

WEST INFORMATION OFFICE  
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Technical information: (415) 625-2284  
Media contact: (415) 625-2270

• [BLSinfoSF@bls.gov](mailto:BLSinfoSF@bls.gov)

• [www.bls.gov/ro9](http://www.bls.gov/ro9)

## COUNTY EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES IN OREGON FOURTH QUARTER 2011

Employment rose in four of the six large counties in Oregon from December 2010 to December 2011, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2010 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that Washington County posted the largest employment increase, 2.7 percent, exceeding the national rate of 1.4 percent.

Nationally, employment grew in 266 of the 322 large U.S. counties gained jobs. Kern County, Calif. experienced the largest percentage increase in employment in both the state and nation, up 5.3 percent over the year. Benton, Wash., had the largest employment decrease, 3.4 percent.

Among the large counties in Oregon, Multnomah County reported the largest employment (437,700), followed by Washington County (248,000). Three other large counties had employment levels above 125,000. Jackson (75,800) had the lowest employment level. Together, the six large counties in Oregon accounted for 71.6 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 322 largest counties made up 70.7 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 131.1 million in December 2011.

Average weekly wages decreased over the year in five of the six large Oregon counties. Jackson County recorded the largest decrease, 1.7 percent, and had the lowest weekly wage among the large counties (\$689). Nationally, the average weekly wage also decreased 1.7 percent over the year to \$955 in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 30 counties in Oregon with employment below 75,000. Wage levels in all of these counties were below the national average. (See table 2.)

### Large County Wage Changes

Washington County's 1.4-percent wage gain ranked 14<sup>th</sup> nationally and was the only large county in Oregon to post an increase from December 2010 to December 2011. Of the 322 largest U.S. counties, 36 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Tulsa Okla., had the largest average weekly wage increase with a gain of 8.6 percent from the fourth quarter of 2010. Harford, Md., had the second largest increase in average weekly wages (5.8 percent) followed by Lake, Ohio (4.9 percent), Snohomish, Wash. (3.0 percent), and Westmoreland, Pa. (2.9 percent).

Nationwide, 282 large counties recorded decreases in average weekly wages over the year. Olmsted, Minn. had the largest wage loss (-21.3 percent). Smaller declines were reported in Douglas, Colo. (-8.6 percent), Williamson, Tenn. (-6.7 percent), and Durham, N.C. (-6.5 percent).

Among the 322 largest counties, 36 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2011. Tulsa, Okla., had the largest average weekly wage increase with a gain of 8.6 percent, followed by the counties of Harford, Md. (5.8 percent), Lake, Ohio (4.9 percent), Snohomish, Wash. (3.0 percent) and Westmoreland, Pa (2.9 percent).

### **Large County Average Weekly Wages**

Average weekly wages in Washington County (\$1,085, 50<sup>th</sup>) and Multnomah County (\$969, 93<sup>rd</sup>) placed in the top half of the national ranking among the 322 largest counties nationwide in the fourth quarter of 2011. Average weekly wages in the remaining four large counties placed in the bottom half of the national ranking.

Nationwide, 103 large counties registered weekly wages at or above the U.S. average of \$955 in the fourth quarter of 2011. New York, N.Y., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,889. Santa Clara, Calif. was second at \$1,836, followed by the counties of Washington, D.C. (\$1,668), Suffolk, Mass. (\$1,599), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,597).

Slightly over two-thirds of the largest U.S. counties (219) reported weekly wages below the national average. Horry County, S.C., reported the lowest wage (\$569), followed by the counties of Cameron, Texas (\$597), Hidalgo, Texas (\$601), Yakima, Wash. (\$648), and Lake, Fla. (\$649).

### **Average Weekly Wages in Oregon's Smaller Counties**

All of the 30 counties in Oregon with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$955. Benton reported the highest weekly wage (\$901) followed by Sherman (\$801). Wheeler County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging \$471 in the fourth quarter of 2011. (See table 2.)

