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Occupational Employment and Wages in Charleston – May 2019

Workers in the Charleston, WV Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of $21.96 in May 2019, 15 percent below the nationwide average of $25.72, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that after testing for statistical significance, 19 of the 22 major occupational groups had average wages in the local area that were significantly lower than their respective national averages, including protective service, computer and mathematical, and business and financial operations. One group—production—had a significantly higher wage than its respective national average.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, Charleston area employment was more highly concentrated in 8 of the 22 occupational groups, including healthcare practitioners and technical, protective service, and legal. Eleven groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including production, food preparation and serving related, 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 the Charleston, WV Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2019

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Charleston		United States	Charleston		Percent difference [1]
Total, all occupations	100	100		$25.72	$21.96	*	-15
Management	5.5	5.3		58.88	43.78	*	-26
Business and financial operations	5.6	5.0	*	37.56	27.88	*	-26
Computer and mathematical	3.1	2.8	*	45.08	29.68	*	-34
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.5	*	42.69	34.91	*	-18
Life, physical, and social science	0.9	1.3	*	37.28	28.76	*	-23
Community and social service	1.5	1.7	*	24.27	20.16	*	-17
Legal	0.8	1.5	*	52.71	38.94	*	-26
Education instruction and library	6.1	4.4	*	27.75	21.19	*	-24
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.4	1.0	*	29.79	25.20	*	-15
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	8.8	*	40.21	36.70	*	-9
Healthcare support	4.4	4.9		14.91	12.44	*	-17
Protective service	2.4	4.0	*	23.98	15.30	*	-36
Food preparation and serving related	9.2	7.5	*	12.82	11.37	*	-11
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.0	2.8		15.03	12.19	*	-19
Personal care and service	2.2	1.6	*	15.03	12.23	*	-19
Sales and related	9.8	8.6	*	20.70	16.84	*	-19
Office and administrative support	13.3	17.0	*	19.73	17.47	*	-11
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1	*	15.07	14.63		-3
Construction and extraction	4.2	5.2	*	25.28	23.42	*	-7

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Charleston, WV Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2019 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Charleston		United States	Charleston		Percent difference [1]
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.6	*	24.10	21.08	*	-13
Production	6.2	3.3	*	19.30	21.04	*	9
Transportation and material moving	8.5	7.2	*	18.23	17.48		-4

Footnotes:
(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in the Charleston, WV Metropolitan Statistical Area is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.
* The mean hourly wage or percent share of employment 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 5,730 jobs in construction and extraction occupations, accounting for 5.2 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 4.2-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was $23.42, significantly lower than the national wage of $25.28.

Operation engineers and other construction equipment operators (1,050) and construction laborers (880) were some of the larger occupations within the construction and extraction group. Among the higher-paying jobs in this group were first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers ($30.62) and electricians ($25.53). At the lower end of the wage scale were construction laborers ($16.31) and highway maintenance workers ($16.43). (Detailed data for transportation and material moving occupations are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to 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 several of the occupations within the construction and extraction group. For instance, operating engineers and other construction equipment operators were employed at 3.5 times the national rate in Charleston, and mining roof bolters at 67.2 times the national rate. On the other hand, electricians had a location quotient of 1.0 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.

Changes to the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Data

With the May 2019 estimates, the OES program has begun implementing the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. Each set of OES estimates is calculated from six panels of survey data collected over three years. Because the May 2019 estimates are based on a combination of survey data collected using the 2010 SOC and survey data collected using the 2018 SOC, these estimates use a hybrid of the two classification systems that contains some combinations of occupations that are not found in either the 2010 or 2018 SOC. These combinations may include occupations from more than one 2018 SOC minor group or broad occupation. Therefore, OES will not publish data for some 2018 SOC minor groups and broad occupations in the May 2019 estimates. The May 2021 estimates, to be published in Spring 2022, will be the first OES estimates based entirely on survey data collected using the 2018 SOC.

