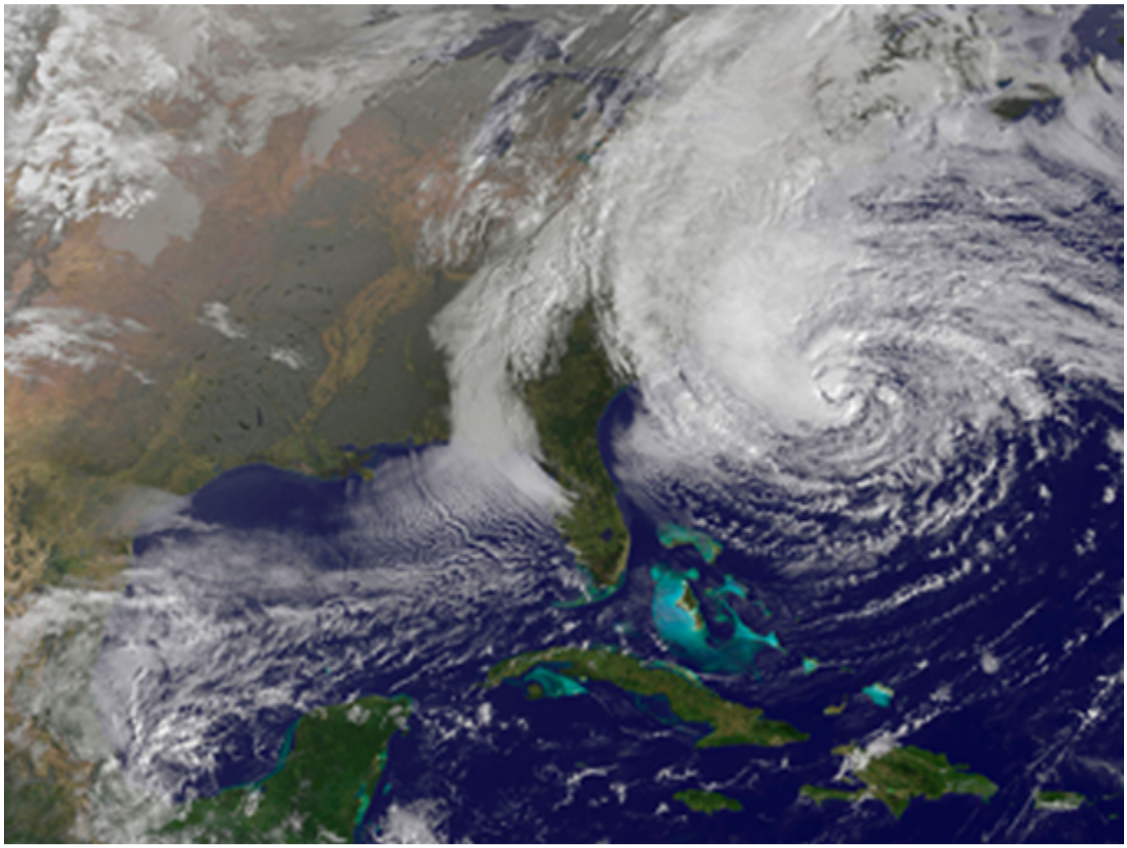


NOVEMBER 2012

Hurricane Sandy: A Pre-storm Look At Affected Areas

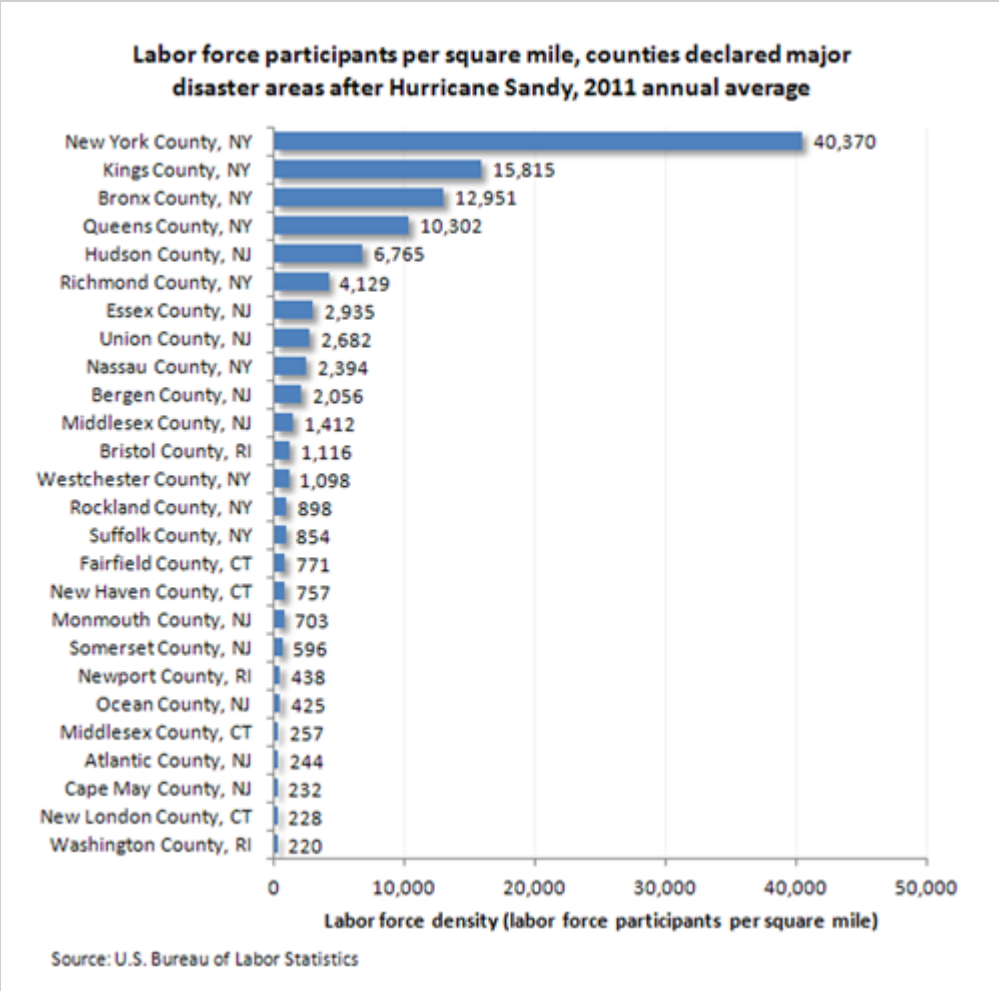
Hurricane Sandy swept up the East Coast of the United States in late October 2012. The storm began in the southern Caribbean Sea and quickly developed first into a tropical storm, then into a hurricane. Hurricane Sandy made landfall in the United States the evening of October 29 near Atlantic City, New Jersey.

High winds and flooding caused dozens of deaths and massive damage to homes, businesses, power systems, transportation systems, and other property in many states, especially New Jersey and the New York metropolitan area. Sandy's reach placed it among the largest Atlantic tropical cyclones on record.

It will be months before the economic impact of Sandy can be fully assessed using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and other organizations. This Spotlight on Statistics provides a brief look at the pre-Sandy labor market in some of the areas of the United States hit hardest by the storm.

