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County Employment and Wages in California – Fourth Quarter 2019

Job growth in 13 of the state’s large counties exceeded the national rate of 1.2 percent

Employment increased in 26 of the 29 large counties in California from December 2018 to December 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with 2018 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the annual rates of job growth in 13 large counties in California exceeded the national rate of 1.2 percent in December 2019. Riverside and San Francisco Counties had the largest increases in employment at 3.0 percent each. Two large counties, Solano and Tulare, had employment declines of 0.4 percent each.

Nationally, employment increased 1.2 percent over the year with 285 of the 355 largest U.S. counties reporting increases. Cleveland, OK, had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 5.8 percent over the year. Ector, TX, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 4.2 percent.

Among the 29 largest counties in California, employment was highest in Los Angeles County (4,589,500) in December 2019, while Napa County had the smallest employment level (76,800). Together, California’s large counties accounted for 94.4 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 355 largest counties made up 73.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

All 29 large California counties reported average weekly wage gains from the fourth quarter of 2018 to the fourth quarter of 2019, with the fastest rate of increase in Santa Cruz County, up 20.7 percent. San Mateo and San Luis Obispo Counties followed with gains of 8.2 and 8.1 percent, respectively. Santa Clara County had the highest average weekly wage among the state’s largest counties at \$2,825. Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 3.5 percent from a year ago to \$1,185 in the fourth quarter of 2019. (See [table 1.](#))

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 29 counties in California with employment below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average of \$1,185 in the fourth quarter of 2019. (See [table 2.](#))

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in all large California counties increased from the fourth quarter of 2018 to the fourth quarter of 2019. Santa Cruz County’s 20.7-percent wage increase was the largest in the state and ranked first among the 355 large U.S. counties. Thirteen other counties’ wage gains in the state ranked in the top 25 percent nationally. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationwide, 341 of the 355 largest counties had over-the-year wage increases. The remaining 14 large counties had wage declines during the period. Linn, IA, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-7.1 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Nationally, 93 large counties reported average weekly wages at or above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2019. In California, wages in 15 of the 29 large counties exceeded the national average during the same period. Three California counties held the top positions in the nation: Santa Clara (\$2,825, 1st), San Mateo (\$2,622, 2nd), and San Francisco (\$2,523, 3rd).

Average weekly wages were below the national average in 262 counties. At \$701 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

Average weekly wages in California's smaller counties

All 29 counties in California with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$1,185. Among these smaller counties, El Dorado had the highest average weekly wage at \$1,055 in the fourth quarter of 2019, while Del Norte (\$781) had the lowest weekly wage. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 58 counties in California were considered, 17 reported average weekly wages of \$899 or lower. Nineteen counties had wages ranging from \$900 to \$999, 4 had wages from \$1,000 to \$1,099, 4 had wages from \$1,100 to \$1,199, 6 had wages from \$1,200 to \$1,299 and 8 had average weekly wages at or above \$1,300. (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 2018 edition of this publication, which was published in September 2019, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2019 version of this news release. Tables and additional content from the 2018 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2018/home.htm. The 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2020.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 19, 2020. The County Employment and Wage full data update for first quarter 2020 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 2, 2020.

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 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 29 largest counties in California, fourth quarter 2019

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2018-19 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2018-19 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	149,857.1	1.2	--	\$1,185	--	3.5	--
California	17,836.3	1.5	--	1,457	4	4.7	4
Alameda	798.9	0.1	273	1,577	15	3.5	149
Butte	82.8	0.0	286	907	316	4.6	60
Contra Costa	371.6	0.1	273	1,415	34	1.7	304
Fresno	401.8	2.2	59	942	288	4.4	71
Kern	331.4	1.1	160	967	269	4.8	53
Los Angeles	4,589.5	1.2	144	1,437	27	4.1	98
Marin	118.3	1.6	104	1,499	21	2.3	261
Merced	79.0	0.1	273	888	326	4.1	98
Monterey	181.3	0.4	241	1,001	231	4.1	98
Napa	76.8	0.6	220	1,188	91	2.6	234
Orange	1,664.7	0.8	199	1,297	57	4.6	60
Placer	174.1	2.0	73	1,182	95	5.5	27
Riverside	779.7	3.0	20	918	305	4.2	91
Sacramento	686.8	1.5	114	1,272	61	4.0	109
San Bernardino	797.7	2.7	39	973	258	4.4	71
San Diego	1,512.7	1.5	114	1,311	53	4.1	98
San Francisco	776.3	3.0	20	2,523	3	2.3	261
San Joaquin	262.0	2.8	34	995	237	3.4	161
San Luis Obispo	118.2	0.9	184	1,051	187	8.1	7
San Mateo	423.5	2.7	39	2,622	2	8.2	6
Santa Barbara	211.5	1.9	81	1,120	136	4.1	98
Santa Clara	1,138.5	1.9	81	2,825	1	5.6	21
Santa Cruz	102.7	1.7	94	1,241	70	20.7	1
Solano	143.7	-0.4	305	1,200	85	4.0	109
Sonoma	212.5	0.2	266	1,201	84	6.1	16
Stanislaus	190.9	1.1	160	991	241	5.1	41
Tulare	163.1	-0.4	305	850	341	4.9	49
Ventura	334.5	1.2	144	1,165	103	6.0	18
Yolo	106.1	1.0	175	1,235	73	2.1	279

