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## **County Employment and Wages in New Mexico – Fourth Quarter 2020**

Employment fell 8.5 percent in Bernalillo, New Mexico's only large county, 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 the rate of employment growth in Bernalillo County ranked 284<sup>th</sup> among the 357 largest U.S. counties. (See [table 1.](#))

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.

Employment in Bernalillo County stood at 310,000 in December 2020, accounting for 40.4 percent of total employment in New Mexico. Within Bernalillo County's private industry, health care and social assistance accounted for the largest employment. 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 32 counties in New Mexico with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in 31 of the 32 smaller counties were below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2020. (See [table 2.](#))

### **Large county wage changes**

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo County increased 15.0 percent from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the fourth quarter of 2020, ranking 52<sup>nd</sup> among the largest U.S. counties. Nationally, average weekly wages rose 13.0 percent over the year.

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

The average weekly wage in Bernalillo County was \$1,129 in the fourth quarter of 2020, ranking it 226<sup>th</sup>. Among the largest U.S. counties, 89 reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average of \$1,339 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 New Mexico's smaller counties

Among the 32 smaller counties in New Mexico—those with employment below 75,000—Los Alamos (\$1,915) reported an average weekly wage above the national average of \$1,339. Guadalupe and Catron Counties (both at \$674) reported the lowest average weekly wages in the state.

When all 33 counties in New Mexico were considered, 12 reported average weekly wages of less than \$800, 13 registered wages from \$800 to \$899, 3 had wages from \$900 to \$999, and 5 had average weekly wages of \$1,000 or higher. (See [chart 1.](#)) The higher-paying counties were located in and around the metropolitan areas Albuquerque, Carlsbad, Hobbs, Los Alamos, and Santa Fe.

## 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 largest county in New Mexico, 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	--
New Mexico.....	64.8	767.1	-9.5	--	1,052	43	11.8	29
Bernalillo.....	21.0	310.0	-8.5	284	1,129	226	15.0	52

(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 New Mexico, fourth quarter 2020**

Area	Employment December 2020	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2) .....	140,881,253	\$1,339
New Mexico .....	767,120	1,052
Bernalillo .....	310,029	1,129
Catron .....	640	674
Chaves .....	20,253	829
Cibola .....	7,172	823
Colfax .....	3,970	747
Curry .....	16,832	844
De Baca .....	417	791
Dona Ana .....	69,389	882
Eddy .....	27,869	1,332
Grant .....	8,505	838
Guadalupe .....	1,299	674
Harding .....	158	787
Hidalgo .....	1,406	948
Lea .....	25,849	1,050
Lincoln .....	5,546	758
Los Alamos .....	17,547	1,915
Luna .....	6,935	822
McKinley .....	18,886	866
Mora .....	636	732
Otero .....	16,386	892
Quay .....	2,352	728
Rio Arriba .....	8,815	864
Roosevelt .....	5,831	788
Sandoval .....	29,237	973
San Juan .....	40,660	979
San Miguel .....	7,398	708
Santa Fe .....	54,792	1,082
Sierra .....	3,393	800
Socorro .....	4,768	877
Taos .....	9,389	771
Torrance .....	3,194	842
Union .....	1,193	803
Valencia .....	14,988	790

(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: Covered employment and wages 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)

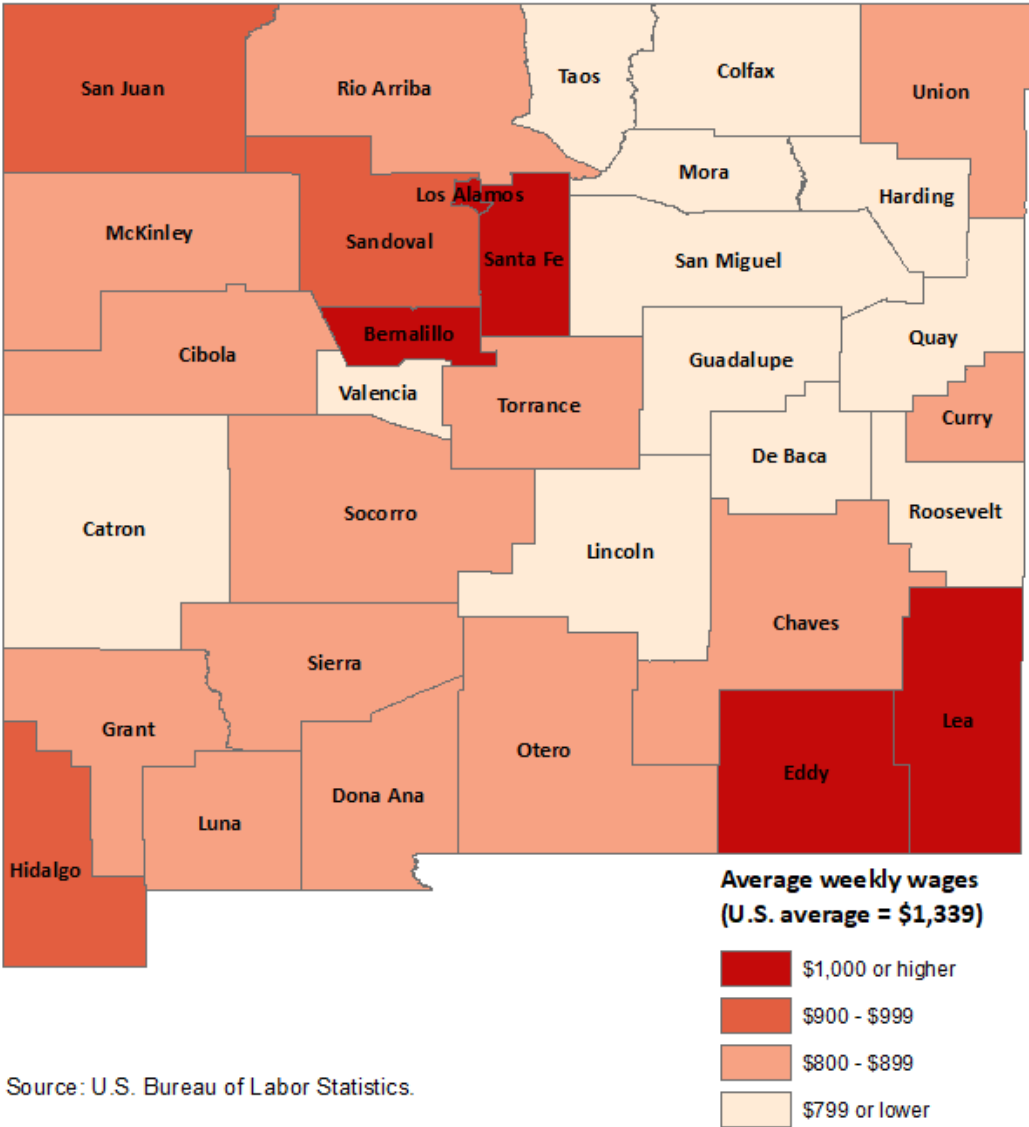
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 1. Average weekly wages by county in New Mexico, fourth quarter 2020**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.