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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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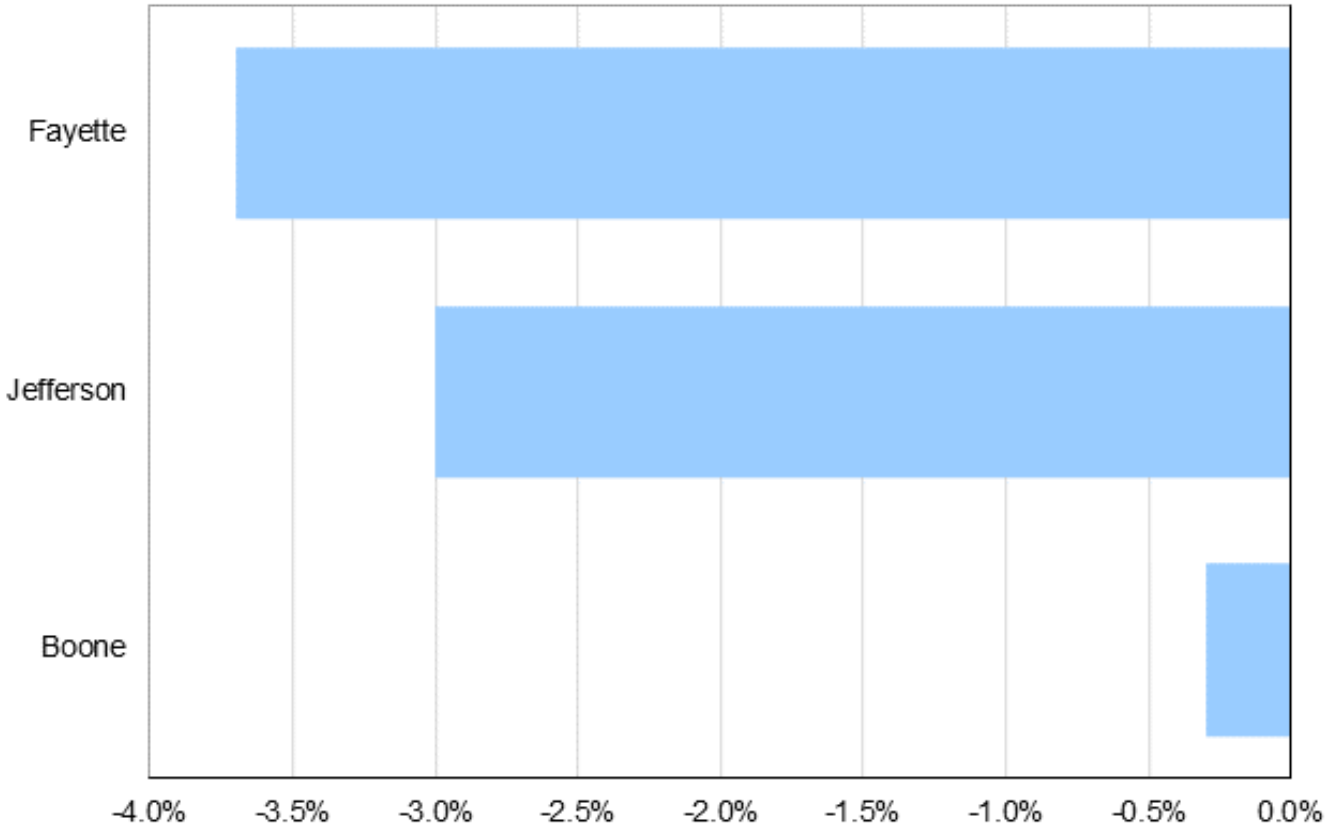
County Employment and Wages in Kentucky — First Quarter 2021

Employment fell in Kentucky's three largest counties from March 2020 to March 2021, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2020.) Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that Fayette County had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment at 3.7 percent. (See chart 1 and table 1.)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in covered employment among the largest counties in Kentucky, March 2021



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

National employment decreased 4.5 percent over the year, with 324 of the 343 largest U.S. counties reporting declines. Calcasieu, LA, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 14.9 percent. Utah, UT, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment with a gain of 6.1 percent.

