Occupational Employment and Wages for Police and Firefighters in Massachusetts’ Metropolitan Areas – May 2013

Three of the seven metropolitan areas in Massachusetts—Leominster-Fitchburg-Gardner, Pittsfield, and Springfield—had wages significantly below the national average for police and sheriff’s patrol officers, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. In fact, no metropolitan area in Massachusetts had wages that were significantly above the national average for this occupation. Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that two metropolitan areas in Massachusetts, Barnstable and Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, had wages that were measurably above those for the nation for firefighters. Nationwide, the average (mean) wage for police and sheriff’s patrol officers was $58,720 and for firefighters, $48,270. (See table A. For comprehensive definitions of metropolitan areas in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, please see Technical Note.)

The Boston area had 19,490 police and sheriff’s patrol officers and firefighters, the largest number among the seven metropolitan areas. Springfield had employment of 3,100 and Worcester had employment of 2,820 in these two occupations. Employment levels for both police and sheriff’s patrol officers and firefighters in each of the remaining four areas were 1,010 or below.

Table A. Average (mean) annual wages for police and sheriff’s patrol officers and firefighters in the United States, Massachusetts, and metropolitan areas in Massachusetts, May 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Police and Sheriff’s Patrol Officers</th>
<th>Firefighters ¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>$58,720</td>
<td>$48,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>58,000</td>
<td>53,420*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barnstable</td>
<td>56,700</td>
<td>56,510*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston-Cambridge-Quincy</td>
<td>59,320</td>
<td>56,730*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leominster-Fitchburg-Gardner</td>
<td>55,010*</td>
<td>47,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Bedford</td>
<td>58,580</td>
<td>51,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsfield</td>
<td>53,360*</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springfield</td>
<td>51,640*</td>
<td>47,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>58,660</td>
<td>47,910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The mean annual wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

¹ Data for firefighters do not cover volunteer firefighters who are unpaid.
Wages for police and sheriff’s patrol officers in metropolitan areas in Massachusetts
New Bedford, Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, and Worcester were among the higher-paying areas for police and sheriff’s patrol officers at $59,580, $59,320 and $58,660, respectively. Wages in these three metropolitan areas were not significantly different from the national average. Three areas had wages for police and sheriff’s patrol officers that were measurably lower than the U.S. average, of which Springfield ($51,640) and Pittsfield ($53,360) were among the lower-paid.

Wages for firefighters in metropolitan areas in Massachusetts
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy ($56,730) and Barnstable ($56,510) were among the higher-paying areas for firefighters in the commonwealth. Wages in both of these areas were significantly higher than the national average of $48,270. Leominster-Fitchburg-Gardner, Springfield, and Worcester were among the lower-paying areas for firefighters at $47,440, $47,470 and $47,910, respectively. Wages in these three metropolitan areas were not significantly different from the national average.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance.

The OES wage data for police and sheriff’s patrol officers and firefighters in the state and metropolitan areas were compared to their respective national averages based on statistical significance testing. Only those occupations with wages above or below the national wage after testing for significance at the 90-percent confidence level meet the criteria.

NOTE: A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.
Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are also surveyed, but their data are not included in the national estimates. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Each year, forms are mailed to two semiannual panels of approximately 200,000 sampled establishments, one panel in May and the other in November. May 2013 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2013, November 2012, May 2012, November 2011, May 2011, and November 2010. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 75.3 percent based on establishments and 71.6 percent based on employment. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and 821 detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, employment and wage estimates for 94 minor groups and 458 broad occupations are available in the national data. OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm, respectively.


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

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.


