

NEWS RELEASE



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Technical information: (202) 691-6378 • cpsinfo@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/cps

Media contact: (202) 691-5902 • PressOffice@bls.gov

(NOTE: The Usual Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers news releases for the first, second, and third quarters of 2015 were reissued on Tuesday, November 10, 2015, to correct errors in table 1 of the release. An incorrect price index was used to compute seasonally adjusted median weekly earnings in constant dollars for total, men, and women, affecting data for the first quarter 2010 through the third quarter 2015. These estimates have been recalculated using the correct price index. No other series in the usual weekly earnings news release were affected by the error.)

USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS THIRD QUARTER 2015

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 110.4 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$803 in the third quarter of 2015 (not seasonally adjusted), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. This was 1.6 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 0.1 percent in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) over the same period.

Data on usual weekly earnings are collected as part of the Current Population Survey, a nationwide sample survey of households in which respondents are asked, among other things, how much each wage and salary worker usually earns. (See the Technical Note.) Data shown in this release are not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Highlights from the third-quarter data are:

- **Median weekly earnings** were \$803 in the third quarter of 2015. **Women** who usually worked full time had median weekly earnings of \$721, or 81.1 percent of the \$889 median for **men**. (See table 2.)
- The women's-to-men's earnings ratio varied by race and ethnicity. White women earned 80.5 percent as much as their male counterparts, compared with 93.3 percent for black women, 72.2 percent for Asian women, and 91.0 percent for Hispanic women. (See table 2.)
- Among the major **race and ethnicity groups**, median weekly earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$652 per week, or 70.9 percent of the median for white men (\$919). The difference was less among women, as black women's median earnings (\$608) were 82.2 percent of those for white women (\$740). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics who worked full time (\$602) were lower than those of blacks (\$624), whites (\$829), and Asians (\$974). (See table 2.)

- Usual weekly earnings of full-time workers varied by **age**. Among men, those age 55 to 64 had the highest median weekly earnings, at \$1,077. Usual weekly earnings were highest for women age 35 to 64: weekly earnings were \$788 for women age 35 to 44, \$794 for women age 45 to 54, and \$789 for women age 55 to 64. Workers age 16 to 24 had the lowest median weekly earnings, at \$491. (See table 3.)
- Among the major **occupational groups**, persons employed full time in management, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,381 for men and \$1,000 for women. Men and women employed in service jobs had much lower earnings, \$571 and \$465, respectively. (See table 4.)
- By educational attainment, full-time workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$492, compared with \$672 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,234 for those holding at least a bachelor's degree. Among college graduates with advanced degrees (professional or master's degree and above), the highest earning 10 percent of male workers made \$3,480 or more per week, compared with \$2,413 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 5.)
- **Seasonally adjusted median weekly earnings** were \$809 in the third quarter of 2015, little changed from the previous quarter (\$803). (See table 1.)

Revision of Seasonally Adjusted Usual Weekly Earnings Data

The Usual Weekly Earnings news release for the fourth quarter of 2015 will incorporate annual revisions to seasonally adjusted data for the number of full-time wage and salary workers and median weekly earnings in current dollars. (See table 1.) Estimates for constant (1982-84) dollar median weekly earnings also will be affected by revisions to the current dollar series. Seasonally adjusted estimates back to the first quarter of 2011 will be subject to revision.

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides basic information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment. The survey is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the U.S. Census Bureau using a scientifically selected national sample of about 60,000 eligible households, with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The earnings data are collected from one-fourth of the CPS monthly sample and are limited to wage and salary workers. All self-employed workers, both incorporated and unincorporated, are excluded from CPS earnings estimates.

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Definitions

The principal definitions used in connection with the earnings data in this news release are described briefly below.

Usual weekly earnings. Data represent earnings before taxes and other deductions and include any overtime pay, commissions, or tips usually received (at the main job in the case of multiple jobholders). Prior to 1994, respondents were asked how much they usually earned per week. Since January 1994, respondents have been asked to identify the easiest way for them to report earnings (hourly, weekly, biweekly, twice monthly, monthly, annually, or other) and how much they usually earn in the reported time period.

