

# NEWS RELEASE

## BUREAU OF LABOR

### U. S. DEPARTMENT OF

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### **County Employment and Wages in Nebraska — Fourth Quarter 2019**

Employment rose in Nebraska's two large counties from December 2018 to December 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2018.) Acting Regional Commissioner Julie Wilson noted that employment increased 0.8 percent over the year in Douglas County and 0.5 percent in Lancaster County. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, employment increased 1.2 percent over the year with 285 of the 355 largest U.S. counties reporting increases. Cleveland, OK, had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 5.8 percent over the year. Ector, TX, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 4.2 percent.

Among the two largest counties in Nebraska, employment was highest in Douglas County (346,300) in December 2019. Lancaster County had an employment level of 174,100. Together, the two largest Nebraska counties accounted for 52.5 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 355 largest counties made up 73.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

The two large Nebraska counties reported average weekly wage gains from the fourth quarter of 2018 to the fourth quarter of 2019, with the faster rate of increase in Douglas County, up 5.2 percent. In Lancaster County, average weekly wages rose 5.0 percent. Douglas County had an average weekly wage of \$1,091. The average weekly wage in Lancaster County was \$948. Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 3.5 percent from a year ago to \$1,185 in the fourth quarter of 2019.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 91 counties in Nebraska with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in all of these smaller counties were below the national average in December 2019, with one exception, Stanton (\$1,244). (See [table 2.](#))

### **Large county wage changes**

The 5.2-percent annual average weekly wage gain in Douglas County ranked 33<sup>rd</sup> among the nation's 355 largest counties in the fourth quarter of 2019. The 5.0-percent wage gain in Lancaster County ranked 45<sup>th</sup>.

Nationally, 341 of the 355 largest counties had over-the-year wage increases. Santa Cruz, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (20.7 percent). The remaining 14 large counties had wage declines during the period. Linn, IA, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-7.1 percent).

### **Large county average weekly wages**

Weekly wages in the state's two large counties were below the national average of \$1,185 in the fourth quarter of 2019. Average weekly wages in Douglas County (\$1,091) and Lancaster County (\$948) ranked 160<sup>th</sup> and 285<sup>th</sup>, respectively.

Nationally, 93 large counties reported average weekly wages at or above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2019. Santa Clara, CA, had the highest average weekly wage at \$2,825. Average weekly wages were below the national average in 262 counties. At \$701 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

### **Average weekly wages in Nebraska's smaller counties**

All 91 smaller counties in Nebraska—those with employment below 75,000—reported average weekly wages below the national average of \$1,185, with the exception of Stanton (\$1,244). Other smaller counties with average wages above \$1,000 included Nemaha (\$1,038), Washington (\$1,025), Dakota (\$1,006), and Boyd (\$1,003). Loup County reported the lowest average wage in the state at \$478 per week, followed by Hooker County at \$496 per week.

When all 93 counties in Nebraska were considered, 4 reported average weekly wages of less than \$600, 15 registered wages from \$600 to \$699, 32 had wages from \$700 to \$799, 28 had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 14 had average weekly wages of \$900 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](http://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 2018 edition of this publication, which was published in September 2019, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2019 version of this news release. Tables and additional content from the 2018 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at [www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2018/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2018/home.htm). The 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2020.

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**The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 19, 2020. The County Employment and Wages full data update for first quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 2, 2020.**

## 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 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. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/cew/](http://www.bls.gov/cew/). However, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

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 2019**

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	December 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2018-19 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level <sup>(3)</sup>	Percent change, fourth quarter 2018-19 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>
United States <sup>(4)</sup> .....	149,857.1	1.2	--	\$1,185	--	3.5	--
Nebraska .....	990.9	0.7	--	969	38	4.2	6
Douglas .....	346.3	0.8	199	1,091	160	5.2	33
Lancaster.....	174.1	0.5	231	948	285	5.0	45

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. 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 2019**

