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## **County Employment and Wages in Colorado – Fourth Quarter 2016**

Employment rose in all nine large counties in Colorado from December 2015 to December 2016, 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 2015 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that 7 of the 9 counties reported employment growth exceeding the national average of 1.2 percent. Adams County had the largest increase at 3.6 percent. Employment in Weld County rose the least among the large counties with an increase of 0.2 percent from December 2015 to December 2016.

Nationally, employment increased in 280 of the 344 largest U.S. counties from December 2015 to December 2016. Williamson, Tenn., had the largest percentage increase with a gain of 5.1 percent over the year. Lafayette, La, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment among the largest counties in the U.S. with a loss of 5.1 percent.

Among the nine largest counties in Colorado, employment was highest in Denver (501,700) in December 2016. Four other counties—Adams, Arapahoe, El Paso, and Jefferson—had employment levels exceeding 200,000. Together, the nine large counties accounted for 80.5 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.8 percent of total U.S. employment.

Average weekly wages declined in all nine large counties in Colorado from the fourth quarter of 2015 to the fourth quarter of 2016. Wages in Douglas County had the largest rate of decline (-6.8 percent). Nationally, average weekly wages decreased 1.5 percent. Average weekly wages in five of the large counties exceeded the national average of \$1,067. Denver had the highest average weekly wage among the state's largest counties at \$1,287, followed by Boulder (\$1,237), Arapahoe (\$1,227), Douglas (\$1,204), and Jefferson (\$1,072). (See [table 1.](#))

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000. Of these smaller counties, Broomfield (\$1,440) and Pitkin (\$1,096) had average weekly wages above the national average. (See [table 2.](#))

### **Large county wage changes**

All nine large counties in Colorado had wage declines from the fourth quarter of 2015 to the fourth quarter of 2016, with four counties posting declines greater than the U.S. average decrease of 1.5 percent. (See [table 1.](#)) Douglas County had the largest wage decline (-6.8 percent), placing 341<sup>st</sup> in the national ranking. Weld (-2.9 percent, 268<sup>th</sup>), Boulder (-2.4 percent, 237<sup>th</sup>), and Arapahoe (-1.8 percent, 183<sup>rd</sup>) also had wage losses that

exceeded the national average. Wages in the remaining five large counties declined less than the national average, with Denver (-0.4 percent, 70<sup>th</sup>) and Larimer (-0.6 percent, 84<sup>th</sup>) placing in the top quartile of the national ranking.

Among the 344 largest counties in the U.S., 290 had over-the-year declines in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2016. McLean, Ill., had the largest percentage decline in average weekly wages with a loss of 9.2 percent. Forty-eight of the 344 largest counties experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., ranked first in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 11.3 percent.

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

Five of the state's large counties had average weekly wages that were above the national average of \$1,067. Denver (\$1,287) and Boulder (\$1,237) ranked 35<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup>, respectively, followed by the counties of Arapahoe (\$1,227, 46<sup>th</sup>) and Douglas (\$1,204, 52<sup>nd</sup>). Jefferson's average weekly wage was close to the national average (\$1,072, 96<sup>th</sup>). The average weekly wages in Colorado's four other large counties ranged from \$900 to \$1,022.

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average of \$1,067 in 100 of the 344 largest counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$2,365, followed by New York, N.Y. (\$2,212), and San Mateo, Calif. (\$2,098). Among the 243 large counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2016, Cameron, Texas (\$640), reported the lowest wage.

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

Of the 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000, only Broomfield (\$1,440) and Pitkin (\$1,096) had average weekly wages above the national average. San Juan County had the lowest weekly wage in the state with an average of \$504 in the fourth quarter of 2016. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 64 counties in Colorado were considered, six reported average weekly wages of \$599 or less, 16 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 18 had wages from \$700 to \$799, nine had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 15 had wages of \$900 or higher. Nine of the high-wage counties were concentrated in the corridor between Colorado Springs and the Wyoming border that includes metropolitan areas such as Denver and Greeley. (See [chart 1](#).)

### **Additional statistics and other information**

Quarterly 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 the QCEW Web site at [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 2015 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 2016 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at [www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2015/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2015/home.htm). The 2016 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2017.

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.

**The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2017 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 6, 2017.**

### **Upcoming Industry Changes to QCEW Data**

Beginning with the release of first quarter 2017 data, the program will switch to the 2017 version of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) as the basis for the assignment and tabulation of economic data by industry. For more information on the change, please see the Federal Register notice at [www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/federal\\_register\\_notices/notices/fr08au16.pdf](http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/federal_register_notices/notices/fr08au16.pdf).

