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Occupational Employment and Wages in Fargo — May 2016

Workers in the Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$21.93 in May 2016, about 8 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.86, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 10 of the 22 major occupational groups, including legal; computer and mathematical; and arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media. Three groups had significantly higher wages than their respective national averages.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 3 of the 22 occupational groups: construction and extraction; personal care and service; and healthcare practitioners and technical. Conversely, five groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including production; protective service; and legal. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2016

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Fargo	United States	Fargo	Percent difference (1)
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0	\$23.86	\$21.93*	-8
Management	5.1	4.8	56.74	49.32*	-13
Business and financial operations	5.2	5.2	36.09	29.06*	-19
Computer and mathematical	3.0	3.3	42.25	32.03*	-24
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.6	40.53	32.69*	-19
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.7*	35.06	28.71*	-18
Community and social service.....	1.4	1.4	22.69	21.94	-3
Legal.....	0.8	0.5*	50.95	36.21*	-29
Education, training, and library.....	6.2	5.0	26.21	25.29	-4
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.4	1.4	28.07	18.83*	-33
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	6.6*	38.06	34.95*	-8
Healthcare support	2.9	2.7	14.65	15.19	4
Protective service	2.4	1.3*	22.03	20.86	-5
Food preparation and serving related	9.2	8.8	11.47	11.30	-1
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance ...	3.2	3.4	13.47	13.57	1
Personal care and service.....	3.2	4.7*	12.74	13.26	4
Sales and related	10.4	10.5	19.50	19.11	-2
Office and administrative support.....	15.7	15.8	17.91	17.04*	-5
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.2*	13.37	17.51*	31
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	5.7*	23.51	22.40*	-5
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.0	22.45	23.56*	5
Production	6.5	5.1*	17.88	17.87	0
Transportation and material moving.....	6.9	7.3	17.34	18.25*	5

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in the Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area 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. Fargo had 7,840 jobs in construction and extraction, accounting for 5.7 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 4.0-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$22.40, significantly below the national wage of \$23.51.

Some of the largest detailed occupations within the construction and extraction group included construction laborers (1,390), electricians (1,070), and carpenters (830). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers with mean hourly wages of \$30.75 and brickmasons and blockmasons, \$27.70. At the lower end of the wage scale were carpet installers (\$16.59) and construction laborers (\$17.52). (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/2016/may/oes_22020.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 than it does nationally. In the Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the construction and extraction group. For instance, cement masons and concrete finishers were employed at 2.3 times the national rate in Fargo, and operating engineers and other construction equipment operators, at 1.9 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, painters, construction and maintenance had a location quotient of 1.0 in Fargo, 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 Job Service North Dakota and the Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development.

Note

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 data available from BLS include cross-industry occupational employment and wage estimates for the nation; over 650 areas, including states and the District of Columbia, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), metropolitan divisions, nonmetropolitan areas, and territories; national industry-specific estimates at the NAICS sector, 3-, 4-, 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.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Each year, two semiannual panels of approximately 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 2016 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2016, November 2015, May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, and November 2013. The overall national response rate for the six panels, based on the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is 73 percent based on establishments and 69 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 58 percent of total national employment. The sample in the Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,000 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 2016 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 **Fargo, N.D. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Cass County of North Dakota and Clay County of Minnesota.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/midwest. 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, Fargo Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2016

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Construction and extraction occupations	7,840	1.4	\$22.40	\$46,590
First-line supervisors of construction trades and extraction workers	760	1.5	30.75	63,960
Brickmasons and blockmasons	110	1.7	27.70	57,620
Carpenters	830	1.3	18.77	39,040
Carpet installers	(5)	(5)	16.59	34,510
Floor layers, except carpet, wood, and hard tiles	(5)	(5)	18.25	37,960
Cement masons and concrete finishers	390	2.3	20.78	43,230
Construction laborers	1,390	1.6	17.52	36,440
Paving, surfacing, and tamping equipment operators	130	2.6	21.11	43,900
Operating engineers and other construction equipment operators	650	1.9	24.14	50,220
Drywall and ceiling tile installers	(5)	(5)	20.04	41,690
Electricians	1,070	1.8	27.58	57,360
Glaziers	100	2.2	26.47	55,070
Insulation workers, floor, ceiling, and wall	120	4.1	21.69	45,110
Insulation workers, mechanical	170	6.5	19.14	39,800
Painters, construction and maintenance	210	1.0	19.78	41,140
Pipelayers	70	1.9	19.20	39,930
Plumbers, pipefitters, and steamfitters	630	1.6	23.34	48,550
Roofers	120	1.0	19.38	40,310
Sheet metal workers	140	1.1	23.12	48,080
Structural iron and steel workers	100	1.5	22.29	46,360
Helpers--brickmasons, blockmasons, stonemasons, and tile and marble setters	(5)	(5)	18.96	39,440
Helpers, construction trades, all other	(5)	(5)	10.33	21,490
Highway maintenance workers	170	1.2	20.87	43,410
Construction and related workers, all other	40	1.2	16.65	34,630

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Fargo, ND-MN, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_22020.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.