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Occupational Employment and Wages in Knoxville — May 2015

Workers in the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.19 in May 2015, about 13 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.23, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, 19 groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including computer and mathematical; construction and extraction; and management. No major occupational group in the local area had wages that were measurably higher than their respective national averages.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 7 of the 22 occupational groups, including office and administrative support; production; and management. Conversely, 12 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including business and financial operations; education, training, and library; and computer and mathematical. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Knoxville	United States	Knoxville	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$23.23	\$20.19*	-13
Management	5.0	6.1*	55.30	45.59*	-18
Business and financial operations	5.1	3.6*	35.48	29.96*	-16
Computer and mathematical	2.9	2.0*	41.43	31.45*	-24
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.2	39.89	39.91	0
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.8	34.24	31.69*	-7
Community and social services	1.4	1.2*	22.19	17.30*	-22
Legal	0.8	0.5*	49.74	50.65	2
Education, training, and library	6.2	5.2*	25.48	21.52*	-16
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	1.0*	27.39	20.90*	-24
Healthcare practitioner and technical	5.8	6.7*	37.40	32.92*	-12
Healthcare support	2.9	2.6*	14.19	12.95*	-9
Protective service	2.4	2.2*	21.45	17.42*	-19
Food preparation and serving related	9.1	9.3	10.98	9.67*	-12
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	3.7*	13.02	11.92*	-8
Personal care and service	3.1	2.7*	12.33	10.75*	-13
Sales and related	10.5	9.9*	18.90	15.89*	-16
Office and administrative support	15.8	17.1*	17.47	15.91*	-9
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1*	12.67	12.04	-5
Construction and extraction	4.0	3.6*	22.88	18.59*	-19
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.5*	22.11	19.96*	-10
Production	6.6	7.7*	17.41	16.21*	-7

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Knoxville	United States	Knoxville	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Transportation and material moving	6.9	7.4*	16.90	15.49*	-8

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Knoxville is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—office and administrative support—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Knoxville had 63,840 jobs in office and administrative support, accounting for 17.1 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 15.8-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$15.91, significantly below the national wage of \$17.47.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the office and administrative support group included general office clerks (8,370), customer service representatives (8,270), and secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive (7,560). Among the higher paying jobs were production, planning, and expediting clerks; and first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers, with mean hourly wages of \$31.05 and \$25.40, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were stock clerks and order fillers (\$11.46) and tellers (\$12.86). (Detailed occupational data for office and administrative support are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_28940.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the office and administrative support group. For instance, bill and account collectors were employed at 2.3 times the national rate in Knoxville, and order clerks, at 2.1 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, payroll and timekeeping clerks had a location quotient of 1.0 in Knoxville, indicating that this particular occupation’s local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

With the issuance of data for May 2015, the OES program has incorporated redefined metropolitan area definitions as designated by the Office of Management and Budget. OES data are available for 394 metropolitan areas, 38 metropolitan divisions, and 167 OES-defined nonmetropolitan areas. A listing of the areas and their definitions can be found at www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa_def.htm.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES program produces employment and wage estimates for over 800 occupations for all industries combined in the nation; the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 432 metropolitan areas and divisions; 167 nonmetropolitan areas; and Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. National estimates are also available by industry for NAICS sectors, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industries, and by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year. May 2015 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, November 2013, May 2013, and November 2012. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 73.5 percent based on establishments and 69.6 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57.9 percent of total national employment. (Response rates are slightly lower for these estimates due to the federal shutdown in October 2013.) The sample in the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area included 3,154 establishments with a response rate of 71 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2015 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Metropolitan Area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Knoxville, Tenn. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Grainger, Knox, Loudon, Morgan, Roane, and Union Counties.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southeast. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	63,840	1.1	\$15.91	\$33,090
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	4,200	1.1	25.40	52,830
Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service	380	1.4	12.64	26,280
Bill and Account Collectors	1,940	2.3	14.66	30,480
Billing and Posting Clerks	1,560	1.2	14.50	30,160
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	4,760	1.1	16.78	34,900
Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks	450	1.0	19.98	41,550
Procurement Clerks	140	0.8	16.55	34,420
Tellers	1,080	0.8	12.86	26,740
Financial Clerks, All Other	80	0.8	19.26	40,060
Brokerage Clerks	110	0.7	22.02	45,790
Correspondence Clerks	40	2.2	14.37	29,890
Court, Municipal, and License Clerks	590	1.7	16.36	34,020
Credit Authorizers, Checkers, and Clerks	110	1.0	15.46	32,150
Customer Service Representatives	8,270	1.2	14.56	30,290
Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs	290	0.8	16.23	33,750
File Clerks	410	1.1	12.06	25,080
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	860	1.3	9.01	18,750
Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan	890	1.8	12.86	26,740
Library Assistants, Clerical	160	0.6	13.12	27,280
Loan Interviewers and Clerks	780	1.3	15.87	33,010
New Accounts Clerks	(5)	(5)	12.99	27,020
Order Clerks	1,050	2.1	12.72	26,460
Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	440	1.2	15.15	31,520
Receptionists and Information Clerks	2,330	0.9	12.91	26,840
Reservation and Transportation Ticket Agents and Travel Clerks	(5)	(5)	15.02	31,230
Information and Record Clerks, All Other	310	0.7	17.91	37,240
Cargo and Freight Agents	50	0.2	18.06	37,570
Couriers and Messengers	90	0.5	12.50	25,990
Police, Fire, and Ambulance Dispatchers	180	0.7	14.40	29,960
Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance	490	0.9	24.51	50,980
Meter Readers, Utilities	150	1.5	19.93	41,460
Postal Service Clerks	180	0.9	22.97	47,770
Postal Service Mail Carriers	840	1.0	24.75	51,480
Postal Service Mail Sorters, Processors, and Processing Machine Operators	390	1.3	23.48	48,850
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	1,450	1.7	31.05	64,580
Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	1,950	1.1	13.13	27,320
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	5,920	1.1	11.46	23,840
Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	210	1.1	21.86	45,460
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	1,530	0.9	22.99	47,810
Legal Secretaries	460	0.8	18.77	39,050
Medical Secretaries	1,080	0.8	13.99	29,100
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	7,560	1.2	14.90	30,990
Computer Operators	250	1.8	18.45	38,370
Data Entry Keyers	320	0.6	12.55	26,100
Word Processors and Typists	30	0.2	18.25	37,970
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	240	0.3	15.85	32,960
Mail Clerks and Mail Machine Operators, Except Postal Service	140	0.5	12.60	26,210
Office Clerks, General	8,370	1.1	14.19	29,510

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015 - Continued

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Office Machine Operators, Except Computer.....	140	0.8	11.80	24,550
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other.....	300	0.5	15.67	32,580

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Knoxville, TN, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_28940.htm

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Estimate not released.