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County Employment and Wages in Massachusetts – Second Quarter 2013

Employment increased in 8 of the 9 large counties in Massachusetts from June 2012 to June 2013. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2012 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that Middlesex County had the largest gain, up 1.9 percent, followed by Norfolk and Suffolk Counties, up 1.8 and 1.7 percent, respectively. Employment gains in these counties exceeded the national increase of 1.6 percent.

Nationally, 288 of the 334 large counties had employment gains from June 2012 to June 2013. The largest over-the-year percentage gain was recorded in Fort Bend, Texas, 7.0 percent. Atlantic, N.J., had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment with a loss of 4.5 percent.

Among the nine large counties in Massachusetts, employment was highest in Middlesex (847,695) in June 2013, followed by Suffolk (608,141). Together, Massachusetts' large counties accounted for 93.6 percent of total employment within the Commonwealth. Nationwide, the 334 largest counties made up 71.4 percent of total U.S. employment in June 2013.

Average weekly wages increased in 8 of the 9 large counties in Massachusetts from the second quarter of 2012 to the second quarter of 2013. Weekly wage growth was highest in Essex County, up 2.8 percent. Plymouth (2.5 percent) and Middlesex (2.2 percent) recorded the next highest wage growth. Suffolk County had the highest average weekly wage at \$1,410, followed by Middlesex (\$1,371) and Norfolk (\$1,066). Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 2.1 percent over the year to \$921 in the second quarter of 2013. (See [table 1.](#))

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

Large County Wage Changes

Essex County's 2.8-percent annual wage gain ranked in the top-quarter (69th) among the 334 largest U.S. counties in the second quarter of June 2013. Plymouth (2.5 percent) and Middlesex (2.2 percent) placed in the top-third (85th and 111th, respectively). (See [table 1.](#)) Smaller over-the-year wage growth was recorded in Bristol, Suffolk, Worcester, Barnstable, and Norfolk Counties. In Hampden County, average weekly wages were unchanged over the year.

Nationwide, Union, N.J., ranked first in average weekly wage growth, with an increase of 8.1 percent from the second quarter of 2012. San Mateo, Calif., placed second with a wage gain of 8.0 percent, followed by Williamson, Tenn. (7.8 percent) and Rockingham, N.H. (6.9 percent).

Among the 334 largest U.S. counties, 18 experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Davidson, Tenn., had the largest average weekly wage decrease with a loss of 2.2 percent. Whatcom, Wash., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages, followed by Washington, Ore., and Shelby, Tenn., which tied for the third largest percentage decrease.

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Average weekly wages in 5 of Massachusetts' 9 large counties were above the national average of \$921 in the second quarter of 2013. Two of these counties placed in the top 10 nationwide—Suffolk (\$1,410, 9th) and Middlesex (\$1,371, 10th). Average weekly wages were lowest in Barnstable County (\$768, 255th).

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 107 of the 334 largest U.S. counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$1,810. New York, N.Y., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,675, followed by San Mateo, Calif., (\$1,632), Washington, D.C., (\$1,575), and Arlington, Va. (\$1,525).

More than two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (227) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the second quarter of 2013. The lowest wage was reported in Horry, S.C. (\$537), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron (\$572) and Hidalgo (\$592). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than one-third of the average weekly wage reported for the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif. (\$1,810).

Average Weekly Wages in Massachusetts' Smaller Counties

All five counties in Massachusetts with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$921. Nantucket had the highest wage at \$898; Franklin reported the lowest wage \$711.

When all 14 counties in Massachusetts were considered, 9 had wages below the national average. As mentioned, the lowest weekly wage was reported in Franklin County which was 1 of 4 counties in the Commonwealth with an average weekly wage below \$800. Five counties reported weekly wages ranging from \$800 to \$899; two other counties had weekly wages from \$900 to \$999. The three highest-paid counties had average weekly wages over \$1,000 and were located in the Boston metropolitan area, including the area encircled by Highway 495. (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 the QCEW Web site at www.bls.gov/cew.

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages Annual Wages Online*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2012 edition of this publication, which was published in September 2013, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2013 version of the news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2012*

are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2012/home.htm. The 2013 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2014.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Services: 1-800-877-8339.

For personal assistance or further information on the QCEW program, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the New England Information Office at 617-565-2327. This release is available in PDF and HTML format on the New England BLS Web site at https://www.bls.gov/regions/new-england/news-release/countyemploymentandwages_machusetts.htm.

