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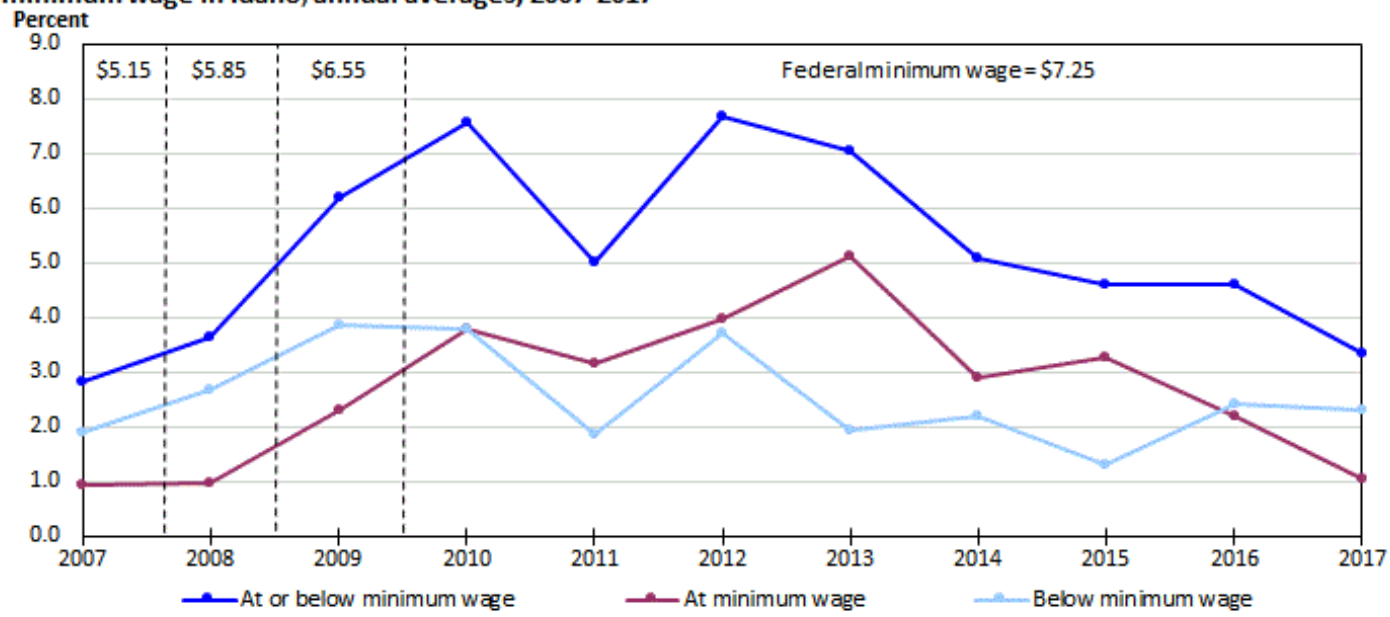
WESTERN INFORMATION OFFICE: San Francisco, Calif.
Technical information: (415) 625-2270 BLSinfoSF@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/west
Media contact: (415) 625-2270

Minimum Wage Workers in Idaho – 2017

Of the 477,000 workers paid hourly rates in Idaho in 2017, 5,000 earned exactly the prevailing federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour, while 11,000 earned less, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the 16,000 workers earning the federal minimum wage or less made up 3.3 percent of all hourly paid workers in the state. Nationwide, those earning the federal minimum or less accounted for 2.3 percent of the hourly paid workforce. (See table 1. The Idaho minimum wage is equal to the prevailing federal minimum wage.)

In 2003, 11,000 hourly paid workers earned the prevailing federal minimum wage or less in Idaho, the lowest level since data were first available in 2000. The 11,000 workers in this category accounted for 3.0 percent of all hourly paid workers in the state. In 2007, the federal minimum wage began increasing after holding steady for nearly a decade. (See chart 1.) Two additional increases in the federal minimum wage followed, resulting in more Idaho workers falling into this category, peaking at 31,000 in 2012. From 2014 to 2016 the number held steady at 21,000, then decreased to 16,000 in 2017.

