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OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN WEST PALM BEACH-BOCA RATON-BOYNTON BEACH, MAY 2011

Workers in the West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Boynton Beach Metropolitan Division had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.76 in May 2011, about 5 percent below the nationwide average of \$21.74, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 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 10 of the 22 major occupational groups, including transportation and material moving, construction and extraction, and installation, maintenance, and repair. Three groups had significantly higher wages than their respective national averages, including sales and related, food preparation and serving related, and management.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 8 of the 22 occupational groups, including food preparation and serving related, office and administrative support, and protective service. Conversely, nine groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including production, transportation and material moving, and computer and mathematical. (See table A and box note at end of release.)

One occupational group—office and administrative support—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Boynton Beach had 91,800 jobs in office and administrative support, accounting for 18.5 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 16.7-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$15.76, measurably below the national wage of \$16.40.

With employment of 11,310, secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive was the largest occupation within the office and administrative support group, followed by customer service representatives (9,770) and general office clerks (9,750). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers and executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants, with mean hourly wages of \$24.66 and \$21.41, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were stock clerks and order fillers (\$11.28) and tellers (\$13.14). (Detailed occupational data for office and administrative support are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_48424.htm)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Boynton Beach Metropolitan Division, and measures of statistical significance, May 2011

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	West Palm Beach	United States	West Palm Beach	Percent difference (1)
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$21.74	\$20.76 *	-5
Management	4.8	3.7 *	51.64	53.79 *	4
Business and financial operations	4.8	5.4 *	33.05	31.92	-3
Computer and mathematical	2.7	2.1 *	37.85	34.32 *	-9
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.3 *	37.08	34.51 *	-7
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.5 *	32.44	28.54 *	-12
Community and social service	1.5	1.1 *	21.07	20.26	-4
Legal	0.8	1.2 *	47.30	45.60	-4
Education, training, and library	6.6	4.9 *	24.46	24.49	0
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	1.3	25.89	22.84 *	-12
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	6.3 *	34.97	35.66	2
Healthcare support	3.1	3.4	13.16	13.03	-1
Protective service	2.5	3.7 *	20.54	19.98	-3
Food preparation and serving related	8.7	11.0 *	10.30	10.80 *	5
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.3	4.7 *	12.29	11.53 *	-6
Personal care and service	2.8	3.0	11.84	12.16	3
Sales and related	10.6	12.9 *	18.04	19.47 *	8
Office and administrative support	16.7	18.5 *	16.40	15.76 *	-4
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	(2)	11.68	11.09	-5
Construction and extraction	3.9	3.5 *	21.46	19.08 *	-11
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.0	20.86	18.88 *	-9
Production	6.5	2.8 *	16.45	15.68 *	-5
Transportation and material moving	6.7	4.1 *	15.96	14.06 *	-12

* 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) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in West Palm Beach is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

(2) 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 West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Boynton Beach Metropolitan Division, above average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the office and administrative support group. For instance, file clerks were employed at 1.7 times the national rate in West Palm Beach, and receptionists and information clerks at 1.5 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, customer service representatives had a location quotient of 1.1 in West Palm Beach, 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 Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. 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 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 West Palm Beach Metropolitan Division 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 the national estimates. 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 2011 survey was 77.3 percent based on establishments and 73.3 percent based on employment. May 2011 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2011, November 2010, May 2010, November 2009, May 2009, and November 2008. The sample in the West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Boynton Beach Metropolitan Division included 3,581 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.

The May 2011 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.

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 **West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Boynton Beach, Fla. Metropolitan Division** includes Palm Beach County.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at 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, West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Boynton Beach Metropolitan Division, May 2011

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean Wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Office and administrative support occupations	91,800	1.1	\$15.76	\$32,790
First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers	5,190	1.0	24.66	51,300
Switchboard operators, including answering service	560	1.1	12.13	25,220
Bill and account collectors	2,540	1.7	16.82	34,980
Billing and posting clerks	1,120	0.6	15.85	32,960
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks	6,990	1.1	17.18	35,730
Payroll and timekeeping clerks	380	0.6	18.64	38,780
Procurement clerks	210	0.8	17.09	35,550
Tellers	2,760	1.3	13.14	27,340
Brokerage clerks	580	2.5	18.13	37,700
Credit authorizers, checkers, and clerks	150	0.8	18.08	37,600
Customer service representatives	9,770	1.1	14.45	30,060
Eligibility interviewers, government programs	60	0.1	14.57	30,310
File clerks	1,060	1.7	13.75	28,600
Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks	920	1.1	11.50	23,930
Interviewers, except eligibility and loan	(5)	(5)	13.83	28,760
Library assistants, clerical	500	1.2	13.10	27,250
Loan interviewers and clerks	820	1.1	16.84	35,020
New accounts clerks	180	0.8	12.87	26,780
Order clerks	1,240	1.5	12.86	26,740
Human resources assistants, except payroll and timekeeping	430	0.8	17.65	36,710
Receptionists and information clerks	5,740	1.5	13.48	28,040
Reservation and transportation ticket agents and travel clerks	380	0.8	13.56	28,210
Information and record clerks, all other	700	0.9	17.57	36,550
Cargo and freight agents	270	0.9	17.52	36,450
Couriers and messengers	290	0.9	14.88	30,940
Police, fire, and ambulance dispatchers	450	1.2	23.78	49,470
Dispatchers, except police, fire, and ambulance	390	0.6	16.17	33,630
Meter readers, utilities	130	0.8	16.46	34,240
Postal service clerks	250	1.0	25.35	52,720
Postal service mail carriers	1,350	1.1	25.68	53,410
Postal service mail sorters, processors, and processing machine operators	580	1.1	24.35	50,640
Production, planning, and expediting clerks	590	0.6	20.37	42,360
Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks	2,400	0.9	13.44	27,940
Stock clerks and order fillers	9,080	1.3	11.28	23,450
Weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers, recordkeeping	330	1.3	15.07	31,350
Executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants	4,820	1.3	21.41	44,520
Legal secretaries	1,360	1.6	20.38	42,390
Medical secretaries	1,410	0.7	14.96	31,120
Secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive	11,310	1.5	15.34	31,910
Computer operators	230	0.8	18.21	37,870
Data entry keyers	970	1.2	14.31	29,770
Word processors and typists	210	0.6	14.02	29,160
Desktop publishers	120	1.6	14.41	29,980
Insurance claims and policy processing clerks	880	1.0	17.03	35,420
Mail clerks and mail machine operators, except postal service	330	0.7	12.30	25,580
Office clerks, general	9,750	0.9	13.49	28,060
Office machine operators, except computer	120	0.5	14.36	29,870
Proofreaders and copy markers	70	1.6	19.93	41,450
Office and administrative support workers, all other	680	0.7	12.96	26,950

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in West Palm Beach-Boca Raton-Boynton Beach, see

www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_48424.htm

(2) 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.

(3) 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.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Estimate not released.