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SOUTHWEST INFORMATION OFFICE: Dallas, Texas

Technical information: (972) 850-4800 • BLSInfoDallas@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/regions/southwest

Media contact: (972) 850-4800

Occupational Employment and Wages in Las Cruces, May 2015

Workers in the Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$19.79 in May 2015, about 15 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.23, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 17 of the 22 major groups including legal; sales and related; and management. Wage levels in the remaining groups were not statistically different from their respective national averages.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 9 of the 22 occupational groups, including education, training, and library; personal care and service; and architecture and engineering. Conversely, nine groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including production; transportation and material moving; and sales and related. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Las Cruces		United States	Las Cruces	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾	
Total, all occupations.....	100.0%	100.0%		\$23.23	\$19.79	*	-15
Management.....	5.0	4.4	*	55.30	40.27	*	-27
Business and financial operations.....	5.1	3.6	*	35.48	28.54	*	-20
Computer and mathematical.....	2.9	2.5		41.43	38.64	*	-7
Architecture and engineering.....	1.8	3.1	*	39.89	37.45		-6
Life, physical, and social science.....	0.8	1.0	*	34.24	32.12	*	-6
Community and social service.....	1.4	1.9	*	22.19	22.50		1
Legal.....	0.8	0.4	*	49.74	33.24	*	-33
Education, training, and library.....	6.2	10.1	*	25.48	26.88		5
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.3	0.9	*	27.39	20.02	*	-27
Healthcare practitioners and technical.....	5.8	5.9		37.40	36.79		-2
Healthcare support.....	2.9	3.2		14.19	12.80	*	-10
Protective service.....	2.4	3.7	*	21.45	22.22		4
Food preparation and serving related.....	9.1	9.9	*	10.98	9.81	*	-11
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance..	3.2	2.9		13.02	10.75	*	-17
Personal care and service.....	3.1	6.1	*	12.33	9.79	*	-21
Sales and related.....	10.5	8.8	*	18.90	13.60	*	-28
Office and administrative support.....	15.8	14.6	*	17.47	14.12	*	-19
Farming, fishing, and forestry.....	0.3	2.2	*	12.67	9.90	*	-22

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

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
	United States	Las Cruces		United States	Las Cruces		
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	4.9	*	22.88	17.49	*	-24
Installation, maintenance, and repair.....	3.9	3.3	*	22.11	17.96	*	-19
Production.....	6.6	3.1	*	17.41	14.17	*	-19
Transportation and material moving.....	6.9	3.6	*	16.90	12.92	*	-24

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

Note: * 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—architecture and engineering—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Las Cruces had 2,140 jobs in architecture and engineering, accounting for 3.1 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 1.8-percent national share. The local average hourly wage for this occupational group was \$37.45, compared to the national average of \$39.89.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the architecture and engineering group included electronics engineers, except computer (350), electrical and electronics engineering technicians (270), and electrical engineers (200). Among the higher paying jobs were electrical engineers and aerospace engineers, with mean hourly wages of \$51.76 and \$49.14, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were civil engineering technicians (\$19.59) and survey and mapping technicians (\$19.97). (Detailed occupational data for the architecture and engineering group are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29740.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 Las Cruces metropolitan area, above average concentrations of employment were found in nearly all of the occupations within the architecture and engineering group. For instance, electronics engineers, except computer, were employed at 5.1 times the national average in Las Cruces, and electrical and electronics engineering technicians, at 3.9 times the national rate. Both location quotients were among the highest in all metropolitan areas for these particular occupations. On the other hand, civil engineers had a location quotient of 1.0 in Las Cruces, 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 New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions.

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 Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,068 establishments with a response rate of 83 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 **Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes Doña Ana County in New Mexico.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southwest. 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, Las Cruces Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Architecture and engineering occupations.....	2,140	1.7	\$37.45	\$77,890
Architects, except landscape and naval.....	60	1.4	28.66	59,600
Aerospace engineers.....	⁽⁵⁾	⁽⁵⁾	49.14	102,200
Civil engineers.....	140	1.0	39.79	82,760
Computer hardware engineers.....	70	1.9	42.43	88,260
Electrical engineers.....	200	2.2	51.76	107,670
Electronics engineers, except computer.....	350	5.1	42.35	88,090
Materials engineers.....	50	3.4	36.88	76,710
Mechanical engineers.....	70	0.5	41.89	87,120
Engineers, all other.....	330	5.2	⁽⁵⁾	⁽⁵⁾
Architectural and civil drafters.....	60	1.3	20.32	42,270
Civil engineering technicians.....	90	2.6	19.59	40,740
Electrical and electronics engineering technicians.....	270	3.9	32.67	67,960
Engineering technicians, except drafters, all other.....	200	5.5	24.01	49,930
Surveying and mapping technicians.....	50	1.8	19.97	41,530

⁽¹⁾ For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Las Cruces MSA, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29740.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⁾ Estimates not released.