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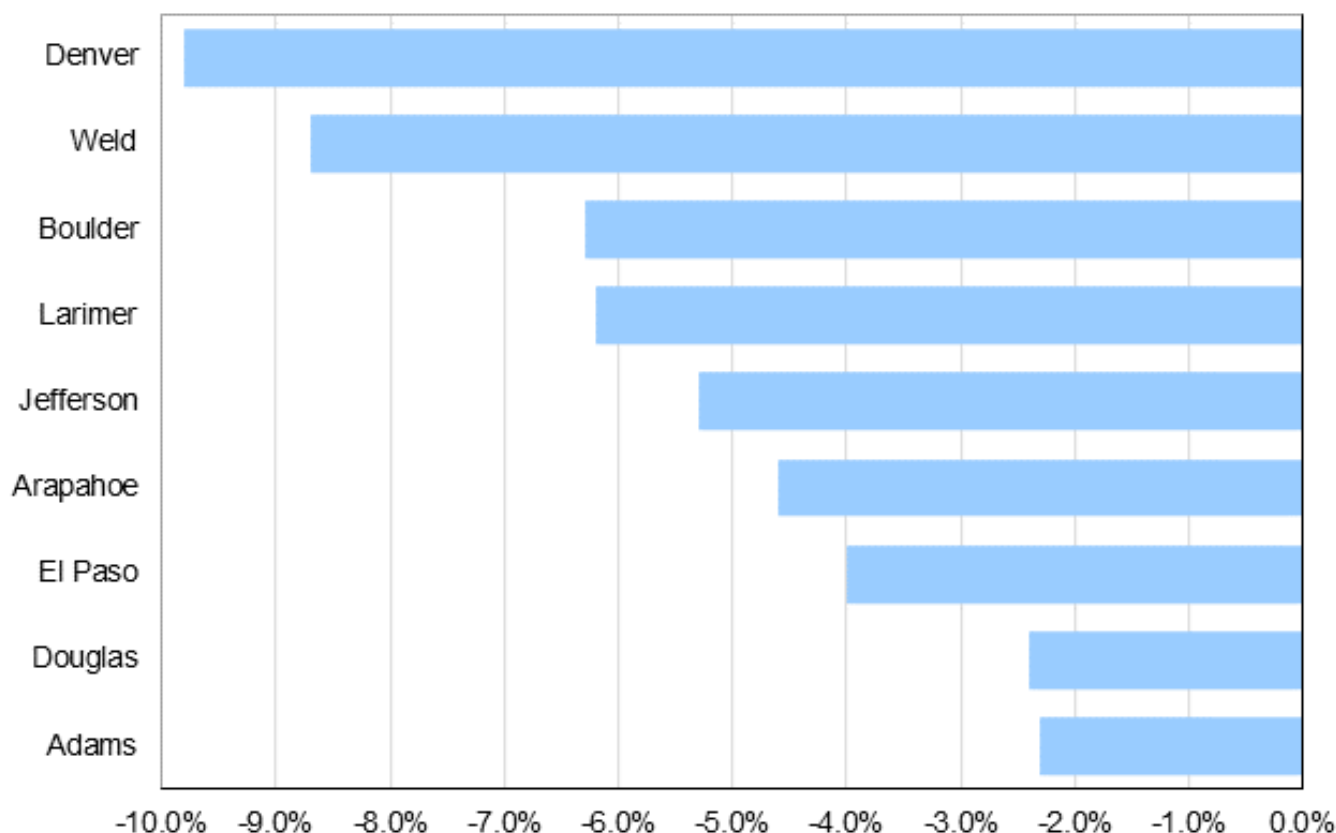
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## County Employment and Wages in Colorado – Fourth Quarter 2020

Employment fell in Colorado’s nine large counties from December 2019 to December 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2019.) Regional Commissioner Michael Hirniak noted that Denver County (-9.8 percent) had the largest over-the-year employment loss among the nine largest counties in the state. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

**Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in covered employment among the largest counties in Colorado, December 2020**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

National employment decreased 6.1 percent over the year, with 352 of the 357 largest U.S. counties reporting declines. Maui + Kalawao, HI, had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment with a loss of 22.8 percent. Utah, UT, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage increase in employment with a gain of 3.8 percent.

