

Holiday Profile – Washington’s Birthday (President’s Day)

February 2018

The National Compensation Survey¹ (NCS) captures the provisions and costs of employer-provided benefits in private industry and state and local government, including leave benefits such as vacation, sick leave, and holidays. In the second of a series of holiday profiles, BLS is publishing new data on the incidence of federal and other prominent holidays. Washington’s Birthday (often celebrated as President’s Day in the United States) is a federal holiday established in 1879 to honor the first President of the United States. The holiday was originally celebrated on George Washington’s actual birthday, February 22nd, but in 1968 was officially changed to the third Monday of February.²

Over 3 in 4 civilian workers³ (76 percent) received paid holidays in March 2017.⁴ Paid holidays cost employers an average of 74 cents per employee hour worked.⁵ Among civilian workers who received paid holidays, 26 percent received Washington’s Birthday (President’s Day) as a paid holiday, with 21 percent of private industry workers and 57 percent of state and local government workers receiving the holiday. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Percent of workers receiving the Washington’s Birthday (President’s Day) paid holiday, March 2017
(All workers with paid holidays = 100 percent)

Characteristics	Civilian		Private industry		State and local government	
	Percent	Standard Error	Percent	Standard Error	Percent	Standard Error
All workers	26	0.9	21	1.0	57	1.5
Occupational group:						
Management, business, and financial	37	1.9	33	2.0	64	3.1
Professional and related	33	1.8	27	2.3	50	2.0
Service	25	2.2	15	2.7	57	2.7
Sales and office	27	1.2	22	1.3	63	1.9
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	17	1.5	11	1.6	63	4.5
Production, transportation, and material moving	13	1.2	12	1.3	54	6.7
Bargaining status¹:						
Union	48	2.3	28	4.3	72	1.8
Nonunion	22	0.8	20	0.8	45	2.4
Establishment size:						
1-99 workers	21	1.0	18	1.0	66	4.1
100 workers or more	31	1.4	24	1.8	54	1.5
Census region¹:						
Northeast	39	2.1	32	2.0	83	2.9
South	19	1.2	16	1.4	36	3.0
Midwest	15	0.8	9	1.0	50	2.5
West	42	2.7	33	3.1	83	3.0

Footnotes:

(1) For more information on bargaining status and census region definitions, see the *Bureau of Labor Statistics, Handbook of Methods, National Compensation Measures*, www.bls.gov/opub/hom/ncs/concepts.htm.

More highlights of Washington’s Birthday (President’s Day) paid holiday benefits include:

- The incidence ranged from 13 percent of workers in production, transportation, and material moving occupations to 37 percent of civilian workers in management, business, and financial occupations.

- Union workers (48 percent) were significantly more likely than nonunion workers (22 percent) to receive the paid holiday.
- Private industry workers in establishments of 100 workers or more received the paid holiday at a higher rate (24 percent) than workers in establishments of 1 to 99 workers (18 percent). State and local government workers were more likely to receive the holiday in establishments of 1 to 99 workers (66 percent) compared with establishments of 100 workers or more (54 percent).
- Thirty-three percent of private industry workers in the West region received the paid holiday, compared with 9 percent in the Midwest.
- Eighty-three percent of state and local government workers in the Northeast and West regions received the paid holiday, compared with 36 percent in the South.

Estimation Methods for Specific Paid Holidays

The estimates of specific paid holiday percentages for this profile are based on information field economists collected for sample establishments. For Washington's Birthday (President's Day), both holiday plan names were accepted for determining specific paid holiday estimates. Missing data were not subject to imputation procedures used in other NCS publications. Workers were included as having paid holiday leave for either partial or full workday paid holidays. Data are rounded to the nearest whole number. Use caution in applying these estimates because they are only based on collected data, part of the overall sample, and not subject to standard imputation and processing methods. Those methods can affect estimates based on establishment and worker characteristics of available and missing holiday information.⁶

Standard errors are based only on collected holiday information. (See Table 1.) Data that satisfied strict relative standard error criteria for collected and matched holiday collection information were used in this profile.

Additional Holidays Data

Upcoming paid holiday benefit profiles in 2018 will be available at www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/holiday_profiles.htm.

In addition to the paid holidays data in this profile, BLS also publishes the average number of paid holidays offered. Civilian workers³ received an average of 8 paid holidays per year with approximately one-third of all workers (33 percent) receiving 10 or more paid holidays per year. Private industry workers averaged 8 paid holidays per year and state and local government workers averaged 11 paid holidays per year. For more information, see www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2017/benefits_leave.htm.

END NOTES

⁽¹⁾ The National Compensation Survey (NCS) collects information on employee wages and salaries and benefits from a nationally-representative sample of about 8,200 responding establishments. (See [March 2017 Appendix 1](#)). The NCS program produces the Employment Cost Index (ECI) and Employer Costs for Employee Compensation (ECEC). The ECI tracks changes over time in average employer costs for pay and benefits, while the ECEC expresses average employer costs for pay and benefits in dollars and cents. The NCS also tracks coverage and provisions of employer-sponsored benefits such as healthcare, retirement, and leave benefits. For more information, see www.bls.gov/ncs.

⁽²⁾ The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, The Center for Legislative Archives, www.archives.gov/legislative/features/washington.

⁽³⁾ Civilian workers include both private industry and state and local government workers.

⁽⁴⁾ Bureau of Labor Statistics: *National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2017*, www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2017.

⁽⁵⁾ Bureau of Labor Statistics: *National Compensation Survey: Employer Costs for Employee Compensation, March 2017*, www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/ecec_06092017.pdf.

⁽⁶⁾ Bureau of Labor Statistics: *Handbook of Methods, National Compensation Measures*, www.bls.gov/opub/hom/ncs/home.htm.

