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County Employment and Wages in Georgia – Fourth Quarter 2015

Employment increased in all 10 of Georgia's large counties from December 2014 to December 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.) Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that employment increases ranged from 5.0 percent in Hall County to 0.1 percent in Muscogee County. (See [table 1](#).)

Nationally, employment advanced 1.9 percent from December 2014 to December 2015 as 308 of the 342 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Williamson, Tenn., recorded the largest percentage increase, up 6.8 percent over the year. Ector, Texas, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment among the large U.S. counties, with a loss of 11.8 percent.

Among the 10 largest counties in Georgia, employment was highest in Fulton County (811,400) in December 2015, while Hall County had the smallest employment level (82,200). Together, Georgia's large counties accounted for 57.2 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 141.9 million in December 2015.

Nine of Georgia's 10 large counties had over-the-year wage increases in the fourth quarter of 2015, with the largest gain in Hall County, up 7.4 percent, followed by Muscogee County, up 6.6 percent. Fulton County had the highest average weekly wage among the state's largest counties (\$1,402), followed by Cobb County (\$1,118), DeKalb County (\$1,048), and Gwinnett County (\$1,041). Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 4.4 percent over the year to \$1,082 in the fourth quarter of 2015. (See [table 1](#).)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 149 counties in Georgia with employment below 75,000. With the exception of Burke County (\$1,082), wage levels in all of these smaller counties were below the national average in December 2015. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages increased in 9 of the 10 large counties in Georgia from the fourth quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2015. The wage gains in three of the state's large counties placed in the top third of the national ranking—Hall (7.4 percent, 20th), Muscogee (6.6 percent, 43rd), and Chatham (5.9 percent, 88th). (See [table 1](#).) In contrast, Clayton County had an over-the-year wage decline, down 1.8 percent.

Nationally, 325 of the 342 largest counties registered over-the-year wage increases. Wyandotte, Kan., had the largest percentage wage increase among the largest U.S. counties (10.4 percent). Sonoma, Calif., was second with a wage increase of 10.0 percent, followed by Lake, Ill. (9.8 percent); Passaic, N.J. (9.4 percent); and Santa Clara, Calif., and Anoka, Minn. (9.3 percent each).

Of the 342 largest counties, 10 experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages, with a loss of 11.5 percent. Ector, Texas, had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages (-8.0 percent), followed by Lafayette, La. (-4.3 percent); Gregg, Texas (-3.2 percent); and San Mateo, Calif. (-2.3 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 4 of Georgia's 10 large counties placed in the top half of the national ranking in the fourth quarter of 2015. The highest paid counties—Fulton and Cobb—had average weekly wages above the U.S. average of \$1,082 and ranked in the top 80 nationwide. Average weekly wages in DeKalb (\$1,048) and Gwinnett (\$1,041) ranked 126th and 130th, respectively.

Nationwide, average weekly wages were above the U.S. average (\$1,082) in 100 of the 342 largest counties in the fourth quarter of 2015. Santa Clara, Calif., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$2,335, followed by New York, N.Y. (\$2,235); San Mateo, Calif. (\$2,095); San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,961); and Suffolk Mass. (\$1,943).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 241 had average weekly wages below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2015. Cameron County, Texas (\$649), reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Horry, S.C. (\$653); Hidalgo, Texas (\$661); Webb, Texas (\$706); and Harrison, Miss. (\$729).

Average weekly wages in Georgia's smaller counties

With the exception of Burke County (\$1,082), all of the smaller counties in Georgia, those with employment below 75,000, had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$1,082. Among the smaller counties, Forsyth had the second highest average weekly wage at \$1,018, followed by Rockdale at \$1,001. Glascock County had the lowest average weekly wage in state at \$484. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 159 counties in Georgia were considered, 19 reported average weekly wages below \$600, 75 had wages from \$600-\$699, 30 had wages from \$700-\$799, 22 had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 13 reported wages above \$900. (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 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 <https://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn14.htm>. The 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in December 2016.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 7, 2016.

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 10 largest counties in Georgia, 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⁾	141,924.5	1.9	--	\$1,082	--	4.4	--
Georgia.....	4,249.4	2.9	--	1,001	21	4.5	27
Bibb, Ga.	84.8	1.1	235	838	307	4.5	196
Chatham, Ga.	147.9	3.3	69	921	236	5.9	88
Clayton, Ga.	121.9	4.8	13	957	197	-1.8	330
Cobb, Ga.	340.6	3.0	93	1,118	80	3.4	266
DeKalb, Ga.	301.0	3.8	37	1,048	126	3.4	266
Fulton, Ga.	811.4	2.8	108	1,402	19	4.5	196
Gwinnett, Ga.	341.9	2.9	102	1,041	130	4.0	230
Hall, Ga.	82.2	5.0	10	930	225	7.4	20
Muscogee, Ga.	94.9	0.1	306	860	290	6.6	43
Richmond, Ga.	105.3	1.2	221	875	281	4.8	172

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 counties in Georgia, fourth quarter 2015

