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County Employment and Wages in Massachusetts – Second Quarter 2016

Employment increased in 8 of the 9 large counties in Massachusetts from June 2015 to June 2016. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2015 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Deborah A. Brown noted that Suffolk County had the largest gain, up 2.5 percent, which was higher than the national increase of 1.5 percent. Norfolk County had the second highest gain, up 1.3 percent.

Nationally, 291 of the 344 large counties had employment gains from June 2015 to June 2016. Williamson, Tenn., recorded the largest percentage increase, up 6.7 percent over the year. Midland, Texas, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 8.3 percent.

Among the nine large counties in Massachusetts, employment was highest in Middlesex (893,100) in June 2016, followed by Suffolk (658,600). Together, Massachusetts' large counties accounted for 93.7 percent of total employment within the Commonwealth. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment in June 2016.

Average weekly wages increased in eight large counties in Massachusetts from the second quarter of 2015 to the second quarter of 2016. Bristol County had the largest wage gain, up 4.3 percent. Suffolk (4.0 percent) and Barnstable (3.5 percent) recorded the next highest wage growth. Suffolk County had the highest average weekly wage at $1,571, followed by Middlesex ($1,470) and Norfolk ($1,162). Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 2.2 percent over the year to $989 in the second quarter of 2016. (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

Six of the nine large counties in Massachusetts recorded over-the-year wage growth above the national increase of 2.2 percent. Bristol County's 4.3-percent annual wage gain ranked 35th among the 344 largest U.S. counties in the second quarter of June 2016. (See table 1.)The wage growth in Suffolk (4.0 percent), Barnstable (3.5 percent), Worcester (3.4 percent), and Plymouth (3.0 percent) also ranked among the 100 large counties nationwide. Conversely, Middlesex County's wage declined 1.3 percent over the year and ranked in the bottom-fifth among the large U.S. counties.

Of the 344 largest U.S. counties, 304 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Nationwide, McLean, Ill., ranked first in average weekly wage growth, with an increase of 21 percent from the second quarter of 2015. Elkhart, Ind., placed second with a wage gain of 8.5 percent, followed by King, Wash. (8.1 percent) and Washington, Ore. (7.4 percent).

Thirty-six counties nationwide experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages. Ventura, Calif., had the largest average weekly wage decrease with a loss of 8.4 percent. Forsyth, N.C., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages, followed Lafayette, La.; Gregg, Texas; and Midland, Texas.

Large County Average Weekly Wages

Average weekly wages in two large counties in the Commonwealth ranked among the highest nationwide in the second quarter of 2016—Suffolk ($1,571, 6th) and Middlesex ($1,470, 11th). Average weekly wages in three other large counties in Massachusetts were also above the national average of $989 and placed among the top-third nationwide. Barnstable County ($833, 252nd) had the lowest average weekly wage among Massachusetts' large counties.

Average weekly wages were higher than the national average in 102 of the 344 largest U.S. counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of $2,252. San Mateo, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of $1,871, followed by New York, N.Y. ($1,866), San Francisco, Calif. ($1,806), and Washington, D.C. ($1,623).

More than two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (242) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the second quarter of 2016. The lowest weekly wage was reported in Horry, S.C. ($598), followed by the Texas counties of Cameron ($602), Hidalgo ($626) and Webb ($659). 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. ($2,252).

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 $989. Among these smaller counties, Nantucket had the highest average weekly wage at $967 and Franklin reported the lowest at $781.

When all 14 counties in Massachusetts were considered, one county had an average weekly wage below $800. Five counties reported weekly wages ranging from $800 to $899 and four counties had weekly wages from $900 to $999. The four highest-paid counties, those with average weekly wages over $1,000, were located in the Boston metropolitan area.(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.

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 Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2015 are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn15.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 Services: 1-800-877-8339.