Chart 1. Percentage of hourly-paid wage and salary workers with earnings at or below the prevailing Federal minimum wage in Idaho, annual averages, 2007-2017



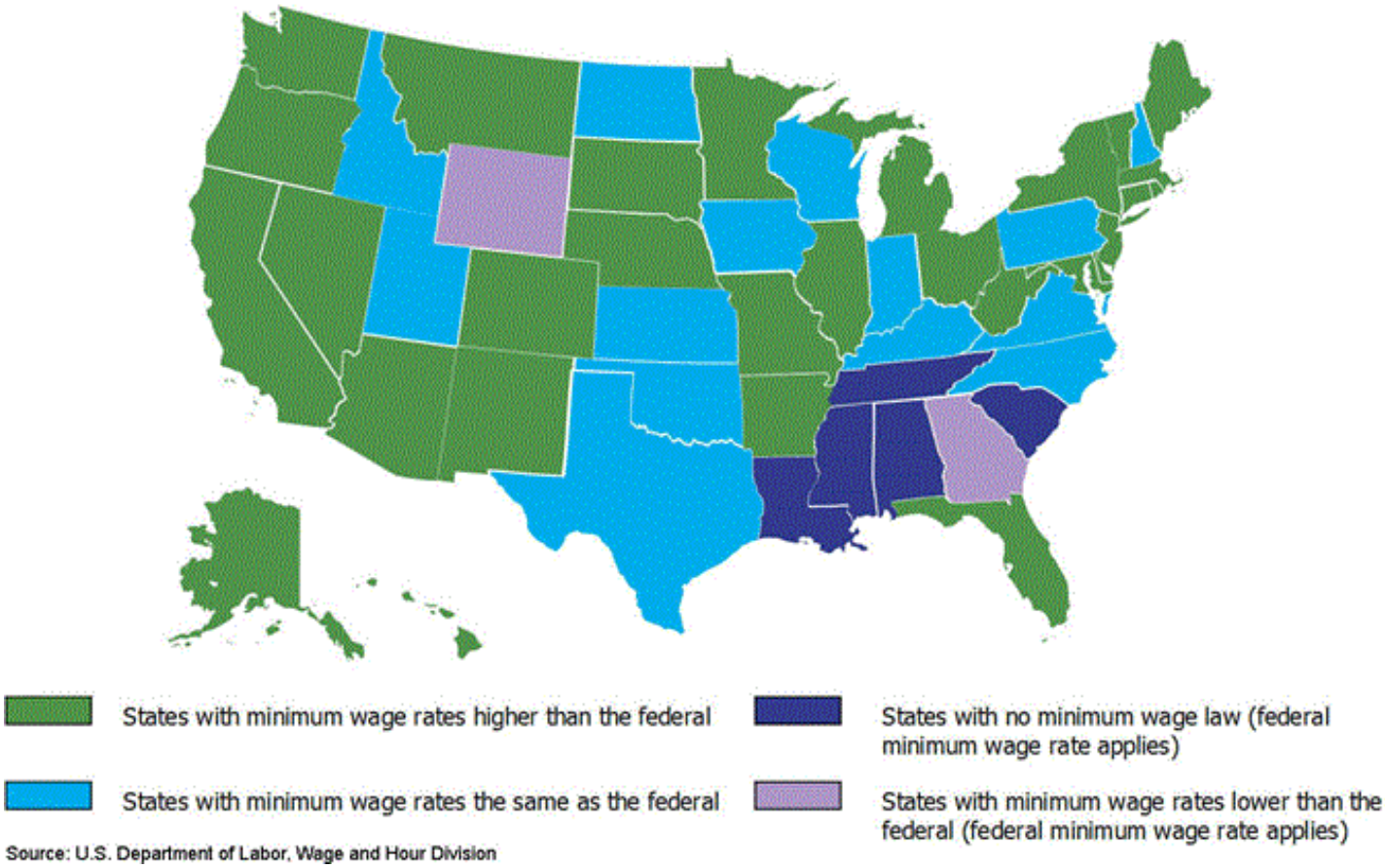
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

From 2016 to 2017, the proportion of hourly paid workers in Idaho who earned at or below the federal minimum wage fell 1.3 percentage points. The percentage of workers earning exactly the federal minimum wage decreased from 2.1 percent to 1.0 percent, while the percentage earning less than the minimum wage fell from 2.5 percent to 2.3 percent.