In addition, the OES program has replaced some 2018 SOC detailed occupations with SOC broad occupations or OES-specific aggregations. These include home health aides and personal care aides, for which OES will publish only the 2018 SOC broad occupation 31-1120 Home Health and Personal Care Aides.

For more information on the occupational classification system used in the May 2019 OES estimates, please see www.bls.gov/oes/soc_2018.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm#qf10.

The May 2019 OES estimates use the metropolitan area definitions delineated in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin 17-01, which add a new Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) for Twin Falls, Idaho. For more information on the area definitions used in the May 2019 estimates, please see www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa_def.htm.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES data available from BLS include cross-industry occupational employment and wage estimates for the nation; over 580 areas, including states and the District of Columbia, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), nonmetropolitan areas, and territories; national industry-specific estimates at the NAICS sector, 3-digit, most 4-digit, and selected 5- and 6-digit industry levels, and national estimates by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

The OES survey is a cooperative effort between BLS and the State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). BLS funds the survey and provides the procedures and technical support, while the State Workforce Agencies collect most of the data. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.1 million establishments. Each year, two semiannual panels of approximately 180,000 to 200,000 sampled establishments are contacted, one panel in May and the other in November. Responses are obtained by mail, Internet or other electronic means, email, telephone, or personal visit. The May 2019 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2019, November 2018, May 2018, November 2017, May 2017, and November 2016. The unweighted sampled employment of 83 million across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57 percent of total national employment. The overall national response rate for the six panels, based on the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is 71 percent based on establishments and 68

percent based on weighted sampled employment. The sample in the Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,350 establishments with a response rate of 65 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_tec.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 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.

The May 2019 OES estimates are the first set of OES estimates to be based in part on survey data collected using the 2018 SOC. These estimates use a hybrid of the 2010 and 2018 SOC systems. More information on the hybrid classification system is available at www.bls.gov/oes/soc_2018.htm.

The May 2019 OES estimates are based on the 2017 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). More information about the 2017 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 **Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Boone, Clay, and Kanawha Counties in West Virginia.

Additional information

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 at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_doc.htm.

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 2019

Occupation [1]	Employment [2]		Mean wage	
	Level	Location quotient [3]	Hourly	Annual [4]
Construction and extraction occupations	5,730	1.2	$23.42	$48,700
First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers	680	1.4	30.62	63,690
Carpenters	360	0.7	21.59	44,910
Cement masons and concrete finishers	[5]	[5]	19.64	40,850
Construction laborers	880	1.2	16.31	33,930
Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators	1,050	3.5	21.81	45,360
Electricians	520	1.0	25.53	53,110
Painters, construction and maintenance	110	0.6	18.33	38,130
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	240	0.7	25.30	52,630
Roofers	[5]	[5]	22.85	47,530
Sheet metal workers	[5]	[5]	19.01	39,550
Helpers--carpenters	30	1.2	17.92	37,280
Helpers--electricians	40	0.7	17.03	35,430
Helpers--pipelayers, plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	70	1.6	16.82	34,990
Construction and building inspectors	90	1.1	24.40	50,760
Elevator and escalator installers and repairers	100	4.6	33.80	70,300
Highway maintenance workers	160	1.4	16.43	34,180
Rotary drill operators, oil and gas	100	6.2	21.83	45,400
Service unit operators, oil, gas, and mining	50	1.2	24.72	51,410
Excavating and loading machine and dragline operators, surface mining	160	4.7	30.06	62,520
Continuous mining machine operators	130	11.4	29.95	62,290
Roof bolters, mining	160	67.2	29.43	61,210
Loading and moving machine operators, underground mining	[5]	[5]	27.96	58,150
Roustabouts, oil and gas	60	1.3	23.91	49,740
Earth drillers, except oil and gas; and explosives workers, ordnance handling experts, and blasters	60	3.4	20.45	42,530

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.
(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.