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County Employment and Wages in Pennsylvania – First Quarter 2015

Chester County had second largest decrease in wages among nation's largest counties

Employment rose in 17 of the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania from March 2014 to March 2015, 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 2014 annual average employment.) Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that Cumberland County's 2.4-percent rate of employment gain was the fastest in Pennsylvania and was ranked 135th among the 342 largest counties nationwide. Lancaster County followed with an increase of 1.9 percent, ranking 165th among the nation's large counties. Butler and Lackawanna Counties recorded the only employment declines among Pennsylvania's large counties, down 0.6 and 0.1 percent, respectively.

Nationally, employment grew 2.1 percent during this 12-month period, as 323 of the 342 large counties nationwide gained jobs. Utah County, Utah, experienced the largest percentage increase in employment, up 6.7 percent over the year. Atlantic County, N.J., had the largest employment decrease with a loss of 4.3 percent.

Among the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, employment was highest in Allegheny County (675,600) in March 2015. One other county, Philadelphia, had employment above 600,000. Together, Pennsylvania's large counties accounted for 76.7 percent of total employment within the Commonwealth. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.3 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Washington County rose 10.7 percent from the first quarter of 2014 to the first quarter of 2015—the fastest wage increase among Pennsylvania's largest counties and ranked second in wage growth among the large counties nationwide. Allegheny was the only other large county in Pennsylvania to rank in the top 15 nationally for wage growth, placing 12th with a 6.3-percent increase. The remaining wage increases in Pennsylvania's large counties ranged from 3.0 percent in Montgomery to 1.1 percent in Bucks. Two counties—Chester and Cumberland—had wage decreases over the year, while Dauphin County's average weekly wage was unchanged. (See table 1.) Nationally, the average weekly wage rose 2.1 percent over the year to $1,048 in the first quarter of 2015.

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

Five of Pennsylvania's 19 large counties recorded over-the-year wage increases larger than the national advance of 2.1 percent in the first quarter of 2015. Wage growth in all five of these counties ranked in the top third among the 342 large counties nationwide.

Of the 342 largest counties nationwide, 297 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Olmsted, Minn., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 11.7 percent from the first quarter of 2014. Washington, Pa., as noted, was second with a gain of 10.7 percent.

Nationwide, 39 large counties recorded decreases in average weekly wages over the year. Snohomish, Wash., had the largest decrease in wages with a decline of 4.8 percent from the first quarter of 2014. Chester, Pa., had the second largest decrease in average weekly wages (-4.0 percent), followed by Williamson, Texas (-3.1 percent); Saginaw, Mich. (-2.4 percent); and Palm Beach, Fla. (-2.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

The average weekly wage in one of Pennsylvania's large counties, Montgomery, ranked 24th in the nation while Chester and Washington also ranked in the top 50 nationwide. In addition to these counties, Philadelphia, Delaware, and Allegheny Counties also had wages above the U.S. average of $1,048.

Five large counties in the Commonwealth had average weekly wages that placed in the bottom fourth of the national ranking—Lackawanna, Erie, Luzerne, Westmoreland, and Lancaster. Wages in these counties were more than 20 percent below the national average for the first quarter of 2015.

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 $1,048. The exceptions were Montour and Green Counties with wages of $1,243 and $1,111, respectively. Perry reported the lowest weekly wage among the smaller counties as well as the Commonwealth as a whole, averaging $577 in the first quarter of 2015. (See table 2.)

When all 67 counties in Pennsylvania were considered, 59 had wages below the national average of $1,048. Eighteen reported wages below $700, 36 had wages from $701 to $900, and 13 had wages above $900. (See chart 1.) Four of the eight counties that recorded wages above the national average of $1,048 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.

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 9.5 million employer reports cover 137.4 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.