Among workers earning the prevailing federal minimum wage or less in Idaho in 2017, 11,000 were women. These women represented 4.6 percent of all women paid hourly rates in the state. There were 4,000 men earning the minimum wage or less in Idaho, accounting for 1.7 percent of all men paid hourly rates in the state. (See table 2.)

In 2017, the states with the highest percentages of hourly paid workers earning at or below the federal minimum wage were in the South: Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee (all were about 4 percent). The states with the lowest percentages of hourly paid workers earning at or below the federal minimum wage were in the West or Midwest: California, Washington, Montana, and Minnesota (all were less than 1 percent). It should be noted that many states have minimum wage laws establishing standards that exceed the federal minimum wage. As of January 1, 2018, 29 states and the District of Columbia had minimum wage rates that exceeded the federal minimum wage of $7.25 per hour. (See table 1 and chart 2.)

Chart 2. Minimum wage laws in the states, January 1, 2018



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment. The survey is conducted monthly for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the U.S. Census Bureau using a scientifically selected national sample of about 60,000 eligible households in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The survey also provides data on earnings, which are based on one-fourth of the CPS monthly sample and are limited to wage and salary workers. All self-employed workers, both incorporated and unincorporated, are excluded from these earnings estimates.

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the true population values they represent. The component of this difference that occurs because samples differ by chance is known as sampling error, and its variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the true population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by nonsampling error. Nonsampling error can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data. For example, respondents may round their hourly earnings to whole dollars when answering survey questions.

Minimum wage worker data, particularly levels, for each year are not strictly comparable with data for earlier years because of the introduction of revised population controls used in the CPS. For technical documentation and related information, including reliability of the CPS estimates, see www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm.

Some workers reported as earning at or below the prevailing federal minimum wage may not, in fact, be covered by federal or state minimum wage laws because of exclusions and exemptions in the statutes. The presence of workers with hourly earnings below the federal minimum wage does not necessarily indicate violations of the FLSA or state statutes in cases where such standards apply.

Estimates of the number of minimum wage workers in this release pertain only to workers who are paid hourly rates. Salaried workers and other workers who are not paid by the hour are excluded, even though some have earnings that, if converted to hourly rates, would be at or below the federal minimum wage. Consequently, the estimates presented in this release likely understate the actual number of workers with hourly earnings at or below the minimum wage.

The prevailing federal minimum wage was $2.90 in 1979, $3.10 in 1980, and $3.35 in 1981-89. The minimum wage rose to $3.80 in April 1990, $4.25 in April 1991, $4.75 in October 1996, and $5.15 in September 1997. On July 24, 2007, the federal minimum wage increased to $5.85 per hour; on July 24, 2008, to $6.55 per hour; and on July 24, 2009, to $7.25 per hour.

The principal definitions for the main concepts presented in this report are below.

Wage and salary workers. Workers age 16 and older who receive wages, salaries, commissions, tips, payments in kind, or piece rates on their sole or principal job. This group includes employees in both the private and public sectors. All self-employed workers are excluded whether or not their businesses are incorporated.

Workers paid at or below the prevailing federal minimum wage pertain only to workers who are paid hourly rates. Salaried workers and other nonhourly paid workers are excluded.

Hourly earnings. Hourly earnings data are for wage and salary workers who are paid by the hour and refer to a person's sole or principal job. Hourly earnings for hourly paid workers do not include overtime pay, commissions, or tips received.