Area	Employment December 2019	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2) .....	149,857,130	\$1,185
Nebraska .....	990,927	969
Adams .....	15,233	846
Antelope .....	2,354	784
Arthur .....	93	516
Banner .....	114	775
Blaine .....	121	759
Boone .....	2,399	840
Box Butte .....	3,734	762
Boyd .....	610	1,003
Brown .....	1,257	746
Buffalo .....	27,184	819
Burt .....	1,751	747
Butler .....	2,593	841
Cass .....	5,716	797
Cedar .....	2,662	777
Chase .....	1,846	808
Cherry .....	2,148	654
Cheyenne .....	4,155	782
Clay .....	2,315	923
Colfax .....	5,102	938
Cuming .....	3,790	873
Custer .....	4,459	812
Dakota .....	12,546	1,006
Dawes .....	3,046	688
Dawson .....	11,535	855
Deuel .....	525	690
Dixon .....	1,764	803
Dodge .....	17,768	852
Douglas .....	346,262	1,091
Dundy .....	569	832
Fillmore .....	2,222	883
Franklin .....	730	750
Frontier .....	853	697
Furnas .....	1,874	800
Gage .....	8,984	776
Garden .....	470	704
Garfield .....	807	692
Gosper .....	376	791
Grant .....	267	713
Greeley .....	603	692
Hall .....	34,672	837
Hamilton .....	3,571	917
Harlan .....	814	709
Hayes .....	216	647
Hitchcock .....	652	766
Holt .....	4,442	786
Hooker .....	305	496
Howard .....	1,559	737
Jefferson .....	3,346	755
Johnson .....	1,489	831
Kearney .....	2,236	776
Keith .....	3,231	720
Keya Paha .....	136	580
Kimball .....	1,406	774
Knox .....	2,918	725

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2019 - Continued**

Area	Employment December 2019	Average weekly wage(1)
Lancaster.....	174,108	948
Lincoln.....	14,292	811
Logan.....	196	631
Loup.....	123	478
Madison.....	22,262	857
McPherson.....	77	651
Merrick.....	2,241	873
Morrill.....	1,525	810
Nance.....	1,008	725
Nemaha.....	3,110	1,038
Nuckolls.....	1,427	697
Otoe.....	6,214	807
Pawnee.....	767	749
Perkins.....	1,157	907
Phelps.....	4,741	917
Pierce.....	1,900	803
Platte.....	19,277	916
Polk.....	1,478	778
Red Willow.....	4,980	771
Richardson.....	2,479	710
Rock.....	464	695
Saline.....	7,015	865
Sarpy.....	74,314	971
Saunders.....	5,511	818
Scotts Bluff.....	16,227	817
Seward.....	6,015	871
Sheridan.....	1,669	714
Sherman.....	748	633
Sioux.....	156	717
Stanton.....	1,333	1,244
Thayer.....	2,281	827
Thomas.....	252	625
Thurston.....	3,005	881
Valley.....	1,858	731
Washington.....	7,724	1,025
Wayne.....	4,448	697
Webster.....	1,044	691
Wheeler.....	319	750
York.....	7,418	860

**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 2019**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	December 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2018-19	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2018-19	National ranking by percent change
United States <sup>(2)</sup>	149,857.1	1.2	\$1,185	--	3.5	--
Alabama	2,007.9	1.0	985	36	2.6	39
Alaska	309.9	0.6	1,139	16	3.2	27
Arizona	2,999.8	2.7	1,059	23	4.1	7
Arkansas	1,232.9	0.5	898	50	3.2	27
California	17,836.3	1.5	1,457	4	4.7	4
Colorado	2,772.6	2.2	1,227	9	4.0	8
Connecticut	1,687.4	-0.7	1,383	5	3.8	11
Delaware	455.3	0.8	1,136	17	2.6	39
District of Columbia	782.5	0.8	1,992	1	2.5	42
Florida	9,085.5	2.0	1,044	26	3.6	14
Georgia	4,576.1	1.7	1,090	21	3.6	14
Hawaii	665.1	-0.8	1,053	24	3.5	17
Idaho	756.9	3.1	918	46	3.1	32
Illinois	6,043.5	0.2	1,221	10	2.7	38
Indiana	3,106.0	0.6	969	38	3.0	34
Iowa	1,560.4	0.1	984	37	1.9	47
Kansas	1,410.7	0.6	959	40	3.5	17
Kentucky	1,928.3	0.8	955	41	3.2	27
Louisiana	1,927.7	-0.5	993	34	2.5	42
Maine	620.2	0.7	955	41	5.3	2
Maryland	2,728.1	0.9	1,271	8	3.5	17
Massachusetts	3,660.8	0.9	1,511	2	3.8	11
Michigan	4,385.3	0.4	1,115	18	3.4	22
Minnesota	2,912.8	0.4	1,177	14	3.2	27
Mississippi	1,145.0	0.0	818	51	3.2	27
Missouri	2,846.2	0.9	1,010	32	3.0	34
Montana	474.1	1.1	918	46	3.4	22
Nebraska	990.9	0.7	969	38	4.2	6
Nevada	1,435.5	2.7	1,030	29	2.4	45
New Hampshire	671.3	0.8	1,192	12	2.9	37
New Jersey	4,157.4	0.8	1,332	7	2.5	42
New Mexico	844.0	1.5	942	44	4.0	8
New York	9,691.0	0.8	1,499	3	3.7	13
North Carolina	4,546.9	1.9	1,036	28	2.4	45
North Dakota	424.6	0.5	1,085	22	2.6	39
Ohio	5,477.2	0.5	1,037	27	3.1	32
Oklahoma	1,639.4	0.3	945	43	1.4	49
Oregon	1,969.3	1.6	1,100	19	4.6	5
Pennsylvania	5,985.9	0.8	1,143	15	3.6	14
Rhode Island	489.8	0.6	1,099	20	1.1	50
South Carolina	2,144.8	1.2	931	45	4.0	8
South Dakota	430.7	0.6	916	48	3.5	17
Tennessee	3,085.4	1.6	1,047	25	1.6	48
Texas	12,793.0	2.0	1,187	13	3.4	22
Utah	1,547.8	2.5	1,022	30	5.0	3
Vermont	314.0	-0.4	987	35	3.5	17
Virginia	3,978.7	1.2	1,204	11	3.4	22
Washington	3,457.7	2.2	1,370	6	6.4	1
West Virginia	690.3	-2.0	904	49	-1.4	51
Wisconsin	2,898.0	0.2	1,022	30	3.3	26
Wyoming	276.3	1.4	1,007	33	3.0	34
Puerto Rico	910.7	1.5	575	(3)	-0.2	(3)
Virgin Islands	39.2	10.8	1,065	(3)	13.5	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

