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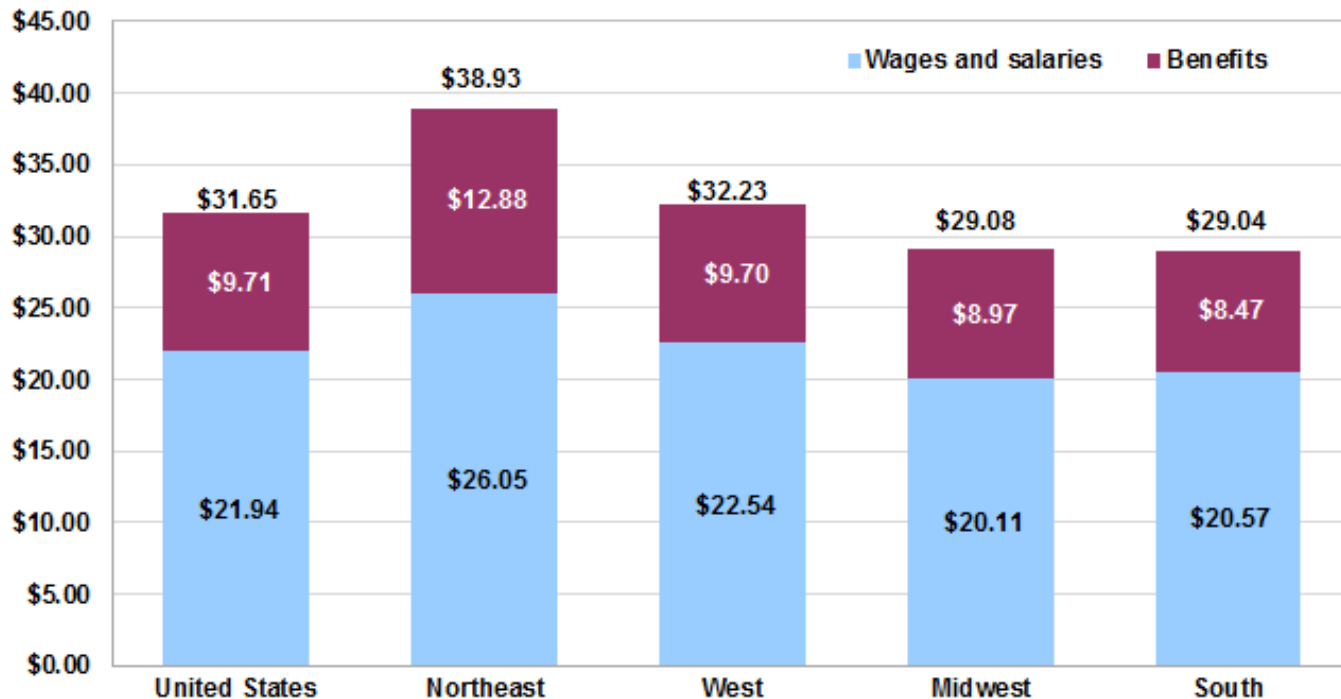
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Employer Costs for Employee Compensation for the Regions – March 2015

Employer costs for employee compensation in private industry among the four regions of the country ranged from \$29.04 per hour in the South to \$38.93 in the Northeast during March 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. In the other two regions, hourly employer costs for employee compensation stood at \$29.08 in the Midwest and \$32.23 in the West. (See [chart 1](#).) In addition to regional estimates, employer costs for nine smaller geographic divisions are also available. Within divisions, total compensation costs ranged from \$24.87 per hour in the East South Central division to \$39.14 in the Middle Atlantic division. (See [table 1](#).) Employer Costs for Employee Compensation (ECEC) are based on the National Compensation Survey, which measures employer costs for wages, salaries, and employee benefits. (Geographic definitions of the regions and divisions follow in the [Technical Note](#).)

Chart 1. Employer costs per hour worked for employee compensation in private industry by region, March 2015

Cost per hour worked



Note: The sum of individual items may not equal totals due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In the Northeast, hourly total compensation costs were comprised of the following: wages and salaries (\$26.05) made up 66.9 percent, while total benefits (\$12.88) accounted for the remaining 33.1 percent. Insurance costs, which include life, health, and short- and long-term disability, averaged \$3.19 per hour worked, or 8.2 percent of all compensation costs. Legally required benefits, which include Social Security and Medicare, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance, averaged \$2.98 per hour and represented 7.7 percent of total compensation costs. Paid leave benefits, which includes vacation, holiday, sick, and personal leave, was \$2.87 per hour worked and accounted for 7.4 percent of total compensation costs.