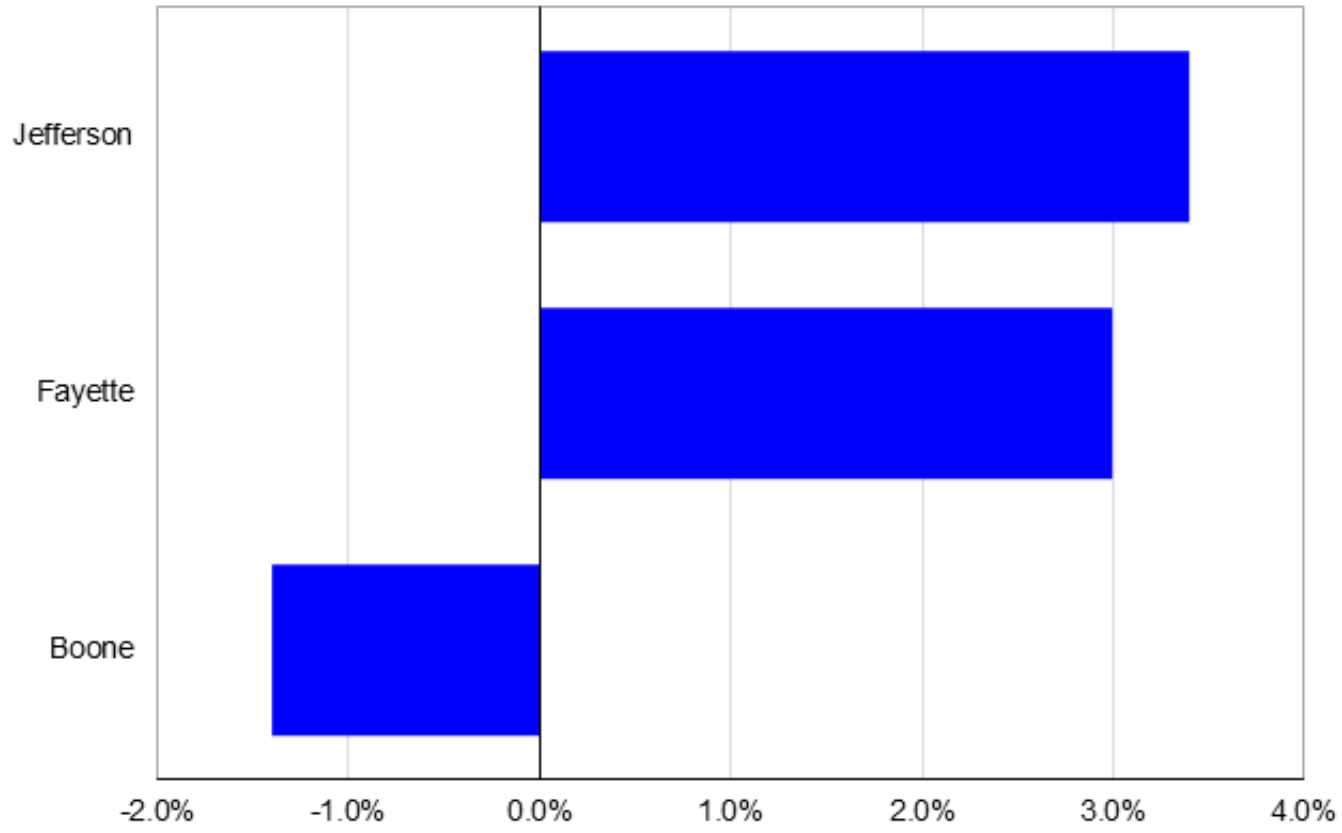
Among the three largest counties in Kentucky, employment was highest in Jefferson County (452,000) in March 2021. Within Jefferson County's private industry, health care and social assistance accounted for the largest employment. Together, the three largest Kentucky counties accounted for 40.0 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 343 largest counties made up 72.3 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 117 counties in Kentucky with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in 116 of the 117 smaller counties were below the national average in the first quarter of 2021. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Among Kentucky's three largest counties, Jefferson County (+3.4 percent) and Fayette County (+3.0 percent) reported average weekly wage gains from the first quarter of 2020 to the first quarter of 2021. (See chart 2.) Boone County reported an over-the-year decline in average weekly wages.