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.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 19 largest counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2015

Area	Employment[1]		Average Weekly Wage[3]				
	March 2015[2] (thousands)	Percent change, March 2014-15[4]	National ranking by percent change[5]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level[5]	Percent change, first quarter 2010-11[4]	National ranking by percent change[5]
United States[6]	137,412.4	2.1	--	$1,048	--	2.1	--
Pennsylvania	5,606.9	0.9	--	1,031	16	2.4	16
Allegheny, Pa.	675.6	0.1	320	1,200	55	6.3	12
Berks, Pa.	167.1	1.4	214	881	202	1.5	195
Bucks, Pa.	250.0	1.2	234	930	165	1.1	239
Butler, Pa.	83.3	-0.6	335	919	171	1.9	150
Chester, Pa.	240.1	0.6	290	1,363	27	-4.0	341
Cumberland, Pa.	127.7	2.4	135	908	178	-0.5	314
Dauphin, Pa.	173.7	0.6	290	1,036	100	0.0	298
Delaware, Pa.	215.4	0.8	267	1,143	62	1.9	150
Erie, Pa.	122.6	1.0	254	770	306	1.4	210
Lackawanna, Pa.	95.8	-0.1	326	752	317	1.3	223
Lancaster, Pa.	224.3	1.9	165	818	265	1.9	150
Lehigh, Pa.	178.7	1.1	243	1,006	120	2.9	76
Luzerne, Pa.	139.9	0.8	267	783	297	1.4	210
Montgomery, Pa.	468.0	0.8	267	1,387	24	3.0	67
Northampton, Pa.	105.8	1.3	223	882	200	1.4	210
Philadelphia, Pa.	646.1	1.6	199	1,214	51	2.4	114
Washington, Pa.	86.3	1.5	210	1,219	50	10.7	2
Westmoreland, Pa.	129.5	0.2	314	785	295	1.3	223
York, Pa.	171.5	0.8	267	854	231	1.4	210

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.
(7) Data do not meet BLS or State agency disclosure standards.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2015

Area[1]	Employment March 2015[2]	Average weekly wage [2][3]
United States [4]	137,412,381	$1,048
Pennsylvania	5,606,898	1,031
Adams	33,637	703
Allegheny	675,569	1,200
Armstrong	17,003	752
Beaver	51,331	823
Bedford	15,089	631
Berks	167,080	881
Blair	57,434	727
Bradford	24,481	845
Bucks	249,954	930
Butler	83,270	919
Cambria	52,931	686
Cameron	1,980	726
Carbon	16,777	633
Centre	65,412	898
Chester	240,090	1,363
Clarion	13,343	636
Clearfield	29,229	694
Clinton	12,704	773
Columbia	24,593	727
Crawford	30,803	694
Cumberland	127,669	908
Dauphin	173,682	1,036
Delaware	215,359	1,143
Elk	14,762	747
Erie	122,632	770
Fayette	39,279	675
Forest	1,942	885
Franklin	57,392	715
Fulton	4,965	798
Greene	14,893	1,111
Huntingdon	12,003	693
Indiana	31,960	842
Jefferson	15,555	708
Juniata	6,030	665
Lackawanna	95,845	752
Lancaster	224,311	818
Lawrence	28,334	736
Lebanon	47,940	730
Lehigh	178,686	1,006
Luzerne	139,879	783
Lycoming	52,707	809
Mc Kean	15,716	783
Mercer	47,112	737
Mifflin	15,516	680
Monroe	52,396	805
Montgomery	468,007	1,387
Montour	15,270	1,243
Northampton	105,843	882
Northumberland	26,559	713
Perry	7,636	577
Philadelphia	646,118	1,214
Pike	10,182	609
Potter	5,193	736
Schuylkill	49,381	721

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all of the counties in Pennsylvania, first quarter 2015 - Continued

Area[1]	Employment March 2015[2]	Average weekly wage [2][3]
Snyder	15,595	601
Somerset	24,105	698
Sullivan	1,762	694
Susquehanna	9,133	724
Tioga	12,729	752
Union	16,637	769
Venango	19,025	691
Warren	14,760	698
Washington	86,320	1,219
Wayne	13,826	684
Westmoreland	129,491	785
Wyoming	9,955	891
York	171,496	854

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.

