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County Employment and Wages in Nebraska — Fourth Quarter 2017

The two largest counties in Nebraska had employment gains from December 2016 to December 2017, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2016 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that employment rose 1.5 percent in Lancaster County and 0.7 percent in Douglas County. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, employment advanced 1.5 percent from December 2016 to December 2017 with 316 of the 346 largest U.S. counties registering increases. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 11.5 percent over the year. Shawnee, Kan., and Caddo, La., had the largest over-the-year percentage decreases in employment among the largest counties in the U.S., with losses of 1.8 percent each.

Among the two largest counties in Nebraska, employment was higher in Douglas (342,700) in December 2017. Lancaster County had an employment level of 170,300. Collectively, Nebraska's two large counties accounted for 52.3 percent of the state's employment. Nationwide, the 346 largest counties made up 73.0 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Douglas County was \$1,011 in the fourth quarter of 2017, an increase of 3.0 percent from the fourth quarter of 2016. (See [table 1.](#)) Average weekly wages in Lancaster were \$882, up 2.9 percent over the year. Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 3.9 percent over the year, increasing to \$1,109 in the fourth quarter of 2017.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 91 counties in Nebraska with employment levels below 75,000. Two of these smaller counties had average weekly wages above the national average. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in Douglas County increased 3.0 percent, ranking it 171st among the nation's 346 largest counties. Lancaster County's average wages rose 2.9 percent over the year and ranked 180th nationwide. (See [table 1.](#))

Among the 346 largest counties in the U.S., 339 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2017. San Mateo, Calif., and Ada, Idaho, had the largest percentage increases in average weekly wages among the largest U.S. counties (11.5 percent each). Seven of the 346 largest counties experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages with a decline of 6.7 percent.

Large county average weekly wages

Douglas County's \$1,011 average weekly wage placed near the middle of the national ranking at 162nd in the fourth quarter of 2017. Lancaster County's average weekly wage of \$882 ranked 289th among the nation's largest counties.

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average of \$1,109 in 95 of the 346 largest counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,576, followed by New York, N.Y. (\$2,439), and San Mateo, Calif. (\$2,341). Among the largest U.S. counties, more than two-thirds (251) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2017. The lowest weekly wages were in the Texas counties of Cameron (\$652) and Hidalgo (\$664), followed by Horry, S.C. (\$674).

Average weekly wages in Nebraska's smaller counties

Among the counties with employment below 75,000, Stanton (\$1,130) and Cheyenne (\$1,125) had average weekly wages above the national average of \$1,109. Loup County had the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging \$460 in the fourth quarter of 2017. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 93 counties in Nebraska were considered, 8 had average weekly wages less than \$600, 24 had wages from \$600 to \$699, 41 had wages from \$700 to \$799, and 20 had wages of \$800 or more. (See [chart 1](#).)

Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the [Technical Note](#) or visit www.bls.gov/cew.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2016 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2017 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2016* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2016/home.htm. The 2017 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2018.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2018 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 22, 2018.

QCEW Publication Acceleration and Conversion to Two Data Releases

The national QCEW publication process has accelerated for a more timely release. Beginning with the national fourth quarter 2017 release, QCEW data are now published in two parts. The current County Employment and Wages news release and associated data have been accelerated and published first. The full QCEW data release, with smaller county data contained in this release, occurs two weeks later.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The 10.0 million employer reports cover 145.9 million full- and part-time workers. The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

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. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 2 largest counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2017

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2016-17 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2016-17 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	145,921.1	1.5	--	\$1,109	--	3.9	--
Nebraska	980.9	0.9	--	901	39	3.0	28
Douglas, Neb.....	342.7	0.7	240	1,011	162	3.0	171
Lancaster, Neb.	170.3	1.5	135	882	289	2.9	180

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2017

Area	Employment December 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	145,921,109	\$1,109
Nebraska	980,919	901
Adams	15,188	784
Antelope	2,155	757
Arthur	86	539
Banner	118	714
Blaine	130	687
Boone	2,327	737
Box Butte	3,779	739
Boyd	574	592
Brown	1,201	683
Buffalo	27,464	777
Burt	1,775	733
Butler	2,548	754
Cass	5,737	756
Cedar	2,667	728
Chase	1,858	737
Cherry	2,297	620
Cheyenne	4,909	1,125
Clay	2,353	847
Colfax	5,254	833
Cuming	3,718	805
Custer	4,608	755
Dakota	13,139	879
Dawes	3,290	620
Dawson	11,392	774
Deuel	564	616
Dixon	1,707	678
Dodge	17,569	771
Douglas	342,700	1,011
Dundy	579	739
Fillmore	2,138	802
Franklin	732	760
Frontier	846	687
Furnas	2,031	719
Gage	9,153	731
Garden	555	707
Garfield	800	642
Gosper	353	771
Grant	302	671
Greeley	632	628
Hall	34,867	780
Hamilton	3,728	878
Harlan	833	639
Hayes	201	622
Hitchcock	648	691
Holt	4,474	727
Hooker	282	472
Howard	1,608	696
Jefferson	3,369	691
Johnson	1,530	755
Kearney	2,218	740
Keith	3,249	654
Keya Paha	135	576
Kimball	1,416	730
Knox	2,867	658

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2017 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2017	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
Lancaster.....	170,316	882
Lincoln.....	14,675	765
Logan.....	193	594
Loup.....	136	460
Madison.....	21,855	805
McPherson.....	75	584
Merrick.....	2,293	790
Morrill.....	1,561	724
Nance.....	1,093	714
Nemaha.....	3,153	966
Nuckolls.....	1,470	663
Otoe.....	6,064	767
Pawnee.....	789	728
Perkins.....	1,151	854
Phelps.....	4,731	892
Pierce.....	1,962	746
Platte.....	18,892	861
Polk.....	1,461	720
Red Willow.....	5,057	714
Richardson.....	2,452	665
Rock.....	494	669
Saline.....	7,247	828
Sarpy.....	71,367	904
Saunders.....	5,315	753
Scotts Bluff.....	16,715	776
Seward.....	6,009	832
Sheridan.....	1,771	589
Sherman.....	795	603
Sioux.....	159	681
Stanton.....	1,345	1,130
Thayer.....	2,439	765
Thomas.....	275	750
Thurston.....	3,053	864
Valley.....	1,811	678
Washington.....	7,983	997
Wayne.....	4,255	709
Webster.....	1,063	609
Wheeler.....	318	709
York.....	7,486	782

Footnotes

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2017

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2016-17	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2016-17	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	145,921.1	1.5	\$1,109	--	3.9	--
Alabama	1,955.3	1.1	928	36	2.9	32
Alaska	306.7	-1.2	1,052	19	1.5	51
Arizona	2,834.7	2.6	978	25	3.5	12
Arkansas	1,217.2	1.0	848	48	2.5	42
California	17,293.0	2.1	1,346	4	5.7	4
Colorado	2,653.3	2.5	1,133	10	4.3	9
Connecticut	1,689.7	0.3	1,317	5	2.2	46
Delaware	444.9	0.6	1,081	15	2.6	40
District of Columbia	769.0	0.9	1,812	1	2.7	37
Florida	8,712.0	2.0	975	26	3.4	16
Georgia.....	4,425.0	1.8	1,027	20	3.4	16
Hawaii.....	664.5	0.8	984	24	3.1	26
Idaho	712.4	3.0	857	46	7.1	1
Illinois	6,001.1	0.8	1,151	9	2.6	40
Indiana.....	3,057.8	1.1	915	38	3.6	11
Iowa	1,549.7	0.4	938	32	3.0	28
Kansas	1,390.3	0.4	894	41	1.9	49
Kentucky.....	1,903.8	0.5	892	42	2.1	47
Louisiana	1,918.8	0.4	933	35	2.1	47
Maine.....	610.3	1.2	884	43	3.4	16
Maryland.....	2,683.6	0.5	1,207	8	3.3	22
Massachusetts	3,582.2	1.3	1,411	3	4.4	8
Michigan	4,321.8	0.9	1,062	17	3.4	16
Minnesota.....	2,875.7	1.3	1,100	14	3.4	16
Mississippi.....	1,140.6	0.5	774	51	2.4	45
Missouri	2,809.5	1.0	945	31	2.9	32
Montana	461.4	1.0	843	50	2.7	37
Nebraska	980.9	0.9	901	39	3.0	28
Nevada	1,351.9	3.5	955	29	3.2	25
New Hampshire.....	661.3	0.7	1,132	11	3.7	10
New Jersey.....	4,106.9	1.6	1,262	6	1.8	50
New Mexico	816.7	0.6	865	45	2.5	42
New York	9,465.3	1.4	1,428	2	6.4	2
North Carolina	4,388.6	1.5	964	28	3.3	22
North Dakota	416.1	0.4	1,010	22	3.3	22
Ohio	5,409.2	0.8	973	27	3.1	26
Oklahoma	1,607.8	1.2	895	40	3.5	12
Oregon	1,900.4	2.0	1,014	21	4.5	7
Pennsylvania	5,870.4	1.2	1,075	16	3.5	12
Rhode Island	483.6	1.1	1,056	18	2.7	37
South Carolina.....	2,058.8	1.6	879	44	2.8	35
South Dakota.....	423.8	0.9	856	47	3.4	16
Tennessee	2,984.8	1.3	1,000	23	3.0	28
Texas	12,207.8	2.0	1,109	13	3.5	12
Utah	1,465.5	3.6	936	33	2.9	32
Vermont.....	314.7	0.5	919	37	2.5	42
Virginia.....	3,884.2	1.3	1,121	12	2.8	35
Washington.....	3,305.0	2.4	1,217	7	5.8	3
West Virginia	693.1	0.1	847	49	4.7	5
Wisconsin	2,872.6	1.0	951	30	3.0	28
Wyoming	267.5	0.6	935	34	4.6	6
Puerto Rico.....	887.0	-4.4	570	(3)	2.5	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	34.3	-11.1	827	(3)	7.7	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

