

News

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COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN RHODE ISLAND: SECOND QUARTER 2008

The average weekly wage in Providence County was \$825 in the second quarter of 2008, 3.3 percent higher than it was one year earlier, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Denis M. McSweeney noted that Providence's average weekly wage was \$16 below the national average of \$841, but its wage growth was above the nationwide increase of 2.6 percent. (See table 1.) Kent County's average weekly wage of \$735 increased by 1.7 percent over the year. Providence and Kent were the only large counties in Rhode Island—that is, they had 75,000 or more jobs as measured by 2007 annual average employment.

Employment in Rhode Island's two largest counties accounted for more than 75 percent of statewide employment in June 2008. Both counties experienced over-the-year employment declines at a pace faster than the national average (-0.3 percent). Kent County's employment fell 4.1 percent and Providence County's was down 2.6 percent from June 2007 to June 2008.

Average wages (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the three smaller counties in Rhode Island, those with employment below 75,000. None of these counties registered average weekly wages above the national average in the second quarter of 2008. Newport (\$810) had the highest average followed by Washington County (\$710). Bristol County had the lowest average weekly wage among the small counties, as well as the State, at \$661.

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Nationwide, there were 334 large counties of which 224 had average weekly wages below the U.S. average (\$841). Providence County (\$825) placed 124th, in the top half of the national ranking. Kent County (\$735) fell in the bottom half at 223rd.

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 109 of the largest 334 U.S. counties. New York, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,569. Santa Clara, Calif., was second at \$1,529, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,433), Arlington, Va. (\$1,376), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,334).

The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$535), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$538), Horry, S.C. (\$539), Webb, Texas (\$562), and Yakima, Wash. (\$580).

Over the year, the national average weekly wage rose by 2.6 percent. Providence County's faster-than-average wage growth of 2.8 percent ranked among the top third in the nation at 94th. Kent County's 1.7-percent wage growth ranked among the bottom third at 237th. Rock Island, Ill., led the nation in wage growth with an increase of 10.5 percent from the second quarter 2007. Weld, Colo., ranked second with a 10.4-percent gain, followed by the counties of Utah, Utah (9.4 percent), Whatcom, Wash. (8.3 percent), and East Baton Rouge, La. (7.8 percent).

Twenty-six large counties experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., experienced the largest decrease in wages (-43.7 percent), followed by the counties of Boone, Ky. (-10.0 percent), Ventura, Calif., and Trumbull, Ohio (-4.8 percent each), and Queens, N.Y. (-4.3 percent).

State Average Weekly Wages

The average weekly wage in Rhode Island was \$796 in the second quarter of 2008, \$45 below that for the nation. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, Rhode Island's average weekly wage ranked 21st. The five highest wage levels in the U.S. were in the District of Columbia (\$1,433), Massachusetts (\$1,044), New York (\$1,040), Connecticut (\$1,036), and New Jersey (\$1,004). The states with the lowest average weekly wages were South Dakota (\$606), Montana (\$629), Mississippi (\$635), Idaho (\$636), and North Dakota (\$654). (See table 3.)

Average weekly wages in Rhode Island rose 2.8 percent over the year, above the growth rate for the nation. The District of Columbia experienced a wage gain of 5.9 percent from the second quarter 2007, higher than any other state. North Dakota was second with 5.8 percent growth. The smallest wage gains were in Connecticut (0.3 percent) and New Hampshire (1.5 percent). Two states experienced over-the-year declines in wages: Delaware (-0.8 percent) and Georgia (-0.6 percent).

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 9.1 million employer reports cover 136.6 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs; this result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2007 edition of this bulletin contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics

(BED) on job gains and losses as well as selected data from the first quarter 2008 version of the County Employment and Wages national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2007 Employment and Wages Annual Bulletin are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn07.htm. These tables present final 2007 annual averages. The hardcopy version of the Annual Bulletin will include the tables on a CD. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2007* is expected to be available for sale by the end of the first quarter in 2009 from the United States Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 37194, Pittsburgh, PA 15230, telephone 866-512-1800, outside Washington, D.C. Within Washington, D.C., the telephone number is 202-512-1800. The fax number is 202-512-2104.

This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (617) 565-2072; Federal Relay Services: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the QCEW program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the New England Information Office at (617) 565-2327. This release is available in PDF and HTML format on the New England BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/ro1/home.htm.

