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County Employment and Wages in New Jersey - Fourth Quarter 2015

Wages grew in 14 of the 15 largest counties in New Jersey from the fourth quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2014 annual average employment.) Passaic County had the largest increase, with a gain of 9.4 percent, followed by Burlington and Essex Counties, up 5.8 and 5.7 percent, respectively. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1.](#)) Chief Regional Economist Martin Kohli noted that Passaic County’s wage increase ranked fourth among the 342 largest counties nationwide.

Twelve of New Jersey’s large counties reported average weekly wages above the \$1,082 national average in the fourth quarter of 2015. Average weekly wages in Morris and Somerset Counties exceeded \$1,500.

Chart 1. Large counties in New Jersey ranked by percent increase in average weekly wages, fourth quarter 2014-15

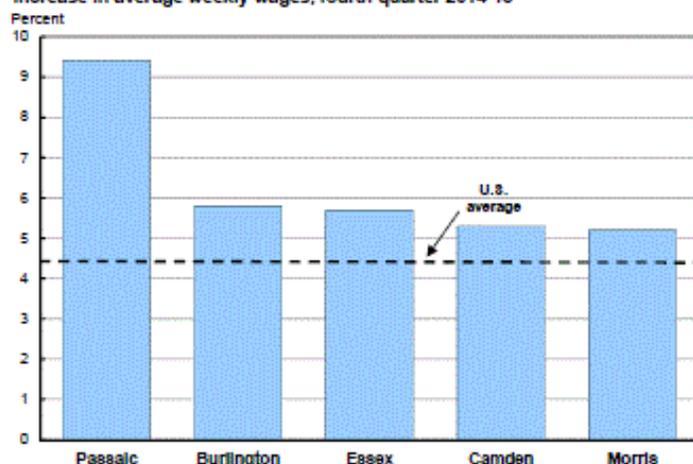
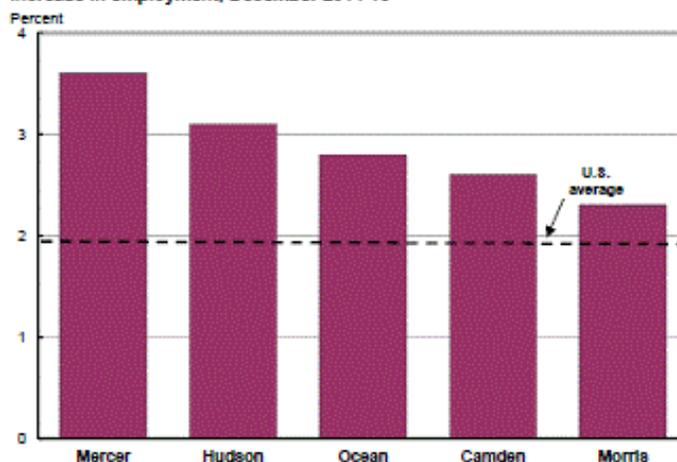


Chart 2. Large counties in New Jersey ranked by percent increase in employment, December 2014-15



The largest employment gain among New Jersey’s largest counties was in Mercer, up 3.6 percent. Nationally, employment grew by 1.9 percent from December 2014 to December 2015. (See [chart 2.](#))

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the six counties in New Jersey with employment below 75,000. Two of these counties had average weekly wages above the U.S. average of \$1,082. Cape May County reported the lowest average weekly wage, \$789. (See [table 2.](#))

Large County Wage Changes

In addition to Passaic County's 9.4-percent wage gain, five other large counties in the state—Burlington, Essex, Camden, Morris, and Middlesex—had over-the-year wage gains above the 4.4-percent national average. Four additional counties recorded wage gains of at least 3.2 percent. Wage gains in the remaining large counties ranged from 2.5 to 1.0 percent. (Data for Union County were not available.)

Among the 342 largest U.S. counties, 325 recorded gains in average weekly wages. Wyandotte, Kan., had the largest wage increase (10.4 percent). In contrast, 10 counties nationwide experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Midland, Texas, had the largest over-the-year wage decline (-11.5 percent).