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 9.7 million employer reports cover 142.7 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/; 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 Massachusetts, second quarter 2016

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	June 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2015-16 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, second quarter 2015-16 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	142,717.20	1.5	--	$989	--	2.2	--
Massachusetts	3,538.20	1.2	--	1,233	2	2.0	29
Barnstable, Mass.	106.2	0.5	270	833	252	3.5	66
Bristol, Mass.	227.4	1.1	204	938	146	4.3	35
Essex, Mass.	328.4	0.6	257	1,054	69	2.9	105
Hampden, Mass.	208	-0.1	298	885	188	0.8	284
Middlesex, Mass.	893.1	1.1	204	1,470	11	-1.3	326
Norfolk, Mass.	355.3	1.3	188	1,162	39	2.2	181
Plymouth, Mass.	193.6	0.8	238	954	131	3.0	100
Suffolk, Mass.	658.6	2.5	87	1,571	6	4.0	52
Worcester, Mass.	343.9	1.1	204	992	100	3.4	73

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 the counties in Massachusetts, second quarter 2016

Area	Employment June 2016	Average Weekly Wage [1]
United States[2]	142,717,157	$989
Massachusetts	3,538,226	1,233
Barnstable	106,154	833
Berkshire	63,238	843
Bristol	227,402	938
Dukes	10,723	891
Essex	328,360	1,054
Franklin	27,315	781
Hampden	208,045	885
Hampshire	64,295	842
Middlesex	893,066	1,470
Nantucket	9,107	967
Norfolk	355,285	1,162
Plymouth	193,611	954
Suffolk	658,567	1,571
Worcester	343,901	992

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: Covered employment and wages include 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, second quarter 2016

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	June 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	142,717.2	1.5	$989	--	2.2	--
Alabama	1,923.5	1.2	835	37	2.0	29
Alaska	338.7	-2.4	1,011	10	-1.7	49
Arizona	2,619.6	2.6	921	22	1.9	33
Arkansas	1,197.5	1.1	785	47	3.0	7
California	16,754.1	2.5	1,157	5	2.4	19
Colorado	2,574.5	2.3	999	14	1.0	43
Connecticut	1,689.9	-0.1	1,213	3	3.0	7
Delaware	444.0	0.9	990	16	-0.6	48
District of Columbia	756.0	1.7	1,623	1	1.1	42
Florida	8,161.8	3.2	883	25	2.6	14
Georgia	4,269.5	2.7	929	21	2.7	11
Hawaii	643.4	1.0	906	24	3.5	5
Idaho	699.7	3.3	740	50	3.8	3
Illinois	5,945.0	0.2	1,038	9	2.4	19
Indiana	2,995.4	1.0	828	39	2.1	27
Iowa	1,566.0	0.3	825	40	2.9	9
Kansas	1,378.4	-0.2	829	38	1.2	39
Kentucky	1,877.2	1.5	838	36	1.9	33
Louisiana	1,905.2	-1.4	852	32	0.2	46
Maine	622.8	1.0	795	46	3.5	5
Maryland	2,656.0	0.9	1,070	8	2.5	15
Massachusetts	3,538.2	1.2	1,233	2	2.0	29
Michigan	4,300.9	1.9	942	19	2.7	11
Minnesota	2,846.8	0.7	997	15	2.0	29
Mississippi	1,120.1	0.5	727	51	2.5	15
Missouri	2,785.6	1.4	863	30	2.4	19
Montana	468.6	2.2	767	48	1.7	35
Nebraska	978.3	0.9	805	43	2.4	19
Nevada	1,289.4	3.3	874	27	2.2	26
New Hampshire	655.1	1.1	1,003	12	3.7	4
New Jersey	4,051.2	1.7	1,147	6	1.7	35
New Mexico	808.1	-0.3	812	42	0.9	44
New York	9,264.0	1.5	1,210	4	2.5	15
North Carolina	4,285.3	2.5	865	29	2.1	27
North Dakota	423.3	-4.9	908	23	-3.3	51
Ohio	5,353.1	0.8	882	26	2.0	29
Oklahoma	1,570.5	-1.4	823	41	0.6	45
Oregon	1,867.8	2.7	933	20	4.1	2
Pennsylvania	5,786.8	0.4	971	17	1.4	37
Rhode Island	482.9	0.6	949	18	2.5	15
South Carolina	2,013.7	2.4	804	44	2.8	10
South Dakota	432.7	1.0	760	49	2.7	11
Tennessee	2,900.4	2.4	874	27	1.3	38
Texas	11,810.7	1.0	1,000	13	1.2	39
Utah	1,395.9	3.8	840	35	2.3	25
Vermont	310.6	-0.1	850	33	2.4	19
Virginia	3,833.4	1.6	1,011	10	1.2	39
Washington	3,281.6	2.8	1,083	7	5.4	1
West Virginia	693.2	-1.9	800	45	-0.4	47
Wisconsin	2,869.1	0.9	856	31	2.4	19
Wyoming	281.7	-3.7	849	34	-2.2	50
Puerto Rico	879.5	-0.7	512	[3]	0.2	[3]