Median hourly earnings. The median is the amount which divides a given earnings distribution into two equal groups, one having earnings above the median and the other having earnings below the median. The median is less sensitive to extreme wages than the mean; this makes it a better measure for highly skewed distributions.

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. Wage and salary workers paid hourly rates with earnings at or below the prevailing federal minimum wage, by state, 2017 annual averages

State	Number of workers (in thousands)				Percent distribution				Percentage of workers paid hourly rates		
	Total paid hourly rates	At or below minimum wage			Total paid hourly rates	At or below minimum wage			At or below minimum wage		
		Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage		Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage	Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage
Total, 16 years and older	80,439	1,824	542	1,282	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	2.3	0.7	1.6
Alabama	1,189	40	26	14	1.5	2.2	4.8	1.1	3.4	2.2	1.2
Alaska	203	2	1	1	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.1	1.2	0.6	0.5
Arizona	1,644	29	2	27	2.0	1.6	0.4	2.1	1.8	0.1	1.6
Arkansas	769	14	3	11	1.0	0.8	0.5	0.9	1.8	0.4	1.4
California	9,685	52	14	39	12.0	2.9	2.5	3.0	0.5	0.1	0.4
Colorado	1,292	22	0	22	1.6	1.2	0.0	1.7	1.7	0.0	1.7
Connecticut	937	14	1	14	1.2	0.8	0.2	1.1	1.5	0.1	1.5
Delaware	266	8	2	6	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	2.9	0.8	2.1
District of Columbia	116	4	1	3	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	3.0	0.6	2.4
Florida	4,726	123	6	116	5.9	6.7	1.1	9.1	2.6	0.1	2.5
Georgia	2,288	73	30	43	2.8	4.0	5.6	3.3	3.2	1.3	1.9
Hawaii	372	6	1	5	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.4	1.7	0.3	1.4
Idaho	477	16	5	11	0.6	0.9	0.9	0.9	3.3	1.0	2.3
Illinois	3,147	79	18	61	3.9	4.3	3.3	4.8	2.5	0.6	1.9
Indiana	1,937	59	24	35	2.4	3.2	4.4	2.7	3.0	1.2	1.8
Iowa	962	16	6	10	1.2	0.9	1.2	0.8	1.7	0.7	1.0
Kansas	825	26	9	17	1.0	1.4	1.7	1.3	3.2	1.1	2.1
Kentucky	1,176	52	17	35	1.5	2.9	3.2	2.7	4.4	1.5	3.0
Louisiana	1,061	39	15	24	1.3	2.1	2.7	1.9	3.6	1.4	2.3
Maine	366	10	1	8	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.7	2.7	0.4	2.3
Maryland	1,458	39	11	28	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.7	0.8	1.9
Massachusetts	1,567	40	4	36	1.9	2.2	0.7	2.8	2.5	0.2	2.3
Michigan	2,711	57	6	52	3.4	3.1	1.0	4.0	2.1	0.2	1.9
Minnesota	1,649	14	6	8	2.1	0.8	1.1	0.6	0.9	0.4	0.5
Mississippi	704	29	15	14	0.9	1.6	2.7	1.1	4.1	2.1	2.0
Missouri	1,634	33	4	29	2.0	1.8	0.8	2.3	2.0	0.3	1.8
Montana	291	2	0	2	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.8	0.2	0.7
Nebraska	540	7	1	6	0.7	0.4	0.2	0.5	1.3	0.2	1.1
Nevada	883	12	6	6	1.1	0.7	1.1	0.5	1.4	0.7	0.7
New Hampshire	382	8	2	6	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5	2.1	0.5	1.6
New Jersey	1,788	27	8	19	2.2	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.5	0.4	1.1
New Mexico	505	14	3	11	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.9	2.7	0.5	2.2
New York	4,236	75	28	47	5.3	4.1	5.2	3.7	1.8	0.7	1.1
North Carolina	2,481	82	28	54	3.1	4.5	5.2	4.2	3.3	1.1	2.2
North Dakota	234	5	1	4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	2.0	0.5	1.5
Ohio	3,391	58	6	52	4.2	3.2	1.1	4.1	1.7	0.2	1.5
Oklahoma	901	28	12	16	1.1	1.5	2.3	1.2	3.1	1.4	1.7
Oregon	1,094	13	3	10	1.4	0.7	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.3	0.9
Pennsylvania	3,415	106	43	64	4.2	5.8	7.9	5.0	3.1	1.2	1.9
Rhode Island	298	4	1	3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.3	1.4	0.2	1.1
South Carolina	1,132	43	14	29	1.4	2.4	2.6	2.3	3.8	1.2	2.6
South Dakota	264	5	1	4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.8	0.4	1.4
Tennessee	1,706	69	26	43	2.1	3.8	4.8	3.4	4.1	1.5	2.5
Texas	6,290	196	78	118	7.8	10.7	14.5	9.2	3.1	1.2	1.9
Utah	900	21	13	9	1.1	1.2	2.3	0.7	2.4	1.4	1.0
Vermont	177	3	1	2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	1.8	0.8	1.1
Virginia	1,978	70	15	55	2.5	3.9	2.8	4.3	3.6	0.8	2.8
Washington	1,910	14	3	12	2.4	0.8	0.5	0.9	0.8	0.1	0.6
West Virginia	459	10	2	7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.6	2.1	0.5	1.6
Wisconsin	1,862	50	17	33	2.3	2.7	3.1	2.6	2.7	0.9	1.8
Wyoming	164	4	2	2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	2.2	0.9	1.2