Labor Force Density

Hurricane Sandy struck at the most densely populated region of the United States. Four of the five counties with the highest number of labor force participants per square mile in 2011 were among those hardest hit by Sandy. All 26 of the counties designated as major disaster areas are among the top 10 percent of U.S. counties in terms of labor force density. The average density for these 26 counties, 1,301 labor force participants per square mile, was approximately 30 times the average density of the United States in 2011. The number of labor force participants in these 26 counties ranged from just under 27,000 in Bristol County, Rhode Island, to over 1.1 million in both Kings County (Brooklyn) and Queens County in New York. Their unemployment rates ranged from 6.5 percent in Rockland County, New York, to 12.9 percent in Atlantic County, New Jersey.



Employment in New Jersey and New York flood zones-Atlantic City, NJ

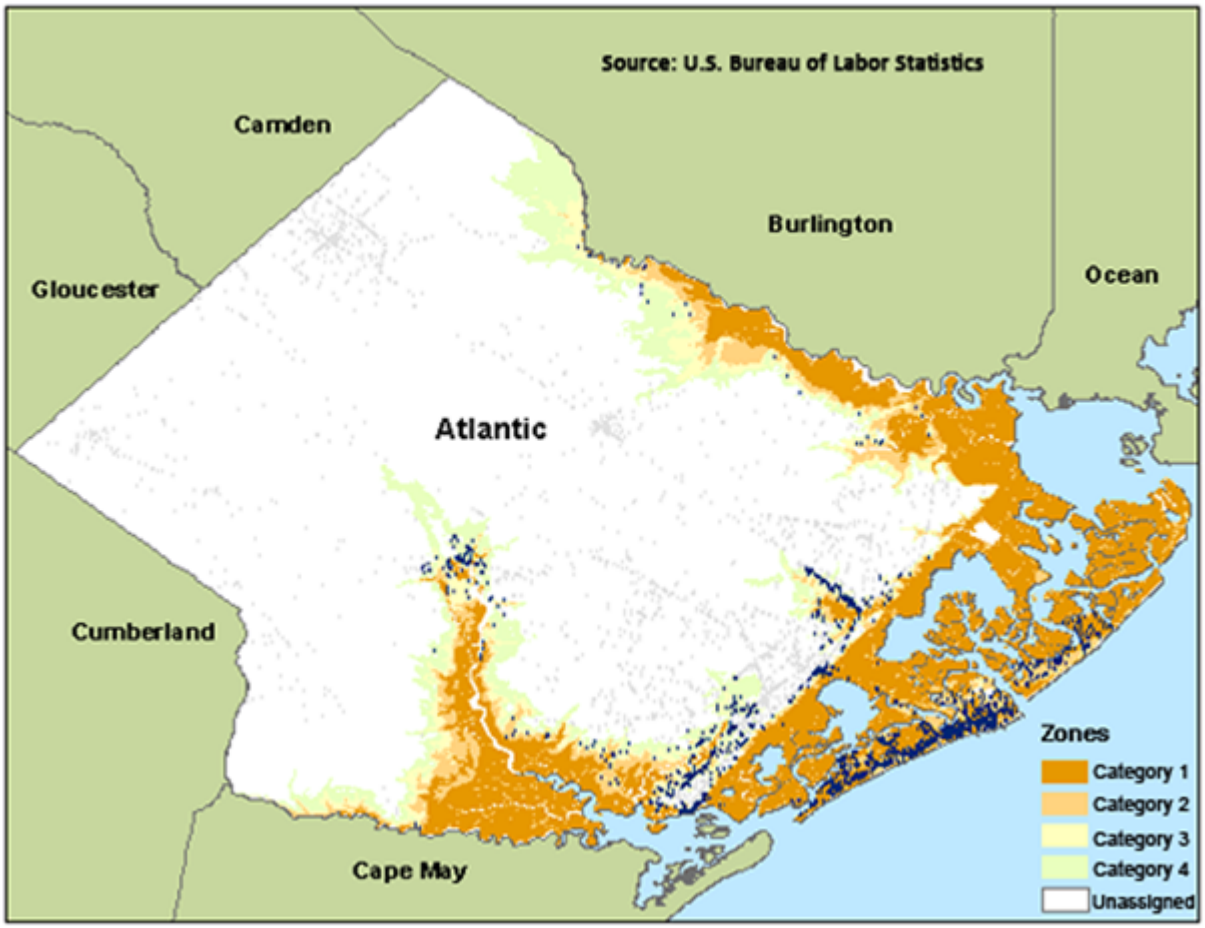
The maps below show selected areas of New York and New Jersey that were hit particularly hard by flood damage from Hurricane Sandy. Low-lying areas in New York City are identified as being in evacuation zones A, B, or C. Zone A is the lowest and most vulnerable level, with B and C being progressively higher. A major portion of Staten Island employment—29 percent in October 2011, a year before Hurricane Sandy—was located in the most exposed zone A. In Manhattan, 7 percent of employment was located in the zone A areas. In Queens, 2 percent of employment was in zone A areas. (County employment data for October 2012 will not be published until June 27, 2013. October 2011 employment data are shown here as the best approximation of the seasonal employment levels when Hurricane Sandy struck.)

New Jersey counties are classified into four hurricane zones, reflecting their vulnerability to hurricane force storms of category 1-4. Hurricanes are categorized as 1-5 based on increasing rates of sustained wind speed. Maps are presented for Hudson County (which includes Hoboken, Jersey City, and other municipalities) and Atlantic County (which includes Atlantic City). The New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry has permitted BLS to publish these maps with dots showing the location of employers.

No information is currently available on how many of these employers suffered damage as a result of Hurricane Sandy.

