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County Employment and Wages in Texas – Third Quarter 2017

Employment rose in 20 of the 25 largest counties in Texas from September 2016 to September 2017, 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 2016 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that Midland and Montgomery Counties ranked among the top 10 nationwide for job growth. The 10.4-percent employment gain in Midland County ranked first and the 4.0-percent gain in Montgomery County ranked eighth. (See table 1.)

Nationwide, employment advanced 1.0 percent from September 2016 to September 2017 as 283 of the 346 largest U.S. counties registered increases. As noted, Midland County, Texas, had the fastest employment gain in the nation (10.4 percent). Within Midland, the largest employment increase was in natural resources and mining, which gained 4,526 jobs over the year (24.4 percent). Collier, Fla., had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment, down 5.2 percent. Within Collier, construction had the largest employment decrease, with a loss of 1,879 jobs (-12.8 percent).

Among the largest counties in Texas, employment was highest in Harris County (2,261,300) in September 2017, followed by Dallas County (1,691,100). Three other counties (Tarrant, Bexar, and Travis) had employment levels exceeding 700,000. Together, the 25 largest Texas counties accounted for 80.0 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 346 largest counties made up 72.7 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the third quarter of 2016 to the third quarter of 2017, average weekly wages nationwide decreased 0.6 percent to $1,021. Among the large counties in Texas, Midland had the largest increase in average weekly wages with a gain of 8.4 percent, which also ranked first in the nation in terms of percentage increase. (See table 1.) In the third quarter of 2017, Midland had the highest average weekly wage among the state's largest counties at $1,283.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 229 counties in Texas with annual average employment levels below 75,000 in 2016. Among these smaller counties, 213 had average weekly wages below the national average in September 2017. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

Among Texas's 25 large counties, 5 recorded wage gains from the third quarter of 2016 to the third quarter of 2017. Midland County's 8.4-percent wage increase was the highest in the nation and Brazos (1.3 percent), Travis (0.9 percent), and Smith (0.6 percent) ranked among the top 50 nationwide. (See table 1.) McLennan

County ranked 52nd with a 0.5-percent wage gain. Twenty large Texas counties had over-the-year wage decreases. Cameron County had the largest decrease, down 3.0 percent, followed by Tarrant (-2.9 percent) and Lubbock (-2.7 percent). Nationally, average weekly wages declined 0.6 percent over the year.

Nationwide, 265 of the 346 largest counties had over-the-year wage decreases. Mercer, N.J., had the largest wage decline in the nation, down 8.8 percent. The Mercer, N.J., decrease was followed by Wyandotte, Kan. (-6.0 percent); Clark, Nev. (-5.3 percent); and Somerset, N.J. (-5.0 percent).

Of the 346 largest counties nationwide, 71 experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. The 8.4-percent increase in Midland, Texas, was followed by Union, N.J. (+8.2 percent); Elkhart, Ind. (+6.5 percent); Forsyth, N.C. (+5.3 percent); and Maui + Kalawao, Hawaii (+4.6 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 5 of the 25 large Texas counties were more than 15 percent above the national average of $1,021 in the third quarter of 2017. Midland County led at $1,283 per week and ranked 21st among the 346 large U.S. counties. Midland was followed by Harris ($1,247, 25th), Dallas ($1,213, 34th), Collin ($1,190, 39th), and Travis ($1,188, 40th). Two additional Texas counties reported average weekly wages above the national average: Brazoria ($1,074, 73rd), and Jefferson ($1,052, 84th).

Texas had a number of low-paying large counties. Three of the four lowest-paying large counties in the nation were located along the Texas-Mexico border: Cameron ($612, 346th), Hidalgo ($649, 344th), and Webb ($672, 343rd). Other Texas counties with low national rankings included El Paso ($717, 337th), Brazos ($775, 325th), and Lubbock ($790, 313th).

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average in 96 of the largest counties in the country. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of $2,320. San Mateo, Calif., was second at $2,123, followed by San Francisco, Calif. ($1,954), and New York, N.Y. ($1,889).

Among the largest U.S. counties, more than two-thirds (250) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the third quarter of 2017. The lowest weekly wage was reported in Cameron, Texas ($612), followed by Horry, S.C. ($633), and the Texas counties of Hidalgo ($649) and Webb ($672). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than 30 percent of the average weekly wage in the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif.

Average weekly wages in smaller Texas counties

Sixteen of the 229 smaller Texas counties – those with employment below 75,000 – reported average weekly wages above the national average of $1,021. Two of these smaller counties had wages that were also the highest in the state: Carson ($1,465) and Upton ($1,295). Delta County registered the lowest weekly wage, averaging $444 in the third quarter of 2017. (See table 2.)