Large County Average Weekly Wages

As noted, 12 of New Jersey's large counties reported average weekly wages above the national average. The state's four highest-paying counties—Morris, Somerset, Hudson, and Union—ranked among the nation's top 25. Ocean County had an average weekly wage of \$890, the lowest of all New Jersey's large counties, ranking it in the bottom quartile nationally at 264th.

Nationally, 101 large counties registered average weekly wages equal to or above the U.S. average of \$1,082 in the fourth quarter of 2015. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,335. New York, N.Y., was second at \$2,235, followed by San Mateo, Calif. (\$2,095).

Among the 241 counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the fourth quarter 2015, Cameron County, Texas, reported the lowest average weekly wage (\$649), followed by Horry, S.C. (\$653) and Hidalgo, Texas (\$661).

Large County Employment

Employment grew in 13 of the 15 largest counties in New Jersey from December 2014 to December 2015. Eight of the counties had increases equal to or above the national job growth rate of 1.9 percent, led by Mercer (3.6 percent) and Hudson (3.1 percent). One large county in New Jersey, Passaic (-1.1 percent) had an over-the-year employment loss. (Data for Union County were not available.)

Nationally, employment grew in 308 of the 342 large U.S. counties. Williamson, Tenn., had the largest percentage increase in employment with a gain of 6.8 percent over the year. Ector, Texas, had the largest over-the-year employment decrease nationwide, 11.8 percent.

In New Jersey, employment was highest in Bergen (454,100), followed by Middlesex (415,600), and Essex (343,400). Altogether, New Jersey's large counties accounted for 91.0 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment.

Average Weekly Wages in New Jersey's Smaller Counties

Two of New Jersey's six counties with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages above the national average—Hunterdon (\$1,237) and Salem (\$1,142). (See [table 2](#).)

When all 21 counties in New Jersey were considered, 9 had an average weekly above \$1,150. All of these counties were clustered in northern and central New Jersey. The one county with average weekly wages below \$850 was located at the southern tip of the state. (See [chart 3](#).)

Additional Statistics and Other Information

QCEW data for states has 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 2014 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 2015 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2014* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn14.htm. The 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2016.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 7, 2016, at 10:00 a.m. (ET).

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 141.9 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.

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 15 largest counties in New Jersey, fourth quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2014-15 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	141,924.50	1.9	--	\$1,082	--	4.4	--
New Jersey.....	3,988.40	1.7	--	1,262	6	4.0	31
Atlantic, N.J.	124.5	0.2	304	896	260	2.4	300
Bergen, N.J.	454.1	0.7	273	1,324	28	2.5	298
Burlington, N.J.	201.2	0.9	254	1,124	77	5.8	94
Camden, N.J.	201.4	2.6	125	1,090	98	5.3	127
Essex, N.J.	343.4	0.3	299	1,295	33	5.7	100
Gloucester, N.J.	105.5	2.2	144	946	208	3.7	254
Hudson, N.J.	250.3	3.1	87	1,375	21	3.9	237
Mercer, N.J.	248.5	3.6	51	1,327	26	1.1	320
Middlesex, N.J.	415.6	1.5	205	1,274	41	5.1	148
Monmouth, N.J.	257.1	2.2	144	1,091	96	3.2	280
Morris, N.J.	291.5	2.3	138	1,601	10	5.2	137
Ocean, N.J.	160.5	2.8	108	890	264	4.3	212
Passaic, N.J.	169	-1.1	329	1,111	83	9.4	4
Somerset, N.J.	186.2	1.9	171	1,576	11	1	321
Union, N.J.	219.3	⁽⁵⁾	--	1,373	22	⁽⁵⁾	--

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.
- (5) Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

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 counties in New Jersey, fourth quarter 2015