Chart 2. Over-the-year percent change in covered average weekly wages among the largest counties in Kentucky, first quarter 2021



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the 343 largest counties in the United States, 312 had over-the-year wage increases. Nationally, across most industries, increases in average weekly wages reflect substantial employment declines combined with wage increases. The lowest paying industry, leisure and hospitality, had the largest employment loss, which resulted in higher average weekly wages for the industry and the nation. San Francisco, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (+33.9 percent). Clayton, GA, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-14.2 percent).

Large county average weekly wages
Weekly wages in all of Kentucky's three largest counties were below the national average of $1,289 in the first quarter of 2021. Average weekly wages in Jefferson County ($1,215, 113th) ranked in the top third nationwide.

Among the largest U.S. counties, 84 reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the first quarter of 2021. New York, NY, had the highest average weekly wage at $3,967. Average weekly wages were below the national average in the remaining 259 counties. At $685 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

Average weekly wages in Kentucky's smaller counties
Among the 117 smaller counties in Kentucky—those with employment below 75,000—Hancock ($1,332) reported an average weekly wage above the national average of $1,289. Nicholas County ($555) reported the lowest average weekly wage in the state.

When all 120 counties in Kentucky were considered, 42 reported average weekly wages of less than $700, 37 registered wages from $700 to $799, 25 had wages from $800 to $899, 9 had wages from $900 to $999, and 7 had average weekly wages of $1,000 or higher. (See chart 3.)

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. This publication is typically published in September of the following year of the reference period or shortly after the QCEW first quarter full data update. The *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* is available at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/.

The County Employment and Wages release for second quarter 2021 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, November 17, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. (ET). The County Employment and Wages full data update for second quarter 2021 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, 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 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 individuals with sensory impairments 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 three largest counties in Kentucky, first quarter 2021

Area	Establishments, first quarter 2021 (thousands)	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
		March 2021 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2020–21 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	First quarter 2021	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, first quarter 2020–21 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	10,755.4	140,455.8	-4.5	--	$1,289	--	5.6	--
Kentucky	130.7	1,835.2	-2.5	--	965	41	2.3	42
Boone	5.0	96.0	-0.3	14	936	297	-1.4	324
Fayette	12.2	185.5	-3.7	111	1,017	231	3.0	232
Jefferson	27.7	452.0	-3.0	84	1,215	113	3.4	213

Footnotes:
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
(2) Percent changes were computed from 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 Kentucky, first quarter 2021

Area	Employment March 2021	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	140,455,819	$1,289
Kentucky	1,835,209	965
Adair	4,360	650
Allen	4,543	712
Anderson	4,775	749
Ballard	2,234	750
Barren	14,671	740
Bath	1,890	746
Bell	7,953	669
Boone	96,041	936
Bourbon	6,641	837
Boyd	23,253	970
Boyle	13,742	822
Bracken	1,277	743
Breathitt	2,587	658
Breckinridge	3,446	698
Bullitt	27,063	830
Butler	2,799	711
Caldwell	4,565	661
Calloway	14,968	733
Campbell	28,951	897
Carlisle	994	679
Carroll	6,883	1,242
Carter	5,386	672
Casey	3,844	668
Christian	30,073	855
Clark	13,779	840
Clay	3,887	721
Clinton	3,950	576
Crittenden	1,899	631
Cumberland	1,909	716
Daviess	44,210	874
Edmonson	1,486	666
Elliott	828	631
Estill	2,186	796
Fayette	185,473	1,017
Fleming	3,116	743
Floyd	10,090	750
Franklin	31,253	914
Fulton	2,045	632
Gallatin	2,460	1,057
Garrard	2,100	672
Grant	4,893	839
Graves	11,471	743
Grayson	7,353	727
Green	1,710	637
Greenup	6,601	745
Hancock	3,932	1,332
Hardin	46,416	864
Harlan	5,729	675
Harrison	4,893	872
Hart	4,719	742
Henderson	17,903	861
Henry	2,649	764
Hickman	919	624
Hopkins	15,873	841
Jackson	1,607	632

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Kentucky, first quarter 2021 - Continued