### **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 9.9 million employer reports cover 143.7 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. 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.

**Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 9 largest counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2016**

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	December 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2015-16 <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 2015-16 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>
United States <sup>(4)</sup> .....	143,749.9	1.2	--	\$1,067	--	-1.5	--
Colorado .....	2,588.6	2.0	--	1,086	12	-1.5	24
Adams, Colo. ....	202.0	3.6	14	1,022	130	-1.3	144
Arapahoe, Colo. ....	324.6	1.6	139	1,227	46	-1.8	183
Boulder, Colo. ....	179.9	3.0	39	1,237	43	-2.4	237
Denver, Colo. ....	501.7	2.8	50	1,287	35	-0.4	70
Douglas, Colo. ....	118.9	1.8	114	1,204	52	-6.8	341
El Paso, Colo. ....	268.0	2.7	58	943	194	-1.4	149
Jefferson, Colo. ....	234.4	0.7	223	1,072	96	-0.9	110
Larimer, Colo. ....	154.0	2.5	71	980	167	-0.6	84
Weld, Colo. ....	100.4	0.2	264	900	241	-2.9	268

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 Colorado, 4th quarter 2016**

Area	Employment December 2016	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2) .....	143,749,910	\$1,067
Colorado .....	2,588,551	1,086
Adams .....	201,985	1,022
Alamosa .....	8,028	714
Arapahoe .....	324,567	1,227
Archuleta .....	4,065	654
Baca .....	1,096	563
Bent .....	1,215	667
Boulder .....	179,896	1,237
Broomfield .....	37,236	1,440
Chaffee .....	7,487	736
Cheyenne .....	691	803
Clear Creek .....	3,169	855
Conejos .....	1,416	587
Costilla .....	859	542
Crowley .....	1,100	770
Custer .....	851	699
Delta .....	8,297	646
Denver .....	501,707	1,287
Dolores .....	516	646
Douglas .....	118,876	1,204
Eagle .....	34,331	890
Elbert .....	3,444	814
El Paso .....	268,044	943
Fremont .....	13,371	753
Garfield .....	25,325	925
Gilpin .....	4,885	759
Grand .....	7,938	688
Gunnison .....	8,291	687
Hinsdale .....	258	629
Huerfano .....	1,689	580
Jackson .....	530	683
Jefferson .....	234,437	1,072
Kiowa .....	476	669
Kit Carson .....	2,851	701
Lake .....	2,331	684
La Plata .....	26,581	935
Larimer .....	154,020	980
Las Animas .....	4,729	724
Lincoln .....	2,165	713
Logan .....	8,154	730
Mesa .....	59,716	816
Mineral .....	623	590
Moffat .....	4,655	921
Montezuma .....	8,823	680
Montrose .....	14,525	752
Morgan .....	12,049	814
Otero .....	5,966	668
Ouray .....	1,594	712
Park .....	2,381	755
Phillips .....	1,651	719
Pitkin .....	18,390	1,096
Prowers .....	4,350	636
Pueblo .....	60,152	800
Rio Blanco .....	2,667	974
Rio Grande .....	3,827	769
Routt .....	15,883	883

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Colorado, 4th quarter 2016 - Continued**

Area	Employment December 2016	Average Weekly Wage(1)
Saguache .....	1,478	628
San Juan .....	282	504
San Miguel .....	5,846	818
Sedgwick .....	795	663
Summit .....	23,836	781
Teller .....	7,087	735
Washington .....	1,210	721
Weld .....	100,436	900
Yuma .....	3,939	733

