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County Employment and Wages in Washington – Third Quarter 2013

Employment rose in 9 of the 10 large counties in Washington from September 2012 to September 2013, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2012 annual average employment.) Regional Commissioner Richard J. Holden noted that the largest employment increase was 3.7 percent in King County, followed by 3.5 percent in Clark County. (See [table 1](#).)

Employment nationwide advanced 1.7 percent from September 2012 to September 2013 as 286 of the 334 largest U.S. counties registered increases. Fort Bend, Texas, posted the largest increase with a gain of 6.0 percent over the year. Peoria, Ill., experienced the largest over-the-year decrease in employment with a loss of 3.7 percent.

Among the largest counties in Washington, King reported the highest employment (1,212,300) in September 2013. Three other counties (Pierce, Snohomish, and Spokane) had employment levels exceeding 200,000. Together, Washington's 10 large counties accounted for 84.5 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 334 largest counties made up 71.4 percent of total U.S. employment.

Average weekly wages increased in 8 of the 10 large counties in Washington from the third quarter of 2012 to the third quarter of 2013. Whatcom County experienced the largest growth in wages (6.9 percent), followed by Yakima (3.2 percent), and Clark and Spokane (2.2 percent each). Nationally, average weekly wages increased 1.9 percent from the third quarter of 2012 to the third quarter of 2013. King County had the highest average weekly wage among the largest counties in the state at \$1,376, followed by Snohomish (\$1,013). Average weekly wages in these two counties exceeded the national average of \$922. Yakima County recorded the lowest average weekly wage at \$638. (See [table 1](#).)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 29 counties in Washington with employment below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

Eight large counties in Washington recorded wage gains from the third quarter of 2012 to the third quarter of 2013, with four counties posting increases greater than the U.S. average of 1.9 percent. (See [table 1](#).) As mentioned, Whatcom County's 6.9-percent wage increase was the highest in the state and placed 4th in the national ranking. Three additional Washington counties registered wage growth ranking in the top 100

nationally: Yakima (3.2 percent, 42nd), and Clark and Spokane (2.2 percent each, tied 98th). In contrast, average weekly wages fell in Thurston and Kitsap Counties, decreasing 2.2 percent and 0.6 percent, respectively.

Among the 334 largest U.S. counties, 291 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. San Mateo, Calif., had the largest wage gain at 9.9 percent. Dane, Wis., was second with wage growth of 9.3 percent, followed by Collier, Fla. (8.0 percent). Wage decreases were recorded in 40 large counties nationwide; Pinellas, Fla., experienced the largest over-the-year wage loss at 4.3 percent.

Large county average weekly wages

King County's \$1,376 weekly wage placed 10th among the 334 largest U.S. counties in the third quarter of 2013. Snohomish (\$1,013) and Benton (\$916) Counties placed 59th and 109th, respectively. Five large counties in the state reported average weekly wages between \$880 and \$800. Yakima County's \$638 weekly wage was the lowest among the state's large counties and ranked 329th nationwide.

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than average in 101 of the 334 largest U.S. counties. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position among the highest-paid large counties with an average weekly wage of \$1,868. San Mateo, Calif., was second at \$1,698, followed by New York, N.Y. (\$1,667), Washington D.C. (\$1,560), and San Francisco, Calif. (\$1,549).

Among the 232 large counties with an average weekly wage below the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2013, 3 had wages below \$600. Horry, S.C. (\$564) reported the lowest wage, followed by Cameron, Texas (\$587) and Hidalgo, Texas (\$595).

Average weekly wages in Washington's smaller counties

Of the 29 counties in Washington with employment below 75,000, Cowlitz recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$895. Okanogan County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state with an average of \$518 in the third quarter of 2013. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 39 counties in Washington were considered, all but 2 had wages below the national average of \$922. One reported average weekly wages under \$600, 20 reported wages from \$600 to \$699, 9 had wages from \$700 to \$799, 6 had wages from \$800 to \$899, and 3 had wages above \$900. (See [chart 1](#).) Of the nine counties with wages of \$800 or higher, six were located on coastal waters on or adjacent to Puget Sound.

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 <https://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 2012 edition of this publication, which was published in September 2013, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2013 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2012* are now available online at <https://www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2012/home.htm>. The 2013 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2014.

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.

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 9.3 million employer reports cover 135.0 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.

Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 10 largest counties in Washington, third quarter 2013 (2)

Area	Employment			Average Weekly Wage (3)			
	September 2013 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2012-13 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level (5)	Percent change, third quarter 2012-13 (4)	National ranking by percent change (5)
United States (6)	134,957.5	1.7	--	\$922	--	1.9	--
Washington.....	3,017.9	2.4	--	1,044	7	2.1	21
Benton, Wash.	79.9	1.1	203	916	109	0.3	268
Clark, Wash.	136.1	3.5	34	866	159	2.2	98
King, Wash.	1,212.3	3.7	25	1,376	10	1.6	172
Kitsap, Wash.	80.1	-0.2	295	879	145	-0.6	312
Pierce, Wash.	274.0	2.1	114	842	178	0.5	255
Snohomish, Wash.	264.6	1.6	156	1,013	59	1.4	192
Spokane, Wash.	204.2	1.3	187	796	231	2.2	98
Thurston, Wash.	100.1	2.3	97	829	195	-2.2	326
Whatcom, Wash.	82.7	2.0	120	807	218	6.9	4
Yakima, Wash.....	114.8	1.0	214	638	329	3.2	42

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.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Washington, third quarter 2013 (2)

Area	Employment September 2013	Average Weekly Wage (3)
United States (4)	134,957,493	\$922
Washington.....	3,017,877	1,044
Adams	8,103	642
Asotin	5,726	621
Benton	79,891	916
Chelan	43,143	645
Clallam	22,300	673
Clark	136,117	866
Columbia	1,299	676
Cowlitz.....	35,987	895
Douglas	11,706	606
Ferry	1,684	723
Franklin.....	35,046	658
Garfield.....	756	760
Grant	40,974	649
Grays Harbor.....	22,145	682
Island	14,952	678
Jefferson.....	7,965	674
King	1,212,331	1,376
Kitsap	80,053	879
Kittitas.....	14,509	651
Klickitat	7,248	794
Lewis	23,875	702
Lincoln.....	2,974	650
Mason.....	13,479	680
Okanogan.....	20,497	518
Pacific.....	6,232	622
Pend Oreille.....	2,868	779
Pierce	274,014	842
San Juan	5,803	611
Skagit	48,522	761
Skamania	2,226	647
Snohomish	264,551	1,013
Spokane	204,239	796
Stevens	9,617	681
Thurston	100,146	829
Wahkiakum.....	739	646
Walla Walla.....	27,436	700
Whatcom	82,675	807
Whitman	17,512	778
Yakima.....	114,791	638

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.

SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

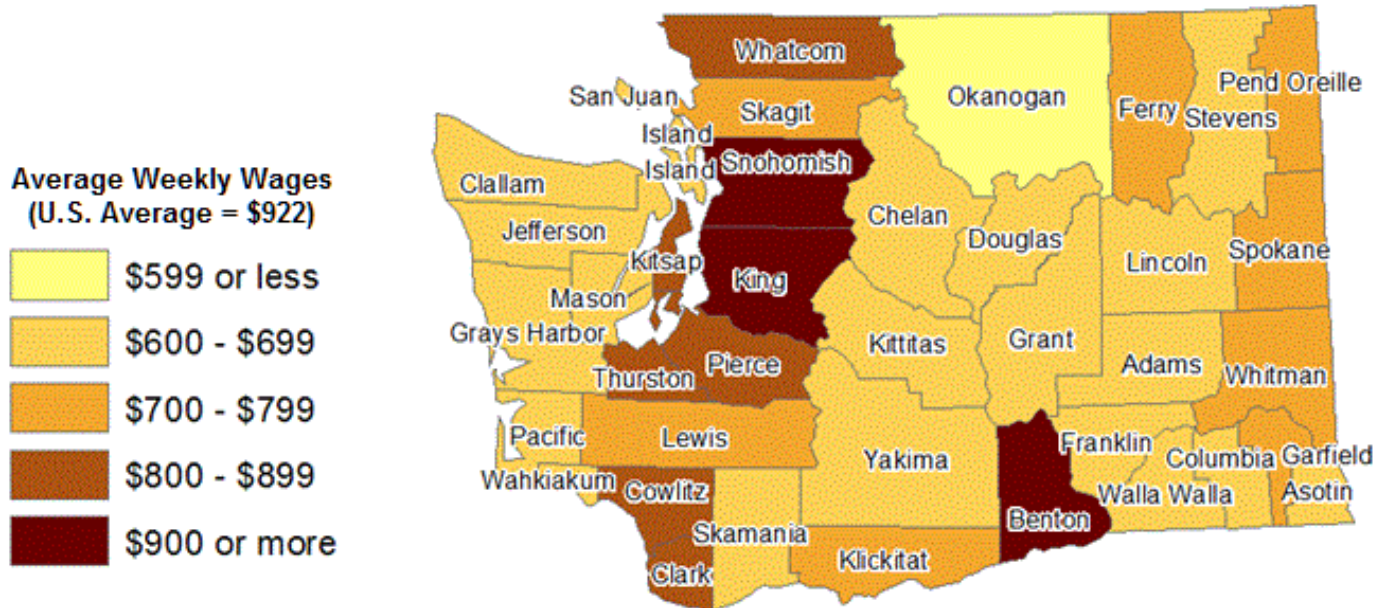
Table 3. Covered ⁽¹⁾ employment and wages by state, third quarter 2013 ⁽²⁾