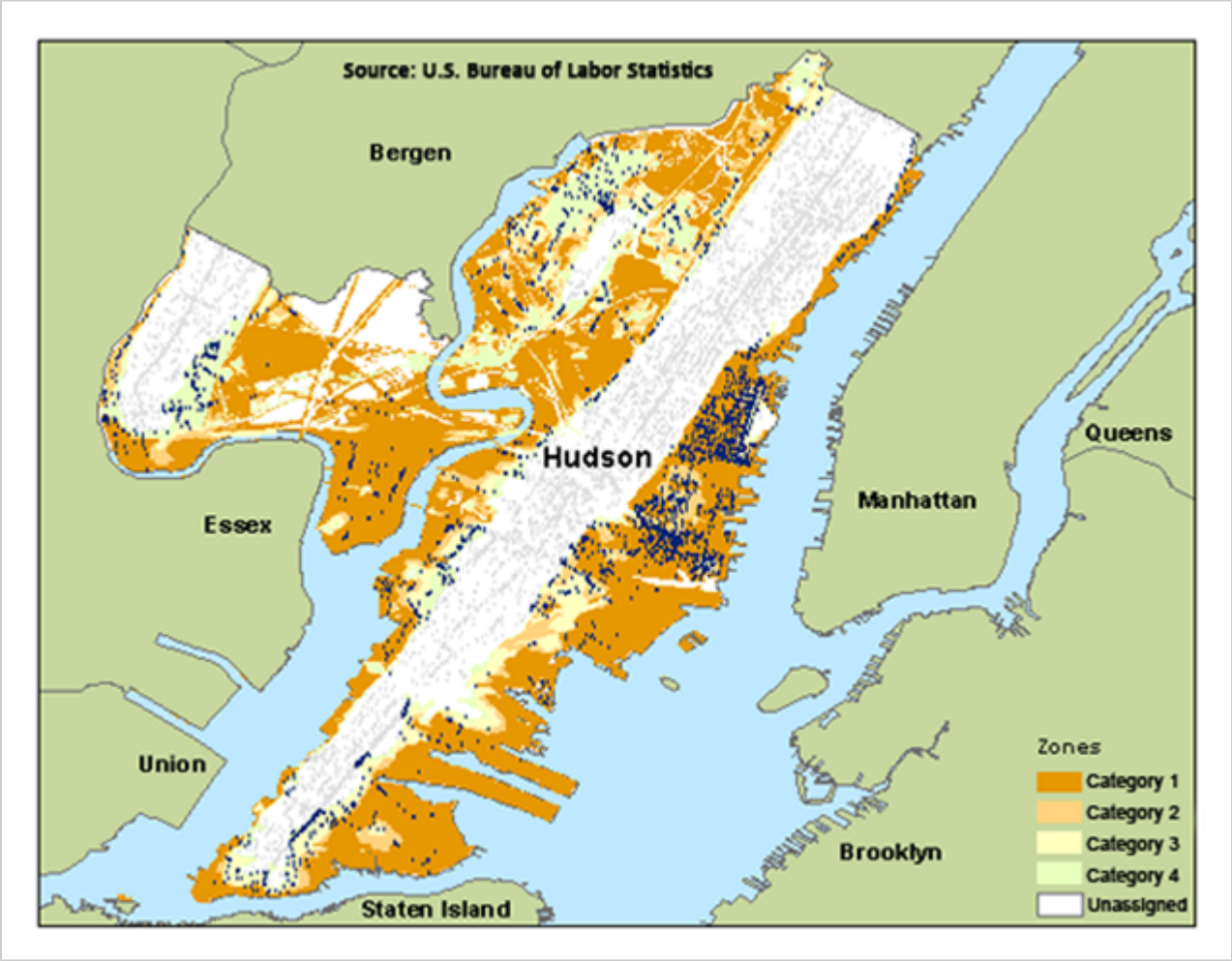
In Hudson County, 40 percent of employment as of October 2011 was within the category 1 zone; in Atlantic County, 20 percent of employment was in the category 1 zone.

Evacuation zones were provided by the New York City Office of Emergency Management. New Jersey hurricane zones were provided by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Camden
Burlington
Ocean
Gloucester
Atlantic
Cumberland
Cape May
Zones
Category 1
Category 2
Category 3
Category 4
Unassigned

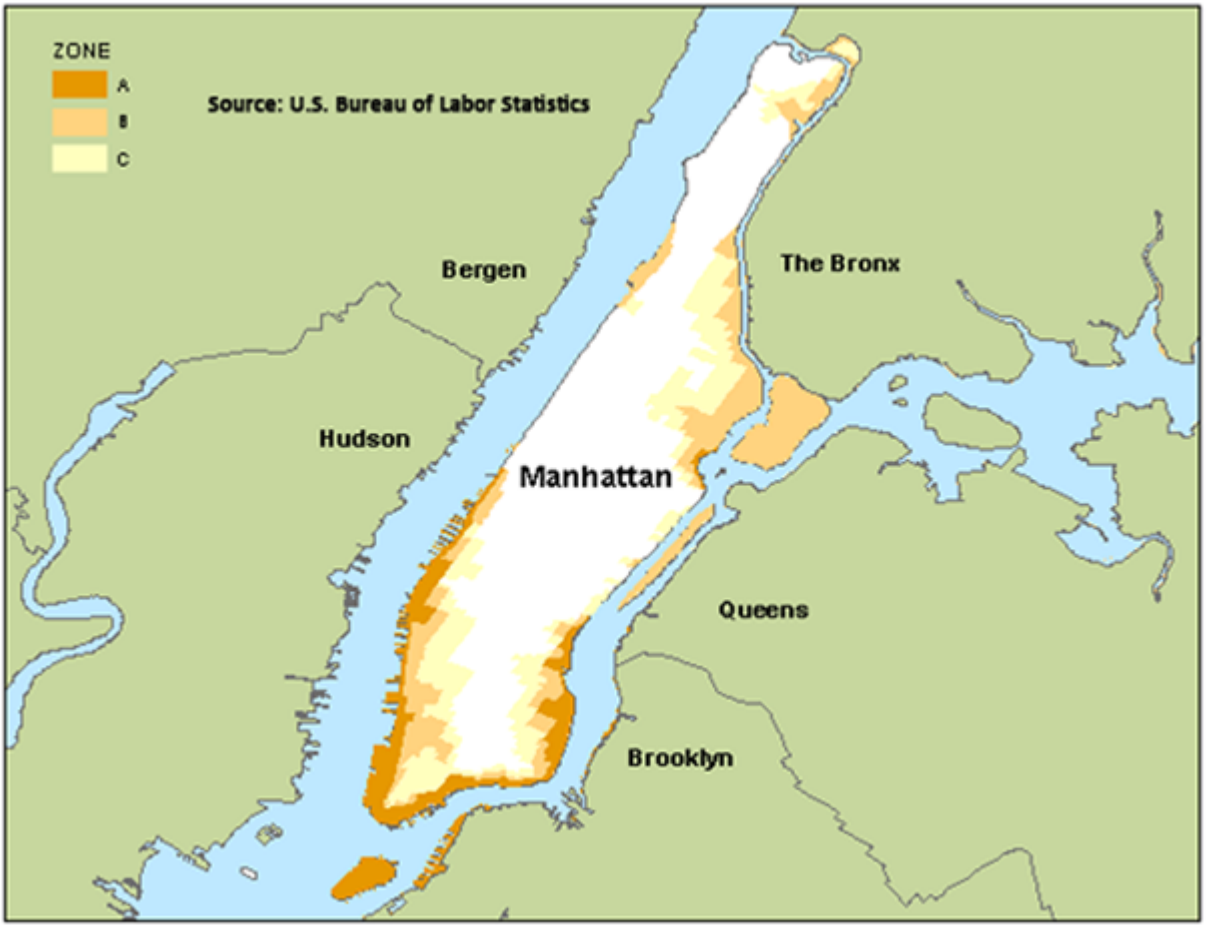
Employment in New Jersey and New York flood zones-Hudson, NJ