Area	Employment March 2021	Average weekly wage(1)
Jefferson	452,001	1,215
Jessamine	16,897	821
Johnson	4,996	686
Kenton	67,179	1,212
Knott	1,953	688
Knox	7,532	656
Larue	2,510	714
Laurel	26,799	706
Lawrence	3,706	685
Lee	1,576	690
Leslie	1,438	724
Letcher	4,123	704
Lewis	1,943	652
Lincoln	3,873	742
Livingston	2,530	922
Logan	8,599	882
Lyon	2,406	668
McCracken	37,591	889
McCreary	2,991	735
McLean	1,757	657
Madison	33,127	808
Magoffin	1,819	573
Marion	8,142	816
Marshall	10,363	999
Martin	1,914	772
Mason	7,893	825
Meade	4,133	816
Menifee	906	667
Mercer	6,084	957
Metcalfe	1,869	726
Monroe	3,082	680
Montgomery	10,020	770
Morgan	2,772	686
Muhlenberg	7,395	793
Nelson	16,045	853
Nicholas	844	555
Ohio	7,012	682
Oldham	16,192	925
Owen	1,313	799
Owsley	625	628
Pendleton	2,238	797
Perry	10,869	784
Pike	19,561	837
Powell	2,683	618
Pulaski	24,703	722
Robertson	278	670
Rockcastle	3,656	630
Rowan	9,672	728
Russell	5,458	665
Scott	27,864	946
Shelby	15,673	844
Simpson	8,758	781
Spencer	1,985	690
Taylor	12,344	682
Todd	2,270	727
Trigg	2,843	627

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Kentucky, first quarter 2021 - Continued

Area	Employment March 2021	Average weekly wage(1)
Trimble	1,194	1,180
Union	4,922	925
Warren	62,946	848
Washington	3,234	786
Wayne	5,792	610
Webster	2,678	843
Whitley	12,607	724
Wolfe	1,480	557
Woodford	8,782	831

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.

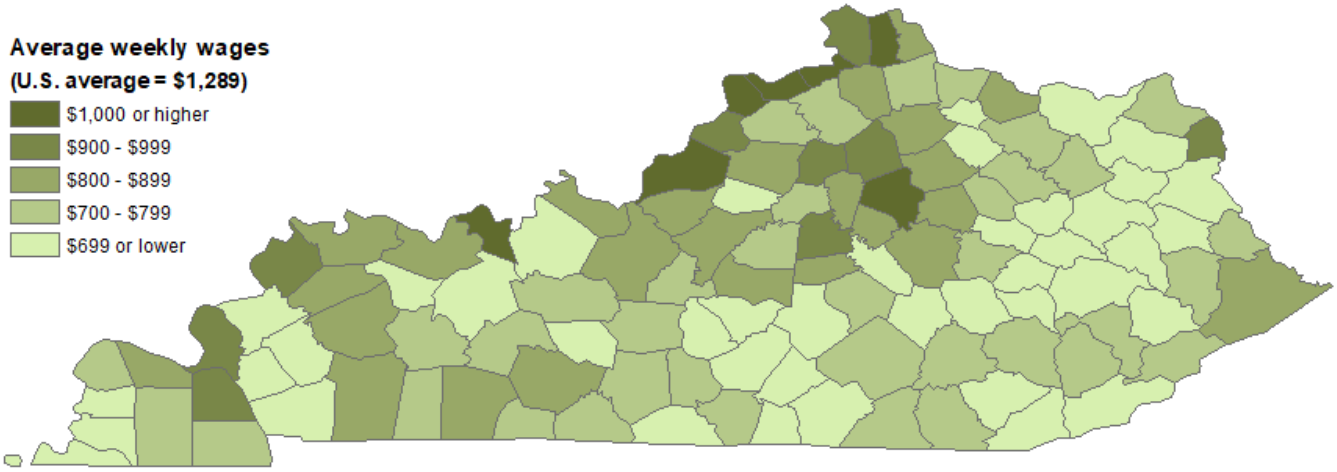
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2021