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. 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 California, fourth quarter 2019

Area	Employment December 2019	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	149,857,130	\$1,185
California	17,836,312	1,457
Alameda	798,894	1,577
Alpine	725	906
Amador	12,098	940
Butte	82,821	907
Calaveras	9,957	862
Colusa	8,981	937
Contra Costa	371,630	1,415
Del Norte	8,117	781
El Dorado	58,626	1,055
Fresno	401,768	942
Glenn	9,385	916
Humboldt	51,555	846
Imperial	63,387	833
Inyo	7,722	913
Kern	331,439	967
Kings	48,938	913
Lake	16,458	803
Lassen	9,839	930
Los Angeles	4,589,505	1,437
Madera	51,975	896
Marin	118,280	1,499
Mariposa	5,440	849
Mendocino	32,410	833
Merced	79,016	888
Modoc	2,434	783
Mono	7,907	820
Monterey	181,344	1,001
Napa	76,776	1,188
Nevada	32,711	965
Orange	1,664,726	1,297
Placer	174,125	1,182
Plumas	6,228	892
Riverside	779,719	918
Sacramento	686,813	1,272
San Benito	16,666	995
San Bernardino	797,662	973
San Diego	1,512,669	1,311
San Francisco	776,265	2,523
San Joaquin	261,971	995
San Luis Obispo	118,211	1,051
San Mateo	423,538	2,622
Santa Barbara	211,487	1,120
Santa Clara	1,138,463	2,825
Santa Cruz	102,704	1,241
Shasta	67,986	932
Sierra	529	861
Siskiyou	13,481	837
Solano	143,691	1,200
Sonoma	212,522	1,201
Stanislaus	190,851	991
Sutter	30,835	886
Tehama	18,888	919
Trinity	2,624	810
Tulare	163,115	850

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in California, fourth quarter 2019 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2019	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
Tuolumne.....	17,618	930
Ventura	334,466	1,165
Yolo.....	106,090	1,235
Yuba	19,588	1,048

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 2019

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2018-19	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2018-19	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	149,857.1	1.2	\$1,185	--	3.5	--
Alabama	2,007.9	1.0	985	36	2.6	39
Alaska	309.9	0.6	1,139	16	3.2	27
Arizona	2,999.8	2.7	1,059	23	4.1	7
Arkansas	1,232.9	0.5	898	50	3.2	27
California	17,836.3	1.5	1,457	4	4.7	4
Colorado	2,772.6	2.2	1,227	9	4.0	8
Connecticut	1,687.4	-0.7	1,383	5	3.8	11
Delaware	455.3	0.8	1,136	17	2.6	39
District of Columbia	782.5	0.8	1,992	1	2.5	42
Florida	9,085.5	2.0	1,044	26	3.6	14
Georgia.....	4,576.1	1.7	1,090	21	3.6	14
Hawaii.....	665.1	-0.8	1,053	24	3.5	17
Idaho	756.9	3.1	918	46	3.1	32
Illinois	6,043.5	0.2	1,221	10	2.7	38
Indiana.....	3,106.0	0.6	969	38	3.0	34
Iowa	1,560.4	0.1	984	37	1.9	47
Kansas	1,410.7	0.6	959	40	3.5	17
Kentucky.....	1,928.3	0.8	955	41	3.2	27
Louisiana	1,927.7	-0.5	993	34	2.5	42
Maine.....	620.2	0.7	955	41	5.3	2
Maryland.....	2,728.1	0.9	1,271	8	3.5	17
Massachusetts	3,660.8	0.9	1,511	2	3.8	11
Michigan	4,385.3	0.4	1,115	18	3.4	22
Minnesota.....	2,912.8	0.4	1,177	14	3.2	27
Mississippi.....	1,145.0	0.0	818	51	3.2	27
Missouri	2,846.2	0.9	1,010	32	3.0	34
Montana	474.1	1.1	918	46	3.4	22
Nebraska	990.9	0.7	969	38	4.2	6
Nevada	1,435.5	2.7	1,030	29	2.4	45
New Hampshire.....	671.3	0.8	1,192	12	2.9	37
New Jersey.....	4,157.4	0.8	1,332	7	2.5	42
New Mexico	844.0	1.5	942	44	4.0	8
New York	9,691.0	0.8	1,499	3	3.7	13
North Carolina	4,546.9	1.9	1,036	28	2.4	45
North Dakota	424.6	0.5	1,085	22	2.6	39
Ohio	5,477.2	0.5	1,037	27	3.1	32
Oklahoma	1,639.4	0.3	945	43	1.4	49
Oregon	1,969.3	1.6	1,100	19	4.6	5
Pennsylvania	5,985.9	0.8	1,143	15	3.6	14
Rhode Island	489.8	0.6	1,099	20	1.1	50
South Carolina.....	2,144.8	1.2	931	45	4.0	8
South Dakota.....	430.7	0.6	916	48	3.5	17
Tennessee	3,085.4	1.6	1,047	25	1.6	48
Texas	12,793.0	2.0	1,187	13	3.4	22
Utah	1,547.8	2.5	1,022	30	5.0	3
Vermont.....	314.0	-0.4	987	35	3.5	17
Virginia.....	3,978.7	1.2	1,204	11	3.4	22
Washington.....	3,457.7	2.2	1,370	6	6.4	1
West Virginia	690.3	-2.0	904	49	-1.4	51
Wisconsin	2,898.0	0.2	1,022	30	3.3	26
Wyoming	276.3	1.4	1,007	33	3.0	34
Puerto Rico.....	910.7	1.5	575	(3)	-0.2	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	39.2	10.8	1,065	(3)	13.5	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