Hourly wages and salaries averaged \$22.54 in the West and accounted for 69.9 percent of all compensation costs. Total benefits averaged \$9.70, or 30.1 percent of total compensation costs. Legally required benefits averaged \$2.70 per hour worked and accounted for 8.4 percent of total compensation costs in the West. Insurance benefits averaged \$2.58 per hour and represented 8.0 percent of all employer costs, while paid leave was \$2.14, or 6.6 percent of total compensation costs.

The Midwest region recorded an hourly wage and salary average of \$20.11 in March 2015, which represented 69.2 percent of all compensation costs. Total benefits averaged \$8.97 and accounted for the remaining 30.8 percent of total compensation costs. The three highest categories for employer benefit costs included: insurance benefits (\$2.64 per hour worked), legally required benefits (\$2.35), and paid leave (\$1.99). These categories represented 9.1 percent, 8.1 percent, and 6.8 percent, respectively, of total employer compensation costs in the Midwest.

In the South, wages and salaries averaged \$20.57 per hour and comprised 70.8 percent of total employer compensation, while total benefits, at \$8.47 per hour, accounted for the remaining 29.2 percent. Legally required benefits represented the largest benefit category, averaging \$2.23 per hour worked, or 7.7 percent of total compensation costs. Insurance benefits, at \$2.20 per hour, or 7.6 percent of total compensation costs, represented the second largest benefit category in the South. Paid leave, the third largest benefit category, averaged \$1.97 per hour and represented 6.8 percent of all costs.

Overall, compensation costs among private industry employers in the United States averaged \$31.65 per hour worked in March 2015. Wages and salaries, at \$21.94 per hour, accounted for 69.3 percent of these costs, while benefits, at \$9.71, made up the remaining 30.7 percent.

The June 2015 national release on Employer Costs for Employee Compensation is scheduled to be released on September 9, 2015.

Technical Note

Employer Costs for Employee Compensation (ECEC) measures the average cost to employers for wages and salaries and benefits per employee hour worked.

Employer Costs for Employee Compensation data in this release cover private industry. Excluded from private industry are the self-employed and farm and private household workers. The cost levels for this quarter were collected from a probability sample of approximately 37,400 occupations selected from a sample of about 8,600 establishments in private industry. The private industry sample is rotated over approximately 5 years, which makes the sample more representative of the economy and reduces respondent burden. Data are collected for the pay period including the 12th day of the survey months of March, June, September, and December.

Employer Costs for Employee Compensation data on total compensation, wages and salaries, and benefits in private industry are produced annually in the March reference period for 15 combined and metropolitan statistical areas (CSA and MSA). Further information about metropolitan area ECEC estimates is available at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/cwc/bls-introduces-new-employer-costs-for-employee-compensation-data-for-private-industry-workers-in-15-metropolitan-areas.pdf.

For detailed information on Employer Costs for Employee Compensation, see Chapter 8, National Compensation Measures, of the BLS Handbook of Methods at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch8.pdf.

Current and historical BLS data are also posted on our Web site at www.bls.gov/ect.

Information from the Employer Costs for Employee Compensation program is available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Regional definitions

Northeast region

- New England division: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
- Middle Atlantic division: New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania

Midwest region

- East North Central division: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
- West North Central division: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota

South region

- South Atlantic division: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
- East South Central division: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
- West South Central division: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas

West region

- Mountain division: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
- Pacific division: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

Table 1. Employer costs per hour worked for employee compensation and costs as a percent of total compensation: Private industry workers, by census region and division, March 2015