When all 254 counties in Texas were considered, all but 23 had wages below the national average. Thirty-one counties reported average weekly wages under $650, 83 registered wages from $650 to $749, 61 had wages from $750 to $849, 41 had wages from $850 to $949, and 38 had wages of $950 or higher. (See chart 1.) The counties with the highest average weekly wages were located around the larger metropolitan areas of Dallas, Houston, and Austin, as well as the smaller areas of Midland, Odessa, and Amarillo. Lower-paying counties were concentrated in the agricultural areas of central Texas, the Texas Panhandle, and along the Texas-Mexico border.

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 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 2016 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2017 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn16.htm.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2017 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 23, 2018.

QCEW Publication Acceleration and Conversion to Two Data Releases

The national QCEW publication process is accelerating for a more timely release. Beginning with the national fourth quarter 2017 release, QCEW data will be published in two parts. The current County Employment and Wages news release and associated data will be accelerated and published first. The full QCEW data release will occur two weeks later, accompanied by a data release notice.

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 9.9 million employer reports cover 144.5 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 (see Technical Note below) 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: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 25 largest counties in Texas, third quarter 2017

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, third quarter 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	144,464.4	1.0	--	$1,021	--	-0.6	--
Texas	12,008.9	1.4	--	1,032	12	-1.0	29
Bell, Texas	117.5	0.3	244	863	248	-0.3	98
Bexar, Texas	857.8	1.3	114	905	194	-0.7	133
Brazoria, Texas	107.2	-1.9	342	1,074	73	-0.9	150
Brazos, Texas	102.9	1.4	104	775	325	1.3	27
Cameron, Texas	138.2	0.4	233	612	346	-3.0	311
Collin, Texas	398.0	3.3	16	1,190	39	-0.7	133
Dallas, Texas	1,691.1	1.9	67	1,213	34	-1.9	245
Denton, Texas	239.6	3.0	24	929	180	-2.5	285
El Paso, Texas	300.9	0.8	182	717	337	-1.5	208
Fort Bend, Texas	177.3	0.9	167	942	167	-2.0	256
Galveston, Texas	108.5	-0.1	287	886	216	-1.3	186
Harris, Texas	2,261.3	0.1	270	1,247	25	-1.7	231
Hidalgo, Texas	252.7	1.6	80	649	344	-0.6	121
Jefferson, Texas	119.7	-2.3	344	1,052	84	-1.4	195
Lubbock, Texas	139.1	1.3	114	790	313	-2.7	300
McLennan, Texas	112.5	0.4	233	841	275	0.5	52
Midland, Texas	91.4	10.4	1	1,283	21	8.4	1
Montgomery, Texas	176.4	4.0	8	1,003	112	-0.5	111
Nueces, Texas	160.5	-0.7	314	883	223	-0.2	90
Potter, Texas	78.0	-0.8	321	821	289	-1.0	156
Smith, Texas	102.4	0.9	167	843	272	0.6	49
Tarrant, Texas	877.8	2.3	48	1,000	113	-2.9	307
Travis, Texas	728.0	2.6	32	1,188	40	0.9	37
Webb, Texas	100.1	1.2	132	672	343	-1.0	156
Williamson, Texas	164.6	2.9	27	1,010	108	-1.3	186

Footnotes:
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.
(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, 3rd quarter 2017

Area	Employment September 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	144,464,425	$1,021
Texas	12,008,941	1,032
Anderson	20,134	792
Andrews	7,307	1,167
Angelina	35,386	742
Aransas	4,935	741
Archer	1,764	691
Armstrong	363	696
Atascosa	12,551	902
Austin	9,946	857
Bailey	2,628	708
Bandera	3,081	671
Bastrop	17,886	706
Baylor	1,222	658
Bee	8,677	688
Bell	117,456	863
Bexar	857,771	905
Blanco	3,207	927
Borden	179	671
Bosque	3,680	695
Bowie	41,180	761
Brazoria	107,193	1,074
Brazos	102,944	775
Brewster	3,740	749
Briscoe	307	553
Brooks	2,440	803
Brown	15,863	703
Burleson	4,225	797
Burnet	13,805	784
Caldwell	8,503	727
Calhoun	10,788	1,203
Callahan	2,273	746
Cameron	138,203	612
Camp	3,867	692
Carson	4,737	1,465
Cass	7,417	704
Castro	2,514	687
Chambers	14,379	1,145
Cherokee	14,116	673
Childress	2,478	690
Clay	1,351	665
Cochran	639	719
Coke	689	656
Coleman	2,136	576
Collin	398,037	1,190
Collingsworth	812	767
Colorado	6,902	764
Comal	54,779	782
Comanche	3,572	629
Concho	630	862
Cooke	14,036	841
Coryell	17,507	768
Cottle	385	712
Crane	1,125	965
Crockett	1,560	745
Crosby	1,429	635

