



For Release: Friday, February 12, 2021

21-277-BOS

NEW ENGLAND INFORMATION OFFICE: Boston, Mass.

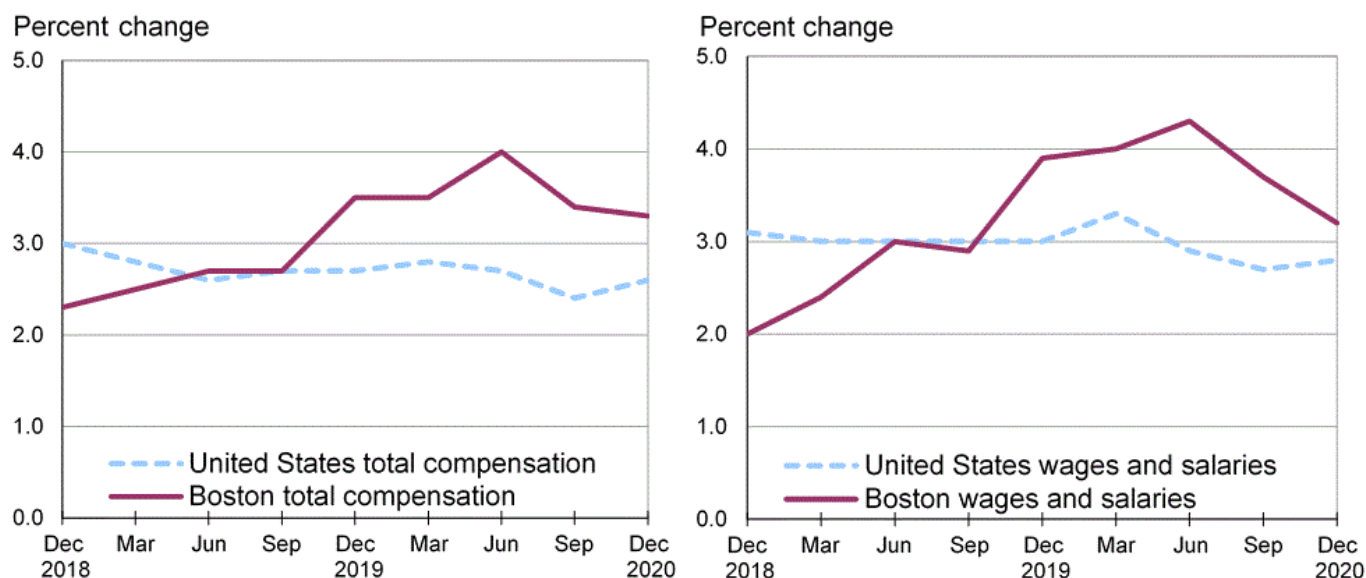
Technical information: (617) 565-2327 BLSInfoBoston@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/new-england

Media contact: (617) 565-2327 BLSMediaBoston@bls.gov

Changing Compensation Costs in the Boston Metropolitan Area — December 2020

Total compensation costs for private industry workers increased 3.3 percent in the Boston-Worcester-Providence, MA-RI-NH-CT Consolidated Statistical Area (CSA) for the 12-month period ending December 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner William J. Sibley noted that one year ago Boston experienced an annual gain of 3.5 percent in total compensation costs. Locally, wages and salaries, the largest component of total compensation costs, advanced at a 3.2-percent pace for the 12-month period ended December 2020. Nationwide, total compensation costs rose 2.6 percent and wages and salaries rose 2.8 percent over the same period. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Twelve-month percent changes in the Employment Cost Index, private industry workers, United States and the Boston area, not seasonally adjusted, December 2018–December 2020