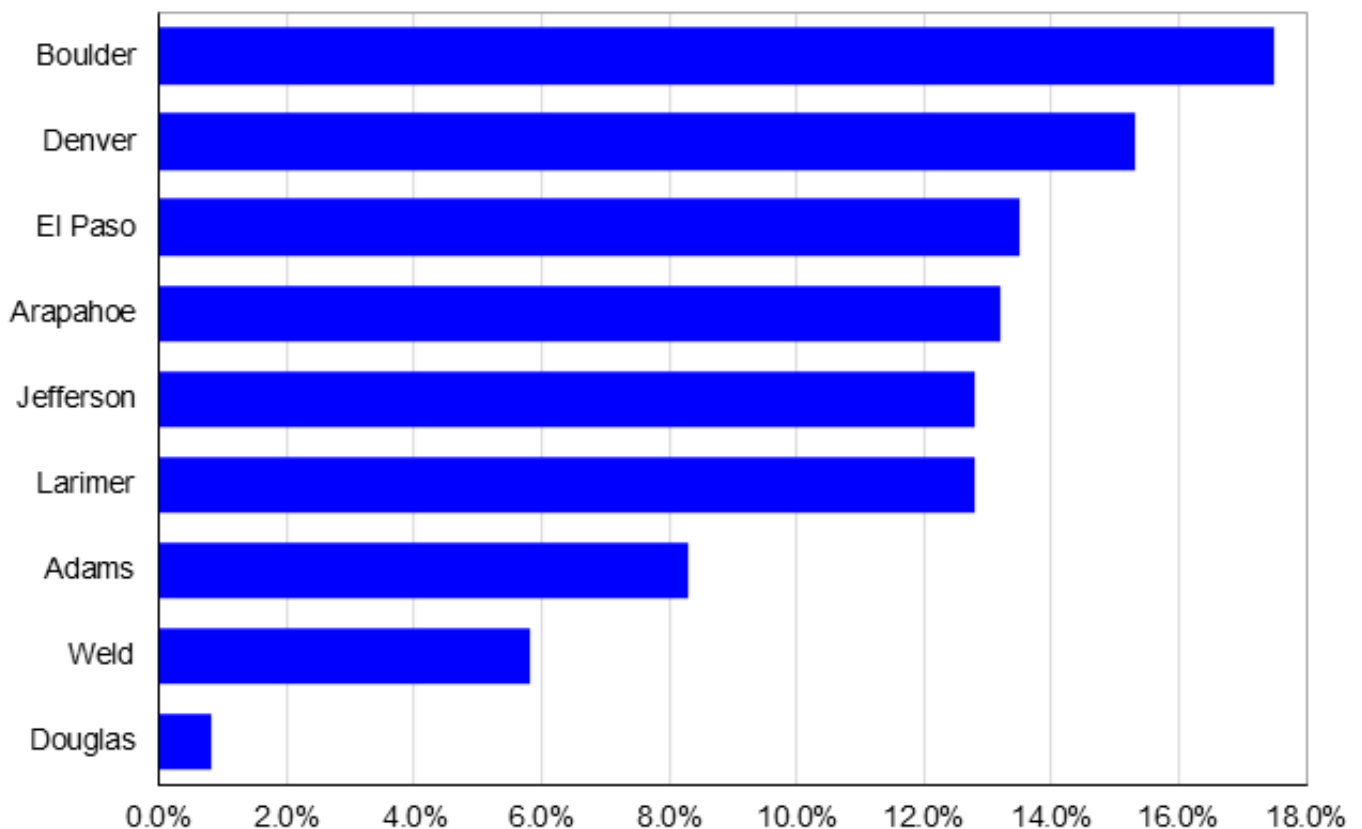
Among the nine largest counties in Colorado, employment was highest in Denver County (485,100), followed by Arapahoe County (321,500) and El Paso County (276,400) in December 2020. Together, the nine largest Colorado counties accounted for 80.8 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 357 largest counties made up 73.1 percent of total U.S. employment.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 55 counties in Colorado with employment below 75,000. Of these smaller counties, Broomfield County (\$1,918) had the highest average weekly wage level and was above the national average of \$1,339. (See [table 2.](#))