Area	Employment December 2015 (thousands)	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
United States ⁽²⁾	141,924.5	\$1,082
New Jersey	3,988.4	1,262
Atlantic	124.5	896
Bergen	454.1	1,324
Burlington	201.2	1,124
Camden	201.4	1,090
Cape May	35.5	789
Cumberland	59.0	932
Essex	343.4	1,295
Gloucester	105.5	946
Hudson	250.3	1,375
Hunterdon	47.0	1,237
Mercer	248.5	1,327
Middlesex	415.6	1,274
Monmouth	257.1	1,091
Morris	291.5	1,601
Ocean	160.5	890
Passaic	169.0	1,111
Salem	20.5	1,142
Somerset	186.2	1,576
Sussex	38.7	920
Union	219.3	1,373
Warren	34.1	1,020
Footnotes		

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.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	141,924.5	1.9	\$1,082	--	4.4	--
Alabama	1,916.2	1.4	912	37	3.4	37
Alaska	315.9	-0.5	1,095	13	2.9	43
Arizona	2,701.8	2.6	967	24	4.4	28
Arkansas	1,201.4	1.7	838	46	3.8	35
California	16,593.8	3.1	1,274	5	5.4	10
Colorado	2,537.5	2.5	1,103	11	3.3	40
Connecticut	1,685.1	0.3	1,334	4	4.3	29
Delaware	441.2	1.8	1,086	15	3.4	37
District of Columbia	754.2	2.2	1,756	1	3.4	37
Florida	8,308.1	3.7	958	26	5.2	16
Georgia	4,249.4	2.9	1,001	21	4.5	27
Hawaii	653.0	2.2	957	27	5.4	10
Idaho	670.1	3.4	803	50	2.6	45
Illinois	5,931.2	1.4	1,146	8	5.1	18
Indiana	2,996.3	1.7	891	40	5.3	14
Iowa	1,539.0	0.7	920	34	5.7	3
Kansas	1,382.1	0.4	898	38	5.0	20
Kentucky	1,881.3	1.6	885	41	5.9	1
Louisiana	1,937.4	-1.0	940	29	1.8	47
Maine	596.9	0.7	873	43	5.7	3
Maryland	2,636.7	1.7	1,175	7	5.6	5
Massachusetts	3,479.1	1.6	1,385	2	5.4	10
Michigan	4,218.9	1.5	1,043	18	5.9	1
Minnesota	2,805.8	1.5	1,073	16	4.8	22
Mississippi	1,133.8	1.3	770	51	3.1	41
Missouri	2,759.6	1.8	933	33	4.6	25
Montana	453.2	2.5	818	49	3.0	42
Nebraska	971.8	1.4	880	42	5.1	18
Nevada	1,272.2	3.5	935	32	4.0	31
New Hampshire	648.6	1.7	1,139	9	5.4	10
New Jersey	3,988.4	1.7	1,262	6	4.0	31
New Mexico	808.9	-0.1	865	44	1.8	47
New York	9,227.6	1.7	1,372	3	3.9	34
North Carolina	4,247.1	2.5	939	30	5.5	8
North Dakota	428.1	-5.9	1,021	20	-2.8	51
Ohio	5,328.8	1.2	964	25	4.6	25
Oklahoma	1,605.0	-0.7	896	39	2.3	46
Oregon	1,814.8	3.3	979	23	5.5	8
Pennsylvania	5,759.7	0.7	1,063	17	4.9	21
Rhode Island	478.1	1.5	1,043	18	4.0	31
South Carolina	1,987.1	2.8	860	45	5.3	14
South Dakota	417.7	1.2	832	47	5.2	16
Tennessee	2,898.1	2.8	980	22	5.6	5
Texas	11,832.1	1.4	1,099	12	2.7	44
Utah	1,375.6	3.8	913	36	4.7	23
Vermont	312.1	0.3	919	35	4.1	30
Virginia	3,806.2	3.0	1,094	14	3.5	36
Washington	3,137.2	2.3	1,132	10	4.7	23
West Virginia	703.7	-1.3	829	48	1.3	49
Wisconsin	2,820.5	1.1	944	28	5.6	5
Wyoming	276.0	-2.9	937	31	-1.7	50
Puerto Rico	929.9	-1.6	565	(3)	1.6	(3)
Virgin Islands	38.4	-0.3	787	(3)	4.7	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

