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County Employment and Wages in Pennsylvania – First Quarter 2014

Chester County Leads the U.S. in Wage Growth

Employment rose in 13 of the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania from March 2013 to March 2014, 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 2013 annual average employment.) Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that Lancaster County's 1.8-percent rate of employment gain was the fastest in Pennsylvania and was ranked 137th among the 339 largest counties nationwide. Delaware County followed with an increase of 1.2 percent, ranking 177th among the nation's large counties. Westmoreland County recorded the largest employment decline among Pennsylvania's large counties, down 0.7 percent. Four other counties posted smaller rates of employment declines over the year, while employment in Luzerne County was unchanged.

Nationally, employment grew 1.7 percent during this 12-month period, as 281 of the 339 large counties nationwide gained jobs. Weld, Colo., experienced the largest percentage increase in employment, up 7.5 percent over the year. Peoria, Ill., had the largest employment decrease with a loss of 2.6 percent.

Among the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, employment was highest in Allegheny County (674,500) in March 2014. One other county, Philadelphia, had employment above 600,000. Together, Pennsylvania's large counties accounted for 76.6 percent of total employment within the Commonwealth. Nationwide, the 339 largest counties made up 72.0 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Chester County rose 13.9 percent from the first quarter of 2013 to the first quarter of 2014—the fastest wage increase among Pennsylvania's largest counties and ranked first in wage growth among the large counties nationwide. Washington was the only other large Pennsylvania county to rank in the top 10 nationally for wage growth, placing ninth with a 7.3-percent increase. All other Pennsylvania large counties had wage increases ranging from 5.5 percent in Delaware to 0.1 percent in Erie. Chester County also had the highest average weekly wage among the 19 largest counties in the Commonwealth at $1,415, followed by the counties of Montgomery ($1,346) and Philadelphia ($1,187). (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 3.8 percent over the year to $1,027 in the first quarter of 2014.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000. Forty-six of these smaller counties had weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Seven of Pennsylvania's 19 large counties recorded over-the-year wage increases larger than the national advance of 3.8 percent in the first quarter of 2014. Wage growth in all of these counties ranked in the top 25 percent among the 339 large counties nationwide.

Of the 339 largest counties nationwide, 323 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. As noted, Pennsylvania's Chester County led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 13.9 percent from the first quarter of 2013. New York, N.Y., was second with a gain of 12.0 percent.

Nationwide, 15 large counties recorded decreases in average weekly wages over the year. Benton, Ark., had the largest decrease in wages with a decline of 3.2 percent from the first quarter of 2013. Cumberland, N.C., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages (-2.0 percent), followed by Dutchess, N.Y. (-1.6 percent); Ocean, N.J. (-1.3 percent); and McLean, Ill. (-1.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

The average weekly wage in one of Pennsylvania's large counties, Chester, ranked 18th in the nation; Montgomery and Philadelphia also ranked in the top 50 nationwide. In addition to these three counties, Allegheny, Delaware, Washington, and Dauphin Counties also had wages above the U.S. average of $1,027. In five other large counties in the Commonwealth, the average weekly wages placed in the bottom fourth of the national ranking—Lancaster, Luzerne, Westmoreland, Erie, and Lackawanna. Wages in these counties were more than 20 percent below the national average for the first quarter of 2014.

Average weekly wages in Pennsylvania's smaller counties

Forty-six of the 48 counties in Pennsylvania with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of $1,027. The exceptions were Montour and Greene counties at $1,197 and $1,078, respectively. Perry reported the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties as well as the Commonwealth as a whole, averaging $568 in the first quarter of 2014. (See table 2.)

When all 67 counties in Pennsylvania were considered, 58 had wages below the national average of $1,027. Twenty-two reported wages below $700, 32 had wages from $701 to $900, 7 had wages from $901 to $1,100, and 6 had wages above $1,100. (See chart 1.) Four of the nine counties that recorded above-average wages were concentrated in the Philadelphia metropolitan area, and two were located in the Pittsburgh area.

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 the QCEW Web site at 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 2013 edition of this publication is now available and contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2014 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2013 are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2013/home.htm.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 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 9.4 million employer reports cover 134.6 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/; 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.

Table 1. Covered[1] employment and wages in the United States and the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2014[2]

Area	Employment		Average Weekly Wage[3]				
	March 2014 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2013-14[4]	National ranking by percent change[5]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level[5]	Percent change, first quarter 2013-14[4]	National ranking by percent change[5]
United States[6]	134,555.0	1.7	--	$1,027	--	3.8	--
Pennsylvania	5,560.9	0.3	--	1,007	16	4.1	11
Allegheny, Pa.	674.5	-0.6	312	1,130	58	4.5	53
Berks, Pa.	164.7	0.6	238	867	198	4.0	73
Bucks, Pa.	246.1	0.6	238	921	156	1.8	230
Butler, Pa.	83.4	0.6	238	905	170	1.0	288
Chester, Pa.	238.3	0.8	218	1,415	18	13.9	1
Cumberland, Pa.	124.5	0.5	253	921	156	3.3	117
Dauphin, Pa.	173.2	-0.1	290	1,038	89	4.5	53
Delaware, Pa.	214.1	1.2	177	1,121	61	5.5	25
Erie, Pa.	121.4	-0.5	307	759	302	0.1	323
Lackawanna, Pa.	96.3	-0.5	307	744	312	3.5	108
Lancaster, Pa.	221.6	1.8	137	803	263	2.0	215
Lehigh, Pa.	176.2	0.7	224	979	126	3.4	111
Luzerne, Pa.	138.6	0.0	282	773	293	3.8	84
Montgomery, Pa.	465.9	0.3	265	1,346	26	4.2	69
Northampton, Pa.	104.4	1.1	184	874	189	3.8	84
Philadelphia, Pa.	634.3	0.3	265	1,187	49	2.9	143
Washington, Pa.	84.9	0.7	224	1,067	76	7.3	9
Westmoreland, Pa.	129.6	-0.7	315	772	294	1.8	230
York, Pa.	170.4	0.3	265	845	221	1.1	279

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) 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.

Table 2. Covered[1] employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2014[2]

Area	Employment March 2014	Average weekly wage [3]
United States [4]	134,554,959	$1,027
Pennsylvania	5,560,923	1,007
Adams	33,828	696
Allegheny	674,511	1,130
Armstrong	17,296	748
Beaver	52,510	819
Bedford	15,148	626
Berks	164,733	867
Blair	57,360	704
Bradford	24,088	816
Bucks	246,145	921
Butler	83,438	905
Cambria	53,337	674
Cameron	1,983	748
Carbon	16,851	607
Centre	65,420	853
Chester	238,308	1,415
Clarion	13,322	630
Clearfield	29,649	683
Clinton	12,959	738
Columbia	24,669	690
Crawford	30,652	671
Cumberland	124,543	921
Dauphin	173,159	1,038
Delaware	214,068	1,121
Elk	14,837	746
Erie	121,438	759
Fayette	38,986	658
Forest	2,032	838
Franklin	56,134	719
Fulton	4,720	750
Greene	14,632	1,078
Huntingdon	11,862	692
Indiana	32,540	828
Jefferson	15,142	687
Juniata	6,181	617
Lackawanna	96,261	744
Lancaster	221,600	803
Lawrence	28,781	707
Lebanon	48,638	722
Lehigh	176,174	979
Luzerne	138,583	773
Lycoming	52,020	778
Mc Kean	15,530	766
Mercer	47,693	728
Mifflin	15,351	659
Monroe	52,305	761
Montgomery	465,870	1,346
Montour	15,655	1,197
Northampton	104,356	874
Northumberland	27,108	694
Perry	7,531	568
Philadelphia	634,285	1,187
Pike	10,026	606
Potter	5,188	730
Schuylkill	49,346	704

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered[1] employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2014[2] - Continued

Area	Employment March 2014	Average weekly wage [3]
Snyder	15,330	604
Somerset	24,417	690
Sullivan	1,634	618
Susquehanna	9,054	756
Tioga	12,880	723
Union	16,304	758
Venango	19,047	684
Warren	15,062	686
Washington	84,853	1,067
Wayne	13,865	675
Westmoreland	129,611	772
Wyoming	9,951	873
York	170,404	845

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. Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

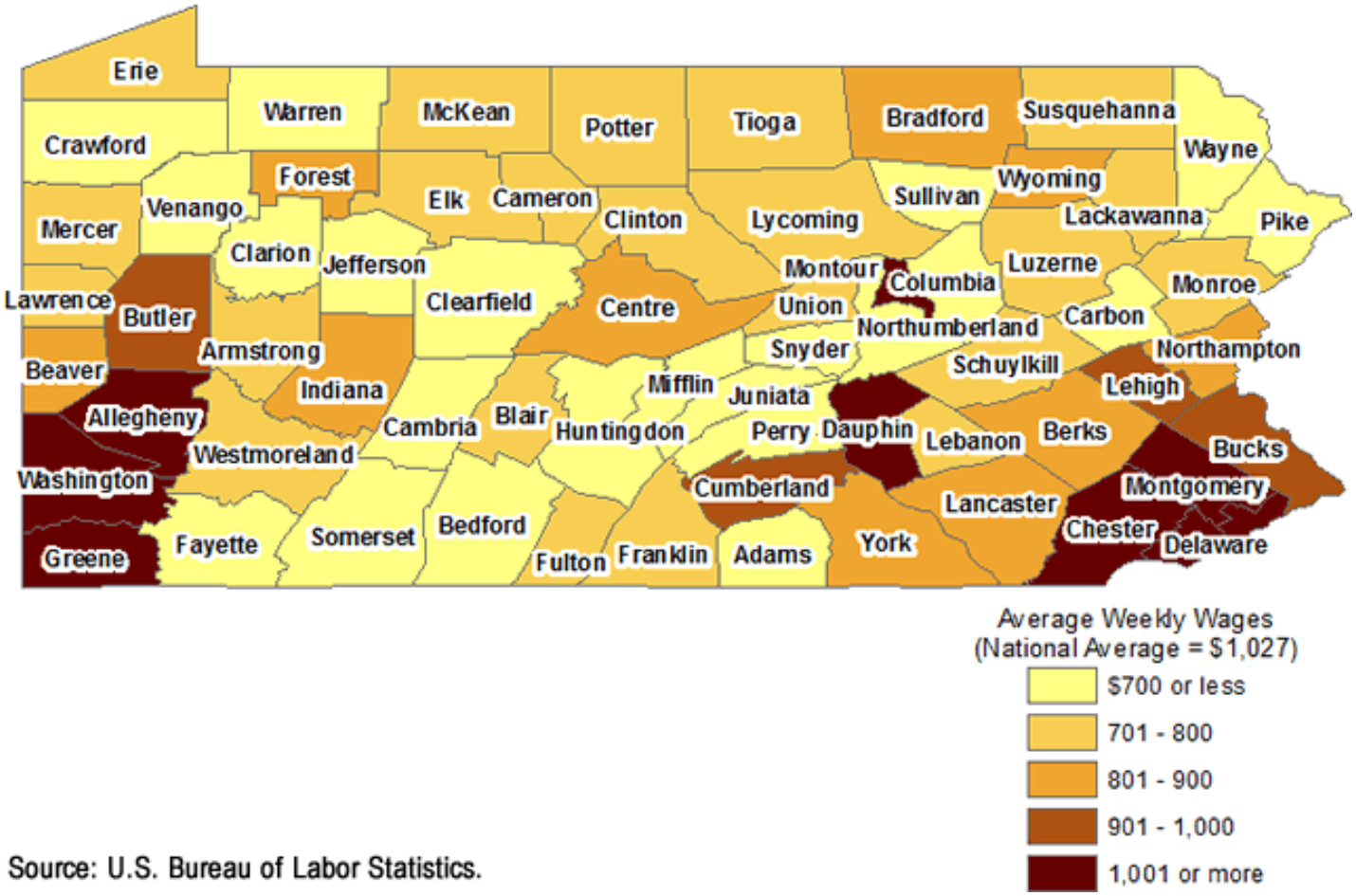
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2014