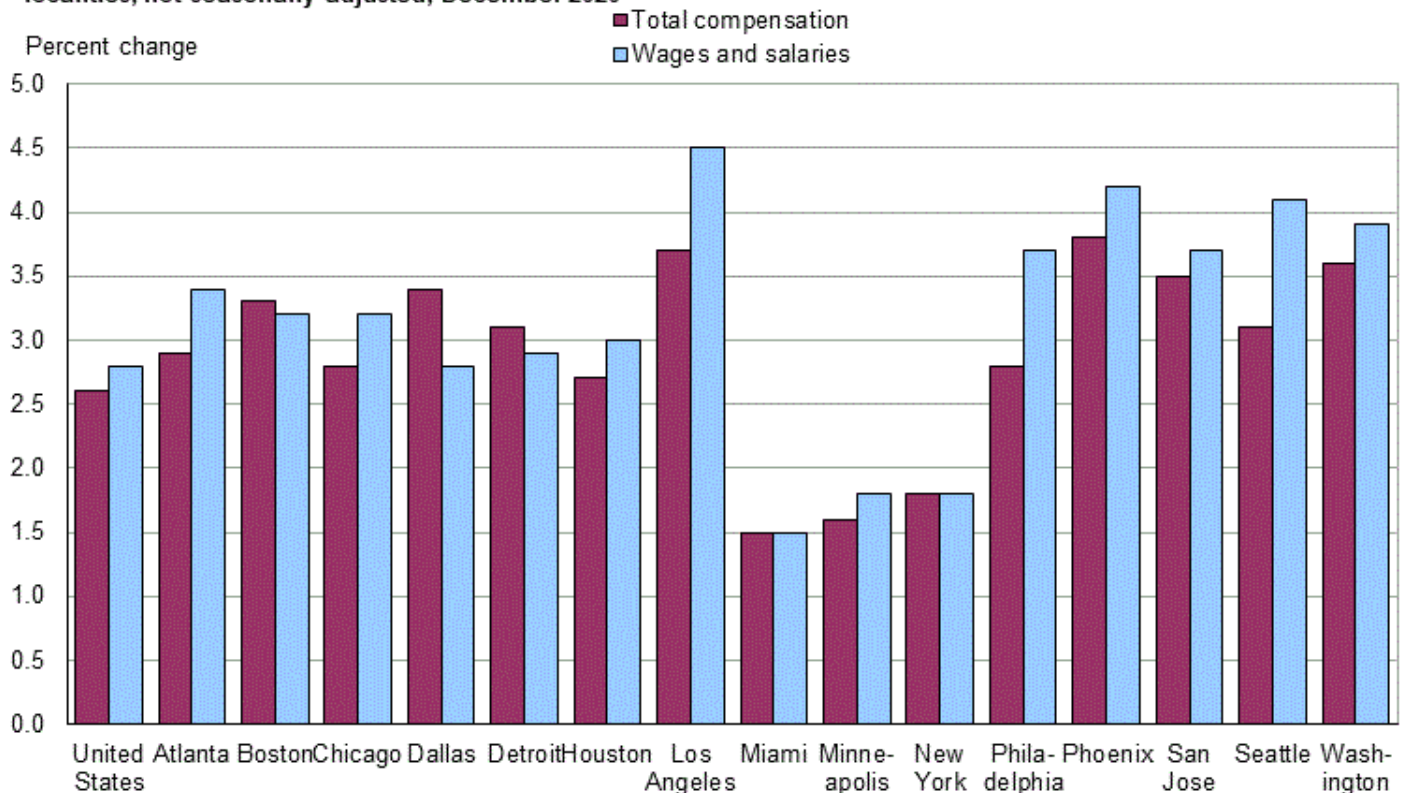
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Boston is 1 of 15 metropolitan areas in the United States, and 1 of 3 areas in the Northeast region of the country, for which locality compensation cost data are available. Among these 15-largest areas, eleven metropolitan areas had both total compensation growth and wage and salary growth that exceeded the U.S. average from December 2019 to December 2020. Over-the-year growth rates in the cost of total compensation ranged from an increase of 3.8 percent in Phoenix to 1.5 percent in Miami during December. Wage and salary annual growth rates ranged from 4.5 percent in Los Angeles to 1.5 percent in Miami. (See [chart 2](#).)

In comparison to the other metropolitan areas in the Northeast, the annual increase in total compensation costs in Boston (3.3 percent) was above that of Philadelphia (2.8 percent) and New York (1.8 percent). Boston's 3.2-percent gain in wages and salaries during December 2020 was also above that in New York (1.8 percent), but, below Philadelphia (3.7 percent).

Locality compensation costs are part of the national Employment Cost Index (ECI) which measures quarterly changes in total compensation costs, which include wages, salaries and employer costs for employee benefits. In addition to the 15 locality estimates provided in this release, ECI data for the nation, 4 geographical regions, and 9 geographical divisions are available. (Geographic definitions for the metropolitan areas mentioned in this release are included in the Technical Note.)