Hudson, NJ



Employment in New Jersey and New York flood zones-Manhattan, NY

Manhattan, NY



Employment in New Jersey and New York flood zones-Staten Island, NY

Staten Island, NY

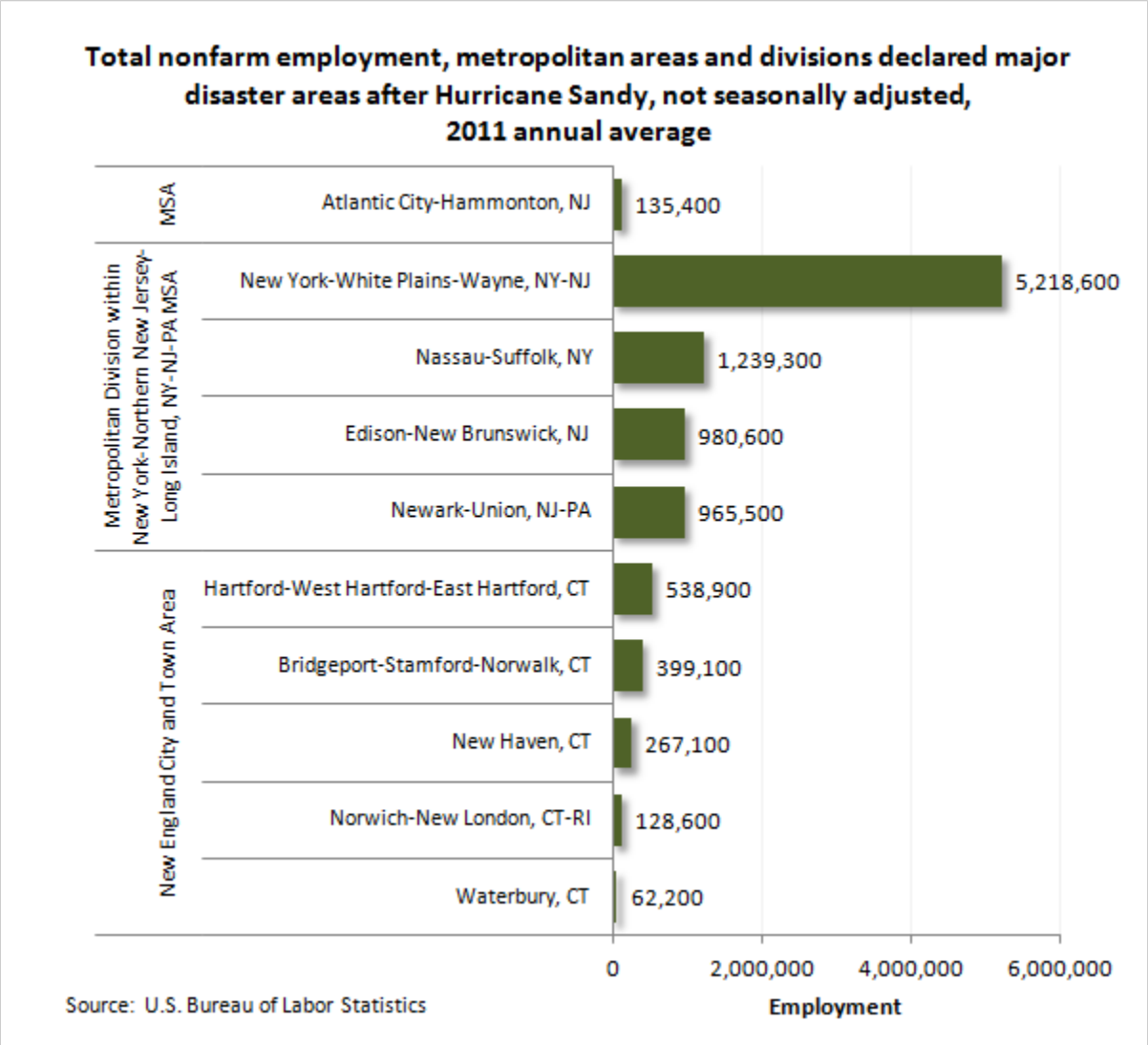
Employment in New Jersey and New York flood zones-Queens, NY

Queens, NY

Total nonfarm employment in affected areas

In 2011, among the four metropolitan divisions that compose the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island metropolitan statistical area (MSA), New York-White Plains-Wayne had the highest average total nonfarm employment (5,218,000). Within New Jersey, 980,600 were employed within the Edison-New Brunswick division.

Within the New England region, those areas affected by Hurricane Sandy were primarily in Connecticut. The largest area, Hartford, employed 538,900 in 2011. Partly located in Connecticut as well as Rhode Island, the Norwich-New London area employed 128,600.

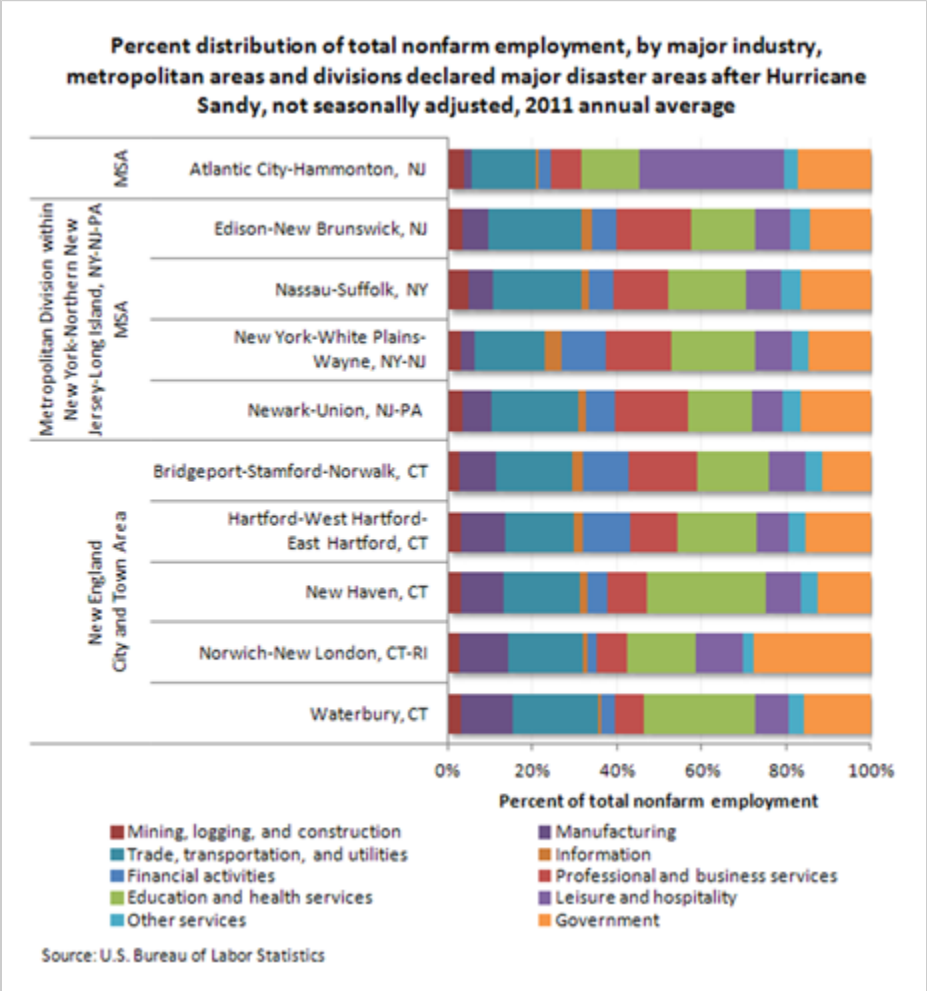


Industry employment in affected areas

In those metropolitan statistical areas and divisions affected by Hurricane Sandy, the majority of employment in 2011 was in the Education and Health Services and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities industries. The Information industry had the fewest jobs.

