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MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE: Philadelphia, Pa.

Technical information: (215) 597-3282 BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic

Media contact: (215) 861-5600 BLSMediaPhiladelphia@bls.gov

## Occupational Employment and Wages in Charleston – May 2015

Workers in the Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.00 in May 2015, 14 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.23, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly lower than their respective national averages in 18 of the 22 major occupational groups, including life, physical, and social science; computer and mathematical; and management.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, Charleston employment was more highly concentrated in 7 of the 22 occupational groups including office and administrative support and healthcare practitioners and technical. Conversely, 10 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation; these groups included production; education, training, and library; and food preparation and serving related. (See [table A](#) and box note at end of release.)

**Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and Charleston metropolitan area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015**

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Charleston	United States	Charleston	Percent difference <sup>(1)</sup>	
Total, all occupations .....	100%	100%	\$23.23	\$20.00	*	-14
Management .....	5.0	4.9	55.30	40.50	*	-27
Business and financial operations .....	5.1	4.1	35.48	27.50	*	-22
Computer and mathematical .....	2.9	1.6	41.43	28.29	*	-32
Architecture and engineering .....	1.8	1.5	39.89	32.63	*	-18
Life, physical, and social science .....	0.8	1.4	34.24	22.94	*	-33
Community and social service .....	1.4	1.5	22.19	18.37	*	-17
Legal .....	0.8	1.5	49.74	37.50	*	-25
Education, training, and library .....	6.2	4.4	25.48	22.79	*	-11
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media .....	1.3	1.0	27.39	21.07	*	-23
Healthcare practitioners and technical .....	5.8	8.6	37.40	32.27	*	-14
Healthcare support .....	2.9	2.8	14.19	12.74	*	-10
Protective service .....	2.4	3.2	21.45	16.34	*	-24
Food preparation and serving related .....	9.1	7.7	10.98	10.26	*	-7
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance .....	3.2	2.9	13.02	10.87	*	-17
Personal care and service .....	3.1	3.9	12.33	10.44	*	-15
Sales and related .....	10.5	9.7	18.90	15.39	*	-19
Office and administrative support .....	15.8	18.7	17.47	15.60	*	-11
Farming, fishing, and forestry .....	0.3	0.0	12.67	22.08	*	74
Construction and extraction .....	4.0	5.6	22.88	22.80		0

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and Charleston metropolitan area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015 - Continued**

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Charleston		United States	Charleston		Percent difference <sup>(1)</sup>
Installation, maintenance, and repair .....	3.9	5.2	*	22.11	19.78	*	-11
Production .....	6.6	3.6	*	17.41	18.98	*	9
Transportation and material moving.....	6.9	6.3	*	16.90	16.21		-4

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Charleston is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

\* 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.

One occupational group—construction and extraction—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Charleston had 6,520 jobs in the construction and extraction group, accounting for 5.6 percent of local area employment, significantly above the 4.0-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$22.80, not significantly different from the national average of \$22.88.

With employment of 940, construction laborers was the largest detailed occupation within the construction and extraction group, followed by operating engineers and other construction equipment operators (750). Among the higher-paying jobs were first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers with a mean hourly wage of \$30.99 and electricians with a wage of \$28.29. At the lower end of the wage scale were highway maintenance workers (\$12.77) and construction laborers (\$16.89). (Detailed occupational data for construction and extraction are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_16620.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_16620.htm).)

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 as it does nationally. In the Charleston area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the construction and extraction group. For instance, highway maintenance workers were employed at 3.4 times the national rate in Charleston, and continuous mining machine operators at 27.4 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, carpenters 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, WorkForce West Virginia.

## Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

With the issuance of data for May 2015, the OES program has incorporated redefined metropolitan area definitions as designated by the Office of Management and Budget. OES data are available for 394 metropolitan areas, 38 metropolitan divisions, and 167 OES-defined nonmetropolitan areas. A listing of the areas and their definitions can be found at [www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa\\_def.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa_def.htm).

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. The OES program produces employment and wage estimates for over 800 occupations for all industries combined in the nation; the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 432 metropolitan areas and divisions; 167 nonmetropolitan areas; and Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. National estimates are also available by industry for NAICS sectors, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industries, and by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at [www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm).

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year. May 2015 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, November 2013, May 2013, and November 2012. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 73.5 percent based on establishments and 69.6 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57.9 percent of total national employment. (Response rates are slightly lower for these estimates due to the federal shutdown in October 2013.) The sample in the Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,432 establishments with a response rate of 70 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 2015 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at [www.bls.gov/soc](http://www.bls.gov/soc) and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at [www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm).

### Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Boone, Clay, Kanawha, Lincoln, and Putnam Counties in West Virginia.

## **Additional information**

OES data are available on our regional web page at <https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic>. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at [www.bls.gov/oes/oes\\_ques.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm). Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at [www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods\\_statement.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf).

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.

**Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015**

Occupation <sup>(1)</sup>	Employment <sup>(2)</sup>		Mean wage	
	Level	Location quotient <sup>(3)</sup>	Hourly	Annual <sup>(4)</sup>
Construction and extraction occupations .....	6,520	1.4	\$22.80	\$47,430
First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers .....	710	1.6	30.99	64,460
Brickmasons and blockmasons.....	30	0.6	17.34	36,070
Carpenters.....	500	0.9	22.43	46,650
Cement masons and concrete finishers .....	30	0.2	19.05	39,610
Construction laborers .....	940	1.3	16.89	35,140
Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators .....	750	2.5	22.00	45,750
Electricians .....	600	1.2	28.29	58,830
Painters, construction and maintenance .....	130	0.7	21.91	45,580
Pipelayers.....	(5)	(5)	24.71	51,400
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters .....	360	1.1	23.79	49,490
Roofers.....	(5)	(5)	17.43	36,260
Sheet metal workers.....	30	0.3	24.60	51,170
Helpers--electricians.....	(5)	(5)	13.41	27,890
Helpers, construction trades, all other.....	40	2.6	13.81	28,720
Construction and building inspectors .....	70	0.9	21.72	45,170
Highway maintenance workers .....	410	3.4	12.77	26,560
Service unit operators, oil, gas, and mining .....	80	1.6	22.71	47,230
Earth drillers, except oil and gas .....	(5)	(5)	17.69	36,790
Continuous mining machine operators.....	260	27.4	28.03	58,310
Roustabouts, oil and gas.....	(5)	(5)	19.08	39,690

Footnotes:

- (1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area, see [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_16620.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_16620.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.