Earnings reported on a basis other than weekly are converted to a weekly equivalent. The term "usual" is determined by each respondent's own understanding of the term. If the respondent asks for a definition of "usual," interviewers are instructed to define the term as more than half the weeks worked during the past 4 or 5 months.

Medians (and other quantiles) of weekly earnings. The median (or upper limit of the second quartile) is the midpoint in a given earnings distribution, with half of workers having earnings above the median and the other half having earnings below the median. Ten percent of a given distribution have earnings below the upper limit of the first decile (90 percent have higher earnings), 25 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the first quartile (75 percent have higher earnings), 75 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the third quartile (25 percent have higher earnings), and 90 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the ninth decile (10 percent have higher earnings).

The BLS procedure for estimating the median of an earnings distribution places each reported or calculated weekly earnings value into a \$50-wide interval that is centered around a multiple of \$50. The median is calculated through the linear interpolation of the interval in which the median lies.

Changes over time in the medians (and other quantile boundaries) for specific groups may not necessarily be consistent with the movements estimated for the overall quantile boundary. The most common reasons for this possible anomaly are as follows: (1) there could be a change in the relative weights of the subgroups. For example, the median of 16- to 24-year-olds and the median earnings of those 25 years and over may rise, but if the lower earning 16to-24 age group accounts for a greatly increased share of the total, the overall median could actually fall. (2) there could be a large change in the shape of the distribution of reported earnings, particularly near a quantile boundary. This change could be caused by survey observations that are clustered at rounded values, such as \$400 or \$500. An estimate lying in a \$50-wide centered interval containing such a cluster or "spike" tends to change more slowly than one in other intervals.

Constant dollars. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) is used to convert current dollars to constant (1982-84) dollars.

Wage and salary workers. These are workers who receive wages, salaries, commissions, tips, payment in kind, or piece rates. The group includes employees in both the private and public sectors but, for the purposes of the earnings series, it excludes all self-employed persons, both those with incorporated businesses and those with unincorporated businesses.

Full-time workers. For the purpose of producing estimates of earnings, workers who usually work 35 hours or more per week at their sole or principal job are defined as working full time.

Part-time workers. For the purpose of producing estimates of earnings, workers who usually work fewer than 35 hours per week at their sole or principal job are defined as working part time.

Race. In the survey process, race is determined by the household respondent. In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget guidelines, white, black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander are terms used to describe a person's race. Estimates for the latter two race groups and persons who selected more than one race are not included in this release due to insufficient sample size.

Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. This refers to people who identified themselves in the survey process as being of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

Reliability

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the true population values they represent. The component of this difference that occurs because samples differ by chance is known as *sampling error*, and its variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the true population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling error*. Nonsampling error can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

Additional information about the reliability of data from the CPS is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability.

Seasonal adjustment

Over the course of a year, the size of the nation's labor force and other measures of labor market activity undergo regularly occurring fluctuations. These recurring events include seasonal changes in weather, major holidays, and the opening and closing of schools. The effect of such seasonal variations can be very large.

Because seasonal events follow a more or less regular pattern each year, their influence on the level of a series can be tempered by adjusting for regular seasonal variation. These adjustments make nonseasonal developments easier to spot. The seasonally adjusted figures provide a more useful tool with which to analyze changes in quarter-to-quarter activity.

At the end of each calendar year, the seasonally adjusted data are revised for the past 5 years when the seasonal adjustment factors are updated. More information on seasonal adjustment is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#sa.

Table 1. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by sex, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted