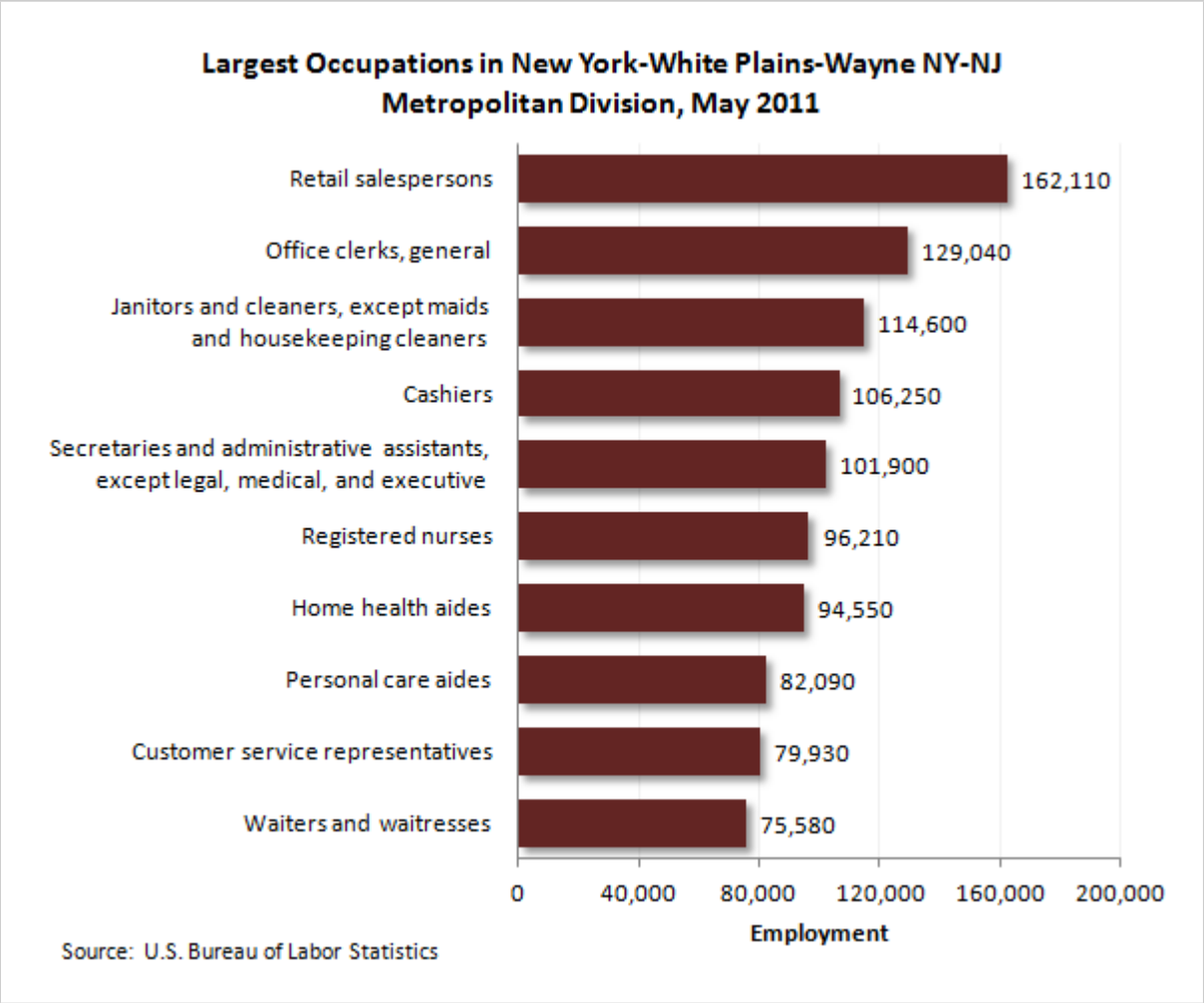
Within New Jersey, compared with all other affected areas, the Atlantic City-Hammonton area employed the highest share of total nonfarm employment in the Leisure and Hospitality industry (34.2 percent) and the lowest share in the Information industry (0.6 percent).

Within Connecticut and Rhode Island, the Norwich-New London area had the highest share of Government employment (27.5 percent) among all affected areas.



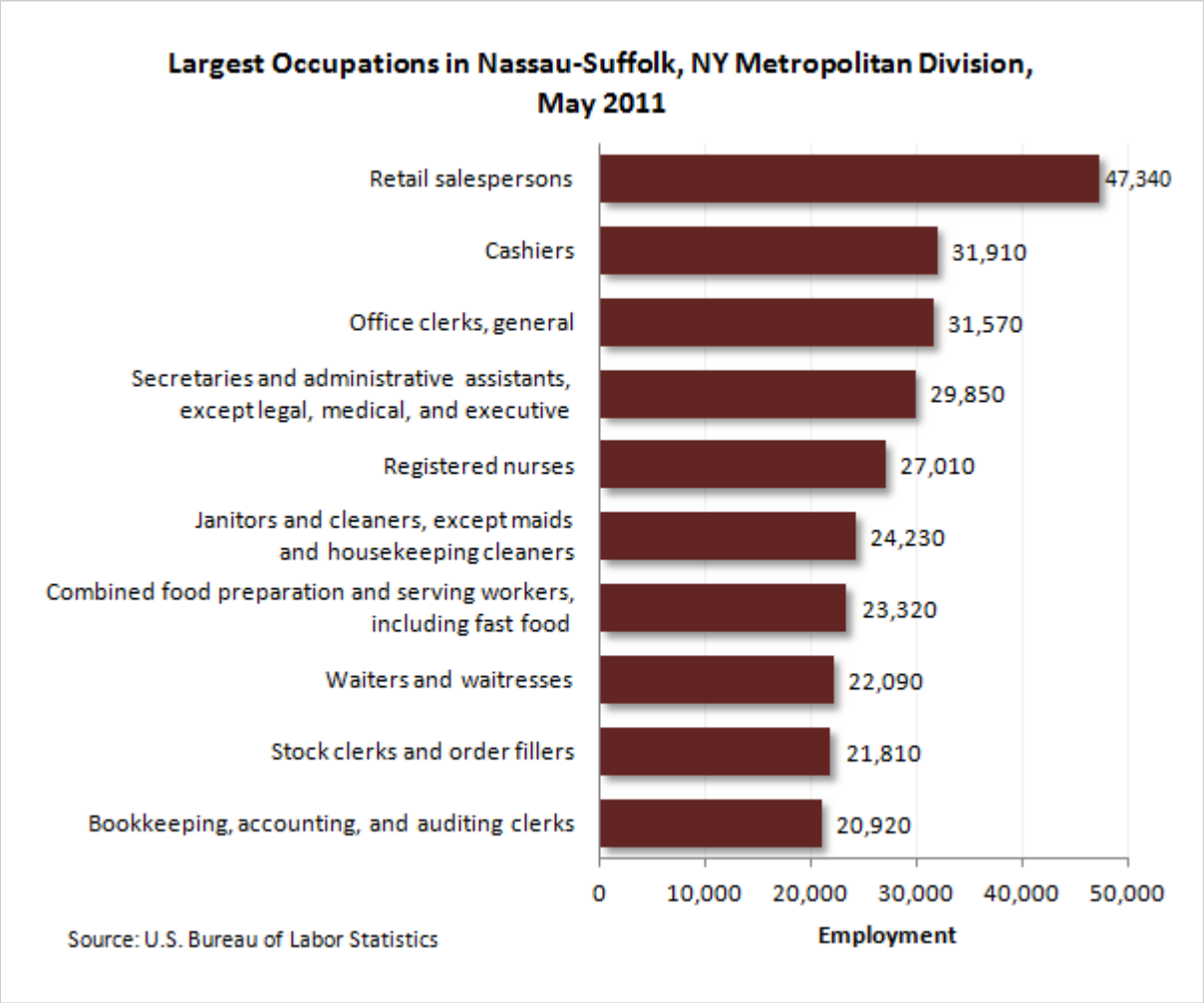
Occupational employment-New York-White Plains-Wayne NY-NJ Metropolitan Division

