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Occupational Employment and Wages in El Paso, May 2015

Workers in the El Paso Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$17.78 in May 2015, about 23 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.23, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 18 of the 22 major occupational groups, including construction and extraction; computer and mathematical; and personal care and service. Local wages in the four remaining occupational groups were not statistically different from their respective national averages.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, El Paso employment was more highly concentrated in 6 of the 22 occupational groups including office and administrative support; food preparation and serving related; and sales and related. Conversely, 11 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including management; business and financial operations; 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 El Paso Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	El Paso		United States	El Paso	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾	
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%		\$23.23	\$17.78	*	-23
Management	5.0	2.9	*	55.30	48.24	*	-13
Business and financial operations	5.1	3.6	*	35.48	29.35	*	-17
Computer and mathematical	2.9	1.5	*	41.43	29.39	*	-29
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.0	*	39.89	37.87		-5
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.5	*	34.24	25.92	*	-24
Community and social service.....	1.4	1.2	*	22.19	21.72		-2
Legal.....	0.8	0.5	*	49.74	48.64		-2
Education, training, and library.....	6.2	7.4	*	25.48	22.70	*	-11
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.3	0.9	*	27.39	20.27	*	-26
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.8	5.5		37.40	33.47	*	-11
Healthcare support	2.9	3.0		14.19	12.97	*	-9
Protective service	2.4	3.6	*	21.45	21.73		1
Food preparation and serving related	9.1	10.8	*	10.98	9.41	*	-14
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance.....	3.2	3.2		13.02	10.38	*	-20
Personal care and service.....	3.1	4.5	*	12.33	9.16	*	-26
Sales and related	10.5	12.1	*	18.90	14.47	*	-23
Office and administrative support.....	15.8	18.6	*	17.47	14.10	*	-19
Farming, fishing, and forestry.....	0.3	0.1	*	12.67	10.07	*	-21

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the El Paso 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	El Paso		United States	El Paso		
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	3.4	*	22.88	15.98	*	-30
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	3.8		22.11	17.37	*	-21
Production	6.6	5.4	*	17.41	13.54	*	-22
Transportation and material moving.....	6.9	6.8		16.90	14.47	*	-14

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in El Paso 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 – office and administrative support – was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. El Paso had 53,940 jobs in office and administrative support, accounting for 18.6 percent of local employment, significantly higher than the 15.8-percent national share. However, the local wage for this occupational group was significantly below the U.S. average. At \$14.10 an hour, the mean wage for El Paso office and administrative support workers was about 19 percent below the \$17.47 national average.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the office and administrative support group included general office clerks (11,080), customer service representatives (7,770), and secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive (4,800). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers, and executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants, with mean hourly wages of \$24.81 and \$23.56, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks (\$9.00) and stock clerks and order fillers (\$10.09). (Detailed occupational data for the office and administrative support group are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_21340.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 El Paso metropolitan area, above average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the office and administrative support group. For instance, data entry keyers were employed at 2.2 times the national average in El Paso, and payroll and timekeeping clerks, at 1.8 times the national rate. Both location quotients were among the highest in all metropolitan areas for these particular occupations. On the other hand, order clerks had a location quotient of 1.0 in El Paso, 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 Texas Workforce Commission.

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 El Paso Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,486 establishments with a response rate of 62 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 **El Paso Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes El Paso and Hudspeth Counties in Texas.

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, El Paso Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Office and administrative support occupations	53,940	1.2	\$14.10	\$29,320
First-line supervisors of office and administrative support workers.....	2,760	0.9	24.81	51,600
Switchboard operators, including answering service.....	170	0.8	11.01	22,900
Bill and account collectors.....	1,050	1.6	14.02	29,160
Billing and posting clerks.....	1,240	1.2	12.98	26,990
Bookkeeping, accounting, and auditing clerks.....	3,000	0.9	15.39	32,010
Payroll and timekeeping clerks.....	640	1.8	17.58	36,570
Procurement clerks.....	200	1.4	18.86	39,240
Tellers.....	1,280	1.2	11.31	23,530
Financial clerks, all other.....	(5)	(5)	15.02	31,230
Court, municipal, and license clerks.....	220	0.8	17.72	36,860
Credit authorizers, checkers, and clerks.....	100	1.2	14.89	30,980
Customer service representatives.....	7,770	1.4	13.01	27,070
File clerks.....	370	1.2	11.00	22,890
Hotel, motel, and resort desk clerks.....	460	0.9	9.00	18,720
Interviewers, except eligibility and loan.....	370	1.0	13.45	27,970
Library assistants, clerical.....	210	1.0	11.26	23,420
Loan interviewers and clerks.....	350	0.8	21.10	43,890
New accounts clerks.....	140	1.4	13.39	27,860
Order clerks.....	390	1.0	14.27	29,680
Human resources assistants, except payroll and timekeeping.....	380	1.3	16.05	33,370
Receptionists and information clerks.....	1,280	0.6	10.58	22,020
Reservation and transportation ticket agents and travel clerks.....	(5)	(5)	20.04	41,680
Information and record clerks, all other.....	640	1.7	17.61	36,630
Cargo and freight agents.....	150	0.9	24.18	50,300
Couriers and messengers.....	290	1.9	10.13	21,060
Police, fire, and ambulance dispatchers.....	190	0.9	16.53	34,380
Dispatchers, except police, fire, and ambulance.....	580	1.4	15.10	31,400
Postal service clerks.....	100	0.6	24.06	50,050
Postal service mail carriers.....	500	0.8	23.83	49,570
Postal service mail sorters, processors, and processing machine operators.....	170	0.7	23.95	49,810
Production, planning, and expediting clerks.....	600	0.9	18.18	37,810
Shipping, receiving, and traffic clerks.....	1,840	1.3	11.64	24,200
Stock clerks and order fillers.....	4,560	1.1	10.09	20,990
Weighers, measurers, checkers, and samplers, recordkeeping.....	330	2.3	12.30	25,590
Executive secretaries and executive administrative assistants.....	740	0.5	23.56	49,010
Legal secretaries.....	310	0.7	18.10	37,640
Medical secretaries.....	1,790	1.6	12.08	25,140
Secretaries and administrative assistants, except legal, medical, and executive.....	4,800	1.0	13.51	28,110
Computer operators.....	200	1.9	14.72	30,620
Data entry keyers.....	920	2.2	10.37	21,580
Word processors and typists.....	40	0.3	17.40	36,180
Insurance claims and policy processing clerks.....	260	0.5	19.29	40,130
Mail clerks and mail machine operators, except postal service.....	250	1.3	13.40	27,870
Office clerks, general.....	11,080	1.8	13.14	27,330
Office machine operators, except computer.....	140	1.0	12.16	25,290
Office and administrative support workers, all other.....	150	0.3	16.81	34,960

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

- (1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the El Paso MSA, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_21340.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.