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County Employment and Wages in Colorado – Fourth Quarter 2019

Employment rose in Colorado's nine 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 Michael Hirniak noted that Adams County (5.1 percent) had the fastest employment growth among the nine largest counties in the state. (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 nine large counties in Colorado, employment was highest in Denver County (535,300), followed by Arapahoe County (338,200) and El Paso County (286,800) in December 2019. Together, the nine largest Colorado counties accounted for 81.0 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 355 largest counties made up 73.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

All nine large Colorado counties reported average weekly wage gains from the fourth quarter of 2018 to the fourth quarter of 2019, with the fastest rate of increase in Douglas County, up 17.2 percent. Douglas County also had the highest average weekly wage among the state's largest counties at \$1,511. 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 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000. Of these smaller counties, Broomfield (\$1,606) had the highest average weekly wage level and was above the national average of \$1,185. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

The 17.2-percent annual average weekly wage gain in Douglas County ranked 3rd among the nation's 355 largest counties in the fourth quarter of 2019. Boulder and Arapahoe Counties ranked in the top 100 of the nation's large counties, 66th and 79th respectively. The remaining large counties were in the bottom half of the rankings.

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 5 of the state's 9 large counties were above the national average of \$1,185 in the fourth quarter of 2019. Average weekly wages in Douglas County (\$1,511) and Denver County (\$1,458) ranked 20th and 24th, respectively, near the top of the national rankings. The average weekly wages in the lowest-paying large Colorado counties, Weld (\$1,045, 194th) and El Paso (\$1,043, 196th), ranked in the bottom half of the 355 largest U.S. counties.

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 Colorado's smaller counties

Of the 55 smaller counties in Colorado—those with employment below 75,000—only one reported average weekly wages above the national average of \$1,185: Broomfield County (\$1,606). Among these smaller counties, Pitkin posted the second highest weekly wage, \$1,149, followed by Rio Blanco (\$1,106), La Plata (\$1,030) and Garfield (\$1,028). San Juan County reported the lowest average wage in the state at \$548 per week, followed by Mineral County at \$570 per week.

When all 64 counties in Colorado were considered, 10 reported average weekly wages of less than \$700, 19 registered wages from \$700 to \$824, 17 had wages from \$825 to \$949, 8 had wages from \$950 to \$1,074, and 10 had average weekly wages of \$1,075 or more. (See [chart 1](#).) The higher-paying counties were primarily located in and around the Denver metropolitan area. The lowest-paying counties, those with weekly wages under \$700, were concentrated in the southern portion of the state.

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 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. The 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2020.

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/. 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 9 largest counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2019

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2018-19 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2018-19 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	149,857.1	1.2	--	\$1,185	--	3.5	--
Colorado.....	2,772.6	2.2	--	1,227	9	4.0	8
Adams.....	233.0	5.1	2	1,121	134	2.6	234
Arapahoe.....	338.2	1.5	114	1,354	47	4.3	79
Boulder.....	191.8	3.0	20	1,418	33	4.5	66
Denver.....	535.3	2.3	53	1,458	24	3.0	203
Douglas.....	133.5	2.8	34	1,511	20	17.2	3
El Paso.....	286.8	2.2	59	1,043	196	2.8	222
Jefferson.....	245.0	1.5	114	1,221	78	0.7	339
Larimer.....	166.8	2.0	73	1,094	153	3.0	203
Weld.....	114.4	2.3	53	1,045	194	3.2	181

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 Colorado, fourth quarter 2019

Area	Employment December 2019	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2)	149,857,130	\$1,185
Colorado	2,772,620	1,227
Adams	232,961	1,121
Alamosa	8,287	783
Arapahoe	338,214	1,354
Archuleta	4,268	729
Baca	1,113	656
Bent	1,115	759
Boulder	191,776	1,418
Broomfield	40,671	1,606
Chaffee	8,077	845
Cheyenne	702	903
Clear Creek	3,490	933
Conejos	1,536	671
Costilla	944	648
Crowley	1,096	874
Custer	792	679
Delta	8,485	734
Denver	535,267	1,458
Dolores	568	692
Douglas	133,508	1,511
Eagle	36,105	1,015
Elbert	3,803	954
El Paso	286,849	1,043
Fremont	13,539	844
Garfield	25,925	1,028
Gilpin	4,623	861
Grand	8,114	786
Gunnison	8,974	824
Hinsdale	256	677
Huerfano	1,719	694
Jackson	530	808
Jefferson	244,953	1,221
Kiowa	507	762
Kit Carson	2,892	785
Lake	2,521	848
La Plata	26,052	1,030
Larimer	166,832	1,094
Las Animas	4,968	772
Lincoln	2,149	813
Logan	7,954	817
Mesa	63,394	921
Mineral	666	570
Moffat	4,729	1,000
Montezuma	9,042	744
Montrose	15,546	823
Morgan	12,660	970
Otero	6,029	767
Ouray	1,837	828
Park	2,502	830
Phillips	1,721	798
Pitkin	18,880	1,149
Prowers	4,615	693
Pueblo	63,134	907
Rio Blanco	2,852	1,106
Rio Grande	4,013	819

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment December 2019	Average Weekly Wage(1)
Routt	16,462	927
Saguache	1,616	711
San Juan	300	548
San Miguel	6,169	899
Sedgwick	814	758
Summit	25,038	834
Teller	7,324	847
Washington	1,177	852
Weld	114,420	1,045
Yuma	3,984	829

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 ⁽¹⁾			
	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 ⁽²⁾	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:

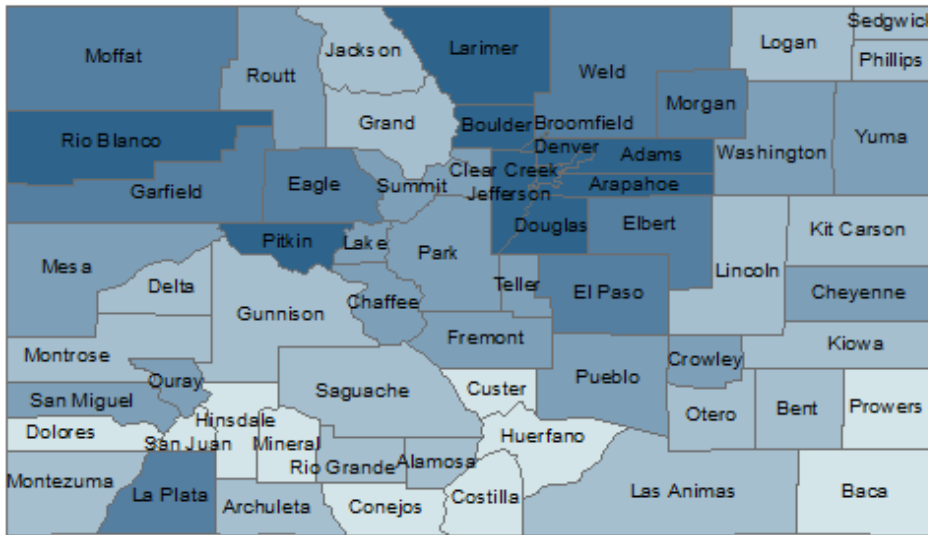
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 Colorado, fourth quarter 2019



Average weekly wages

(U.S. average = \$1,185)

- \$1075 or higher
- \$950 - \$1074
- \$825 - \$949
- \$700 - \$824
- \$699 or lower

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.