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Note: Data exclude all self-employed persons, whether or not their businesses are incorporated. These data are based on a sample and therefore are subject to sampling error; the degree of error may be quite large for less populous states. Unrounded data were used in all calculations.

Table 2. Employed wage and salary workers paid hourly rates with earnings at or below the prevailing federal minimum wage and median earnings of hourly paid workers in Idaho, by gender, annual averages, 2007-2017

Year	Number of workers (in thousands)				Percentage of workers paid hourly rates			Median earnings (in dollars)
	Total paid hourly rates	At or below minimum wage			At or below minimum wage			
		Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage	Total	At minimum wage	Below minimum wage	
Men								
2007	222	3	1	2	1.4	0.5	0.9	$12.88
2008	207	4	1	3	1.9	0.5	1.4	13.78
2009	189	12	5	7	6.3	2.6	3.7	12.83
2010	193	11	5	6	5.7	2.6	3.1	13.73
2011	184	7	5	2	3.8	2.7	1.1	12.42
2012	208	14	6	8	6.7	2.9	3.8	13.31
2013	205	12	10	2	5.9	4.9	1.0	13.13
2014	206	9	6	3	4.4	2.9	1.5	13.88
2015	227	9	6	3	4.0	2.6	1.3	14.92
2016	232	7	3	4	3.0	1.3	1.7	14.54
2017	238	4	2	3	1.7	0.8	1.3	15.06
Women								
2007	202	9	3	6	4.5	1.5	3.0	$10.40
2008	205	11	3	8	5.4	1.5	3.9	10.25
2009	198	13	4	9	6.6	2.0	4.5	11.16
2010	203	19	10	9	9.4	4.9	4.4	11.00
2011	195	12	7	5	6.2	3.6	2.6	11.34
2012	196	17	10	7	8.7	5.1	3.6	11.88
2013	205	17	11	6	8.3	5.4	2.9	11.83
2014	207	12	6	6	5.8	2.9	2.9	11.89
2015	231	13	9	4	5.6	3.9	1.7	12.12
2016	226	13	6	7	5.8	2.7	3.1	12.65
2017	239	11	3	9	4.6	1.3	3.8	13.12

Note: Data exclude all self-employed persons whether or not their businesses are incorporated. Data for 2007–2009 reflect changes in the minimum wage that took place in those years.