TECHNICAL NOTE

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons-some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review, and editing, of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately access changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Table 1. Covered [1] employment and wages in the United States and the 2 largest counties in Rhode Island, second quarter 2008[2]

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage [3]			
	June 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2007-08 [4]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [5]	Percent change, second quarter 2007-08 [4]	National ranking by percent change [5]
United States [6]	136,631.8	-0.3	\$841	--	2.6	--
Rhode Island	481.6	-2.2	796	21	2.8	26
Kent, R.I.	80.4	-4.1	735	223	1.7	237
Providence, R.I.	283.0	-2.6	825	124	3.3	94

[1] Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

[2] Data are preliminary.

[3] Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

[4] Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

[5] Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

[6] Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

[7] Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

Table 2. Covered [1] employment and wages in all of the counties in Rhode Island, second quarter 2008[2]

Area	Employment June 2008	Average Weekly Wage [3]
Bristol County	15,477	\$661
Kent County	80,400	735
Newport County	42,353	810
Providence County	283,000	825
Washington County	52,697	710

[1] Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

[2] Data are preliminary.

[3] Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

Table 3. Covered [1] employment and wages by state, second quarter 2008[2]

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [3]			
	June 2008 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2007-08	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2007-08	National ranking by percent change
United States [4]	136,631.8	-0.3	\$841	-	2.6	-
Alabama	1,955.4	-0.5	720	33	3.3	15
Alaska	330.6	1.4	860	12	3.1	16
Arizona	2,543.9	-2.6	806	19	2.4	34
Arkansas	1,183.5	-0.2	661	46	3.4	11
California	15,760.3	-0.5	955	6	2.2	42
Colorado	2,346.3	0.8	858	13	3.1	16
Connecticut	1,722.3	0.5	1,036	4	0.3	49
Delaware	427.3	-0.9	862	10	-0.8	51
District of Columbia	691.4	1.2	1,433	1	5.9	1
Florida	7,620.1	-3.4	762	26	2.6	30
Georgia	4,059.7	-0.6	787	22	-0.6	50
Hawaii	623.9	-1.3	764	24	3.9	9
Idaho	671.9	-0.9	636	48	1.6	46
Illinois	5,930.0	-0.4	893	8	2.3	39
Indiana	2,906.5	-0.9	715	38	1.9	43
Iowa	1,521.2	0.1	683	42	2.9	23
Kansas	1,389.1	1.2	720	33	2.4	34
Kentucky	1,818.9	-0.5	718	35	2.6	30
Louisiana	1,900.3	1.2	750	29	5.5	3
Maine	620.3	0.1	676	44	2.7	28
Maryland	2,577.7	-0.3	920	7	2.8	26
Massachusetts	3,310.4	0.1	1,044	2	3.6	10
Michigan	4,163.3	-2.2	825	18	2.4	34
Minnesota	2,733.9	-0.5	849	14	1.8	45
Mississippi	1,139.1	0.1	635	49	4.4	7
Missouri	2,761.6	0.0	752	28	3.4	11
Montana	450.3	0.1	629	50	2.9	23
Nebraska	936.1	0.5	676	44	3.4	11
Nevada	1,271.8	-1.9	797	20	2.7	28
New Hampshire	641.9	-0.4	835	16	1.5	48
New Jersey	4,054.4	-0.4	1,004	5	1.6	46
New Mexico	837.2	0.6	715	38	4.2	8
New York	8,758.2	0.6	1,040	3	2.3	39
North Carolina	4,083.6	-0.1	735	31	2.4	34
North Dakota	356.4	2.5	654	47	5.8	2
Ohio	5,315.0	-1.3	757	27	2.3	39
Oklahoma	1,556.0	1.0	701	40	5.3	5
Oregon	1,747.4	-0.8	764	24	3.0	20
Pennsylvania	5,743.3	0.1	827	17	3.1	16
Rhode Island	481.6	-2.2	796	21	2.8	26
South Carolina	1,907.5	-0.6	681	43	2.4	34
South Dakota	409.0	1.2	606	51	2.9	23
Tennessee	2,752.7	-0.4	745	30	1.9	43
Texas	10,510.3	2.2	849	14	2.5	33
Utah	1,234.3	0.1	716	37	2.6	30
Vermont	305.6	-0.9	718	35	3.0	20
Virginia	3,720.4	-0.3	885	9	3.0	20
Washington	3,000.9	0.3	862	10	3.4	11
West Virginia	715.3	0.0	695	41	5.1	6
Wisconsin	2,836.8	-0.5	730	32	3.1	16
Wyoming	296.7	2.7	780	23	5.4	4
Puerto Rico	997.8	-2.0	475	[5]	3.5	[5]
Virgin Islands	45.9	-2.2	703	[5]	-0.6	[5]

[1] Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

[2] Data are preliminary.

[3] Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

[4] Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

[5] Data not included in the national ranking.