### Large county wage changes

All nine large counties in Colorado reported average weekly wage gains from the fourth quarter 2019 to the fourth quarter of 2020. (See [chart 2.](#)) Four counties had rates of wage gains that were above the national rate of 13.0 percent. Boulder County has the largest gain (+17.5 percent), followed by Denver County (+15.3 percent), El Paso County (+13.5 percent), and Arapahoe County (+13.2 percent). Over-the-year wage gains among Colorado’s other five large counties ranged from 12.8 percent to 0.8 percent.

**Chart 2. Over-the-year percent change in covered average weekly wages among the largest counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2020**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the 357 largest counties in the United States, 356 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 results in higher average weekly wages for the industry and the nation. San Francisco, CA, had the largest percentage wage increase (+44.3 percent). Ector, TX, had the only over-the-year percentage decrease (-7.5 percent).

## **Large county average weekly wages**

Weekly wages in 4 of the state's 9 large counties were above the national average of \$1,339 in the fourth quarter of 2020. Average weekly wages in Denver County (\$1,683) and Boulder County (\$1,669) ranked 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, respectively, near the top of the national ranking. The average weekly wages in the lowest-paying large Colorado counties, Weld (\$1,106, 246<sup>th</sup>) and El Paso (\$1,186, 185<sup>th</sup>), ranked in the bottom half of the 357 largest U.S. counties.

Among the largest U.S. counties, 89 reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2020. Santa Clara, CA, had the highest average weekly wage at \$3,690. Average weekly wages were below the national average in the remaining 268 counties. At \$760 a week, Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

## **Average weekly wages in Colorado's smaller counties**

Of the 55 smaller counties in Colorado—those with employment below 75,000—3 reported average weekly wages above the national average of \$1,339: Broomfield (\$1,918), Dolores (\$1,669), and Gilpin (\$1,491). San Juan County reported the lowest average wage in the state at \$637 per week, followed by Costilla County at \$680 per week.

When all 64 counties in Colorado were considered, 9 reported average weekly wages of less than \$800, 28 registered wages from \$800 to \$949, 10 had wages from \$950 to \$1,099, 8 had wages from \$1,100 to \$1,249, and 9 had average weekly wages of \$1,250 or more. (See [chart 3](#).) The higher-paying counties were primarily located in and around the Denver metropolitan area. The lowest-paying counties, those with weekly wages under \$800, were concentrated in the southern portion of the state.

## **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](http://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 2019 edition of this publication was published in September 2020. Tables and additional content from the 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are available at [www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2019/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2019/home.htm). The 2020 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2021.

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**The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2021 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 18, 2021.**

**The County Employment and Wages full data update for first quarter 2021 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 1, 2021.**

## **QCEW Imputation Issue Caused by Pandemic-Related Challenges**

In the spring of 2020, BLS modified its imputation process for QCEW to be more responsive to current economic conditions. While continuing work to improve this process, BLS made an unintended data processing error. This error affected data for the second, third, and fourth quarters of 2020. BLS has analyzed this issue and has determined that the impact on QCEW employment was negligible at the statewide level. In smaller areas and industries, revisions may be larger than usual. Wage data were not affected. Following the usual QCEW practice, these data will be revised and corrected with the full data update on September 1, 2021.

For more information on QCEW imputation methodology, see [www.bls.gov/cew/additional-resources/imputation-methodology.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/additional-resources/imputation-methodology.htm).

