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Occupational Employment and Wages in Lake Charles, May 2016

Workers in the Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$18.98 in May 2016, about 20 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.86, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 18 of the 22 major occupational groups, including legal; computer and mathematical; and healthcare practitioners and technical. Two groups had wages that were measurably higher than their respective national averages, while wages in the two remaining groups were not statistically different from the U.S. averages.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 7 of the 22 occupational groups, including construction and extraction; installation, maintenance, and repair; and production. Conversely, nine groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including office and administrative support; business and financial operations; 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 Lake Charles, LA Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2016

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Lake Charles, LA		United States	Lake Charles, LA	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾	
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0		\$23.86	\$18.98	*	-20
Management	5.1	3.5	*	56.74	44.67	*	-21
Business and financial operations	5.2	2.2	*	36.09	28.47	*	-21
Computer and mathematical	3.0	0.4	*	42.25	27.60	*	-35
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.1	*	40.53	42.05		4
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.8		35.06	29.84	*	-15
Community and social service	1.4	0.8	*	22.69	20.19	*	-11
Legal	0.8	0.4	*	50.95	25.97	*	-49
Education, training, and library	6.2	5.1	*	26.21	20.62	*	-21
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.4	0.4	*	28.07	18.23	*	-35
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	6.0		38.06	25.74	*	-32
Healthcare support	2.9	2.9		14.65	12.06	*	-18
Protective service	2.4	3.2	*	22.03	16.03	*	-27
Food preparation and serving related	9.2	10.0	*	11.47	9.34	*	-19
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	3.3		13.47	10.95	*	-19
Personal care and service	3.2	4.1	*	12.74	10.13	*	-20
Sales and related	10.4	10.2		19.50	13.31	*	-32
Office and administrative support	15.7	12.6	*	17.91	14.71	*	-18
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.0	*	13.37	19.15	*	43

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Lake Charles, LA Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2016 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
	United States	Lake Charles, LA		United States	Lake Charles, LA		
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	10.3	*	23.51	22.07	*	-6
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	6.4	*	22.45	21.78		-3
Production	6.5	8.1	*	17.88	24.61	*	38
Transportation and material moving.....	6.9	7.2		17.34	16.15	*	-7

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in the Lake Charles, LA Metropolitan Statistical Area is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* 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. Lake Charles had 8,260 jobs in production, accounting for 8.1 percent of local area employment, measurably higher than the 6.5-percent national share. More importantly, the local average hourly wage for this occupational group was \$24.61, nearly 40 percent above the national production average of \$17.88.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the Lake Charles production group included welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers (1,600), chemical plant and system operators (1,040), and inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers (810). Among the higher-paying jobs were first-line supervisors of production and operating workers, as well as chemical plant and system operators, with mean hourly wages of \$35.24 and \$34.44, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were laundry and dry cleaning workers (\$9.02) and bakers (\$10.37). (Detailed occupational data for construction and extraction workers are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29340.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 national 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 nationally. In the Lake Charles metropolitan area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, chemical plant and system operators were employed at 42.7 times the national average in Lake Charles, and petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers, at 15.9 times the national rate. Both location quotients were among the highest in all metropolitan areas for these particular occupations.

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 Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Note

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 2016 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2016, November 2015, May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, and November 2013. The overall national response rate for the six panels, based on the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is 73 percent based on establishments and 69 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 58 percent of total national employment. The sample in the Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,324 establishments with a response rate of 77 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2016 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 **Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes in Louisiana.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southwest. 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, Lake Charles, LA Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2016

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production occupations	8,260	1.2	\$24.61	\$51,200
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	800	1.8	35.24	73,290
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	(5)	(5)	21.61	44,940
Assemblers and fabricators, all other	60	0.4	12.76	26,540
Bakers	90	0.7	10.37	21,580
Butchers and meat cutters	50	0.5	13.25	27,560
Machinists	160	0.6	25.46	52,950
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	1,600	5.7	24.60	51,180
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	100	0.6	9.02	18,760
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	90	1.0	16.46	34,230
Chemical plant and system operators	1,040	42.7	34.44	71,630
Petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers	480	15.9	31.99	66,540
Chemical equipment operators and tenders	240	4.5	(5)	(5)
Crushing, grinding, and polishing machine setters, operators, and tenders	50	2.1	15.19	31,590
Mixing and blending machine setters, operators, and tenders	150	1.6	21.63	44,980
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	810	2.1	21.63	44,990
Ophthalmic laboratory technicians	30	1.7	12.10	25,170
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	180	0.6	19.56	40,690
Painters, transportation equipment	(5)	(5)	20.28	42,180
Helpers--production workers	510	1.6	15.01	31,210
Production workers, all other	540	3.0	17.88	37,190

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Lake Charles, LA Metropolitan Statistical Area, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29340.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 national 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) Estimates not released.