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USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS FIRST QUARTER 2012

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 100.8 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$769 in the first quarter of 2012 (not seasonally adjusted), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. This was 1.9 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 2.8 percent in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) over the same period.

Data on usual weekly earnings are collected as part of the Current Population Survey, a nationwide sample survey of households in which respondents are asked, among other things, how much each wage and salary worker usually earns. (See the Technical Note.) Data shown in this release are not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Highlights from the first-quarter data are:

- **Seasonally adjusted** median weekly earnings were \$763 in the first quarter of 2012, about unchanged from the previous quarter (\$762). (See table 1.)
- On a **not seasonally adjusted** basis, median weekly earnings were \$769 in the first quarter of 2012. **Women** who usually worked full time had median weekly earnings of \$697, or 82.2 percent of the \$848 median for **men**. (See table 2.)
- The **female-to-male earnings ratio** varied by race and ethnicity. White women earned 81.6 percent as much as their male counterparts, compared with black (88.9 percent), Asian (80.8 percent), and Hispanic women (89.9 percent). (See table 2.)
- Among the major **race and ethnicity groups**, median weekly earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$677, or 77.5 percent of the median for white men (\$874). The difference was less among women, as black women's median weekly earnings (\$602) were 84.4 percent of those for white women (\$713). Overall, median weekly earnings of Hispanics who worked full time (\$567) were lower than those of blacks (\$635), whites (\$793), and Asians (\$918). (See table 2.)
- Usual weekly earnings of full-time workers varied by **age**. Among both men and women, median weekly earnings tend to be higher in the older age groups. Men between the ages of 45 to 54 had median weekly earnings of \$998, about the same as the median for men age 55 to 64 (\$992). Usual weekly earnings were highest for women age 35 to 64; weekly earnings were

\$756 for women age 35 to 44, \$748 for women age 45 to 54, and \$779 for women age 55 to 64. Workers age 16 to 24 had the lowest median weekly earnings, at \$448. (See table 3.)

- Among the major **occupational groups**, persons employed full time in management, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,309 for men and \$959 for women. Men and women employed in service jobs earned the least, \$563 and \$450, respectively. (See table 4.)
- By **educational attainment**, full-time workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$450, compared with \$653 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,158 for those holding at least a bachelor's degree. Among college graduates with advanced degrees (professional or master's degree and above), the highest earning 10 percent of male workers made \$3,366 or more per week, compared with \$2,284 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 5.)

Revision of Seasonally Adjusted Usual Weekly Earnings Data

Seasonally adjusted data for median usual weekly earnings in constant (1982-84) dollars have been updated using revised seasonally adjusted data for the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). (Data are shown in table 1 of the release.) Seasonally adjusted constant (1982-84) dollar estimates back to the first quarter of 2007 were subject to revision.

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides basic information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment. The survey is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the U.S. Census Bureau using a scientifically selected national sample of about 60,000 eligible households, with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The earnings data are collected from one-quarter of the CPS monthly sample and are limited to wage and salary workers (both incorporated and unincorporated self-employed are excluded). The data, therefore, exclude self-employment income.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Reliability

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample rather than the entire population is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the "true" population values they represent. The exact difference, or *sampling error*, varies depending on the particular sample selected, and this variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the "true" population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling error*. Nonsampling errors can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information on a timely basis, mistakes made by respondents, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

A full discussion of the reliability of data from the Current Population Survey and information on estimating standard errors is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability.

Definitions

The principal definitions used in connection with the earnings series are described briefly below.

Usual weekly earnings. Data represent earnings before taxes and other deductions and include any overtime pay, commissions, or tips usually received (at the main job in the case of multiple jobholders). Prior to 1994, respondents were asked how much they usually earned per week. Since January 1994, respondents have been asked to identify the easiest way for them to report earnings (hourly, weekly, biweekly, twice monthly, monthly, annually, other) and how much they usually earn in the reported time period.

Earnings reported on a basis other than weekly are converted to a weekly equivalent. The term "usual" is as perceived by the respondent. If the respondent asks for a definition of "usual", interviewers are instructed to define the term as more than half the weeks worked during the past 4 or 5 months.