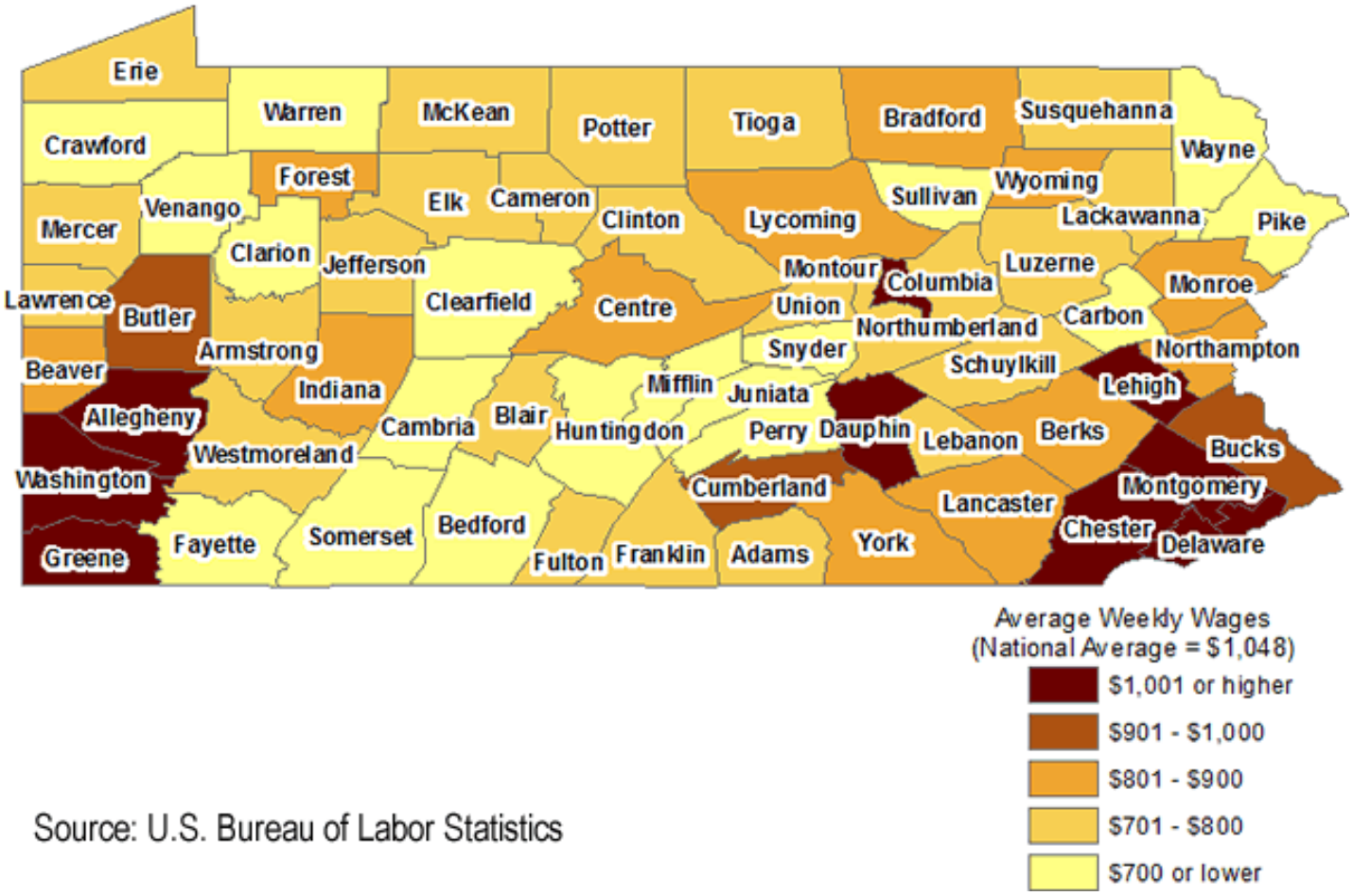
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, first quarter 2015[2]