Chart 2. Twelve-month percent change in the Employment Cost Index, private industry workers, United States and localities, not seasonally adjusted, December 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor

In addition to the geographic data, a comprehensive national report is available that provides data by industry, occupational group and union status, as well as for both private and state and local government employees. The report on the ECI and further technical information may be obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, New England Information Office by calling 617-565-2327. The report is also available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/news.release/eci.toc.htm. Current and historical information for the Bureau programs may be accessed via our regional homepage at <https://www.bls.gov/regions/new-england/home.htm>.

The Employment Cost Index for March 2021 is scheduled for release on April 30, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. (ET). Information from the Employment Cost Index program is available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on December 2020 Employment Cost Index

The Employment Cost Index (ECI) reference date was December 12, 2020. Response rates for December were comparable with prior releases, and no changes in estimation procedures were necessary. Additional information is available at www.bls.gov/bls/effects-of-covid-19-on-workplace-injuries-and-illnesses-compensation-and-occupational-requirements.htm#ECI.

Technical Note

The Employment Cost Index (ECI) is a measure of the change in the cost of labor, free from the influence of employment shifts among occupations and industries. The total compensation series includes changes in wages and salaries and employer costs for employee benefits.

Wages and salaries are defined as straight-time average hourly earnings or, for workers not paid on an hourly basis, straight-time earnings divided by the corresponding hours. Straight-time wage and salary rates are total earnings before payroll deductions, excluding premium pay for overtime, work on weekends and holidays, and shift differentials. Production bonuses, incentive earnings, commission payments, and cost-of-living adjustments are included in straight-time earnings, whereas nonproduction bonuses (such as Christmas or year-end bonuses) are excluded.

Selection of areas

Based on available resources and the existing ECI sample, it was determined that estimates would be published for 14 metropolitan areas. Since the ECI sample sizes by area are directly related to area employment, the areas with the largest private industry employment as of the year 2000 were selected. For each of these areas, 12-month percent changes and associated standard errors were computed for the periods since December 2006. (Note: The Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia area was added to the list in September 2009 to make a total of 15 metropolitan areas.)

The metropolitan area definitions of the 15 published localities are listed below.

Atlanta-Athens-Clarke County-Sandy Springs, GA Combined Statistical Area (CSA) includes Barrow, Bartow, Butts, Carroll, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gordon, Gwinnett, Hall, Haralson, Heard, Henry, Jackson, Jasper, Lamar, Madison, Meriwether, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Rockdale, Spalding, Troup, Upson, and Walton Counties in Georgia.

Boston-Worcester-Providence, MA-RI-NH-CT CSA includes Barnstable, Bristol, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, and Worcester Counties in Massachusetts; Bristol, Kent, Newport, Providence, and Washington in Rhode Island; Belknap, Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, and Strafford Counties in New Hampshire, and Windham County in Connecticut.

Chicago-Naperville, IL-IN-WI CSA includes Bureau, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, La Salle, McHenry, Putnam and Will Counties in Illinois; Jasper, Lake, LaPorte, Newton, and Porter Counties in Indiana; and Kenosha County in Wisconsin.

Dallas-Fort Worth, TX-OK CSA includes Collin, Cooke, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Grayson, Henderson, Hood, Hopkins, Hunt, Johnson, Kaufman, Navarro, Palo Pinto, Parker, Rockwall, Somervell, Tarrant, and Wise Counties in Texas and Bryan County in Oklahoma.

Detroit-Warren-Ann Arbor, MI CSA includes Genesee, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, and Wayne Counties in Michigan.

Houston-The Woodlands, TX CSA includes Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Trinity, Walker, Waller, Washington and Wharton Counties in Texas.

Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA CSA includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura Counties in California.

Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Port St. Lucie, FL CSA includes Broward, Indian River, Martin, Miami-Dade, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties in Florida.

Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI CSA includes Anoka, Benton, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Goodhue, Hennepin, Isanti, Le Sueur, McLeod, Mille Lacs, Ramsey, Rice, Scott, Sherburne, Sibley, Stearns, Washington, and Wright Counties in Minnesota; and Pierce and St. Croix Counties in Wisconsin.

New York-Newark, NY-NJ-CT-PA CSA includes Bronx, Dutchess, Kings, Nassau, New York, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk, Ulster, and Westchester Counties in New York; Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren Counties in New Jersey; Fairfield, Litchfield, and New Haven Counties in Connecticut; and Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, and Pike Counties in Pennsylvania.