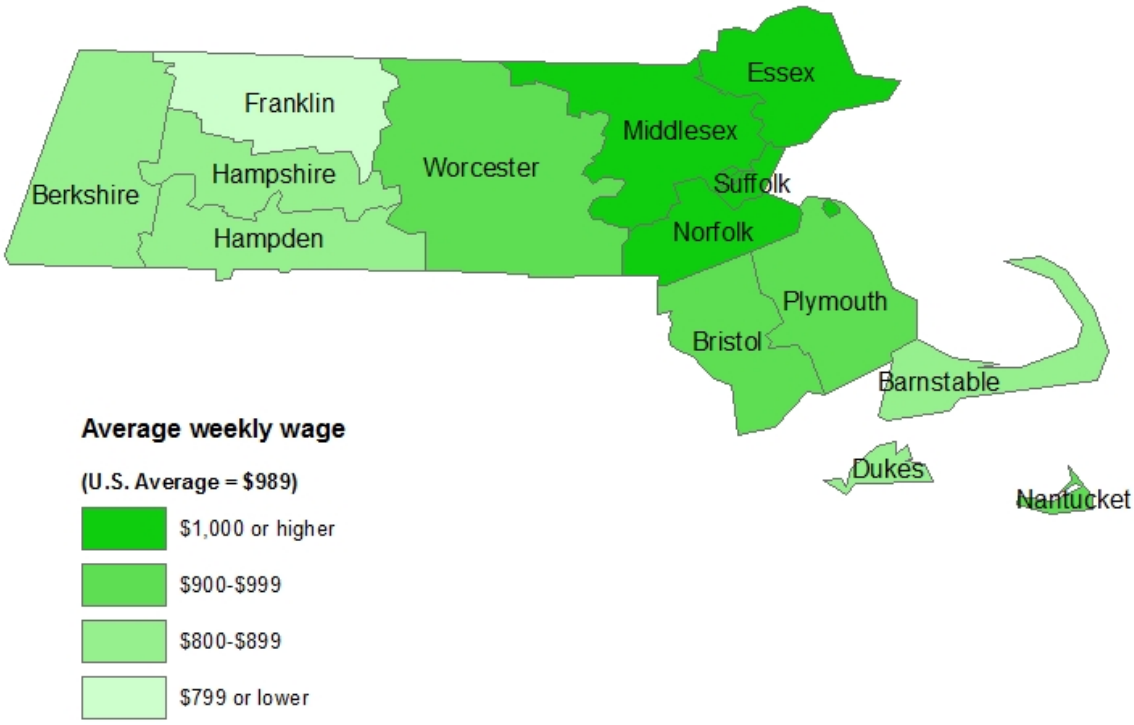
Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, second quarter 2016 - Continued

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	June 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, June 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, second quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
Virgin Islands	38.4	0.9	743	[3]	-0.4	[3]

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 Massachusetts, second quarter 2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.