When all 36 counties in Oregon were considered, all but 2 had wages below the national average of \$955. Five reported average weekly wages under \$600, 18 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 10 had wages from \$700 to \$899, and 3 had wages above \$900. The two counties with above-average wages (Washington and Multnomah) are located in the Portland metropolitan area.

### **Additional statistics and other information**

Quarterly 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 the QCEW Web site at <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 2010 edition of this publication, which was published in November 2011, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2011 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2010* are now available online at [www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn10.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn10.htm). The 2011 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available later in 2012.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

### **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 9.2 million employer reports covered 131.1 million full- and part-time workers. 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 BLS 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.

**Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the six large counties in Oregon, fourth quarter 2011 (2)**

| Area              | Employment                |                                      |  | Average Weekly Wage [3] |                               |  |  |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
|                   | December 2011 (thousands) | Percent change, December 2010-11 [4] | National ranking by percent change [5] | Average weekly wage     | National ranking by level [5] | Percent change, fourth quarter 2010-11 [4] | National ranking by percent change [5] |
| United States [6] | 131,254.2                 | 1.4                                  | --                                     | \$955                   | --                            | -1.7                                       | --                                     |
| Oregon            | 1,629.8                   | 1.2                                  | --                                     | 850                     | 27                            | -0.2                                       | 6                                      |
| Clackamas, Ore.   | 140.1                     | 1.3                                  | 119                                    | 862                     | 176                           | -0.6                                       | 67                                     |
| Jackson, Ore.     | 75.8                      | -2.6                                 | 318                                    | 689                     | 310                           | -1.7                                       | 151                                    |
| Lane, Ore.        | 136.8                     | 0.8                                  | 179                                    | 738                     | 293                           | -0.9                                       | 88                                     |
| Marion, Ore.      | 128.8                     | -0.6                                 | 298                                    | 734                     | 295                           | -1.2                                       | 109                                    |
| Multnomah, Ore.   | 437.7                     | 1.8                                  | 89                                     | 969                     | 93                            | -1.0                                       | 95                                     |
| Washington, Ore.  | 248.0                     | 2.7                                  | 33                                     | 1,085                   | 50                            | 1.4  | 14                                     |

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

[2] Data are preliminary.

[3] Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

[4] Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

[5] Ranking does not include the county of San Juan, Puerto Rico.

[6] Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

[7] Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

**Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Oregon, 4th quarter 2011 (2)**

| Area                     | Employment December 2011 | Average Weekly Wage (3) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>United States (4)</b> | 131,254,162              | \$955                   |
| <b>Oregon</b>            | 1,629,756                | 850                     |
| <b>Baker</b>             | 4,955                    | 598                     |
| <b>Benton</b>            | 34,801                   | 901                     |
| <b>Clackamas</b>         | 140,088                  | 862                     |
| <b>Clatsop</b>           | 16,314                   | 620                     |
| <b>Columbia</b>          | 9,604                    | 644                     |
| <b>Coos</b>              | 21,895                   | 617                     |
| <b>Crook</b>             | 5,441                    | 713                     |
| <b>Curry</b>             | 5,878                    | 616                     |
| <b>Deschutes</b>         | 59,626                   | 721                     |
| <b>Douglas</b>           | 34,050                   | 674                     |
| <b>Gilliam</b>           | 895                      | 799                     |
| <b>Grant</b>             | 2,277                    | 633                     |
| <b>Harney</b>            | 2,140                    | 618                     |
| <b>Hood River</b>        | 12,479                   | 597                     |
| <b>Jackson</b>           | 75,781                   | 689                     |
| <b>Jefferson</b>         | 5,732                    | 661                     |
| <b>Josephine</b>         | 22,540                   | 617                     |
| <b>Klamath</b>           | 21,365                   | 647                     |
| <b>Lake</b>              | 2,197                    | 695                     |
| <b>Lane</b>              | 136,751                  | 738                     |
| <b>Lincoln</b>           | 16,584                   | 621                     |
| <b>Linn</b>              | 39,828                   | 730                     |
| <b>Malheur</b>           | 12,471                   | 600                     |
| <b>Marion</b>            | 128,845                  | 734                     |
| <b>Morrow</b>            | 4,214                    | 773                     |
| <b>Multnomah</b>         | 437,696                  | 969                     |
| <b>Polk</b>              | 16,927                   | 597                     |
| <b>Sherman</b>           | 740                      | 801                     |
| <b>Tillamook</b>         | 8,154                    | 622                     |
| <b>Umatilla</b>          | 28,539                   | 693                     |
| <b>Union</b>             | 9,304                    | 619                     |
| <b>Wallowa</b>           | 2,266                    | 580                     |
| <b>Wasco</b>             | 9,896                    | 674                     |
| <b>Washington</b>        | 248,028                  | 1,085                   |
| <b>Wheeler</b>           | 306                      | 471                     |
| <b>Yamhill</b>           | 30,669                   | 701                     |