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 2016**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	December 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States <sup>(2)</sup>	143,749.9	1.2	1067	--	-1.5	--
Alabama	1,932.6	0.7	901	35	-1.3	21
Alaska	310.0	-1.9	1038	17	-5.2	51
Arizona	2,760.1	2.1	945	25	-2.2	34
Arkansas	1,205.4	0.4	827	47	-1.4	22
California	16,923.3	1.9	1271	5	-0.3	4
Colorado	2,588.6	2.0	1086	12	-1.5	24
Connecticut	1,685.5	0.0	1289	4	-3.4	46
Delaware	441.2	-0.1	1055	15	-2.9	44
District of Columbia	760.9	0.5	1763	1	0.6	2
Florida	8,538.9	2.7	942	27	-1.8	28
Georgia	4,349.3	2.4	993	20	-0.9	14
Hawaii	658.3	0.7	954	24	-0.3	4
Idaho	691.6	3.2	800	50	-0.4	8
Illinois	5,947.6	0.4	1122	9	-2	31
Indiana	3,021.7	0.9	883	38	-0.9	14
Iowa	1,542.0	0.1	911	33	-1	16
Kansas	1,384.5	0.1	877	39	-2.2	34
Kentucky	1,894.2	0.6	874	41	-1.4	22
Louisiana	1,907.4	-1.6	914	32	-2.9	44
Maine	602.6	0.8	855	43	-2.1	33
Maryland	2,666.7	1.0	1169	7	-0.4	8
Massachusetts	3,530.4	1.3	1352	2	-2.4	39
Michigan	4,283.0	1.5	1026	19	-1.6	25
Minnesota	2,839.7	1.2	1062	14	-1.1	18
Mississippi	1,134.0	0.0	756	51	-1.8	28
Missouri	2,783.2	0.9	918	31	-1.7	27
Montana	456.5	0.7	822	48	0.5	3
Nebraska	972.4	0.0	876	40	-0.5	10
Nevada	1,307.8	2.7	924	29	-1.2	20
New Hampshire	656.9	1.3	1092	10	-4.1	48
New Jersey	4,042.1	1.4	1239	6	-1.9	30
New Mexico	811.4	0.0	844	45	-2.5	41
New York	9,332.5	1.2	1342	3	-2.3	36
North Carolina	4,326.3	1.8	932	28	-0.7	13
North Dakota	414.4	-3.2	978	21	-4.2	49
Ohio	5,365.6	0.7	943	26	-2.3	36
Oklahoma	1,587.7	-1.2	864	42	-3.5	47
Oregon	1,860.7	2.4	970	22	-1	16
Pennsylvania	5,799.8	0.7	1039	16	-2.3	36
Rhode Island	478.3	0.0	1027	18	-1.6	25
South Carolina	2,024.3	1.8	855	43	-0.6	12
South Dakota	419.9	0.5	828	46	-0.5	10
Tennessee	2,947.5	1.8	970	22	-1.1	18
Texas	11,974.7	1.2	1072	13	-2.5	41
Utah	1,415.1	2.9	910	34	-0.3	4
Vermont	312.6	0.1	897	36	-2.4	39
Virginia	3,831.6	0.6	1091	11	-0.3	4
Washington	3,227.9	2.8	1150	8	1.7	1
West Virginia	693.1	-1.6	809	49	-2.5	41
Wisconsin	2,842.4	0.5	924	29	-2	31
Wyoming	265.8	-3.9	894	37	-4.7	50
Puerto Rico	928.2	-0.3	555	(3)	-1.9	(3)
Virgin Islands	38.5	0.2	769	(3)	-1.8	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

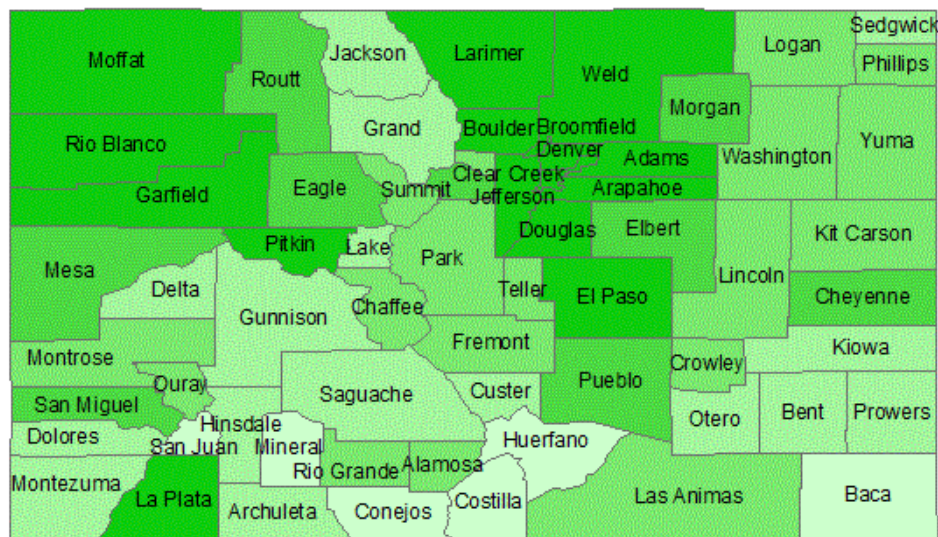
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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.

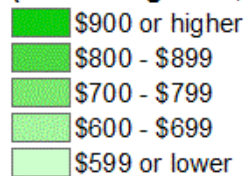
Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

**Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Colorado, fourth quarter 2016**



**Average weekly wages**

(U.S. average = \$1,067)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.