### **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](http://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 nine largest counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2020**

Area	Establishments, fourth quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment			Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
		December 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2019–20 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>	Fourth quarter 2020	National ranking by level <sup>(3)</sup>	Percent change, fourth quarter 2019–20 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>
United States <sup>(4)</sup> .....	10,675.8	140,881.3	-6.1	--	\$1,339	--	13.0	--
Colorado.....	219.6	2,613.7	-5.7	--	1,378	10	12.3	25
Adams.....	12.2	226.6	-2.3	35	1,217	157	8.3	327
Arapahoe.....	23.6	321.5	-4.6	107	1,530	46	13.2	130
Boulder.....	16.7	178.9	-6.3	191	1,669	23	17.5	15
Denver.....	36.6	485.1	-9.8	326	1,683	20	15.3	47
Douglas.....	13.4	130.6	-2.4	37	1,512	48	0.8	355
El Paso.....	21.8	276.4	-4.0	83	1,186	185	13.5	112
Jefferson.....	21.8	232.2	-5.3	142	1,376	77	12.8	153
Larimer.....	13.3	156.3	-6.2	186	1,230	149	12.8	153
Weld.....	8.2	104.8	-8.7	290	1,106	246	5.8	347

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 Colorado, fourth quarter 2020**

Area	Employment December 2020	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2) .....	140,881,253	\$1,339
Colorado .....	2,613,665	1,378
Adams .....	226,632	1,217
Alamosa .....	7,930	870
Arapahoe .....	321,464	1,530
Archuleta .....	4,238	821
Baca .....	1,112	741
Bent .....	1,065	819
Boulder .....	178,895	1,669
Broomfield .....	38,923	1,918
Chaffee .....	7,999	889
Cheyenne .....	729	990
Clear Creek .....	2,915	967
Conejos .....	1,517	714
Costilla .....	896	680
Crowley .....	1,106	938
Custer .....	844	781
Delta .....	8,258	837
Denver .....	485,080	1,683
Dolores .....	567	1,669
Douglas .....	130,595	1,512
Eagle .....	33,486	1,151
Elbert .....	3,762	990
El Paso .....	276,434	1,186
Fremont .....	13,669	933
Garfield .....	24,716	1,106
Gilpin .....	3,422	1,491
Grand .....	7,247	906
Gunnison .....	8,835	896
Hinsdale .....	238	687
Huerfano .....	1,770	800
Jackson .....	556	854
Jefferson .....	232,174	1,376
Kiowa .....	513	878
Kit Carson .....	2,942	851
Lake .....	2,367	923
La Plata .....	23,504	1,134
Larimer .....	156,338	1,230
Las Animas .....	4,738	849
Lincoln .....	2,170	846
Logan .....	7,798	879
Mesa .....	60,911	996
Mineral .....	571	724
Moffat .....	4,493	1,079
Montezuma .....	8,803	824
Montrose .....	15,100	902
Morgan .....	12,046	1,056
Otero .....	5,911	815
Ouray .....	1,916	933
Park .....	2,493	904
Phillips .....	1,602	894
Pitkin .....	16,723	1,338
Prowers .....	4,421	758
Pueblo .....	59,914	998
Rio Blanco .....	2,682	1,137
Rio Grande .....	3,877	898

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Colorado, fourth quarter 2020 - Continued**

Area	Employment December 2020	Average Weekly Wage(1)
Routt.....	14,847	1,062
Saguache.....	1,489	767
San Juan.....	305	637
San Miguel.....	5,450	1,054
Sedgwick.....	784	848
Summit.....	22,349	996
Teller.....	6,907	914
Washington.....	1,175	883
Weld.....	104,775	1,106
Yuma.....	3,952	892