Number of workers (in thousands)				Median weekly earnings						
Year and quarter				In	current doll	ars	In constant (1982-84) dollars			
	Total	Men	Women	Total \$	Men \$	Women \$	Total \$	Men \$	Women \$	
2006										
3rd Quarter	107,041	60,060	46,981	678	755	603	334	372	297	
4th Quarter	106,847	60,140	46,707	681	748	607	337	370	300	
2007										
1st Quarter	107,176	60,105	47,070	687	752	610	336	368	298	
2nd Quarter	106,827	60,351	46,476	693	765	610	335	370	295	
3rd Quarter	. 107,156	60,216	46,940	698	774	621	336	372	298	
4th Quarter	. 108,178	60,508	47,670	700	774	615	332	368	292	
2008										
1st Quarter	. 107,786	60,378	47,408	713	783	633	335	368	298	
2nd Quarter	. 107,046	59,586	47,460	722	802	636	335	372	295	
3rd Quarter	. 106,136	59,273	46,863	724	802	637	331	367	291	
4th Quarter	. 105,617	58,511	47,106	727	806	647	340	377	302	
2009										
1st Quarter	101,683	56,302	45,381	732	815	645	345	384	304	
2nd Quarter	99,996	55,233	44,763	737	818	652	345	383	305	
3rd Quarter	. 99,050	54,481	44,569	742	820	664	345	381	309	
4th Quarter	98,555	54,410	44,145	747	823	666	344	379	307	
2010										
1st Quarter	98,143	54,098	44,045	748	836	662	344	384	304	
2nd Quarter		55,028	44,577	742	814	671	342	374	309	
3rd Quarter	100,412	55,620	44,792	746	821	670	342	377	308	
4th Quarter	. 99,958	55,486	44,472	750	826	676	341	376	308	
2011										
1st Quarter	99,682	55,337	44,345	750	821	679	338	370	306	
2nd Quarter	100,352	55,822	44,530	754	830	687	336	370	306	
3rd Quarter	. 100,488	56,060	44,428	759	836	681	336	370	301	
4th Quarter	. 101,315	56,667	44,648	761	838	686	335	369	302	
2012										
1st Quarter	. 102,184	57,118	45,066	764	841	693	335	368	303	
2nd Quarter	. 102,504	57,057	45,448	772	870	687	337	380	300	
3rd Quarter	1 '	57,245	45,385	765	836	693	333	364	301	
4th Quarter	. 103,685	57,735	45,950	772	868	691	334	375	298	
2013										
1st Quarter	. 103,950	57,919	46,031	768	860	699	331	371	301	
2nd Quarter	. 103,929	57,891	46,038	777	865	706	335	373	304	
3rd Quarter	. 104,512	58,162	46,350	777	856	706	333	367	302	
4th Quarter	. 104,673	58,019	46,654	783	862	712	334	368	304	
2014										
1st Quarter	105,639	58,728	46,911	790	866	716	336	368	304	
2nd Quarter	106,320	59,445	46,875	782	861	715	330	363	302	
3rd Quarter	. 106,889	59,661	47,228	797	880	722	335	370	304	
4th Quarter	. 107,264	59,975	47,289	796	875	723	336	369	305	
2015										
1st Quarter	'	60,405	48,005	802	887	724	341	377	308	
2nd Quarter		60,397	48,177	803	890	726	339	376	306	
3rd Quarter	109,422	61,074	48,349	809	898	728	340	377	306	

NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 2. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics,

quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

		of workers usands)	Median weekly earnings				
Characteristic	3rd 2014	3rd 2015	In current dollars		In constant (1982-84) dollars		
			3rd 2014	3rd 2015	3rd 2014	3rd 2015	
SEX AND AGE							
Total, 16 years and over	107,855	110,446	\$790	\$803	\$332	\$337	
Men, 16 years and over	60,502	61,974	870	889	366	373	
16 to 24 years	5,827	5,992	498	517	209	217	
25 years and over	54,676	55,982	920	946	386	397	
Women, 16 years and over	47,353	48,472	715	721	300	303	
16 to 24 years	4,314	4,598	448	442	188	185	
25 years and over	43,038	43,874	750	762	315	320	
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX							
White	85,030	86,280	816	829	343	348	
Men	48,730	49,662	896	919	377	386	
Women	36,299	36,617	733	740	308	311	
Black or African American	13,195	13,842	638	624	268	262	
Men	6,297	6,582	679	652	285	274	
Women	6,898	7,260	608	608	255	255	
Asian	6,307	6,807	945	974	397	409	
Men	3,612	3,813	1,087	1,133	457	476	
Women	2,695	2,994	795	818	334	343	
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	17,625	18,606	598	602	251	253	
Men	10,802	11,367	617	624	259	262	
Women	6,823	7,238	553	568	232	238	