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 9.2 million employer reports cover 135.1 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/; 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 ⁽¹⁾ employment and wages in the United States and the 9 largest counties in Massachusetts, second quarter 2013 ⁽²⁾

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage ⁽³⁾			
	June 2013 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2012-13 ⁽⁴⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽⁵⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽⁵⁾	Percent change, second quarter 2012-13 ⁽⁴⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽⁵⁾
United States ⁽⁶⁾	135,094.0	1.6	--	\$921	--	2.1	--
Massachusetts	3,352.7	1.3	--	1,131	2	2.0	21
Barnstable, Mass.....	102.3	0.8	226	768	255	1.2	227
Bristol, Mass.....	217.5	0.7	233	842	172	2.1	123
Essex, Mass.....	315.0	0.3	266	979	73	2.8	69
Hampden, Mass.....	201.1	-0.3	306	832	184	0.0	305
Middlesex, Mass.....	847.7	1.9	124	1,371	10	2.2	111
Norfolk, Mass.....	335.1	1.8	131	1,066	45	1.1	237
Plymouth, Mass.....	184.1	1.5	158	889	137	2.5	85
Suffolk, Mass.....	608.1	1.7	143	1,410	9	1.8	159
Worcester, Mass.....	328.3	1.2	183	926	104	1.3	218

Footnotes:

- (1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.
- (2) Data are preliminary.
- (3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
- (4) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.
- (5) Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- (6) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered ⁽¹⁾ employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Massachusetts, 2nd quarter 2013 ⁽²⁾

Area	Employment June 2013	Average Weekly Wage ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	135,093,963	\$921
Massachusetts	3,352,679	1,131
Barnstable County	102,289	768
Berkshire County	62,901	759
Bristol County	217,544	842
Dukes County	10,248	812
Essex County	315,049	979
Franklin County	26,687	711
Hampden County	201,077	832
Hampshire County	61,184	785
Middlesex County	847,695	1,371
Nantucket County	8,132	898
Norfolk County	335,132	1,066
Plymouth County	184,146	889
Suffolk County	608,141	1,410
Worcester County	328,289	926

Footnotes

- (1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.
- (2) Data are preliminary.
- (3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
- (4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 3. Covered ⁽¹⁾ employment and wages by state, second quarter 2013 ⁽²⁾

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽³⁾			
	June 2013 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2012-13	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2012-13	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽⁴⁾	135,094.0	1.6	\$921	--	2.1	--
Alabama	1,859.5	0.9	794	35	1.4	44
Alaska	342.6	-0.1	970	9	1.6	37
Arizona	2,438.1	1.8	877	20	1.7	32
Arkansas	1,150.4	-0.6	734	46	2.4	10
California	15,485.8	2.4	1,048	6	2.0	21
Colorado	2,359.4	2.9	933	14	1.6	37
Connecticut	1,666.3	1.0	1,128	3	1.5	41
Delaware	417.8	1.8	966	12	2.0	21
District of Columbia	725.0	0.9	1,575	1	2.1	19
Florida	7,402.0	2.4	822	29	2.0	21
Georgia.....	3,917.2	1.7	867	22	2.2	17
Hawaii.....	617.0	1.9	823	28	1.6	37
Idaho	642.7	2.7	683	51	1.9	28
Illinois	5,750.0	0.8	971	8	1.9	28
Indiana.....	2,863.4	1.1	776	42	1.7	32
Iowa.....	1,523.9	1.3	757	43	2.0	21
Kansas	1,350.0	1.2	779	41	2.1	19
Kentucky.....	1,790.6	0.6	782	38	1.3	46
Louisiana	1,894.7	0.9	824	27	2.4	10
Maine.....	604.4	0.4	732	47	1.8	30
Maryland.....	2,570.3	0.9	1,005	7	1.4	44
Massachusetts	3,352.7	1.3	1,131	2	2.0	21
Michigan	4,073.7	2.2	875	21	2.0	21
Minnesota.....	2,745.2	1.9	929	15	2.4	10
Mississippi	1,094.9	0.7	691	49	1.5	41
Missouri.....	2,668.2	1.2	803	33	1.6	37
Montana	448.4	1.5	717	48	2.4	10
Nebraska	941.0	0.9	737	45	2.6	7
Nevada	1,168.3	2.3	829	26	1.7	32
New Hampshire.....	629.1	0.8	916	17	2.9	4
New Jersey.....	3,917.5	1.0	1,084	5	2.6	7
New Mexico.....	795.0	0.4	781	39	-0.3	51
New York	8,804.9	1.1	1,118	4	2.0	21
North Carolina	3,985.1	1.7	808	31	2.5	9
North Dakota	433.7	3.2	887	18	3.7	1
Ohio.....	5,162.3	1.1	830	25	1.7	32
Oklahoma.....	1,560.7	0.9	794	35	3.5	2
Oregon	1,708.0	2.5	848	23	1.3	46
Pennsylvania.....	5,665.9	0.3	918	16	2.8	5
Rhode Island.....	465.5	1.0	880	19	2.3	16
South Carolina.....	1,864.9	1.8	747	44	1.5	41
South Dakota.....	417.0	1.0	689	50	1.8	30
Tennessee.....	2,709.3	1.5	820	30	0.5	49
Texas.....	11,078.8	2.7	944	13	2.4	10
Utah.....	1,259.7	2.8	783	37	2.2	17
Vermont.....	303.1	0.3	808	31	2.7	6
Virginia.....	3,685.4	0.7	968	11	1.7	32
Washington.....	3,013.3	2.2	969	10	2.4	10
West Virginia.....	713.1	-0.1	781	39	0.6	48
Wisconsin.....	2,768.2	0.6	801	34	3.0	3
Wyoming.....	290.4	0.4	845	24	0.5	49
Puerto Rico.....	926.1	-1.1	503	(5)	1.0	(5)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

