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MIDWEST INFORMATION OFFICE: Chicago, Ill.

Technical information: (312) 353-1880 BLSInfoChicago@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/midwest

Media contact: (312) 353-1138

Occupational Employment and Wages in Grand Rapids-Wyoming — May 2016

Workers in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.97 in May 2016, about 12 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 were lower than their respective national averages in 17 of the 22 major occupational groups, including legal; arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; and computer and mathematical. Five occupational groups had wages not significantly different from their respective national averages, including personal care and service, healthcare support, and community and social service.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 4 of the 22 occupational groups, including production, transportation and material moving, and architecture and engineering. Conversely, 13 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including office and administrative support, food preparation and serving related, and computer and mathematical. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Grand Rapids	United States	Grand Rapids	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0	\$23.86	\$20.97*	-12
Management	5.1	4.5*	56.74	51.81*	-9
Business and financial operations	5.2	4.0*	36.09	29.90*	-17
Computer and mathematical	3.0	1.7*	42.25	32.00*	-24
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.4*	40.53	33.71*	-17
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.3*	35.06	29.97*	-15
Community and social service	1.4	1.5	22.69	22.49	-1
Legal	0.8	0.4*	50.95	37.69*	-26
Education, training, and library	6.2	5.1*	26.21	23.77*	-9
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.4	1.7*	28.07	17.55*	-37
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	5.8	38.06	35.44*	-7
Healthcare support	2.9	2.9	14.65	14.61	0
Protective service	2.4	1.3*	22.03	19.73	-10
Food preparation and serving related	9.2	7.9*	11.47	10.86*	-5
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	3.3	13.47	12.73*	-5
Personal care and service	3.2	2.6*	12.74	12.54	-2
Sales and related	10.4	9.4*	19.50	20.04	3
Office and administrative support	15.7	14.0*	17.91	17.52*	-2
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1*	13.37	12.36*	-8
Construction and extraction	4.0	3.0*	23.51	21.45*	-9
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	3.9	22.45	21.14*	-6

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Grand Rapids	United States	Grand Rapids	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Production	6.5	14.8*	17.88	16.29*	-9
Transportation and material moving	6.9	9.4*	17.34	14.89*	-14

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming 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—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Grand Rapids-Wyoming had 81,820 jobs in production, accounting for 14.8 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.5-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$16.29, significantly below the national wage of \$17.88.

Some of the largest detailed occupations within the production group included team assemblers (17,210); inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers (5,120); and helpers--production workers (4,560). Among the higher paying jobs were gas plant operators with mean hourly wages of \$34.26 and power plant operators, \$31.08. At the lower end of the wage scale were pressers, textile, garment, and related materials (\$10.77) and tailors, dressmakers, and custom sewers (\$11.00). (Detailed occupational data for production are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/2016/may/oes_24340.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 Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, tool and die makers were employed at 8.5 times the national rate in Grand Rapids, and molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic, at 5.1 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, laundry and dry-cleaning workers had a location quotient of 1.0 in Grand Rapids, 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 Michigan Department of Technology, Management & Budget.

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 Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area included 3,868 establishments with a response rate of 75 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 **Grand Rapids-Wyoming, Mich. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Barry, Ionia, Kent, and Newaygo Counties.

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, Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2016