Medians (and other quantiles) of weekly earnings. The median (or upper limit of the second quartile) is the amount that divides a given earnings distribution into two equal groups, one having earnings above the median and the other having earnings below the median. Ten percent of a given distribution have earnings below the upper limit of the first decile (90 percent have higher earnings); 25 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the first quartile (75 percent have higher earnings); 75 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the third quartile (25 percent have higher earnings); and 90 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the ninth decile (10 percent have higher earnings).

The estimation procedure places each reported or calculated weekly earnings value into \$50-wide intervals that are centered around multiples of \$50. The actual value is estimated through the linear interpolation of the interval in which the quantile boundary lies.

Over-the-year changes in the medians (and other quantile boundaries) for specific groups may not necessarily be consistent with the movements estimated for the overall quantile boundary. The most common reasons for this possible anomaly are: (1) There could be a change in the relative weights of the subgroups. For example, the medians of both 16-to-24 year olds and those 25 years and over may rise; but if the lower-earning 16-to-24 year olds group accounts for a greatly increased share of the total, the overall median could actually fall. (2) There could be a large change in the shape of the distribution of reported earnings, particularly near a quantile boundary. This could be caused by survey observations that are clustered at

rounded values, such as \$250, \$300, or \$400. An estimate lying in a \$50-wide centered interval containing such a cluster or "spike" tends to change more slowly than one in other intervals.

Wage and salary workers. Workers who receive wages, salaries, commissions, tips, payment in kind, or piece rates. The group includes employees in both the private and public sectors but, for the purposes of the earnings series, excludes all self-employed persons, regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated.

Full-time workers. Workers who usually work 35 hours or more per week at their sole or principal job.

Part-time workers. Workers who usually work fewer than 35 hours per week at their sole or principal job.

Constant dollars. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) is used to convert current dollars to constant (1982-84) dollars.

Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Refers to persons who identified themselves in the enumeration process as being Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino. Persons whose ethnicity is

identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

Seasonal adjustment

Over the course of a year, the size of the nation's labor force and other measures of labor market activity undergo regularly occurring fluctuations. These recurring events include seasonal changes in weather, major holidays, and the opening and closing of schools. The effect of such seasonal variations can be very large.

Because seasonal events follow a more or less regular pattern each year, their influence on the level of a series can be tempered by adjusting for regular seasonal variation. These adjustments make nonseasonal developments easier to spot. The seasonally adjusted figures provide a more useful tool with which to analyze changes in quarter-to-quarter activity.

At the end of each calendar year, the seasonally adjusted data are revised for the past 5 years when the seasonal adjustment factors are updated. More information on seasonal adjustment is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#sa.

Table 1. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by sex, quarterly averages, seasonally adjusted