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, 3rd quarter 2017 - Continued

Area	Employment September 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
Culberson	1,027	937
Dallam	4,633	776
Dallas	1,691,095	1,213
Dawson	4,210	724
De Witt	7,614	874
Deaf Smith	7,409	774
Delta	1,111	444
Denton	239,647	929
Dickens	451	634
Dimmit	5,987	987
Donley	909	586
Duval	3,288	737
Eastland	7,303	906
Ector	72,681	1,081
Edwards	413	613
El Paso	300,882	717
Ellis	49,417	807
Erath	16,824	667
Falls	3,165	648
Fannin	7,424	744
Fayette	9,337	749
Fisher	892	782
Floyd	1,641	676
Foard	399	551
Fort Bend	177,290	942
Franklin	2,978	802
Freestone	4,857	778
Frio	6,733	931
Gaines	6,388	888
Galveston	108,472	886
Garza	1,823	723
Gillespie	10,594	694
Glasscock	522	719
Goliad	1,279	685
Gonzales	6,983	783
Gray	7,647	916
Grayson	45,830	792
Gregg	73,711	866
Grimes	7,053	870
Guadalupe	41,873	797
Hale	11,860	693
Hall	776	544
Hamilton	2,474	685
Hansford	2,166	937
Hardeman	1,226	659
Hardin	12,344	771
Harris	2,261,291	1,247
Harrison	22,794	880
Hartley	2,663	738
Haskell	1,590	640
Hays	66,949	751
Hemphill	2,395	994
Henderson	16,841	676
Hidalgo	252,686	649
Hill	10,146	752

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, 3rd quarter 2017 - Continued

Area	Employment September 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
Hockley	9,730	946
Hood	15,771	780
Hopkins	12,521	739
Houston	7,303	865
Howard	12,653	910
Hudspeth	1,028	1,123
Hunt	29,440	1,007
Hutchinson	8,199	1,085
Irion	742	1,216
Jack	3,094	888
Jackson	5,827	798
Jasper	9,900	757
Jeff Davis	895	649
Jefferson	119,748	1,052
Jim Hogg	1,690	736
Jim Wells	15,645	840
Johnson	46,742	820
Jones	3,102	711
Karnes	5,791	940
Kaufman	31,645	783
Kendall	15,511	909
Kenedy	585	1,060
Kent	283	633
Kerr	17,683	789
Kimble	1,285	577
King	81	735
Kinney	778	895
Kleberg	11,354	744
Knox	1,115	857
La Salle	3,421	1,162
Lamar	21,395	820
Lamb	3,943	721
Lampasas	4,438	634
Lavaca	5,496	702
Lee	7,375	998
Leon	4,738	908
Liberty	16,817	815
Limestone	7,639	741
Lipscomb	1,281	784
Live Oak	4,020	993
Llano	4,658	702
Loving	87	862
Lubbock	139,141	790
Lynn	1,567	811
Madison	4,601	720
Marion	2,109	626
Martin	1,977	927
Mason	1,074	615
Matagorda	10,743	950
Maverick	17,504	630
McCulloch	2,923	756
McLennan	112,489	841
McMullen	492	1,006
Medina	9,779	677
Menard	401	515

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, 3rd quarter 2017 - Continued

Area	Employment September 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
Midland	91,435	1,283
Milam	5,516	788
Mills	1,305	610
Mitchell	2,061	747
Montague	4,803	769
Montgomery	176,379	1,003
Moore	10,764	826
Morris	3,514	881
Motley	325	496
Nacogdoches	22,361	697
Navarro	16,303	716
Newton	1,240	686
Nolan	5,939	793
Nueces	160,506	883
Ochiltree	4,503	869
Oldham	905	722
Orange	20,947	987
Palo Pinto	8,826	793
Panola	8,643	876
Parker	32,267	857
Parmer	5,850	785
Pecos	5,545	854
Polk	10,880	731
Potter	78,011	821
Presidio	2,050	834
Rains	1,843	593
Randall	30,257	780
Reagan	1,916	1,181
Real	711	464
Red River	2,705	652
Reeves	5,840	956
Refugio	2,345	696
Roberts	253	898
Robertson	4,139	827
Rockwall	29,590	789
Runnels	2,803	663
Rusk	13,165	808
Sabine	2,298	696
San Augustine	1,750	699
San Jacinto	2,081	655
San Patricio	18,566	888
San Saba	1,718	677
Schleicher	722	827
Scurry	6,494	1,000
Shackelford	1,269	900
Shelby	8,068	691
Sherman	989	790
Smith	102,424	843
Somervell	3,797	1,008
Starr	15,220	565
Stephens	3,198	682
Sterling	529	801
Stonewall	509	742
Sutton	1,891	1,202
Swisher	1,901	638

