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Occupational Employment and Wages in Ponce — May 2017

Workers in the Ponce Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$12.49 in May 2017, about 49 percent below the United States average of \$24.34, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Chief Regional Economist Martin Kohli noted that, after testing for statistical significance, average wages in the local area were lower than their respective U.S. averages in 21 of the 22 major occupational groups.

When compared to the U.S. distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including education, training, and library; sales and related; and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance. Conversely, 13 groups had employment shares significantly below their mainland representation, including business and financial operations; transportation and material moving; and computer and mathematical. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Ponce Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2017

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Ponce	United States	Ponce	Percent difference (1)
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0	\$24.34	\$12.49*	-49
Management	5.1	3.4*	57.65	28.85*	-50
Business and financial operations	5.2	2.1*	36.70	17.98*	-51
Computer and mathematical	3.0	1.0*	43.18	(2)	(2)
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.3	41.44	27.35*	-34
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.5*	35.76	18.63*	-48
Community and social service.....	1.5	1.3*	23.10	14.13*	-39
Legal.....	0.8	0.2*	51.62	26.39*	-49
Education, training, and library.....	6.1	11.1*	26.67	17.50*	-34
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.4	0.5*	28.34	10.60*	-63
Healthcare practitioners and technical	6.0	7.2*	38.83	16.54*	-57
Healthcare support	2.9	1.5*	15.05	9.27*	-38
Protective service	2.4	2.1	22.69	11.36*	-50
Food preparation and serving related	9.3	8.9	11.88	8.97*	-24
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance ...	3.1	6.7*	13.91	9.10*	-35
Personal care and service.....	3.6	1.8*	13.11	9.02*	-31
Sales and related	10.2	14.9*	19.56	9.62*	-51
Office and administrative support.....	15.4	16.1	18.24	10.23*	-44
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.3*	13.87	8.37*	-40
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	3.0*	24.01	9.41*	-61
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	3.1*	23.02	12.18*	-47
Production	6.3	8.2*	18.30	10.47*	-43
Transportation and material moving.....	7.0	4.5*	17.82	9.16*	-49

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in the Ponce Metropolitan Statistical Area is above the U.S. mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

(2) Estimate not released

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Ponce had 4,930 jobs in production, accounting for 8.2 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.3-percent U.S. share. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$10.47, significantly below the U.S. wage of \$18.30.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the production group included assemblers and fabricators, all other, including team assemblers (1,140), inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers (440), and first-line supervisors of production and operating workers (330). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of production and operating workers and tool and die makers, with mean hourly wages of \$17.66 and \$14.94, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were bakers (\$8.49) and food batchmakers (\$8.57). (Detailed occupational data for production are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_38660.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the U.S. average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does in the United States. In the Ponce Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, butchers and meat cutters were employed at 3.7 times the U.S. rate in Ponce, and bakers, at 2.4 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, first-line supervisors of production and operating workers had a location quotient of 1.3 in Ponce, indicating that this particular occupation's local and U.S. employment shares were similar.

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 Puerto Rico Department of Labor and Human Resources.

Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

With the release of the May 2017 estimates, the OES program has replaced 21 detailed occupations found in the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) with 10 new aggregations of those occupations. In addition, selected 4- and 5-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industries previously published by OES will no longer be published separately. Some of the 4-digit NAICS industries that are no longer being published separately will instead be published as OES-specific industry aggregations. More information about the new occupational and industry aggregations is available at www.bls.gov/oes/changes_2017.htm.

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. The OES data available from BLS include cross-industry occupational employment and wage estimates for the nation; over 650 areas, including states and the District of Columbia, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), metropolitan divisions, nonmetropolitan areas, and territories; national industry-specific estimates at the NAICS sector, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industry levels, and national estimates by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Each year, two semiannual panels of approximately 200,000 sampled establishments are contacted, one panel in May and the other in November. Responses are obtained by mail, Internet or other electronic means, email, telephone, or personal visit. The May 2017 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2017, November 2016, May 2016, November 2015, May 2015, and November 2014. The overall national response rate for the six panels, based on the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is 72 percent based on establishments and 68 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted sample employment of 82 million across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 58 percent of total national employment. The sample in the Ponce Metropolitan Statistical Area included 827 establishments with a response rate of 84 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_tec.htm.

The May 2017 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

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.

The **Ponce, P.R. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Guánica, Guayanilla, Juana Díaz, Peñuelas, Ponce, Villalba, and Yauco Municipios.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/new-york-new-jersey. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf.

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. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Ponce Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2017

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production occupations	4,930	1.3	\$10.47	\$21,770
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	330	1.3	17.66	36,730
Assemblers and fabricators, all other, including team assemblers	1,140	2.1	9.77	20,320
Bakers	190	2.4	8.49	17,660
Butchers and meat cutters	200	3.7	8.72	18,140
Food batchmakers	170	2.7	8.57	17,820
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	50	0.7	9.10	18,940
Machinists	330	2.1	10.78	22,420
Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	50	0.7	8.61	17,900
Tool and die makers	50	1.5	14.94	31,070
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	150	0.9	11.46	23,840
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	(5)	(5)	8.62	17,920
Plant and system operators, all other	50	10.0	9.74	20,260
Crushing, grinding, and polishing machine setters, operators, and tenders	60	4.3	11.35	23,610
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	440	1.9	12.27	25,510
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	280	1.7	9.64	20,060
Helpers--production workers	70	0.4	8.80	18,300
Production workers, all other	560	5.2	8.86	18,420

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Ponce, PR, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_38660.htm.

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the U.S. average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a "year-round, full-time" hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Estimate not released.