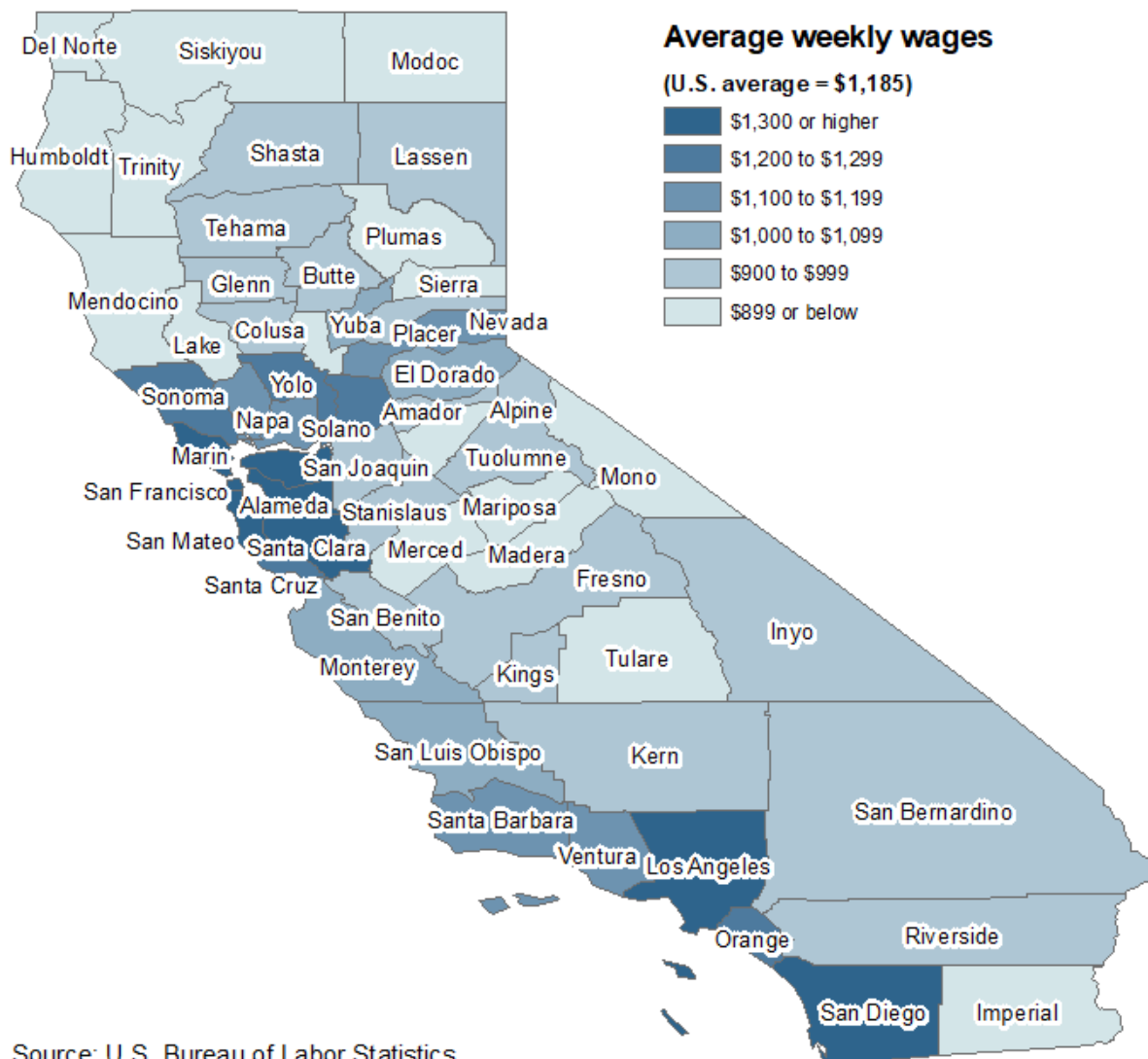
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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. Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in California, fourth quarter 2019



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.