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 2020**

State	Establishments, fourth quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
		December 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2019–20	Fourth quarter 2020	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2019–20	National ranking by percent change
United States <sup>(2)</sup> .....	10,675.8	140,881.3	-6.1	\$1,339	--	13.0	--
Alabama .....	134.6	1,951.2	-2.9	1,096	35	11.4	36
Alaska.....	23.1	290.1	-6.4	1,260	17	10.6	44
Arizona .....	173.9	2,908.7	-3.3	1,214	22	14.6	9
Arkansas .....	94.6	1,194.8	-3.2	999	49	11.4	36
California .....	1,660.2	16,380.1	-8.3	1,724	3	18.5	1
Colorado.....	219.6	2,613.7	-5.7	1,378	10	12.3	25
Connecticut .....	126.8	1,578.4	-6.5	1,551	6	12.2	27
Delaware .....	35.1	432.9	-5.2	1,262	16	11.3	38
District of Columbia .....	43.8	713.0	-8.9	2,293	1	15.2	6
Florida .....	765.4	8,642.8	-5.0	1,180	24	13.1	17
Georgia.....	319.7	4,405.9	-4.0	1,208	23	10.9	42
Hawaii.....	47.3	561.1	-16.1	1,219	21	16.0	4
Idaho .....	71.8	763.5	0.8	1,034	47	12.8	21
Illinois .....	386.3	5,573.8	-7.8	1,378	10	13.0	18
Indiana.....	173.1	2,985.1	-4.0	1,076	39	11.2	39
Iowa.....	105.6	1,494.3	-4.3	1,099	34	11.6	32
Kansas .....	89.9	1,346.9	-4.5	1,070	40	11.5	34
Kentucky.....	130.4	1,839.6	-4.8	1,057	42	10.8	43
Louisiana .....	140.8	1,796.9	-7.0	1,078	38	8.6	48
Maine.....	55.4	594.3	-4.3	1,092	36	14.5	10
Maryland.....	174.5	2,546.1	-6.7	1,445	8	13.6	16
Massachusetts .....	266.7	3,365.8	-8.3	1,766	2	17.0	3
Michigan .....	265.3	3,998.2	-8.9	1,257	19	12.8	21
Minnesota .....	186.4	2,684.1	-7.9	1,322	13	12.3	25
Mississippi .....	76.1	1,119.1	-2.4	901	51	10.4	45
Missouri .....	221.5	2,724.4	-4.3	1,127	33	11.6	32
Montana .....	54.6	467.4	-1.4	1,035	45	12.7	23
Nebraska .....	72.5	962.7	-2.9	1,079	37	11.5	34
Nevada .....	90.2	1,283.1	-10.7	1,178	25	14.4	11
New Hampshire.....	57.1	637.3	-5.2	1,406	9	17.9	2
New Jersey.....	291.0	3,860.5	-7.2	1,517	7	13.9	15
New Mexico.....	64.8	767.1	-9.5	1,052	43	11.8	29
New York .....	662.4	8,693.4	-10.3	1,712	4	14.2	13
North Carolina .....	301.7	4,431.0	-2.7	1,152	29	11.2	39
North Dakota .....	32.6	394.4	-7.1	1,136	31	4.7	50
Ohio.....	307.3	5,199.9	-5.1	1,161	27	12.0	28
Oklahoma .....	113.6	1,569.1	-4.4	1,013	48	7.3	49
Oregon .....	167.3	1,824.3	-7.5	1,256	20	14.2	13
Pennsylvania .....	370.5	5,549.4	-7.4	1,287	15	12.6	24
Rhode Island .....	40.7	449.6	-8.3	1,259	18	14.7	7
South Carolina.....	149.2	2,074.4	-3.5	1,035	45	11.1	41
South Dakota.....	35.5	422.8	-1.9	1,048	44	14.4	11
Tennessee .....	176.2	3,002.5	-2.7	1,172	26	11.7	30
Texas .....	743.1	12,251.1	-4.3	1,294	14	9.0	47
Utah.....	117.9	1,557.8	0.6	1,154	28	12.9	20
Vermont.....	26.6	286.1	-8.9	1,133	32	14.7	7
Virginia.....	289.8	3,796.1	-4.7	1,360	12	13.0	18
Washington.....	259.7	3,219.7	-6.8	1,589	5	16.0	4
West Virginia .....	51.9	654.1	-5.3	997	50	10.3	46
Wisconsin .....	184.2	2,762.5	-4.8	1,140	30	11.7	30
Wyoming .....	27.7	260.2	-5.3	1,061	41	4.6	51
Puerto Rico.....	46.0	873.8	-4.0	621	(3)	8.0	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.



**Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2020 - Continued**

State	Establishments, fourth quarter 2020 (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
		December 2020 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2019–20	Fourth quarter 2020	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2019–20	National ranking by percent change
Virgin Islands.....	3.5	35.3	-11.5	1,057	(3)	-1.3	(3)

Footnotes:

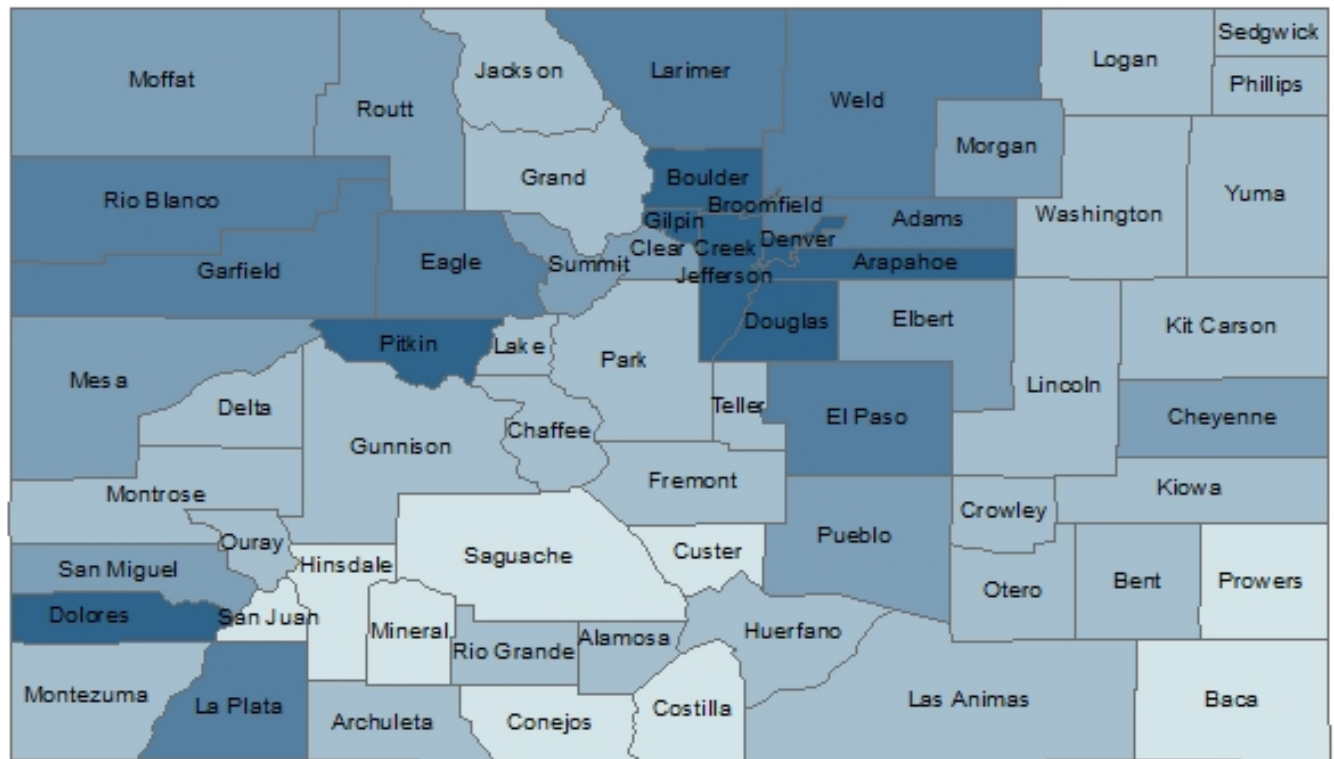
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 Colorado, fourth quarter 2020**



**Average weekly wages**  
(U.S. average = \$1,339)

- \$1,250 or higher
- \$1,100 - \$1,249
- \$950 - \$1,099
- \$800 - \$949
- \$799 or lower

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.