Compensation component	Census region and division ⁽¹⁾									
	Northeast		Northeast divisions				South		South divisions	
	Cost	Percent	New England		Middle Atlantic		Cost	Percent	South Atlantic	
			Cost	Percent	Cost	Percent			Cost	Percent
Total compensation	\$38.93	100.0	\$38.35	100.0	\$39.14	100.0	\$29.04	100.0	\$30.02	100.0
Wages and salaries	26.05	66.9	27.28	71.2	25.60	65.4	20.57	70.8	21.25	70.8
Total benefits	12.88	33.1	11.06	28.8	13.54	34.6	8.47	29.2	8.77	29.2
Paid leave.....	2.87	7.4	2.72	7.1	2.92	7.5	1.97	6.8	2.14	7.1
Vacation.....	1.46	3.7	1.42	3.7	1.47	3.8	1.03	3.5	1.12	3.7
Holiday	0.84	2.2	0.82	2.1	0.85	2.2	0.60	2.1	0.64	2.1
Sick.....	0.38	1.0	0.32	0.8	0.40	1.0	0.23	0.8	0.25	0.8
Personal	0.19	0.5	0.16	0.4	0.20	0.5	0.11	0.4	0.13	0.4
Supplemental pay.....	2.19	5.6	1.05	2.7	2.61	6.7	0.89	3.1	0.83	2.8
Overtime and premium ⁽²⁾	0.25	0.6	0.26	0.7	0.24	0.6	0.29	1.0	0.23	0.8
Shift differentials.....	0.08	0.2	0.09	0.2	0.07	0.2	0.05	0.2	0.06	0.2
Nonproduction bonuses	1.87	4.8	0.70	1.8	2.29	5.9	0.55	1.9	0.54	1.8
Insurance.....	3.19	8.2	2.95	7.7	3.27	8.4	2.20	7.6	2.29	7.6
Life.....	0.05	0.1	0.04	0.1	0.05	0.1	0.05	0.2	0.05	0.2
Health	2.98	7.7	2.77	7.2	3.06	7.8	2.06	7.1	2.14	7.1
Short-term disability.....	0.10	0.2	0.09	0.2	0.10	0.3	0.05	0.2	0.06	0.2
Long-term disability	0.06	0.1	0.05	0.1	0.06	0.2	0.04	0.1	0.05	0.2
Retirement and savings.....	1.65	4.2	1.41	3.7	1.74	4.4	1.18	4.1	1.22	4.1
Defined benefit	0.75	1.9	0.59	1.5	0.80	2.0	0.56	1.9	0.56	1.9
Defined contribution	0.90	2.3	0.82	2.1	0.93	2.4	0.63	2.2	0.66	2.2
Legally required benefits	2.98	7.7	2.92	7.6	3.00	7.7	2.23	7.7	2.29	7.6
Social Security and Medicare.....	2.10	5.4	2.17	5.7	2.08	5.3	1.72	5.9	1.77	5.9
Social Security ⁽³⁾	1.65	4.2	1.72	4.5	1.63	4.2	1.38	4.7	1.42	4.7
Medicare.....	0.45	1.2	0.45	1.2	0.45	1.2	0.34	1.2	0.35	1.2
Federal unemployment insurance	0.04	0.1	0.04	0.1	0.04	0.1	0.03	0.1	0.03	0.1
State unemployment insurance....	0.32	0.8	0.31	0.8	0.33	0.8	0.14	0.5	0.15	0.5
Workers' compensation.....	0.51	1.3	0.40	1.0	0.55	1.4	0.34	1.2	0.34	1.1

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employer costs per hour worked for employee compensation and costs as a percent of total compensation: Private industry workers, by census region and division, March 2015 - Continued

Compensation component	Census region and division ⁽¹⁾									
	South divisions				Midwest		Midwest divisions			
	East South Central		West South Central		Cost	Percent	East North Central		West North Central	
	Cost	Percent	Cost	Percent			Cost	Percent	Cost	Percent
Total compensation	\$24.87	100.0	\$29.41	100.0	\$29.08	100.0	\$29.46	100.0	\$28.29	100.0
Wages and salaries	17.64	70.9	20.85	70.9	20.11	69.2	20.26	68.8	19.81	70.0
Total benefits	7.23	29.1	8.56	29.1	8.97	30.8	9.20	31.2	8.49	30.0
Paid leave.....	1.57	6.3	1.87	6.4	1.99	6.8	2.00	6.8	1.97	7.0
Vacation.....	0.82	3.3	0.97	3.3	1.08	3.7	1.08	3.7	1.07	3.8
Holiday	0.51	2.1	0.58	2.0	0.60	2.1	0.60	2.1	0.60	2.1
Sick.....	0.17	0.7	0.21	0.7	0.21	0.7	0.21	0.7	0.21	0.8
Personal	0.07	0.3	0.11	0.4	0.10	0.3	0.10	0.4	0.09	0.3
Supplemental pay.....	0.72	2.9	1.07	3.6	0.82	2.8	0.90	3.1	0.66	2.3
Overtime and premium ⁽²⁾	0.31	1.2	0.38	1.3	0.26	0.9	0.28	1.0	0.20	0.7
Shift differentials.....	0.04	0.1	0.05	0.2	0.06	0.2	0.07	0.2	0.06	0.2
Nonproduction bonuses	0.38	1.5	0.64	2.2	0.50	1.7	0.55	1.9	0.40	1.4
Insurance.....	2.12	8.5	2.09	7.1	2.64	9.1	2.69	9.1	2.52	8.9
Life.....	0.04	0.2	0.05	0.2	0.04	0.1	0.04	0.1	0.04	0.1
Health	2.00	8.0	1.96	6.7	2.48	8.5	2.54	8.6	2.37	8.4
Short-term disability.....	0.04	0.2	0.04	0.1	0.06	0.2	0.07	0.2	0.06	0.2
Long-term disability	0.04	0.2	0.04	0.1	0.05	0.2	0.05	0.2	0.05	0.2
Retirement and savings.....	0.82	3.3	1.29	4.4	1.17	4.0	1.21	4.1	1.10	3.9
Defined benefit	0.36	1.4	0.65	2.2	0.52	1.8	0.59	2.0	0.37	1.3
Defined contribution	0.46	1.8	0.64	2.2	0.66	2.3	0.62	2.1	0.73	2.6
Legally required benefits	1.99	8.0	2.24	7.6	2.35	8.1	2.40	8.2	2.24	7.9
Social Security and Medicare.....	1.50	6.0	1.73	5.9	1.70	5.8	1.71	5.8	1.67	5.9
Social Security ⁽³⁾	1.21	4.9	1.38	4.7	1.37	4.7	1.38	4.7	1.35	4.8
Medicare.....	0.29	1.2	0.34	1.2	0.33	1.1	0.33	1.1	0.33	1.2
Federal unemployment insurance.....	0.03	0.1	0.02	0.1	0.04	0.1	0.05	0.2	0.03	0.1
State unemployment insurance....	0.12	0.5	0.14	0.5	0.22	0.8	0.23	0.8	0.19	0.7
Workers' compensation.....	0.34	1.4	0.35	1.2	0.39	1.3	0.41	1.4	0.35	1.2