The charts below show employment levels in the 10 largest occupations in each of six metropolitan areas or divisions that were heavily affected by Hurricane Sandy. In five of the six areas or divisions, the largest occupation in May 2011 was retail salespersons; in the Atlantic City-Hammonton area, retail salespersons was the second-largest occupation. Gaming dealers was the largest occupation in Atlantic City-Hammonton; for the nation as a whole, gaming dealers was the 270th largest occupation. Security guards also was among the largest occupations in Atlantic City-Hammonton, the only one of the six areas or divisions in which security guards was among the top 10. Cashiers, janitors and cleaners, and general office clerks were among the 10 largest occupations in all six areas or divisions.



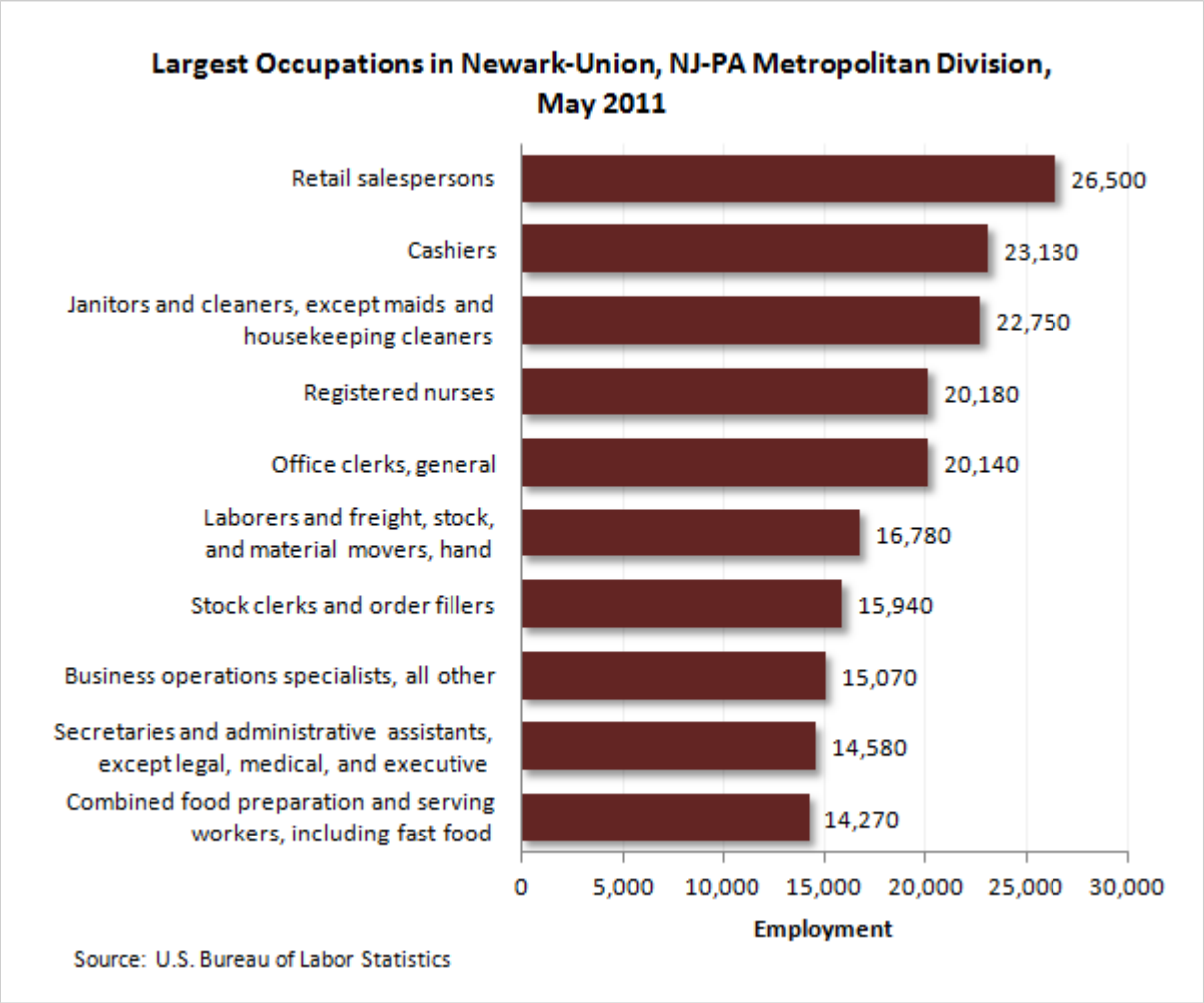
Occupational employment-Nassau-Suffolk NY Metropolitan Division