Year and quarter	Number of workers (in thousands)			Median weekly earnings					
	Total	Men	Women	In current dollars			In constant (1982-84) dollars		
				Total \$	Men \$	Women \$	Total \$	Men \$	Women \$
2003									
1st Quarter.....	100,136	56,079	44,057	615	689	546	335	376	297
2nd Quarter.....	100,255	56,013	44,242	619	692	551	338	378	301
3rd Quarter.....	100,139	56,178	43,961	621	697	554	337	378	300
4th Quarter.....	100,628	56,607	44,021	623	702	560	337	379	302
2004									
1st Quarter.....	100,905	56,848	44,057	629	705	562	337	378	301
2nd Quarter.....	101,135	56,914	44,221	642	715	576	341	380	306
3rd Quarter.....	101,148	56,931	44,217	635	712	574	335	376	303
4th Quarter.....	101,658	57,289	44,369	646	720	577	337	376	302
2005									
1st Quarter.....	102,091	57,710	44,381	647	723	580	336	376	302
2nd Quarter.....	103,201	58,099	45,101	647	714	584	334	369	301
3rd Quarter.....	104,310	58,843	45,467	651	723	588	331	368	299
4th Quarter.....	104,605	58,967	45,638	658	730	588	332	368	296
2006									
1st Quarter.....	104,708	58,960	45,748	662	737	594	332	370	298
2nd Quarter.....	105,798	59,831	45,966	663	732	597	329	364	296
3rd Quarter.....	107,041	60,060	46,981	678	755	603	334	372	297
4th Quarter.....	106,847	60,140	46,707	681	748	607	337	370	300
2007									
1st Quarter.....	107,176	60,105	47,070	687	752	610	336	368	298
2nd Quarter.....	106,827	60,351	46,476	693	765	610	335	370	295
3rd Quarter.....	107,156	60,216	46,940	698	774	621	336	372	298
4th Quarter.....	108,178	60,508	47,670	700	774	615	332	368	292
2008									
1st Quarter.....	107,819	60,401	47,418	713	783	633	335	368	298
2nd Quarter.....	107,051	59,581	47,469	722	801	636	335	372	295
3rd Quarter.....	106,114	59,259	46,856	724	802	637	331	367	291
4th Quarter.....	105,585	58,499	47,087	727	807	647	340	377	302
2009									
1st Quarter.....	101,734	56,339	45,395	731	815	645	344	384	304
2nd Quarter.....	100,002	55,226	44,776	737	816	652	345	382	306
3rd Quarter.....	99,004	54,451	44,553	742	820	664	345	381	308
4th Quarter.....	98,535	54,405	44,130	747	824	666	344	380	307
2010									
1st Quarter.....	98,223	54,156	44,067	747	836	662	344	384	305
2nd Quarter.....	99,621	55,030	44,591	743	812	671	342	374	309
3rd Quarter.....	100,333	55,569	44,765	745	821	670	342	377	307
4th Quarter.....	99,927	55,468	44,459	751	828	675	342	377	307
2011									
1st Quarter.....	99,788	55,407	44,380	749	820	680	337	369	306
2nd Quarter.....	100,377	55,839	44,539	756	828	688	337	369	306
3rd Quarter.....	100,369	55,981	44,388	758	835	681	335	369	301
4th Quarter.....	101,294	56,652	44,642	762	841	685	336	371	302
2012									
1st Quarter.....	102,223	57,162	45,061	763	841	694	334	368	304

NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 2. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings			
	1st 2011	1st 2012	In current dollars		In constant (1982-84) dollars	
			1st 2011	1st 2012	1st 2011	1st 2012
SEX AND AGE						
Total, 16 years and over.....	98,329	100,830	\$755	\$ 769	\$341	\$337
Men, 16 years and over.....	54,251	56,022	829	848	374	372
16 to 24 years.....	4,418	4,786	470	469	212	206
25 years and over.....	49,834	51,236	880	904	397	396
Women, 16 years and over.....	44,077	44,808	683	697	308	306
16 to 24 years.....	3,685	3,614	426	421	192	185
25 years and over.....	40,392	41,194	716	731	323	321
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX						
White.....	79,349	80,278	774	793	349	348
Men.....	44,712	45,755	856	874	386	383
Women.....	34,636	34,523	699	713	316	313
Black or African American.....	11,453	11,935	604	635	272	278
Men.....	5,324	5,626	621	677	280	297
Women.....	6,129	6,309	590	602	266	264
Asian.....	5,219	5,778	831	918	375	403
Men.....	2,952	3,099	948	1,027	428	451
Women.....	2,267	2,679	762	830	344	364
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	14,572	15,776	549	567	248	249
Men.....	8,973	9,577	570	584	257	256
Women.....	5,599	6,199	515	525	232	230