Footnotes

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

(2) Data are preliminary.

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

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

[SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages](#)

**Table 3. Covered [1] employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2011 [2]**

| State                | Employment                   |   | Average weekly wage [3] |                                 |  |  |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
|                      | December 2011<br>(thousands) | Percent change,<br>December 2010-<br>11 | Average<br>weekly wage  | National<br>ranking<br>by level | Percent change,<br>fourth quarter<br>2010-11 | National ranking<br>by<br>percent change |
| United States [4]    | 131,254.2                    | 1.4                                     | \$955                   | --                              | -1.7   | --                                       |
| Alabama              | 1,828.3                      | 0.2                                     | 832                     | 31                              | -0.8   | 14                                       |
| Alaska               | 311.3                        | 1.6                                     | 982                     | 11                              | -0.5   | 10                                       |
| Arizona              | 2,458.4                      | 1.7                                     | 882                     | 21                              | -1.1   | 17                                       |
| Arkansas             | 1,157.1                      | 0.9                                     | 736                     | 47                              | -1.2   | 19                                       |
| California           | 14,731.8                     | 1.3                                     | 1,100                   | 6                               | -2.7   | 47                                       |
| Colorado             | 2,250.1                      | 2.1                                     | 975                     | 13                              | -2.6   | 46                                       |
| Connecticut          | 1,642.0                      | 0.9                                     | 1,188                   | 4                               | -3.1   | 49                                       |
| Delaware             | 405.9                        | 0.4                                     | 984                     | 10                              | -1.6   | 26                                       |
| District of Columbia | 708.0                        | 1.3                                     | 1,668                   | 1                               | -1.2   | 19                                       |
| Florida              | 7,364.1                      | 1.4                                     | 847                     | 29                              | -2.8   | 48                                       |
| Georgia              | 3,826.9                      | 1.0                                     | 885                     | 20                              | -2.2   | 39                                       |
| Hawaii               | 607.0                        | 1.4                                     | 845                     | 30                              | -1.5   | 23                                       |
| Idaho                | 606.4                        | 0.8                                     | 717                     | 50                              | -2.2   | 39                                       |
| Illinois             | 5,635.9                      | 1.1                                     | 1,013                   | 8                               | -2.1   | 35                                       |
| Indiana              | 2,799.2                      | 2.0                                     | 789                     | 41                              | -1.9   | 32                                       |
| Iowa                 | 1,464.2                      | 1.1                                     | 793                     | 40                              | -0.8   | 14                                       |
| Kansas               | 1,320.1                      | 0.7                                     | 800                     | 38                              | -1.5   | 23                                       |
| Kentucky             | 1,770.2                      | 1.3                                     | 786                     | 42                              | -1.0   | 16                                       |
| Louisiana            | 1,870.8                      | 1.0                                     | 850                     | 27                              | -1.7   | 28                                       |
| Maine                | 580.9                        | 0.4                                     | 755                     | 46                              | -1.8   | 30                                       |
| Maryland             | 2,516.4                      | 1.1                                     | 1,058                   | 7                               | -2.0   | 33                                       |
| Massachusetts        | 3,230.8                      | 1.3                                     | 1,192                   | 3                               | -2.1   | 35                                       |
| Michigan             | 3,911.8                      | 2.4                                     | 933                     | 18                              | -0.5   | 10                                       |
| Minnesota            | 2,636.4                      | 2.1                                     | 936                     | 16                              | -3.9   | 51                                       |
| Mississippi          | 1,083.8                      | 0.3                                     | 699                     | 51                              | -1.1   | 17                                       |
| Missouri             | 2,617.0                      | 0.8                                     | 825                     | 32                              | -1.7   | 28                                       |
| Montana              | 426.7                        | 1.8                                     | 727                     | 48                              | 0.7  | 4  |
| Nebraska             | 910.5                        | 0.8                                     | 762                     | 45                              | -1.3   | 21                                       |
| Nevada               | 1,124.1                      | 0.8                                     | 852                     | 26                              | -3.2   | 50                                       |
| New Hampshire        | 615.4                        | 0.9                                     | 971                     | 15                              | -0.7   | 13                                       |
| New Jersey           | 3,811.6                      | 0.6                                     | 1,138                   | 5                               | -2.1   | 35                                       |
| New Mexico           | 784.3                        | -0.3                                    | 799                     | 39                              | -2.2   | 39                                       |
| New York             | 8,618.4                      | 1.4                                     | 1,197                   | 2                               | -1.8   | 30                                       |
| North Carolina       | 3,885.9                      | 1.3                                     | 824                     | 33                              | -2.0   | 33                                       |
| North Dakota         | 397.0                        | 7.6                                     | 871                     | 23                              | 7.7  | 1  |
| Ohio                 | 5,027.6                      | 1.3                                     | 855                     | 25                              | -1.3   | 21                                       |
| Oklahoma             | 1,530.0                      | 1.3                                     | 817                     | 34                              | 2.6  | 2  |
| Oregon               | 1,629.8                      | 1.2                                     | 850                     | 27                              | -0.2   | 6  |
| Pennsylvania         | 5,595.1                      | 0.7                                     | 936                     | 16                              | -1.6   | 26                                       |
| Rhode Island         | 451.9                        | 0.1                                     | 919                     | 19                              | -2.1   | 35                                       |
| South Carolina       | 1,796.1                      | 1.3                                     | 763                     | 44                              | -1.5   | 23                                       |
| South Dakota         | 397.0                        | 1.5                                     | 724                     | 49                              | 1.4  | 3  |
| Tennessee            | 2,654.9                      | 2.1                                     | 858                     | 24                              | -2.3   | 42                                       |
| Texas                | 10,607.9                     | 2.4                                     | 973                     | 14                              | -0.3   | 8  |
| Utah                 | 1,202.8                      | 2.8                                     | 806                     | 37                              | -2.5   | 45                                       |
| Vermont              | 303.9                        | 1.3                                     | 809                     | 36                              | -0.5   | 10                                       |
| Virginia             | 3,625.0                      | 1.3                                     | 1,004                   | 9                               | -2.4   | 43                                       |
| Washington           | 2,843.6                      | 1.4                                     | 979                     | 12                              | -0.2   | 6  |
| West Virginia        | 714.0                        | 2.2                                     | 776                     | 43                              | -0.3   | 8  |
| Wisconsin            | 2,689.6                      | 0.7                                     | 817                     | 34                              | -2.4   | 43                                       |
| Wyoming              | 276.9                        | 2.3                                     | 876                     | 22                              | 0.6  | 5  |
| Puerto Rico          | 960.9                        | 0.1                                     | 552                     | [5]                             | -1.1   | [5]                                      |
| Virgin Islands       | 43.2                         | -4.0                                    | 772                     | [5]                             | -3.4   | [5]                                      |

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

[2] Data are preliminary.

[3] Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

[4] Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

[5] Data not included in the national ranking.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Oregon, fourth quarter 2011

**Average Weekly Wages  
(National average= \$955)**

