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Occupational Employment and Wages in Reading – May 2015

Workers in the Reading Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$21.04 in May 2015, 9 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 10 of the 22 major occupational groups, including arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; life, physical, and social science; and computer and mathematical.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, Reading employment shares were significantly higher in 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including production; transportation and material moving; and installation, maintenance, and repair. Conversely, 12 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation; these groups included management; computer and mathematical; and business and financial operations. (See [table A](#) and box note at end of release.)

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Reading		United States	Reading	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100%	100%		\$23.23	\$21.85	* -9
Management	5.0	3.4	*	55.30	55.69	1
Business and financial operations	5.1	3.7	*	35.48	31.67	* -11
Computer and mathematical	2.9	1.3	*	41.43	35.14	* -15
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.0		39.89	35.77	* -10
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.5	*	34.24	28.83	* -16
Community and social service	1.4	1.8	*	22.19	20.81	* -6
Legal	0.8	0.5	*	49.74	42.26	-15
Education, training, and library	6.2	6.4	*	25.48	25.45	0
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.7	*	27.39	21.82	* -20
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.8	5.9		37.40	32.76	* -12
Healthcare support	2.9	3.8	*	14.19	12.94	* -9
Protective service	2.4	1.4	*	21.45	21.72	1
Food preparation and serving related	9.1	8.5	*	10.98	10.56	* -4
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	3.3		13.02	13.34	2
Personal care and service	3.1	2.9		12.33	12.22	-1
Sales and related	10.5	9.4	*	18.90	17.85	* -6
Office and administrative support	15.8	15.2	*	17.47	17.08	-2
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1	*	12.67	13.63	* 8
Construction and extraction	4.0	3.3	*	22.88	23.23	2

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Reading		United States	Reading		Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.8	*	22.11	22.28		1
Production	6.6	12.3	*	17.41	18.69	*	7
Transportation and material moving	6.9	9.0	*	16.90	16.54		-2

Footnotes:

* 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 Reading is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Reading had 20,950 jobs in production, accounting for 12.3 percent of local area employment, nearly twice the 6.6-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$18.69, measurably above the national wage of \$17.41.

With employment of 2,090, helpers--production workers was the largest occupation within the production group, followed by first-line supervisors of production and operating workers (1,540). Among the higher-paying jobs were first-line supervisors of production and operating workers and printing press operators, with mean hourly wages of \$26.07 and \$22.02, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were bakers (\$12.07) and sewing machine operators (\$12.79). (Detailed occupational data for production are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_39740.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 Reading area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, metal and plastic multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders were employed at 3.7 times the national rate in Reading, and production worker helpers at 3.9 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, power plant operators had a location quotient of 1.0 in Reading, 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 Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry.

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.

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.

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 Reading, Pa. Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,957 establishments with a response rate of 76 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to 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 and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at 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 **Reading, Pa. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Berks County in Pennsylvania.

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. 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.

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, Reading Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment ⁽²⁾		Mean wage	
	Level	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production occupations	20,950	1.9	\$18.69	\$38,880
First-Line supervisors of production and operating workers	1,540	2.1	26.07	54,220
Engine and other machine assemblers	(5)	(5)	17.55	36,510
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	90	0.9	20.50	42,640
Team assemblers	1,040	0.8	15.11	31,430
Assemblers and fabricators, all other	(5)	(5)	13.63	28,340
Bakers	500	2.3	12.07	25,110
Butchers and meat cutters	(5)	(5)	14.31	29,760
Food batchmakers	320.0	1.9	14.26	29,660
Computer-controlled machine tool operators, metal and plastic	240	1.3	18.24	37,940
Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	230	2.6	20.24	42,100
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	310	1.3	20.29	42,190
Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	250.0	2.8	(5)	(5)
Lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	90	1.7	20.14	41,890
Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	80	3.2	18.79	39,080
Machinists	1,180	2.4	18.16	37,770
Metal-refining furnace operators and tenders	(5)	(5)	26.45	55,010
Pourers and casters, metal	90	7.5	16.29	33,880
Foundry mold and coremakers	70	4.6	16.29	33,880
Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	290	1.7	15.93	33,140
Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	480	3.7	20.43	42,500
Tool and die makers	100	1.1	22.32	46,420
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	1,040	2.2	20.73	43,110
Plating and coating machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	130	3.0	17.42	36,230
Metal workers and plastic workers, all other	100	3.7	19.47	40,500
Prepress technicians and workers	(5)	(5)	14.41	29,970
Printing press operators	520	2.5	22.02	45,800
Print binding and finishing workers	(5)	(5)	17.04	35,450
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	210	0.8	11.13	23,140
Pressers, textile, garment, and related materials	30	0.5	10.33	21,480
Sewing machine operators	510	2.9	12.79	26,610
Sewers, hand	30	3.7	13.55	28,190
Tailors, dressmakers, and custom sewers	(5)	(5)	13.23	27,510
Textile bleaching and dyeing machine operators and tenders	90.0	6.1	14.59	30,340
Textile cutting machine setters, operators, and tenders	70	3.8	15.18	31,570
Textile knitting and weaving machine setters, operators, and tenders	180	6.4	18.45	38,380
Textile winding, twisting, and drawing out machine setters, operators, and tenders	90	2.5	15.32	31,870
Extruding and forming machine setters, operators, and tenders, synthetic and glass fibers	(5)	(5)	18.07	37,590
Upholsterers	210	5.7	17.25	35,870
Cabinetmakers and bench carpenters	290	2.5	17.96	37,360
Sawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, wood	60	1.0	17.56	36,530
Woodworking machine setters, operators, and tenders, except sawing	120.0	1.3	15.93	33,140

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment ⁽²⁾		Mean wage	
	Level	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Power plant operators	50	1.0	36.50	75,910
Stationary engineers and boiler operators	80	2.0	24.95	51,890
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	230	1.6	24.12	50,170
Chemical equipment operators and tenders	350	4.2	18.25	37,970
Separating, filtering, clarifying, precipitating, and still machine setters, operators, and tenders.....	60	1.0	19.12	39,770
Crushing, grinding, and polishing machine setters, operators, and tenders	40	0.9	17.26	35,900
Grinding and polishing workers, hand	70	2.0	14.23	29,600
Mixing and blending machine setters, operators, and tenders	110	0.7	15.27	31,750
Cutting and slicing machine setters, operators, and tenders	140	1.8	17.58	36,570
Extruding, forming, pressing, and compacting machine setters, operators, and tenders.....	(5)	(5)	16.02	33,320
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers...	590	1.0	18.99	39,500
Dental laboratory technicians	(5)	(5)	18.10	37,650
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders .	400	0.9	14.59	30,350
Coating, painting, and spraying machine setters, operators, and tenders	240	2.2	17.51	36,420
Painters, transportation equipment	80	1.3	20.23	42,070
Photographic process workers and processing machine operators.....	50.0	1.7	11.59	24,100
Paper goods machine setters, operators, and tenders	120	1.0	17.59	36,580
Helpers--production workers	2,090	3.9	16.24	33,780
Production workers, all other.....	120	0.4	14.15	29,440

Footnotes:

- (1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Reading Metropolitan Statistical Area, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_39740.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.