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employer costs per hour worked for employee compensation and costs as a percent of total compensation: Private industry workers, by census region and division, March 2015 - Continued

Compensation component	Census region and division ⁽¹⁾					
	West		West divisions			
	Cost	Percent	Mountain		Pacific	
			Cost	Percent	Cost	Percent
Total compensation	\$32.23	100.0	\$27.91	100.0	\$34.25	100.0
Wages and salaries	22.54	69.9	20.05	71.8	23.70	69.2
Total benefits	9.70	30.1	7.87	28.2	10.55	30.8
Paid leave.....	2.14	6.6	1.72	6.2	2.34	6.8
Vacation.....	1.10	3.4	0.89	3.2	1.20	3.5
Holiday	0.67	2.1	0.53	1.9	0.73	2.1
Sick.....	0.28	0.9	0.21	0.7	0.32	0.9
Personal	0.09	0.3	0.10	0.3	0.09	0.3
Supplemental pay.....	0.89	2.8	0.73	2.6	0.97	2.8
Overtime and premium ⁽²⁾	0.24	0.7	0.22	0.8	0.24	0.7
Shift differentials.....	0.04	0.1	0.03	0.1	0.05	0.1
Nonproduction bonuses	0.61	1.9	0.47	1.7	0.68	2.0
Insurance.....	2.58	8.0	2.20	7.9	2.76	8.1
Life.....	0.04	0.1	0.04	0.1	0.04	0.1
Health	2.47	7.7	2.08	7.5	2.65	7.7
Short-term disability.....	0.04	0.1	0.04	0.1	0.03	0.1
Long-term disability	0.04	0.1	0.04	0.2	0.04	0.1
Retirement and savings.....	1.38	4.3	0.97	3.5	1.58	4.6
Defined benefit	0.70	2.2	0.36	1.3	0.86	2.5
Defined contribution	0.68	2.1	0.61	2.2	0.71	2.1
Legally required benefits	2.70	8.4	2.25	8.1	2.91	8.5
Social Security and Medicare.....	1.85	5.7	1.66	6.0	1.94	5.7
Social Security ⁽³⁾	1.48	4.6	1.34	4.8	1.55	4.5
Medicare.....	0.37	1.2	0.33	1.2	0.39	1.1
Federal unemployment insurance.....	0.05	0.2	0.03	0.1	0.06	0.2
State unemployment insurance.....	0.23	0.7	0.17	0.6	0.25	0.7
Workers' compensation.....	0.57	1.8	0.39	1.4	0.65	1.9

(1) The States that comprise the census divisions are: New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont; Middle Atlantic: New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania; South Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia; East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee; West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas; East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin; West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota; Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming; and Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington.

(2) Includes premium pay for work in addition to the regular work schedule (such as overtime, weekends, and holidays).

(3) Comprises the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) program.