Nassau-Suffolk NY Metropolitan Division



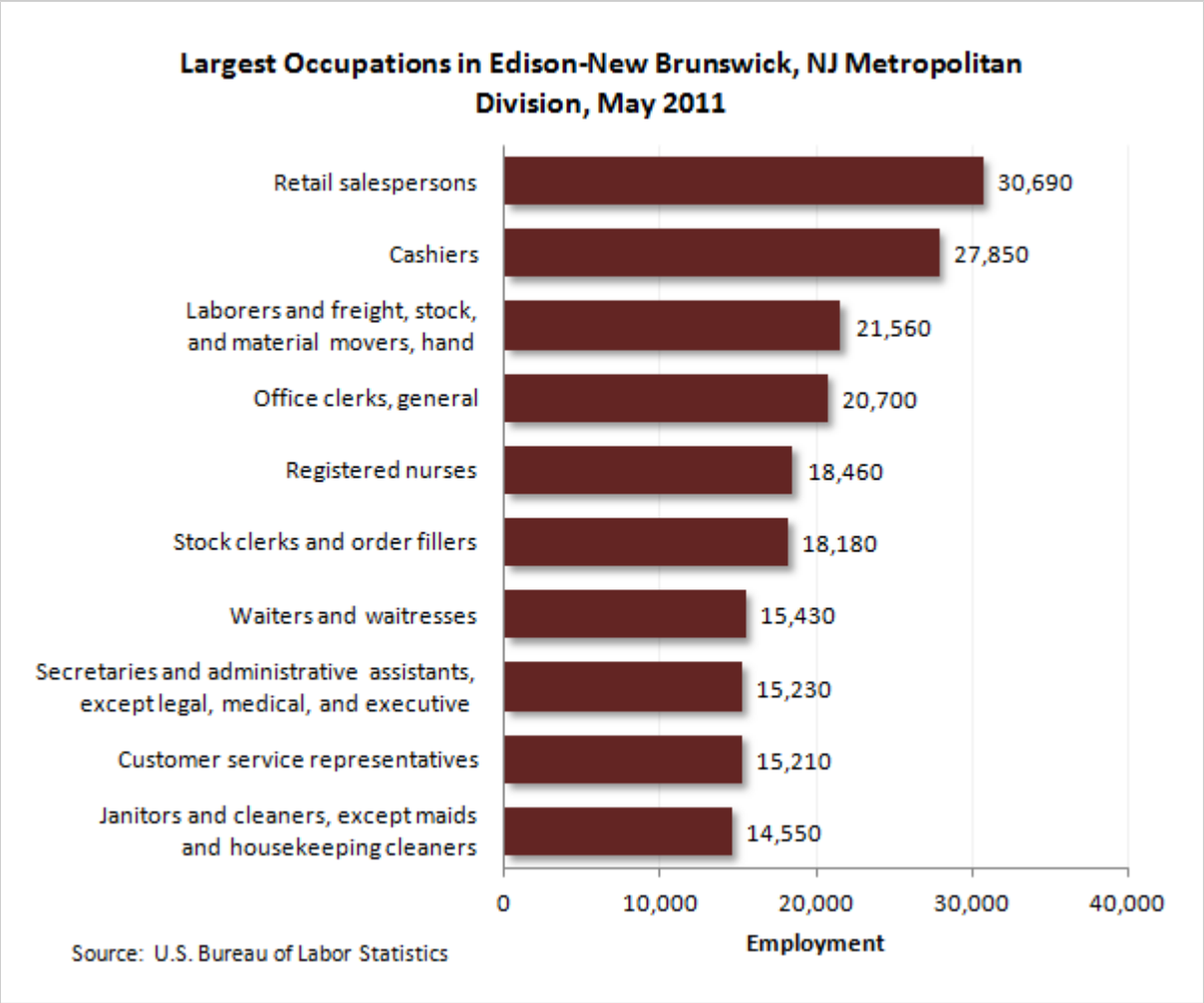
Occupational employment-Newark-Union, N.J.-PA Metropolitan Division

Newark-Union, N.J.-PA Metropolitan Division



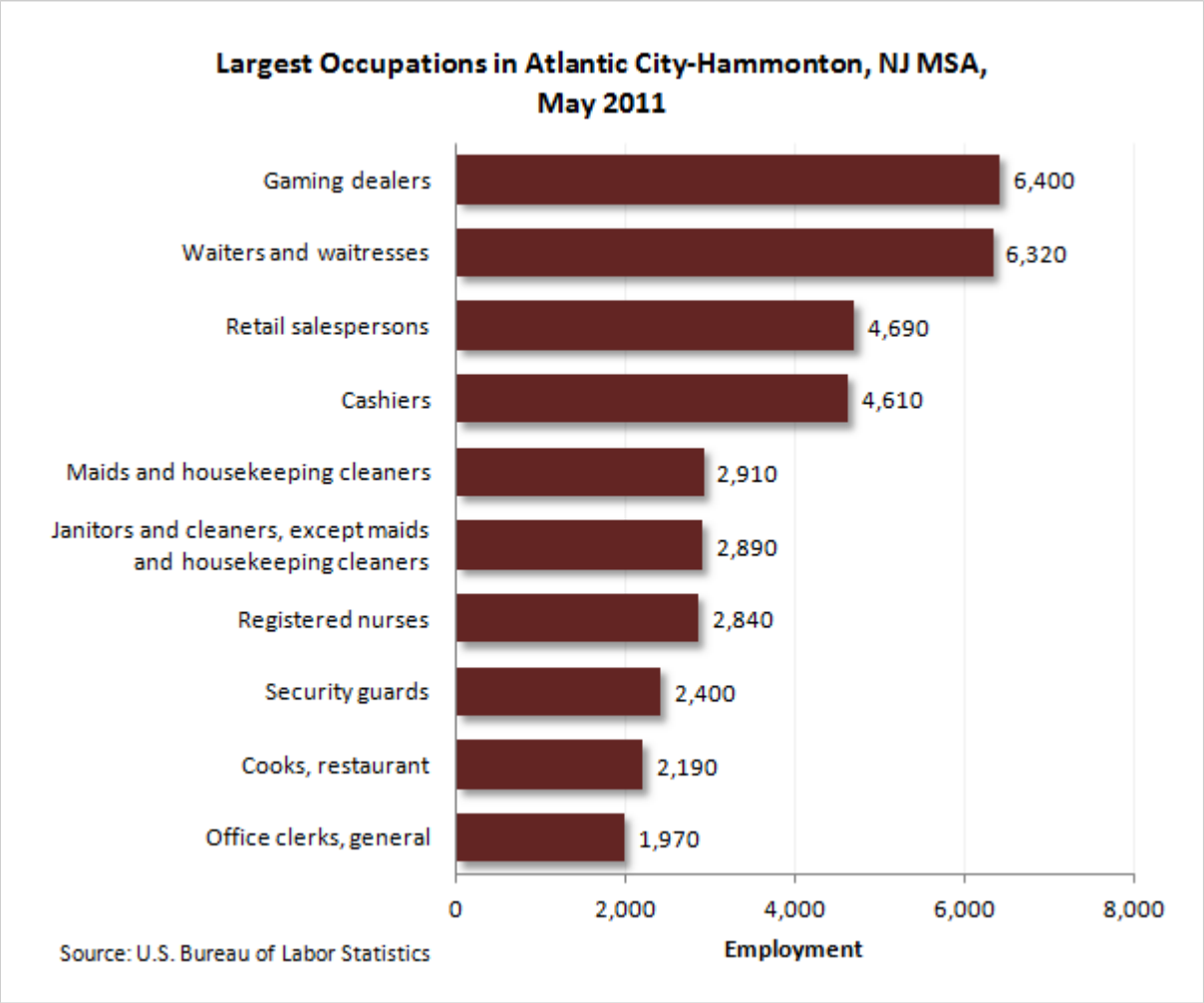
Occupational employment-Edison-New Brunswick, N.J. Metropolitan Division

