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## **OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN CHARLESTON-NORTH CHARLESTON-SUMMERVILLE, MAY 2010**

Workers in the Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$19.21 in May 2010, roughly 10 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.35, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 16 of 22 major occupational groups, including management, business and financial operations, and construction and extraction. Production was the only occupational group to have significantly higher wages than their national average.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including food preparation and serving related, healthcare practitioners and technical, and office and administrative support. Conversely, nine groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including education, training, and library; business and financial operations, and production. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—healthcare practitioners and technical—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville had 19,070 jobs in healthcare practitioners and technical, accounting for 6.9 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 5.8-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$32.17, measurably below the national wage of \$34.27.

With employment of 8,540, registered nurses was the largest occupation within the healthcare practitioners and technical group, followed by licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses (1,360) and pharmacy technicians (940). Among the higher paying jobs were pharmacists and physical therapists, with mean hourly wages of \$54.66 and \$32.93, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were pharmacy technicians (\$13.95) and emergency medical technicians and paramedics (\$15.90). (Detailed occupational data for healthcare practitioners and technical are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_16700.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_16700.htm))

**Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2010**

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Average hourly wage	
	United States	Charleston	United States	Charleston
<b>Total, all occupations</b>	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.35	\$19.21 *
Management	4.7	4.7	50.69	45.68 *
Business and financial operations	4.8	3.9 *	32.54	28.85 *
Computer and mathematical	2.6	1.9 *	37.13	30.16 *
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.6 *	36.32	31.93 *
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.7 *	31.92	(1)
Community and social service	1.5	1.1 *	20.76	17.91 *
Legal	0.8	0.7	46.60	40.45 *
Education, training, and library	6.7	5.1 *	24.25	21.06 *
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.4	1.0 *	25.14	21.76 *
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.8	6.9 *	34.27	32.17 *
Healthcare support	3.1	2.8 *	12.94	12.68
Protective service	2.5	2.6	20.43	16.43 *
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	9.9 *	10.21	10.10
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	3.8 *	12.16	10.98 *
Personal care and service	2.7	2.7	11.82	11.76
Sales and related	10.6	11.0	17.69	15.23 *
Office and administrative support	16.9	17.8 *	16.09	15.09 *
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1 *	11.70	(1)
Construction and extraction	4.0	3.8	21.09	17.45 *
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.7 *	20.58	19.02 *
Production	6.5	5.6 *	16.24	17.24 *
Transportation and material moving	6.7	6.6	15.70	14.40 *

\* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

(1) Estimate not released.

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See table 1.) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville Metropolitan Statistical Area, above average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the healthcare practitioners and technical group. For instance, cardiovascular technologists and technicians were employed at 2.1 times the national rate in Charleston, and respiratory therapists, at 2.0 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, medical records and health information technicians had a location quotient of 0.9 in Charleston, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and nearly 800 non-military detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas.

OES wage and employment data for the 22 major occupational groups in the Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area were compared to their respective national averages based on statistical significance testing. Only those occupations with wages or employment shares above or below the national wage or share after testing for significance at the 90-percent confidence level meet the criteria.

NOTE: A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

### **Technical Note**

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands also are surveyed, but their data are not included in this release. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 establishments in May and November of each year for a 3-year period. The nationwide response rate for the May 2010 survey was 78.2 percent based on establishments and 74.4 percent based on employment. May 2010 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2010, November 2009, May 2009, November 2008, May 2008, and November 2007. The sample in the Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,344 establishments with a response rate of 77 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to [www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm).

The May 2010 OES estimates mark the first set of estimates based in part on data collected using the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. Nearly all the occupations in this release are 2010 SOC occupations; however, some are not. The May 2012 OES data will reflect the full set of detailed occupations in the 2010 SOC. For a list of all occupations, including 2010 SOC occupations, and how data collected on two structures were combined, see the OES Frequently Asked Questions online at [www.bls.gov/oes/oes\\_ques.htm#Ques41](http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm#Ques41).

### **Area definitions**

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, S.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester Counties.

### **Additional information**

OES data are available on our regional web page at [www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm). If you have additional questions, contact the Southeast Economic Analysis and Information Unit at (404) 893-4222. Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

**Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2010**

Occupation	Employment		Mean Wages	
	Level <sup>(1)</sup>	Location quotient <sup>(2)</sup>	Hourly	Annual
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	19,070	1.2	\$32.17	\$66,920
Chiropractors	100	1.8	(3)	(3)
Dentists, general	230	1.2	85.06	176,930
Dietitians and nutritionists	100	0.9	24.77	51,520
Optometrists	40	0.7	39.31	81,760
Pharmacists	810	1.4	54.66	113,690
Family and general practitioners	100	0.5	62.27	129,530
Obstetricians and gynecologists	(3)	(3)	75.09	156,180
Surgeons	90	0.9	(4)	(4)
Physicians and surgeons, all other	370	0.6	81.02	168,520
Physician assistants	120	0.7	38.88	80,860
Registered nurses	8,540	1.5	32.21	66,990
Occupational therapists	250	1.2	31.58	65,690
Physical therapists	530	1.4	32.93	68,490
Recreational therapists	40	0.8	18.58	38,640
Respiratory therapists	470	2.0	27.80	57,820
Speech-language pathologists	170	0.7	32.23	67,040
Veterinarians	180	1.5	(3)	(3)
Health diagnosing and treating practitioners, all other	160	2.4	(3)	(3)
Medical and clinical laboratory technologists	560	1.6	25.52	53,080
Medical and clinical laboratory technicians	240	0.7	17.52	36,440
Dental hygienists	440	1.2	27.86	57,950
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians	220	2.1	25.96	53,990
Diagnostic medical sonographers	150	1.3	29.13	60,580
Nuclear medicine technologists	60	1.3	32.03	66,630
Radiologic technologists and technicians	520	1.1	25.48	52,990
Emergency medical technicians and paramedics	590	1.2	15.90	33,070
Dietetic technicians	120	2.3	10.53	21,900
Pharmacy technicians	940	1.3	13.95	29,020
Surgical technologists	110	0.5	16.90	35,150
Veterinary technologists and technicians	290	1.7	16.24	33,780
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	1,360	0.9	19.77	41,120
Medical records and health information technicians	340	0.9	15.71	32,670
Opticians, dispensing	140	1.0	19.00	39,530
Orthotists and prosthetists	40	3.0	17.43	36,250
Health technologists and technicians, all other	230	1.2	16.71	34,750
Occupational health and safety specialists	60	0.5	36.53	75,980
Athletic trainers	40	1.0	(5)	55,600

(1) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(2) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(3) Estimate not released.

(4) This wage is equal to or greater than \$80.00 per hour or \$166,400 per year.

(5) Wages for some occupations that do not generally work year-round, full-time, are reported either as hourly wages or annual salaries depending on how they are typically paid.