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽³⁾			
	September 2013 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2012-13	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2012-13	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽⁴⁾	134,957.5	1.7	\$922	--	1.9	--
Alabama	1,847.6	0.8	794	34	1.3	43
Alaska	345.0	0.4	990	9	3.0	7
Arizona	2,490.9	2.2	859	22	1.5	36
Arkansas	1,156.5	0.1	723	47	2.1	21
California	15,526.4	2.7	1,057	6	2.1	21
Colorado	2,355.7	3.1	952	12	1.7	31
Connecticut	1,650.3	0.7	1,109	3	1.9	28
Delaware	416.8	2.1	941	14	2.1	21
District of Columbia	726.2	1.5	1,560	1	3.0	7
Florida	7,501.8	2.6	808	31	1.1	46
Georgia	3,928.2	2.3	867	21	1.5	36
Hawaii	617.7	1.7	839	25	1.6	33
Idaho	644.7	2.3	703	50	2.3	19
Illinois	5,731.7	0.7	959	11	1.5	36
Indiana	2,883.6	1.2	784	38	1.6	33
Iowa	1,512.0	1.5	772	40	2.1	21
Kansas	1,347.6	1.8	776	39	2.0	26
Kentucky	1,794.5	1.0	760	43	1.1	46
Louisiana	1,893.4	1.4	827	28	2.9	10
Maine	601.5	0.7	735	46	1.8	30
Maryland	2,546.4	0.6	1,011	8	0.4	51
Massachusetts	3,318.3	1.2	1,131	2	2.6	11
Michigan	4,069.7	2.1	875	20	1.5	36
Minnesota	2,724.2	1.7	938	15	2.6	11
Mississippi	1,099.1	0.8	688	51	2.5	15
Missouri	2,661.0	1.3	805	32	1.4	40
Montana	446.7	1.2	705	49	2.3	19
Nebraska	937.5	1.3	766	41	3.4	3
Nevada	1,169.4	2.5	836	27	2.0	26
New Hampshire	624.5	0.6	895	18	2.4	17
New Jersey	3,851.9	1.2	1,068	5	1.3	43
New Mexico	793.7	0.5	766	41	0.7	49
New York	8,724.8	1.3	1,108	4	1.7	31
North Carolina	4,006.4	1.7	817	30	1.4	40
North Dakota	436.7	3.4	921	16	5.5	1
Ohio	5,147.5	1.4	837	26	1.2	45
Oklahoma	1,572.6	1.4	797	33	2.4	17
Oregon	1,709.8	2.4	856	23	2.6	11
Pennsylvania	5,622.4	0.3	913	17	1.6	33
Rhode Island	465.2	1.3	878	19	2.6	11
South Carolina	1,859.3	2.3	751	44	1.9	28
South Dakota	408.9	0.9	706	48	3.4	3
Tennessee	2,712.8	1.5	819	29	0.6	50
Texas	11,091.9	2.8	952	12	2.5	15
Utah	1,265.5	2.9	791	36	3.1	6
Vermont	302.5	0.0	788	37	3.4	3
Virginia	3,650.1	0.6	971	10	1.1	46
Washington	3,017.9	2.4	1,044	7	2.1	21
West Virginia	710.3	-0.7	751	44	3.7	2
Wisconsin	2,752.7	1.1	793	35	3.0	7
Wyoming	286.1	0.2	840	24	1.4	40
Puerto Rico	910.9	-2.5	501	(5)	-0.6	(5)
Virgin Islands	37.9	-1.9	706	(5)	-0.6	(5)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

- (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.
- (5) Data not included in the national ranking.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Washington, third quarter 2013



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.