State	Employment		Average weekly wage[1]			
	March 2014 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2013-14	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2013-14	National ranking by percent change
United States[2]	134,555.0	1.7	$1,027	--	3.8	--
Alabama	1,849.5	0.6	825	38	1.6	50
Alaska	319.1	0.3	1,023	15	3.5	17
Arizona	2,540.8	1.9	918	22	3.1	26
Arkansas	1,152.6	0.3	784	46	2.5	37
California	15,572.9	2.8	1,165	6	4.5	5
Colorado	2,370.1	3.1	1,046	13	4.2	9
Connecticut	1,627.2	0.5	1,362	3	3.3	24
Delaware	412.5	2.0	1,110	7	3.9	13
District of Columbia	727.3	1.2	1,701	1	5.3	3
Florida	7,752.4	2.9	868	28	3.0	28
Georgia	3,974.8	2.6	972	18	3.4	18
Hawaii	624.9	1.2	857	32	1.9	42
Idaho	631.5	3.3	722	50	3.9	13
Illinois	5,651.2	0.9	1,104	8	4.2	9
Indiana	2,842.5	1.2	845	35	1.7	48
Iowa	1,485.4	1.5	824	39	3.0	28
Kansas	1,343.0	1.7	840	36	4.1	11
Kentucky	1,784.1	1.1	811	40	2.7	33
Louisiana	1,909.8	1.2	868	28	2.6	35
Maine	565.9	0.7	786	45	1.9	42
Maryland	2,512.8	0.1	1,086	9	1.8	47
Massachusetts	3,272.2	1.3	1,300	4	5.3	3
Michigan	4,013.5	1.7	950	20	3.1	26
Minnesota	2,652.3	0.8	1,036	14	3.4	18
Mississippi	1,096.8	0.6	707	51	1.7	48
Missouri	2,634.6	1.0	866	31	2.9	30
Montana	429.9	0.7	730	49	3.3	24
Nebraska	930.7	1.7	797	42	2.6	35
Nevada	1,183.5	3.4	867	30	2.7	33
New Hampshire	614.2	1.3	970	19	3.4	18
New Jersey	3,794.3	0.6	1,263	5	2.2	38
New Mexico	787.0	0.2	793	43	1.9	42
New York	8,699.5	1.6	1,460	2	7.3	1
North Carolina	4,003.2	1.7	914	23	3.4	18
North Dakota	428.9	3.3	944	21	6.7	2
Ohio	5,071.5	1.3	909	24	2.8	32
Oklahoma	1,565.2	0.7	854	34	3.9	13
Oregon	1,688.5	2.8	893	25	3.4	18
Pennsylvania	5,560.9	0.3	1,007	16	4.1	11
Rhode Island	449.7	1.1	996	17	4.4	8
South Carolina	1,873.6	2.7	787	44	1.9	42
South Dakota	400.2	1.4	741	48	4.5	5
Tennessee	2,718.2	1.7	874	27	2.2	38
Texas	11,220.6	2.6	1,062	11	4.5	5
Utah	1,270.8	3.1	831	37	3.4	18
Vermont	301.1	0.5	807	41	1.9	42
Virginia	3,613.2	0.0	1,050	12	2.2	38
Washington	2,966.3	2.6	1,068	10	3.8	16
West Virginia	694.6	-0.9	779	47	1.4	51
Wisconsin	2,694.5	1.0	856	33	2.9	30
Wyoming	275.4	1.0	877	26	2.1	41
Puerto Rico	914.9	-1.8	521	[3]	1.4	[3]
Virgin Islands	38.3	-3.6	744	[3]	2.6	[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 including in the national ranking.
NOTE: Covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2014



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.