Philadelphia-Reading-Camden, PA-NJ-DE-MD CSA includes Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, , Montgomery, and Philadelphia Counties in Pennsylvania; Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties in New Jersey; Kent and New Castle Counties in Delaware; and Cecil County in Maryland.

Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes Maricopa and Pinal Counties in Arizona.

San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland, CA CSA includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma Counties in California.

Seattle-Tacoma, WA CSA includes Island, King, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, and Thurston Counties in Washington.

Washington-Baltimore-Arlington, DC-MD-VA-WV-PA CSA includes the District of Columbia; Baltimore City and Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Talbot, and Washington Counties in Maryland; Franklin County in Pennsylvania; Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Winchester Cities and Arlington, Clarke, Culpeper, Fairfax, Fauquier, Frederick, Loudoun, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Warren Counties in Virginia; and Berkeley, Hampshire, and Jefferson Counties in West Virginia.

Definitions of the four geographic regions of the country are noted below.

Northeast: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

South: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

West: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Table 1. Employment Cost Index for total compensation and for wages and salaries, private industry workers, United States, Northeast region, and the Boston area, not seasonally adjusted

Area	Total compensation				Wages and salaries			
	12-month percent changes for period ended-				12-month percent changes for period ended-			
	March	June	Sep.	Dec.	March	June	Sep.	Dec.
United States								
2016	1.8	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.6	2.4	2.3
2017	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.8
2018	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.1
2019	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.7	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
2020	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.6	3.3	2.9	2.7	2.8
Northeast								
2016	1.6	2.7	2.5	2.5	1.8	3.2	2.8	2.9
2017	2.3	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.2	2.8	3.0	2.7
2018	2.7	2.7	3.1	3.4	2.9	2.4	2.9	3.3
2019	3.3	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.7	3.3	3.5
2020	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.3	3.1	2.8	2.4	2.4
Boston-Worcester-Providence								
2016	2.2	2.2	1.9	2.3	2.9	2.9	2.5	2.9
2017	2.6	2.7	3.0	2.4	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.2
2018	2.0	1.7	2.4	2.3	1.7	1.1	2.0	2.0
2019	2.5	2.7	2.7	3.5	2.4	3.0	2.9	3.9
2020	3.5	4.0	3.4	3.3	4.0	4.3	3.7	3.2

Table 2. Employment Cost Index for total compensation and for wages and salaries, private industry workers, United States, geographical regions, and localities, not seasonally adjusted

Area	Total compensation			Wages and salaries		
	12-month percent changes for period ended-			12-month percent changes for period ended-		
	Dec. 2019	Sep. 2020	Dec. 2020	Dec. 2019	Sep. 2020	Dec. 2020
United States	2.7	2.4	2.6	3.0	2.7	2.8
Northeast	3.1	2.2	2.3	3.5	2.4	2.4
Boston-Worcester-Providence	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.9	3.7	3.2
New York-Newark	3.8	1.9	1.8	4.0	1.9	1.8
Philadelphia-Reading-Camden	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.5	2.8	3.7
South	2.5	2.3	2.6	2.8	2.5	2.8
Atlanta-Athens-Clarke County-Sandy Springs	3.1	2.5	2.9	3.8	2.6	3.4
Dallas-Fort Worth	2.6	3.1	3.4	3.4	2.4	2.8
Houston-The Woodlands	1.9	2.2	2.7	1.6	2.2	3.0
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Port St. Lucie	2.3	1.5	1.5	2.6	1.6	1.5
Washington-Baltimore-Arlington	2.8	3.6	3.6	2.9	3.9	3.9
Midwest	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.7	2.6
Chicago-Naperville	2.4	2.4	2.8	2.6	2.8	3.2
Detroit-Warren-Ann Arbor	2.9	2.7	3.1	3.7	3.0	2.9
Minneapolis-St. Paul	2.5	1.6	1.6	2.2	2.1	1.8
West	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2
Los Angeles-Long Beach	3.4	2.7	3.7	4.0	3.1	4.5
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale	3.3	3.3	3.8	3.7	3.8	4.2
San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland	2.6	3.5	3.5	3.2	4.0	3.7
Seattle-Tacoma	1.4	2.6	3.1	1.3	3.6	4.1