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production occupations	81,820	2.3	\$16.29	\$33,880
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	4,280	1.8	28.75	59,790
Coil winders, tapers, and finishers	70	1.2	14.77	30,730
Electrical and electronic equipment assemblers	(5)	(5)	14.20	29,540
Electromechanical equipment assemblers	80	0.5	18.40	38,260
Engine and other machine assemblers	(5)	(5)	21.87	45,480
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	300	1.0	18.75	39,000
Fiberglass laminators and fabricators	60	0.8	15.88	33,020
Team assemblers	17,210	3.9	14.28	29,710
Assemblers and fabricators, all other	1,240	1.4	14.53	30,220
Bakers	590	0.8	11.56	24,050
Butchers and meat cutters	410	0.8	13.73	28,560
Meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers	360	0.6	12.06	25,090
Slaughterers and meat packers	100	0.3	13.34	27,750
Food and tobacco roasting, baking, and drying machine operators and tenders	(5)	(5)	14.45	30,050
Food batchmakers	1,660	2.8	15.65	32,540
Food cooking machine operators and tenders	160	1.1	13.93	28,970
Food processing workers, all other	70	0.4	13.22	27,490
Computer-controlled machine tool operators, metal and plastic	2,190	3.8	18.25	37,970
Computer numerically controlled machine tool programmers, metal and plastic	460	4.7	21.89	45,530
Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	420	1.5	16.38	34,080
Forging machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	(5)	(5)	16.70	34,740
Rolling machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	340	3.0	16.36	34,030
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	3,240	4.3	15.19	31,600
Drilling and boring machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	180	3.7	21.23	44,170
Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	320	1.1	18.35	38,160
Lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	200	1.5	18.06	37,560
Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	210	3.1	19.28	40,110
Machinists	3,340	2.2	20.05	41,710
Metal-refining furnace operators and tenders	(5)	(5)	16.81	34,950
Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	2,940	5.1	14.48	30,120
Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	1,550	3.4	13.58	28,240
Tool and die makers	2,410	8.5	23.89	49,690
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	1,940	1.3	17.59	36,590
Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders	630	3.4	17.81	37,040
Heat treating equipment setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	60	0.8	17.43	36,250
Plating and coating machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	540	3.9	13.26	27,590
Tool grinders, filers, and sharpeners	100	2.7	17.52	36,440
Metal workers and plastic workers, all other	110	1.2	13.69	28,470
Prepress technicians and workers	260	1.9	16.78	34,890
Printing press operators	840	1.3	16.61	34,550
Print binding and finishing workers	350	1.7	14.21	29,550

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2016 - Continued

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	780	1.0	12.45	25,900
Pressers, textile, garment, and related materials	(5)	(5)	10.77	22,390
Sewing machine operators	420	0.8	13.40	27,870
Tailors, dressmakers, and custom sewers	(5)	(5)	11.00	22,880
Upholsterers	130	1.0	13.69	28,480
Cabinetmakers and bench carpenters	670	1.8	17.92	37,280
Furniture finishers	320	4.7	15.99	33,260
Sawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, wood	180	0.9	14.34	29,820
Woodworking machine setters, operators, and tenders, except sawing	990	3.3	13.18	27,420
Power plant operators	170	1.2	31.08	64,650
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	200	0.4	23.07	47,980
Chemical plant and system operators	70	0.5	27.33	56,840
Gas plant operators	70	1.0	34.26	71,270
Plant and system operators, all other	90	2.0	19.43	40,410
Chemical equipment operators and tenders	100	0.3	23.16	48,170
Separating, filtering, clarifying, precipitating, and still machine setters, operators, and tenders	330	1.8	17.70	36,810
Crushing, grinding, and polishing machine setters, operators, and tenders	80	0.7	14.32	29,790
Grinding and polishing workers, hand	310	3.0	14.39	29,920
Mixing and blending machine setters, operators, and tenders	750	1.5	16.94	35,240
Cutters and trimmers, hand	80	1.5	(5)	(5)
Cutting and slicing machine setters, operators, and tenders	520	2.2	15.82	32,900
Extruding, forming, pressing, and compacting machine setters, operators, and tenders	420	1.5	14.51	30,180
Furnace, kiln, oven, drier, and kettle operators and tenders	80	1.0	18.70	38,900
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	5,120	2.5	14.90	30,990
Jewelers and precious stone and metal workers	120	1.1	21.96	45,680
Dental laboratory technicians	50	0.3	21.12	43,930
Ophthalmic laboratory technicians	(5)	(5)	15.06	31,320
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	(5)	(5)	13.33	27,730
Coating, painting, and spraying machine setters, operators, and tenders	(5)	(5)	14.36	29,870
Painters, transportation equipment	130	0.6	18.97	39,450
Painting, coating, and decorating workers	210	3.5	17.88	37,190
Photographic process workers and processing machine operators	(5)	(5)	16.16	33,620
Adhesive bonding machine operators and tenders	50	0.8	16.97	35,300
Cleaning, washing, and metal pickling equipment operators and tenders	360	5.1	15.42	32,080
Cooling and freezing equipment operators and tenders	50	1.6	15.54	32,330
Etchers and engravers	(5)	(5)	17.21	35,790
Molders, shapers, and casters, except metal and plastic	190	1.2	12.69	26,400
Paper goods machine setters, operators, and tenders	540	1.5	17.78	36,990
Helpers--production workers	4,560	2.7	12.34	25,660
Production workers, all other	2,170	2.2	(5)	(5)

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_24340.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.

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

(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.