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Texas, 3rd quarter 2017 - Continued

Area	Employment September 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
Tarrant	877,755	1,000
Taylor	61,045	772
Terrell	280	825
Terry	3,758	874
Throckmorton	422	549
Titus	15,874	697
Tom Green	47,287	762
Travis	727,953	1,188
Trinity	2,262	650
Tyler	3,646	667
Upshur	6,687	675
Upton	1,522	1,295
Uvalde	9,904	627
Val Verde	17,427	697
Van Zandt	10,920	630
Victoria	37,841	843
Walker	24,449	756
Waller	15,813	845
Ward	4,595	1,087
Washington	14,676	746
Webb	100,130	672
Wharton	15,648	733
Wheeler	2,000	749
Wichita	53,833	735
Wilbarger	5,798	695
Willacy	3,456	665
Williamson	164,589	1,010
Wilson	8,135	702
Winkler	2,745	1,119
Wise	19,403	835
Wood	9,962	684
Yoakum	3,831	1,070
Young	6,719	777
Zapata	3,573	894
Zavala	2,408	663

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.
Note: Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

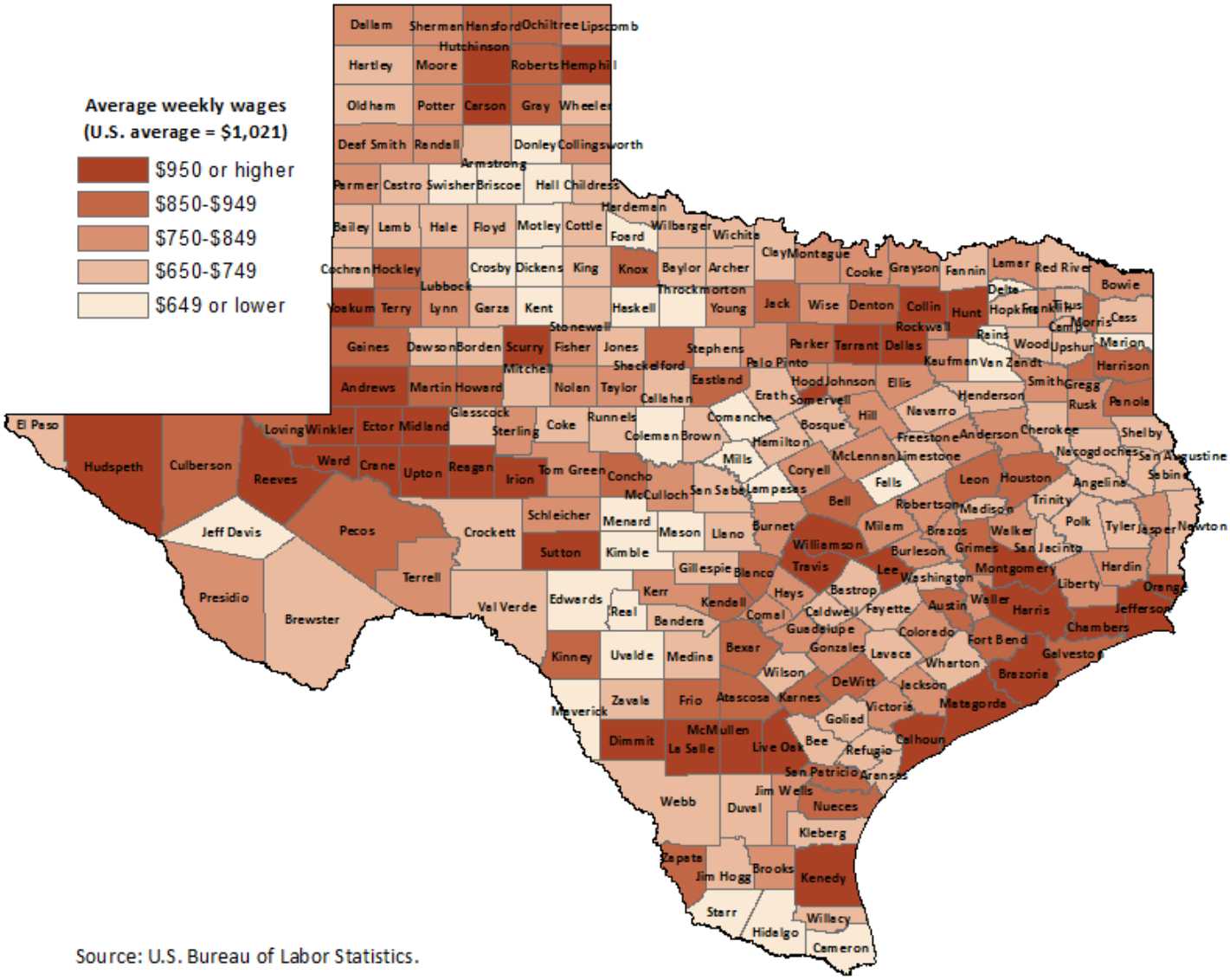
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2017