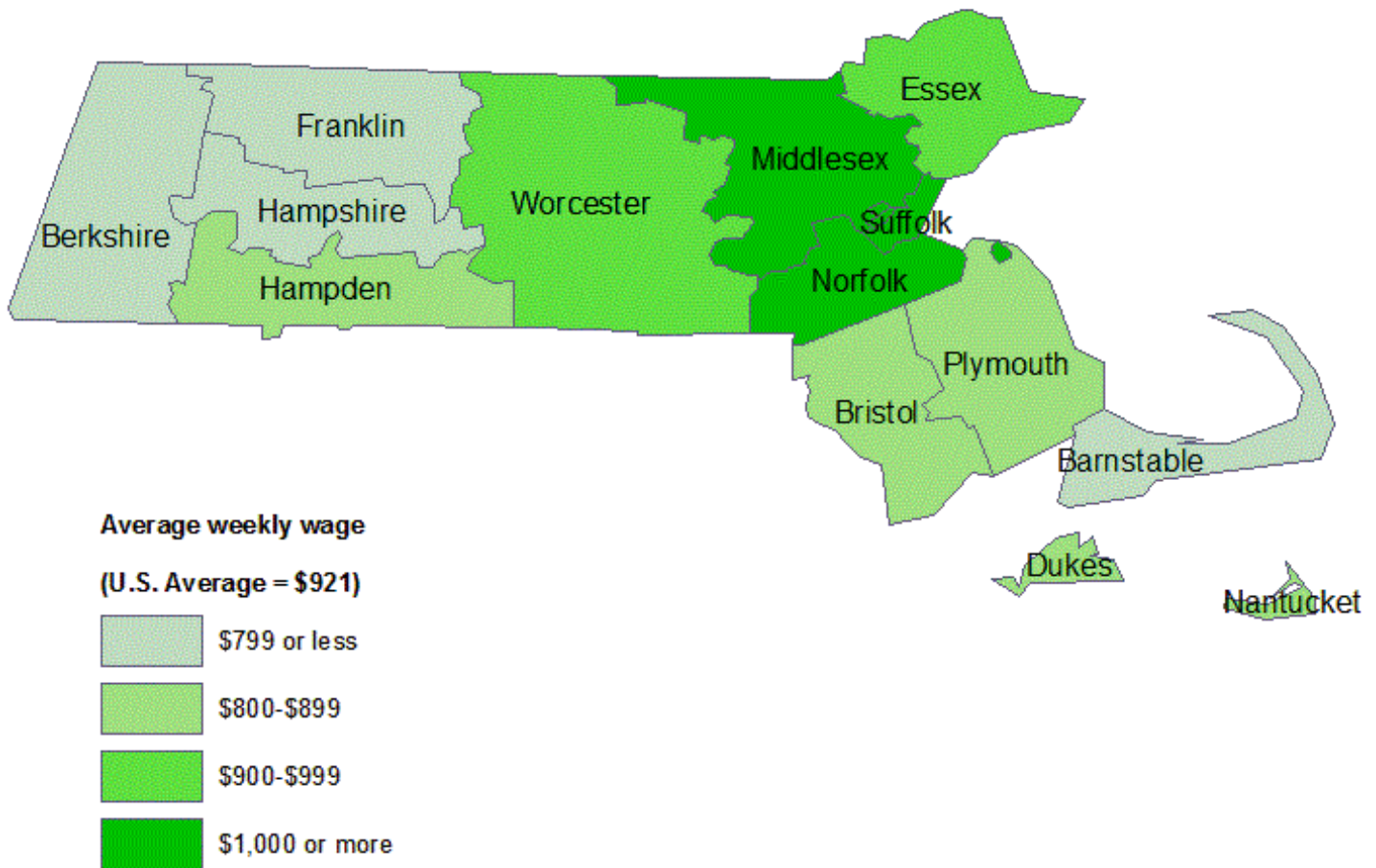
Table 3. Covered ⁽¹⁾ employment and wages by state, second quarter 2013 ⁽²⁾ - Continued

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽³⁾			
	June 2013 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2012-13	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2012-13	National ranking by percent change
Virgin Islands.....	38.9	-3.0	706	(5)	-13.8	(5)

Footnotes:

- (1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.
- (2) Data are preliminary.
- (3) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
- (4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
- (5) Data not included in the national ranking.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Massachusetts, second quarter 2013



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.