State	Establishments, first quarter 2021 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
		March 2021 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2020–21	First quarter 2021	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2020–21	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	10,755.4	140,455.8	-4.5	$1,289	--	5.6	--
Alabama	135.9	1,924.3	-3.0	996	37	2.5	40
Alaska	23.3	295.0	-5.5	1,125	23	-0.6	48
Arizona	176.5	2,894.2	-2.3	1,150	21	4.8	17
Arkansas	95.3	1,194.2	-2.0	957	43	3.7	30
California	1,651.4	16,507.7	-5.9	1,623	4	11.3	1
Colorado	224.7	2,634.7	-3.5	1,335	10	4.1	25
Connecticut	128.3	1,550.5	-5.4	1,575	5	4.7	19
Delaware	35.2	425.6	-4.1	1,264	13	1.6	44
District of Columbia	44.0	708.1	-9.0	2,166	1	8.7	4
Florida	780.8	8,701.9	-3.1	1,104	24	5.1	13
Georgia	329.2	4,393.8	-2.6	1,198	17	3.6	33
Hawaii	48.0	564.4	-14.1	1,091	26	5.7	9
Idaho	74.2	768.6	1.9	906	50	4.9	15
Illinois	390.0	5,559.6	-5.5	1,387	8	6.7	7
Indiana	176.2	2,956.4	-2.5	1,026	34	3.3	37
Iowa	105.1	1,473.6	-3.3	1,004	35	2.6	39
Kansas	90.4	1,335.4	-3.3	986	39	1.9	43
Kentucky	130.7	1,835.2	-2.5	965	41	2.3	42
Louisiana	141.5	1,787.6	-5.9	977	40	1.0	46
Maine	56.2	585.0	-2.8	1,000	36	4.7	19
Maryland	174.3	2,522.1	-5.0	1,386	9	8.5	5
Massachusetts	271.2	3,334.9	-6.6	1,732	3	7.8	6
Michigan	267.5	4,026.6	-5.9	1,155	20	4.8	17
Minnesota	189.7	2,695.4	-5.1	1,290	11	4.6	22
Mississippi	75.3	1,098.4	-2.5	811	51	1.1	45
Missouri	221.8	2,705.5	-3.0	1,055	30	3.7	30
Montana	53.2	465.2	0.1	915	48	5.4	10
Nebraska	73.4	944.7	-2.8	990	38	3.6	33
Nevada	92.8	1,291.5	-8.4	1,080	27	4.7	19
New Hampshire	56.8	631.8	-3.9	1,258	15	5.4	10
New Jersey	297.0	3,818.6	-5.5	1,533	7	5.3	12
New Mexico	65.2	774.5	-7.4	958	42	3.8	28
New York	664.6	8,587.8	-8.7	1,869	2	10.4	2
North Carolina	302.7	4,423.2	-1.7	1,137	22	4.1	25
North Dakota	32.3	388.7	-6.1	1,037	32	-0.9	51
Ohio	310.1	5,136.8	-3.9	1,098	25	3.3	37
Oklahoma	114.4	1,549.7	-3.7	939	46	-0.8	50
Oregon	169.4	1,841.9	-5.2	1,172	18	6.4	8
Pennsylvania	369.7	5,531.3	-5.4	1,226	16	4.3	23
Rhode Island	41.2	447.8	-5.6	1,171	19	3.4	35
South Carolina	150.1	2,056.2	-2.6	957	43	3.8	28
South Dakota	35.6	417.1	-0.9	932	47	3.4	35
Tennessee	180.2	2,968.7	-2.1	1,077	28	5.0	14
Texas	750.1	12,216.7	-3.4	1,261	14	2.4	41
Utah	117.3	1,548.8	1.5	1,065	29	3.7	30
Vermont	27.0	283.7	-6.9	1,028	33	4.9	15
Virginia	291.3	3,765.8	-3.9	1,285	12	4.2	24
Washington	261.2	3,252.0	-5.1	1,540	6	9.1	3
West Virginia	52.3	648.6	-3.8	911	49	0.8	47
Wisconsin	183.1	2,730.0	-3.7	1,047	31	3.9	27
Wyoming	27.8	255.9	-4.6	953	45	-0.6	48
Puerto Rico	47.1	856.5	-3.1	562	[3]	2.0	[3]
Virgin Islands	3.6	34.7	-14.0	961	[3]	-8.0	[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 Kentucky, first quarter 2021



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.