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2016-17	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2016-17	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	144,464.4	1.0	$1,021	--	-0.6	--
Alabama	1,941.1	0.8	859	37	-1.3	38
Alaska	335.4	-0.7	1,025	15	-2.8	50
Arizona	2,760.1	2.4	948	24	-0.2	10
Arkansas	1,213.0	0.6	788	49	-0.6	19
California	17,153.4	1.7	1,215	4	0.5	4
Colorado	2,625.9	1.9	1,067	9	0.5	4
Connecticut	1,676.3	0.1	1,179	6	-2.2	47
Delaware	443.0	0.4	1,026	14	0.4	6
District of Columbia	764.7	0.7	1,759	1	1.3	2
Florida	8,305.8	-0.2	896	29	-1.1	31
Georgia	4,343.5	1.3	961	21	-0.9	27
Hawaii	652.5	0.4	953	22	-0.3	13
Idaho	722.3	2.7	778	50	-0.5	16
Illinois	5,969.6	0.5	1,057	10	-0.3	13
Indiana	3,044.0	0.6	861	36	-0.6	19
Iowa	1,546.1	-0.2	855	38	-2.2	47
Kansas	1,376.4	-0.1	839	41	-2.1	46
Kentucky	1,890.4	0.5	837	42	-2.4	49
Louisiana	1,904.3	-0.1	869	33	-1.7	42
Maine	621.9	0.7	821	46	-0.5	16
Maryland	2,661.8	0.5	1,105	8	-1.7	42
Massachusetts	3,568.0	0.9	1,265	2	-0.9	27
Michigan	4,334.3	0.9	964	20	-1.1	31
Minnesota	2,883.0	1.1	1,030	13	-2.0	45
Mississippi	1,129.1	-0.1	729	51	-1.4	39
Missouri	2,805.8	0.9	878	31	-1.2	34
Montana	468.6	0.9	793	48	0.1	8
Nebraska	973.3	-0.2	850	39	-0.8	23
Nevada	1,337.7	2.9	914	26	-3.8	51
New Hampshire	659.1	0.6	1,022	16	-0.4	15
New Jersey	4,043.6	1.1	1,156	7	-1.5	41
New Mexico	816.0	0.3	823	45	-0.8	23
New York	9,329.8	1.2	1,219	3	-0.2	10
North Carolina	4,348.0	1.3	904	27	-0.7	21
North Dakota	419.2	-1.0	953	22	-1.2	34
Ohio	5,383.6	0.6	920	25	-0.8	23
Oklahoma	1,593.3	0.7	843	40	-1.2	34
Oregon	1,905.3	1.8	969	19	-0.1	9
Pennsylvania	5,836.5	1.0	1,002	17	-1.1	31
Rhode Island	484.5	0.8	973	18	-1.8	44
South Carolina	2,027.2	0.8	828	43	-0.5	16
South Dakota	426.2	0.4	803	47	-0.7	21
Tennessee	2,953.3	1.1	903	28	-1.2	34
Texas	12,008.9	1.4	1,032	12	-1.0	29
Utah	1,444.1	2.6	879	30	-0.2	10
Vermont	310.3	0.1	869	33	-1.4	39
Virginia	3,843.6	1.0	1,053	11	-0.8	23
Washington	3,343.4	2.0	1,208	5	1.7	1
West Virginia	694.0	0.2	826	44	1.1	3
Wisconsin	2,866.9	0.5	876	32	-1.0	29
Wyoming	276.2	0.3	868	35	0.3	7
Puerto Rico	862.8	-3.1	509	[3]	-2.7	[3]
Virgin Islands	36.9	-1.1	763	[3]	-1.9	[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 included in the national ranking.
Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Texas, third quarter 2017



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.