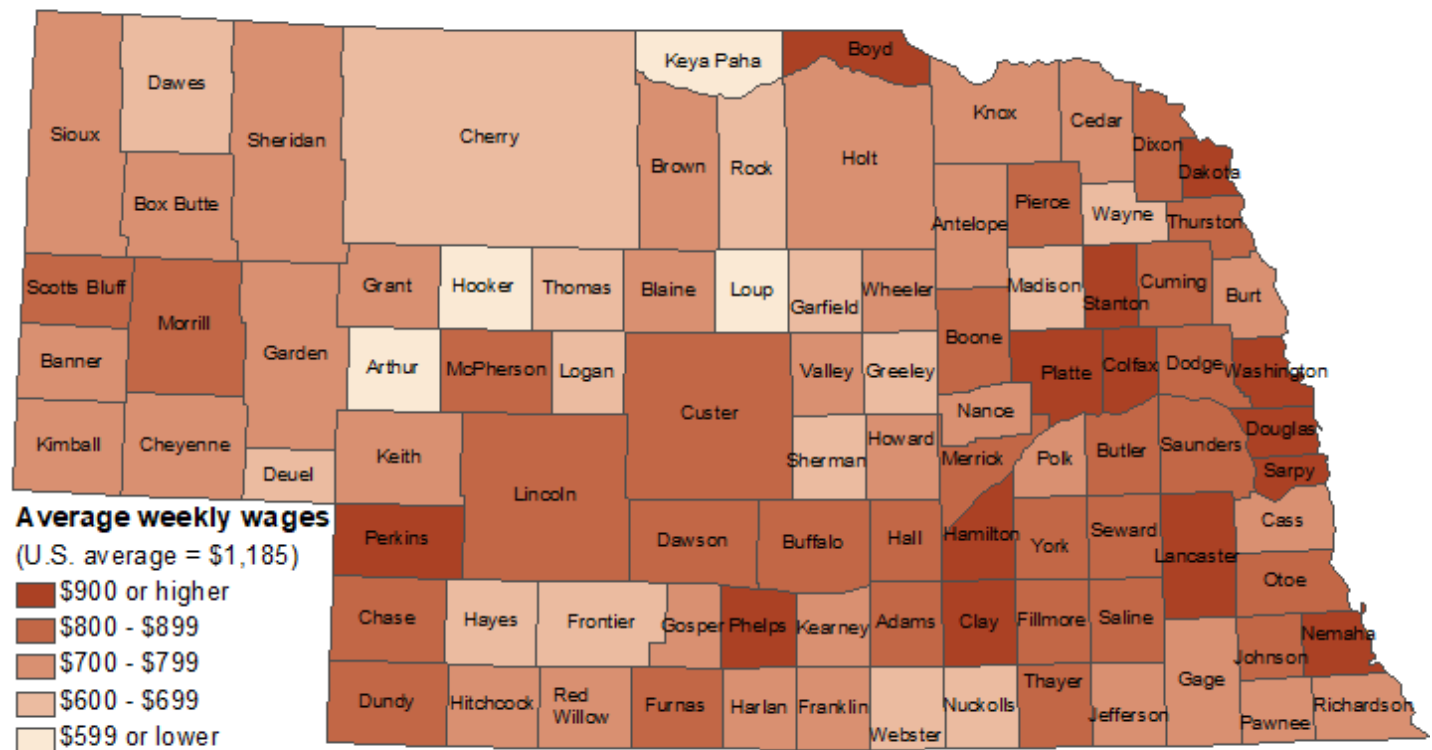
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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. 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 2019**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.