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 3. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by age, race, Hispanic or Latino

ethnicity, and sex, 3rd quarter 2015 averages, not seasonally adjusted

	То	otal	M	en	Women	
Age, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings
TOTAL						
16 years and over	110,446	\$803	61,974	\$889	48,472	\$721
16 to 24 years	10,591	491	5,992	517	4,598	442
16 to 19 years	1,465	387	813	419	653	354
20 to 24 years	9,125	508	5,180	534	3,945	475
25 years and over	99,856	857	55,982	946	43,874	762
25 to 54 years	77,673	837	43,782	916	33,891	757
25 to 34 years	26,954	739	15,287	771	11,667	695
35 to 44 years	25,081	895	14,316	975	10,765	788
45 to 54 years	25,638	918	14,180	1,020	11,458	794
55 years and over	22,182	927	12,199	1,069	9,983	781
55 to 64 years	18,105	937	9,927	1,077	8,179	789
65 years and over	4,077	889	2,273	1,028	1,804	750
White						
16 years and over	86,280	829	49,662	919	36,617	740
16 to 24 years	8,179	502	4,793	530	3,385	455
25 years and over	78,101	887	44,869	972	33,232	781
25 to 54 years	59,912	864	34,585	941	25,327	772
55 years and over	18,189	965	10,284	1,106	7,905	810
Black or African American						
16 years and over	13,842	624	6,582	652	7,260	608
16 to 24 years	1,394	423	666	465	728	395
25 years and over	12,448	673	5,916	709	6,531	650
25 to 54 years	10,123	650	4,848	660	5,275	642
55 years and over	2,325	742	1,069	795	1,256	688
Asian						
16 years and over	6,807	974	3,813	1,133	2,994	818
16 to 24 years	485	518	268	508	217	537
25 years and over	6,322	1,034	3,544	1,201	2,778	889
25 to 54 years	5,109	1,089	2,926	1,240	2,183	955
55 years and over	1,213	865	618	1,030	595	677
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
16 years and over	18,606	602	11,367	624	7,238	568
16 to 24 years	2,403	457	1,463	483	940	411
25 years and over	16,203	631	9,904	666	6,299	597
25 to 54 years	13,786	626	8,451	652	5,335	600
55 years and over	2,417	667	1,453	733	964	582
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NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 4. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by occupation and sex, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Opportunities and any		of workers usands)	Median weekly earnings		
Occupation and sex	3rd 2014	3rd 2015	3rd 2014	3rd 2015	
TOTAL					
Management, professional, and related occupations	43,476	44,614	\$1,131	\$1,165	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	17,816	18,289	1,225	1,261	
Professional and related occupations	25,659	26,325	1,065	1,126	
Service occupations	15,138	15,882	508	504	
Sales and office occupations	23,316	24,027	665	670	
Sales and related occupations	9,517	9,902	710	732	
Office and administrative support occupations	13,798	14,124	646	646	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	11,284	11,199	755	734	
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	959	937	414	464	
Construction and extraction occupations.	6,064	6,005	758	721	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,260	4,256	836	868	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	14,642	14,725	640	666	
Production occupations.	7,612	7,622	651	665	
Transportation and material moving occupations	7,030	7,103	628	668	
	7,030	7,103	020	000	
Men Vlanagement, professional, and related occupations	21,271	22,070	1,326	1,381	
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Management, business, and financial operations occupations	9,646	9,930	1,441	1,436	
Professional and related occupations	11,626	12,140	1,252	1,345	
Service occupations.	7,494	7,685	585	571	
Sales and office occupations	9,196	9,567	761	771	
Sales and related occupations	5,279	5,548	844	866	
Office and administrative support occupations	3,917	4,020	673	679	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	10,814	10,755	763	742	
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	737	745	419	478	
Construction and extraction occupations	5,934	5,871	760	721	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,143	4,139	837	864	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	11,727	11,897	697	712	
Production occupations	5,658	5,707	724	739	
Transportation and material moving occupations	6,069	6,190	663	690	
Women					
Management, professional, and related occupations	22,204	22,544	980	1,000	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	8,171	8,359	1,048	1,071	
Professional and related occupations	14,034	14,185	949	970	
Service occupations	7,645	8,197	467	465	
Sales and office occupations	14,120	14,459	624	628	
Sales and related occupations	4,238	4,355	584	599	
Office and administrative support occupations	9,881	10,105	640	639	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	469	444	486	588	
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	222	192	394	445	
Construction and extraction occupations	131	134	689	720	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	117	117	769	917	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	2,915	2,828	498	518	
	1,953	1,916	504	518	
Production occupations					

NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 5. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, 3rd quarter 2015 averages, not seasonally adjusted

	Number of	Upper limit of:					
Characteristic	workers (in thousands)	First decile	First quartile	Second quartile (median)	Third quartile	Ninth decile	
SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY							
Total, 16 years and over	110,446	\$384	\$523	\$803	\$1,279	\$1,929	
Men	61,974	400	570	889	1,422	2,123	
Women	48,472	363	493	721	1,128	1,733	
White	86,280	393	549	829	1,324	1,988	
Men	49,662	409	590	919	1,449	2,212	
Women	36,617	376	507	740	1,144	1,742	
Black or African American	13,842	340	441	624	968	1,481	
Men	6,582	355	477	652	1,018	1,545	
Women	7,260	333	417	608	921	1,402	
Asian	6,807	389	574	974	1,640	2,301	
Men	3,813	413	641	1,133	1,837	2,489	
Women	2,994	365	514	818	1,371	2,016	
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	18,606	342	423	602	912	1,411	
Men	11,367	359	445	624	964	1,472	
Women	7,238	321	405	568	824	1,295	
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT							
Total, 25 years and over	99,856	401	568	857	1,354	2,014	
Less than a high school diploma	7,428	322	388	492	653	894	
High school graduates, no college ¹	24,846	367	485	672	975	1,393	
Some college or associate degree		398	543	773	1,138	1,581	
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	1	579	815	1,234	1,882	2,680	
Bachelor's degree only	1	545	761	1,143	1,745	2,490	
Advanced degree	15,065	655	948	1,394	2,016	2,910	
Men, 25 years and over	55,982	418	606	946	1,490	2,271	
Less than a high school diploma	5,202	338	403	515	699	975	
High school graduates, no college ¹	14,945	388	516	753	1,089	1,523	
Some college or associate degree		443	619	887	1,262	1,746	
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	1	617	932	1,416	2,085	2,966	
Bachelor's degree only		583	846	1,297	1,918	2,882	
Advanced degree	7,689	742	1,107	1,618	2,312	3,480	
Women, 25 years and over	1 '	384	519	762	1,168	1,773	
Less than a high school diploma		297	356	424	576	718	
High school graduates, no college ¹	1 '	341	433	588	800	1,111	
Some college or associate degree	1	376	493	675	964	1,362	
Bachelor's degree and higher ²		540	747	1,064	1,558	2,263	
Bachelor's degree only	1	513	705	985	1,447	2,040	
Advanced degree	7,376	600	859	1,187	1,742	2,413	

¹ Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

NOTE: Ten percent of all full-time wage and salary workers earn less than the upper limit of the first decile; 25 percent earn less than the upper limit of the first quartile; 50 percent earn less than the upper limit of the second quartile, or median; 75 percent earn less than the upper limit of the third quartile; and 90 percent earn less than the upper limit of the ninth decile. Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

² Includes persons with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

Table 6. Median usual weekly earnings of part-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic		of workers usands)	Median weekly earnings		
Characteristic	3rd 2014	3rd 2015	3rd 2014	3rd 2015	
SEX AND AGE					
otal, 16 years and over	24,032	23,619	\$245	\$248	
Men, 16 years and over	8,443	8,135	240	237	
16 to 24 years	3,750	3,719	199	197	
25 years and over	4,693	4,417	285	287	
Women, 16 years and over	15,589	15,483	248	254	
16 to 24 years	4,679	4,660	194	197	
25 years and over	10,910	10,823	279	290	
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX					
White	19,221	18,754	249	252	
Men	6,553	6,375	244	242	
Women	12,668	12,379	251	258	
Black or African American	2,706	2,862	224	226	
Men	1,103	1,082	217	210	
Women	1,603	1,779	230	237	
Asian	1,199	1,211	267	264	
Men	443	394	256	260	
Women	757	817	274	266	
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	4,065	3,946	235	249	
Men	1,559	1,478	251	254	
Women	2,505	2,467	227	246	

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.