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 3. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by age, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 1st quarter 2012 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Age, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total		Men		Women	
	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings
TOTAL						
16 years and over.....	100,830	\$769	56,022	\$ 848	44,808	\$697
16 to 24 years.....	8,400	448	4,786	469	3,614	421
16 to 19 years.....	851	362	485	376	366	347
20 to 24 years.....	7,548	463	4,301	482	3,248	435
25 years and over.....	92,430	815	51,236	904	41,194	731
25 to 54 years.....	72,999	801	40,763	882	32,236	723
25 to 34 years.....	24,017	702	13,465	732	10,553	671
35 to 44 years.....	23,876	855	13,574	944	10,302	756
45 to 54 years.....	25,105	880	13,724	998	11,382	748
55 years and over.....	19,431	872	10,473	980	8,958	761
55 to 64 years.....	16,319	895	8,689	992	7,630	779
65 years and over.....	3,113	768	1,784	925	1,329	656
White						
16 years and over.....	80,278	793	45,755	874	34,523	713
16 to 24 years.....	6,592	454	3,834	474	2,758	420
25 years and over.....	73,686	840	41,920	928	31,765	746
25 to 54 years.....	57,553	826	33,050	903	24,503	736
55 years and over.....	16,132	913	8,870	1,012	7,262	782
Black or African American						
16 years and over.....	11,935	635	5,626	677	6,309	602
16 to 24 years.....	1,106	397	525	401	580	392
25 years and over.....	10,830	667	5,101	715	5,729	625
25 to 54 years.....	8,786	665	4,162	714	4,624	621
55 years and over.....	2,044	677	939	722	1,105	648
Asian						
16 years and over.....	5,778	918	3,099	1,027	2,679	830
16 to 24 years.....	315	498	183	530	132	468
25 years and over.....	5,462	955	2,916	1,113	2,547	856
25 to 54 years.....	4,516	985	2,429	1,145	2,087	893
55 years and over.....	946	825	487	987	460	701
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
16 years and over.....	15,776	567	9,577	584	6,199	525
16 to 24 years.....	1,842	410	1,175	416	667	399
25 years and over.....	13,934	592	8,402	605	5,532	566
25 to 54 years.....	12,293	591	7,457	603	4,836	571
55 years and over.....	1,641	596	945	619	696	546

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 4. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by occupation and sex, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Occupation and sex	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	1st 2011	1st 2012	1st 2011	1st 2012
TOTAL				
Management, professional, and related occupations.....	39,034	40,290	\$1,072	\$1,107
Management, business, and financial operations occupations.....	15,433	16,676	1,152	1,173
Professional and related occupations.....	23,600	23,614	1,031	1,050
Service occupations.....	13,830	14,339	483	491
Sales and office occupations.....	22,918	22,842	640	654
Sales and related occupations.....	9,209	9,388	674	698
Office and administrative support occupations.....	13,709	13,454	624	638
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.....	9,499	9,883	732	742
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.....	764	716	427	420
Construction and extraction occupations.....	4,706	5,042	707	727
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.....	4,029	4,125	821	815
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations.....	13,048	13,475	608	619
Production occupations.....	7,037	7,335	599	627
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	6,011	6,140	621	611
Men				
Management, professional, and related occupations.....	18,767	19,378	1,266	1,309
Management, business, and financial operations occupations.....	8,263	8,913	1,368	1,407
Professional and related occupations.....	10,504	10,465	1,222	1,242
Service occupations.....	6,953	7,336	565	563
Sales and office occupations.....	8,878	9,066	736	766
Sales and related occupations.....	5,191	5,284	808	847
Office and administrative support occupations.....	3,687	3,782	640	687
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.....	9,109	9,499	743	749
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.....	601	565	453	438
Construction and extraction occupations.....	4,602	4,938	710	724
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.....	3,905	3,996	823	818
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations.....	10,544	10,744	653	667
Production occupations.....	5,239	5,446	655	694
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	5,305	5,297	650	640
Women				
Management, professional, and related occupations.....	20,267	20,912	939	959
Management, business, and financial operations occupations.....	7,171	7,763	987	1,026
Professional and related occupations.....	13,096	13,149	915	924
Service occupations.....	6,877	7,004	431	450
Sales and office occupations.....	14,040	13,776	607	608
Sales and related occupations.....	4,018	4,104	549	550
Office and administrative support occupations.....	10,022	9,672	621	622
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.....	390	384	446	561
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.....	162	152	365	380
Construction and extraction occupations.....	104	103	490	929
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.....	124	129	744	673
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations.....	2,504	2,732	491	483
Production occupations.....	1,798	1,889	488	476
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	705	843	499	492

NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 5. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, 1st quarter 2012 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)	Upper limit of:				
		First decile	First quartile	Second quartile (median)	Third quartile	Ninth decile
SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY						
Total, 16 years and over.....	100,830	\$360	\$ 507	\$ 769	\$1,208	\$1,858
Men.....	56,022	381	550	848	1,356	1,995
Women.....	44,808	338	474	697	1,048	1,547
White.....	80,278	367	520	793	1,237	1,881
Men.....	45,755	387	572	874	1,379	2,020
Women.....	34,523	343	484	713	1,072	1,563
Black or African American.....	11,935	333	439	635	938	1,433
Men.....	5,626	343	463	677	1,015	1,568
Women.....	6,309	325	424	602	859	1,290
Asian.....	5,778	379	540	918	1,490	2,114
Men.....	3,099	397	599	1,027	1,639	2,312
Women.....	2,679	347	494	830	1,295	1,889
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	15,776	305	391	567	834	1,279
Men.....	9,577	316	403	584	869	1,395
Women.....	6,199	294	372	525	781	1,137
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Total, 25 years and over.....	92,430	382	541	815	1,257	1,892
Less than a high school diploma.....	6,850	287	346	450	614	857
High school graduates, no college ¹	24,865	347	469	653	939	1,316
Some college or associate degree.....	25,525	391	533	754	1,096	1,522
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	35,190	564	784	1,158	1,760	2,580
Bachelor's degree only.....	22,281	514	733	1,051	1,571	2,310
Advanced degree.....	12,909	663	926	1,367	1,981	2,911
Men, 25 years and over.....	51,236	404	593	904	1,416	2,080
Less than a high school diploma.....	4,660	304	375	494	675	971
High school graduates, no college ¹	14,773	387	519	733	1,054	1,464
Some college or associate degree.....	13,468	414	596	854	1,237	1,702
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	18,334	623	893	1,356	1,982	2,929
Bachelor's degree only.....	11,703	587	823	1,212	1,857	2,696
Advanced degree.....	6,631	745	1,075	1,596	2,360	3,366
Women, 25 years and over.....	41,194	356	496	731	1,094	1,589
Less than a high school diploma.....	2,190	258	307	380	499	630
High school graduates, no college ¹	10,091	313	404	565	765	1,033
Some college or associate degree.....	12,057	376	492	668	938	1,272
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	16,856	507	721	1,008	1,447	2,021
Bachelor's degree only.....	10,577	478	658	928	1,325	1,882
Advanced degree.....	6,278	620	835	1,172	1,670	2,284

1 Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

2 Includes persons with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

NOTE: Ten percent of all full-time wage and salary workers earn less than the upper limit of the first decile; 25 percent earn less than the upper limit of the first quartile; 50 percent earn less than the upper limit of the second quartile, or median; 75 percent earn less than the upper limit of the third quartile; and 90 percent earn less than the upper limit of the ninth decile. Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 6. Median usual weekly earnings of part-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	1st 2011	1st 2012	1st 2011	1st 2012
SEX AND AGE				
Total, 16 years and over.....	24,947	25,150	\$231	\$229
Men, 16 years and over.....	8,846	8,600	224	221
16 to 24 years.....	3,763	3,605	167	170
25 years and over.....	5,083	4,995	284	265
Women, 16 years and over.....	16,101	16,550	234	234
16 to 24 years.....	4,364	4,778	165	166
25 years and over.....	11,737	11,772	269	265
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX				
White.....	20,639	20,365	232	229
Men.....	7,267	6,879	225	222
Women.....	13,372	13,486	236	233
Black or African American.....	2,637	2,834	227	219
Men.....	972	1,026	225	209
Women.....	1,665	1,807	229	225
Asian.....	922	1,214	217	245
Men.....	323	430	223	227
Women.....	599	784	212	255
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	3,721	3,904	223	229
Men.....	1,583	1,596	241	231
Women.....	2,138	2,309	214	228

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.