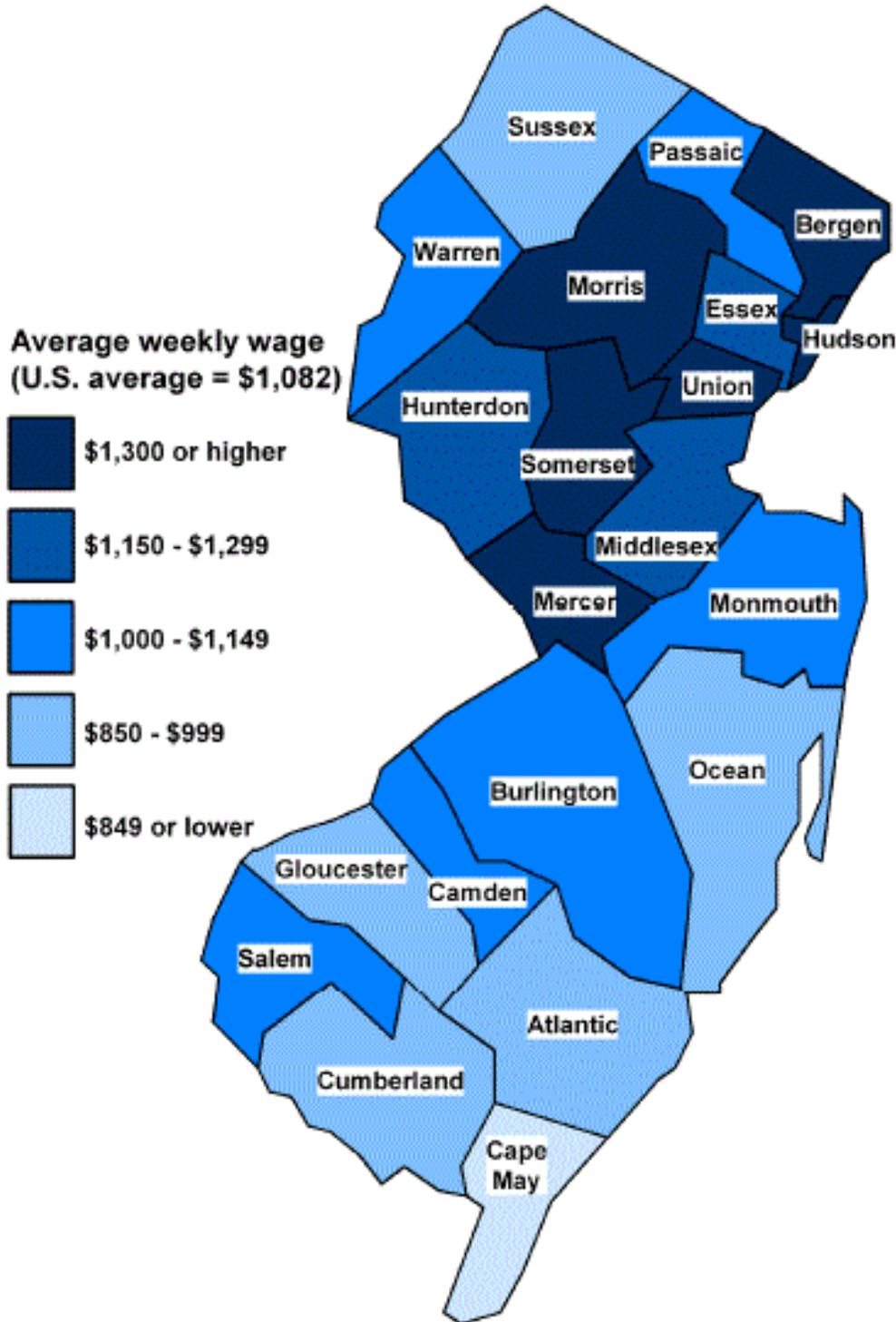
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 3. Average weekly wages by county in New Jersey, fourth quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.