Edison-New Brunswick, N.J. Metropolitan Division



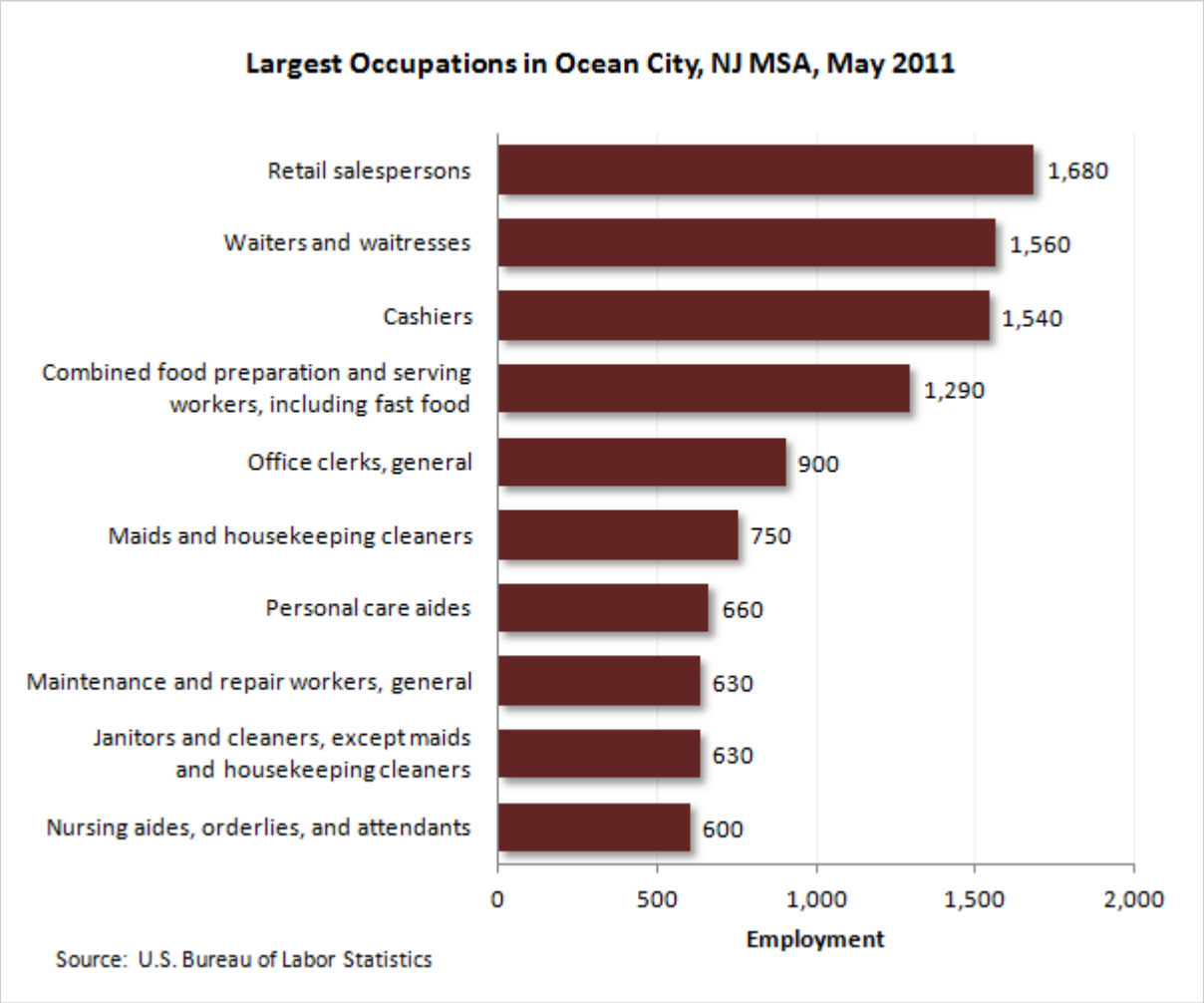
Occupational employment-Atlantic City-Hammonton, N.J. MSA

Atlantic City-Hammonton, N.J. MSA



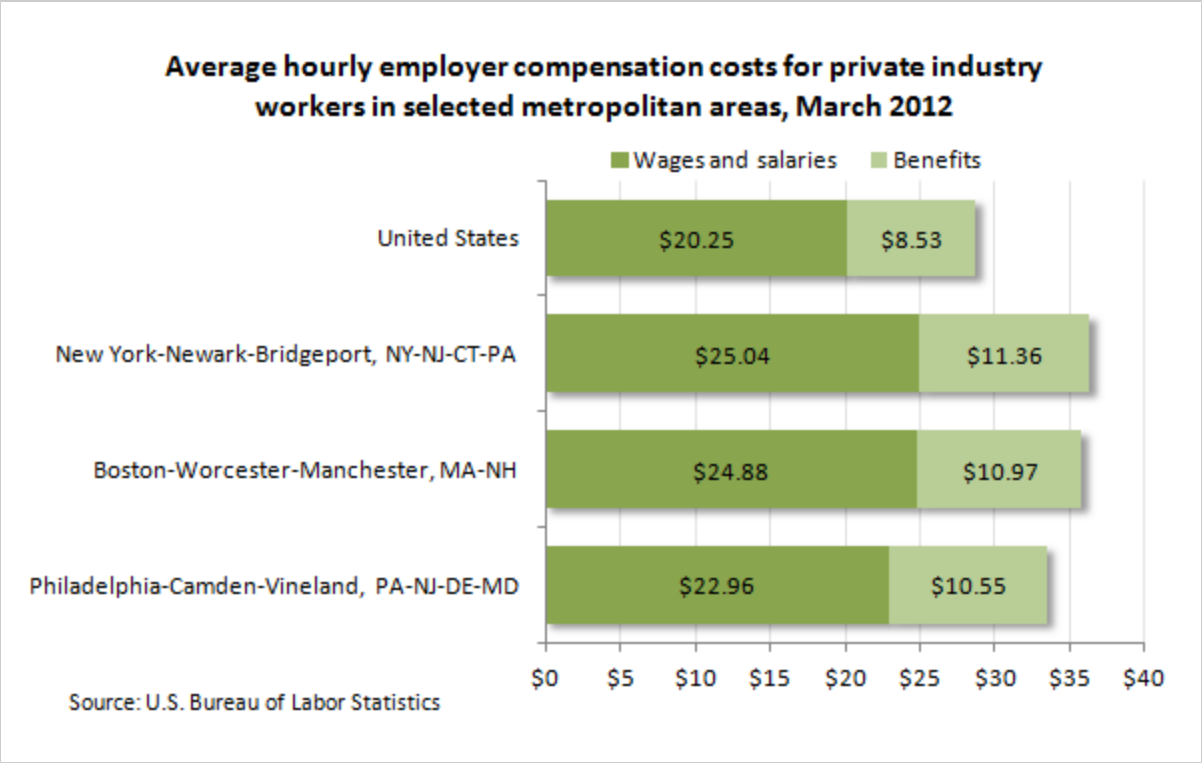
Occupational employment-Ocean City, N.J. MSA

Ocean City, N.J. MSA



Pay and benefits

Private industry employers in the large metropolitan areas hit hardest by Hurricane Sandy—New York, Boston, and Philadelphia—all have higher average hourly compensation costs than the overall average for the United States. Total compensation costs are composed of wages, salaries, and benefits. During the first quarter of 2012, the New York metropolitan area had the highest hourly employer cost at $36.39, followed by Boston at $35.86, and Philadelphia-Camden at $33.51. Hourly employer costs for the United States during the same period averaged $28.78.



More BLS Data

State and Metropolitan Area Economies at a Glance data:

Connecticut | Delaware | District of Columbia | Maryland | New Jersey | New York | Rhode Island | Virginia

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Note: Data in text, charts, and tables are the latest available at the time of publication. Internet links may lead to more recent data.

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