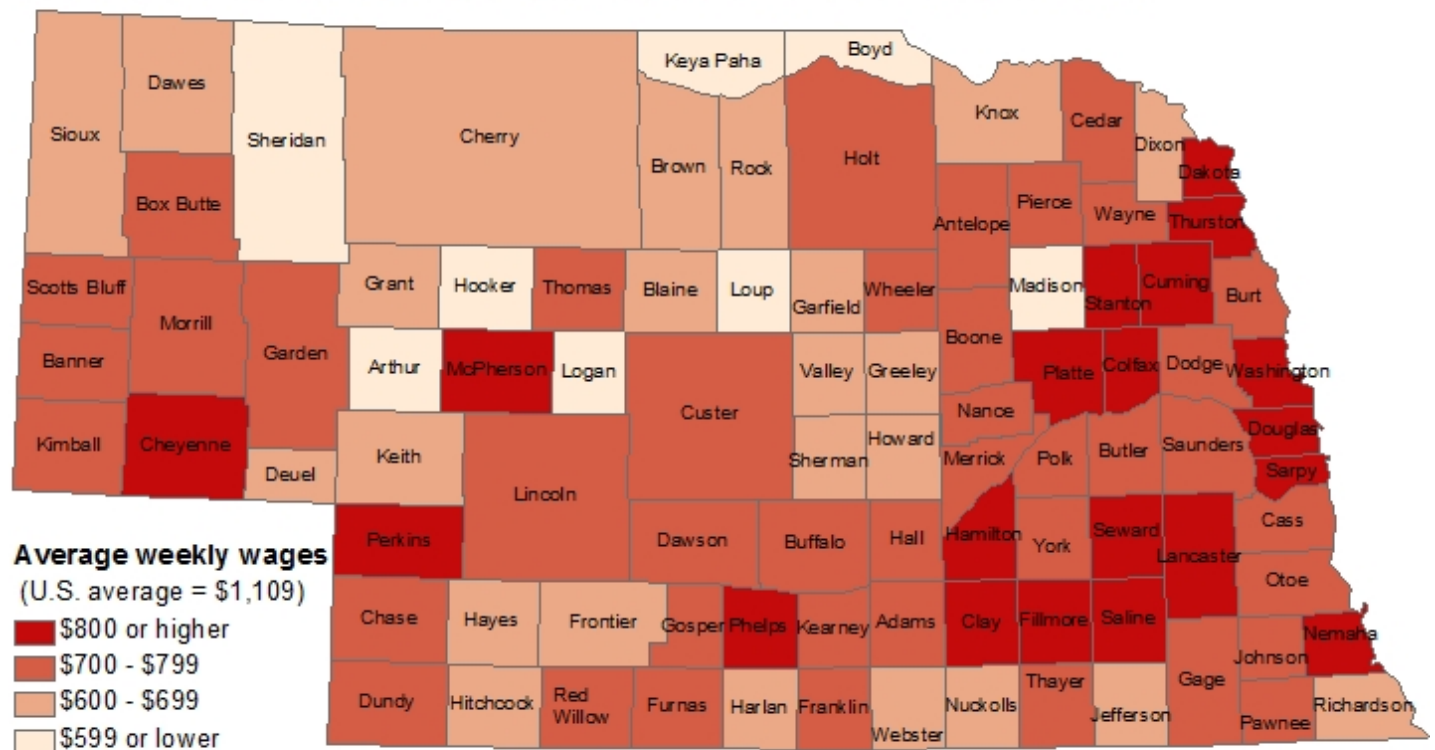
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2017



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.