Area	Employment December 2015	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
United States ⁽²⁾	141,924,459	\$1,082
Georgia	4,249,419	1,001
Appling	6,666	793
Atkinson	1,960	688
Bacon	3,822	689
Baker	435	723
Baldwin	15,166	659
Banks	3,826	640
Barrow	17,995	720
Bartow	35,050	859
Ben Hill	5,410	643
Berrien	3,568	633
Bibb	84,824	838
Bleckley	2,693	573
Brantley	2,204	579
Brooks	3,054	664
Bryan	7,544	687
Bulloch	25,243	653
Burke	6,975	1,082
Butts	6,561	696
Calhoun	1,088	650
Camden	16,052	895
Candler	2,807	589
Carroll	40,179	804
Catoosa	14,893	683
Charlton	2,107	673
Chatham	147,911	921
Chattahoochee	2,237	907
Chattooga	6,386	636
Cherokee	55,041	810
Clarke	68,908	851
Clay	514	615
Clayton	121,926	957
Clinch	2,292	642
Cobb	340,632	1,118
Coffee	16,385	678
Colquitt	14,699	640
Columbia	31,991	771
Cook	4,003	593
Coweta	37,449	800
Crawford	1,293	698
Crisp	8,395	656
Dade	3,282	665
Dawson	8,564	573
Decatur	8,336	664
De Kalb	301,019	1,048
Dodge	4,974	588
Dooly	3,857	646
Dougherty	47,575	787
Douglas	40,400	732
Early	4,397	862
Echols	809	585
Effingham	9,516	813
Elbert	5,589	676
Emanuel	6,821	623
Evans	4,419	773
Fannin	5,938	607

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Georgia, fourth quarter 2015 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2015	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
Fayette	41,658	831
Floyd.....	39,261	835
Forsyth	70,689	1,018
Franklin.....	7,743	714
Fulton	811,405	1,402
Gilmer	7,213	596
Glascocock.....	429	484
Glynn	36,811	846
Gordon	21,845	746
Grady.....	6,171	642
Greene	5,682	708
Gwinnett	341,892	1,041
Habersham.....	14,817	650
Hall	82,194	930
Hancock	1,552	664
Haralson	6,436	795
Harris.....	4,633	619
Hart.....	6,103	710
Heard.....	2,122	907
Henry.....	55,823	727
Houston	58,229	850
Irwin.....	1,941	594
Jackson	24,207	762
Jasper.....	2,092	613
Jeff Davis.....	4,674	654
Jefferson.....	4,628	685
Jenkins	1,351	568
Johnson	1,632	635
Jones.....	4,565	668
Lamar	3,659	665
Lanier	1,378	624
Laurens	18,050	746
Lee	6,063	646
Liberty.....	18,024	799
Lincoln	1,289	626
Long	900	605
Lowndes	49,378	675
Lumpkin.....	7,011	690
McDuffie	6,825	668
McIntosh.....	1,783	538
Macon.....	2,798	747
Madison	3,093	616
Marion	1,208	600
Meriwether.....	4,340	677
Miller.....	1,678	678
Mitchell	7,568	609
Monroe	7,511	751
Montgomery	1,646	689
Morgan	6,685	668
Murray	9,118	667
Muscogee.....	94,903	860
Newton	23,489	816
Oconee.....	9,964	798
Oglethorpe.....	1,545	622
Paulding	22,044	723
Peach	8,779	740

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Georgia, fourth quarter 2015 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2015	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
Pickens.....	7,417	878
Pierce.....	4,035	679
Pike.....	2,849	624
Polk.....	11,078	726
Pulaski.....	2,774	685
Putnam.....	5,499	607
Quitman.....	375	556
Rabun.....	4,585	592
Randolph.....	1,907	638
Richmond.....	105,325	875
Rockdale.....	33,103	1,001
Schley.....	982	652
Screven.....	3,303	666
Seminole.....	2,290	685
Spalding.....	22,118	680
Stephens.....	9,194	806
Stewart.....	1,171	755
Sumter.....	11,205	696
Talbot.....	697	686
Taliaferro.....	187	504
Tattnall.....	5,784	687
Taylor.....	1,700	754
Telfair.....	3,558	545
Terrell.....	2,381	684
Thomas.....	20,797	818
Tift.....	19,739	882
Toombs.....	11,978	659
Towns.....	3,243	560
Treutlen.....	1,140	562
Troup.....	39,310	850
Turner.....	2,086	639
Twiggs.....	1,148	666
Union.....	6,919	642
Upson.....	6,651	678
Walker.....	13,248	650
Walton.....	20,922	781
Ware.....	15,321	700
Warren.....	1,469	787
Washington.....	6,587	729
Wayne.....	7,917	748
Webster.....	506	733
Wheeler.....	1,134	646
White.....	7,243	652
Whitfield.....	55,086	867
Wilcox.....	1,160	538
Wilkes.....	2,976	631
Wilkinson.....	3,227	901
Worth.....	3,290	672

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: Includes 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, 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 1. Average weekly wages by county in Georgia, fourth quarter 2015