State	Employment[1]		Average weekly wage[3]			
	March 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, March 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, first quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States[4]	137,412.4	2.1	$1,048	--	2.1	--
Alabama	1,873.5	1.3	844	39	2.2	19
Alaska	322.2	1.0	1,051	15	2.6	10
Arizona	2,605.6	2.5	926	23	1.0	45
Arkansas	1,166.6	1.3	790	47	0.8	47
California	16,029.5	3.0	1,207	6	3.7	3
Colorado	2,458.0	3.7	1,071	13	2.4	16
Connecticut	1,640.5	0.8	1,382	3	1.5	35
Delaware	422.8	2.5	1,105	9	-0.5	51
District of Columbia	732.6	1.4	1,764	1	3.2	4
Florida	8,018.0	3.6	885	28	1.8	27
Georgia	4,107.0	3.5	989	18	1.7	31
Hawaii	633.7	1.3	881	31	2.8	9
Idaho	650.3	3.1	736	50	2.2	19
Illinois	5,724.6	1.2	1,130	7	2.4	16
Indiana	2,894.8	1.8	857	35	1.4	38
Iowa	1,504.3	1.3	848	37	2.9	7
Kansas	1,357.1	1.0	851	36	1.4	38
Kentucky	1,810.3	1.5	823	41	1.5	35
Louisiana	1,927.1	1.0	885	28	2.0	21
Maine	571.4	0.9	793	45	0.9	46
Maryland	2,540.8	1.2	1,113	8	2.5	12
Massachusetts	3,338.6	1.7	1,341	4	3.2	4
Michigan	4,079.5	1.8	969	21	1.9	24
Minnesota	2,709.2	1.8	1,079	12	4.3	1
Mississippi	1,102.3	0.6	711	51	0.7	48
Missouri	2,678.0	1.7	882	30	1.8	27
Montana	441.0	2.7	750	49	2.6	10
Nebraska	943.1	1.4	818	42	2.5	12
Nevada	1,227.7	3.7	865	34	-0.2	50
New Hampshire	623.5	1.5	982	20	1.2	43
New Jersey	3,834.6	1.4	1,288	5	1.9	24
New Mexico	798.7	1.4	805	43	1.5	35
New York	8,865.0	1.9	1,463	2	0.2	49
North Carolina	4,099.4	2.5	930	22	1.9	24
North Dakota	436.0	1.6	984	19	4.2	2
Ohio	5,144.5	1.4	922	24	1.4	38
Oklahoma	1,592.7	1.3	869	33	2.0	21
Oregon	1,748.7	3.5	919	25	2.9	7
Pennsylvania	5,606.9	0.9	1,031	16	2.4	16
Rhode Island	456.1	1.4	1,008	17	1.2	43
South Carolina	1,919.1	2.5	801	44	1.8	27
South Dakota	406.5	1.5	763	48	3.0	6
Tennessee	2,772.7	2.1	886	27	1.4	38
Texas	11,557.0	2.9	1,089	10	2.5	12
Utah	1,318.8	3.7	845	38	1.7	31
Vermont	303.9	0.9	824	40	2.0	21
Virginia	3,649.3	1.1	1,068	14	1.7	31
Washington	3,064.4	3.2	1,087	11	1.8	27
West Virginia	692.4	-0.3	792	46	1.4	38
Wisconsin	2,734.3	1.5	877	32	2.5	12
Wyoming	277.8	0.8	892	26	1.7	31
Puerto Rico	904.9	-1.1	524	(3)	1.0	(3)
Virgin Islands	38.5	0.0	738	(3)	-0.7	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:
(1) Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. These 328 U.S. counties comprise 71.1 percent of the total workers in the U.S.
(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 Pennsylvania, first quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics