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County Employment and Wages in California – Fourth Quarter 2015

Employment increased in 26 of California's 27 large counties from December 2014 to December 2015, 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 2014 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that job growth in 25 of the large counties exceeded the 1.9-percent national increase. The only county in the state with an employment decline was Kern (-0.8 percent).

Nationally, employment increased in 308 of the 342 largest U.S. counties. Williamson, Tenn., had the largest percentage increase, up 6.8 percent over the year. Ector, Texas, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment among the large U.S. counties with a loss of 11.8 percent.

Among the 27 largest counties in California, employment was highest in Los Angeles (4,341,000) in December 2015, while Butte had the smallest employment level (79,300). Together, California's large counties accounted for 93.1 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 141.9 million, up 2.7 million from December 2014.

Average weekly wages increased in 26 of the 27 large counties in California from the fourth quarter of 2014 to the fourth quarter of 2015. San Mateo was the only county in the state with an over-the-year wage decrease (-2.3 percent), but it had the second highest average weekly wage ($2,095). Ten other large counties in the state had average weekly wages that exceeded the national average weekly wage of $1,082. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 31 counties in California with employment below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2015. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

As noted, 26 of the 27 large counties in California had annual gains in average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2015. Sonoma County's 10.0-percent wage gain placed second among the nation's 342 large counties. The over-the-year wage increase in Santa Clara County (9.3 percent) placed fifth in the national ranking. Wage gains in two other large counties in the state—San Luis Obispo (8.2 percent, 15th) and San Joaquin (7.1 percent, 28th)—placed in the top 10 percent of the national ranking. Nationally, average weekly wages increased 4.4 percent over the year.

Among the 342 largest U.S. counties, 325 recorded gains in average weekly wages. Wyandotte, Kan., had the largest wage increase (10.4 percent). In contrast, 10 large counties nationwide experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages with the largest decline in Midland, Texas (-11.5 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 11 of California's 27 large counties were above the national average of $1,082 in the fourth quarter of 2015, Average weekly wages in Santa Clara ($2,335), San Mateo ($2,095), and San Francisco ($1,961) ranked in the top five nationally. In contrast, at $761 per week, wages in Tulare ranked 330th among the nation's 342 largest counties.

Nationally, 100 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average of $1,082 in the fourth quarter of 2015. In addition to the three California counties mentioned above, New York, N.Y. ($2,235) and Suffolk, Mass. ($1,943) were in the top five nationwide.

Seventy percent of the large U.S. counties (241) reported average weekly wages below the national average of $1,082. Cameron, Texas, reported the lowest weekly wage ($649), followed by Horry, S.C. ($653) and Hidalgo, Texas ($661).

Average weekly wages in California's smaller counties

All 31 counties in California with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of $1,082. Among these smaller counties, Napa County had the highest average weekly wage ($1,073). Modoc County reported the lowest weekly wage among all counties in the state averaging $698 in the fourth quarter of 2015. (See table 2.)

When all 58 counties in California were considered, 17 had wages at or below $799. Eighteen counties had average weekly wages ranging from $800 to $899, 6 had wages from $900 to $999, 9 had wages from $1,000 to $1,199, and 8 had wages at or above $1,200. (See chart 1.)

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 2014 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 2015 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2014* are now available online at https://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn14.htm. The 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2016.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 7, 2016.

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 9.7 million employer reports cover 141.9 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 27 largest counties in California, fourth quarter 2015

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	141,924.5	1.9	--	1082	--	4.4	--
California	16,593.8	3.1	--	1274	5	5.4	10
Alameda, Calif.	741.1	3.3	69	1407	18	6.5	53
Butte, Calif.	79.3	2.7	119	800	323	5.5	114
Contra Costa, Calif.	354.7	3.2	77	1286	37	6.5	53
Fresno, Calif.	363.6	3.5	58	849	298	5.2	137
Kern, Calif.	305.9	-0.8	325	884	272	0.6	323
Los Angeles, Calif.	4,341.0	2.3	138	1266	43	5.5	114
Marin, Calif.	114.0	2.8	108	1334	25	4.7	175
Monterey, Calif.	165.6	3.8	37	914	241	6.8	36
Orange, Calif.	1,550.6	2.3	138	1205	56	4.1	225
Placer, Calif.	151.7	4.4	21	1071	108	3.4	266
Riverside, Calif.	679.7	4.9	11	840	305	4.7	175
Sacramento, Calif.	637.1	3.7	46	1153	63	5.2	137
San Bernardino, Calif.	719.8	3.6	51	888	267	4.7	175
San Diego, Calif.	1,399.7	2.6	125	1184	61	4.3	212
San Francisco, Calif.	691.6	4.6	17	1961	4	6.4	61
San Joaquin, Calif.	233.2	4.2	27	894	262	7.1	28
San Luis Obispo, Calif.	113.5	3.2	77	900	254	8.2	15
San Mateo, Calif.	393.3	3.8	37	2095	3	-2.3	332
Santa Barbara, Calif.	191.9	3.0	93	1038	131	5.8	94
Santa Clara, Calif.	1,040.8	3.8	37	2335	1	9.3	5
Santa Cruz, Calif.	97.5	3.2	77	952	200	3.1	284
Solano, Calif.	134.0	3.4	63	1080	104	5.3	127
Sonoma, Calif.	199.5	3.7	46	1049	123	10.0	2
Stanislaus, Calif.	179.0	4.2	27	888	267	6.2	68
Tulare, Calif.	153.0	3.3	69	761	330	3.8	246
Ventura, Calif.	320.6	1.1	235	1065	114	3.9	237
Yolo, Calif.	96.4	3.2	77	1151	66	5.4	120

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 California, fourth quarter 2015 (2)

Area	Employment December 2015	Average Weekly Wage (1)
United States (2)	141,924,459	$1,082
California	16,593,755	1,274
Alameda	741,071	1,407
Alpine	531	765
Amador	11,473	873
Butte	79,334	800
Calaveras	8,887	783
Colusa	8,360	868
Contra Costa	354,696	1,286
Del Norte	7,897	724
El Dorado	53,062	946
Fresno	363,623	849
Glenn	8,646	767
Humboldt	47,556	753
Imperial	63,877	727
Inyo	7,556	831
Kern	305,856	884
Kings	45,626	836
Lake	15,484	717
Lassen	9,816	852
Los Angeles	4,341,027	1,266
Madera	46,507	833
Marin	114,043	1,334
Mariposa	4,921	718
Mendocino	31,623	744
Merced	73,474	798
Modoc	2,308	698
Mono	7,417	706
Monterey	165,625	914
Napa	72,975	1,073
Nevada	30,759	868
Orange	1,550,632	1,205
Placer	151,687	1,071
Plumas	5,716	808
Riverside	679,684	840
Sacramento	637,075	1,153
San Benito	15,442	911
San Bernardino	719,810	888
San Diego	1,399,731	1,184
San Francisco	691,558	1,961
San Joaquin	233,157	894
San Luis Obispo	113,525	900
San Mateo	393,299	2,095
Santa Barbara	191,851	1,038
Santa Clara	1,040,799	2,335
Santa Cruz	97,499	952
Shasta	64,654	806
Sierra	494	758
Siskiyou	12,727	745
Solano	134,013	1,080
Sonoma	199,462	1,049
Stanislaus	179,048	888
Sutter	28,439	796
Tehama	17,018	825
Trinity	2,647	715
Tulare	153,019	761

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in California, fourth quarter 2015 (2) - Continued

Area	Employment December 2015	Average Weekly Wage (1)
Tuolumne	16,989	827
Ventura	320,562	1,065
Yolo	96,418	1,151
Yuba	16,436	947

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: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

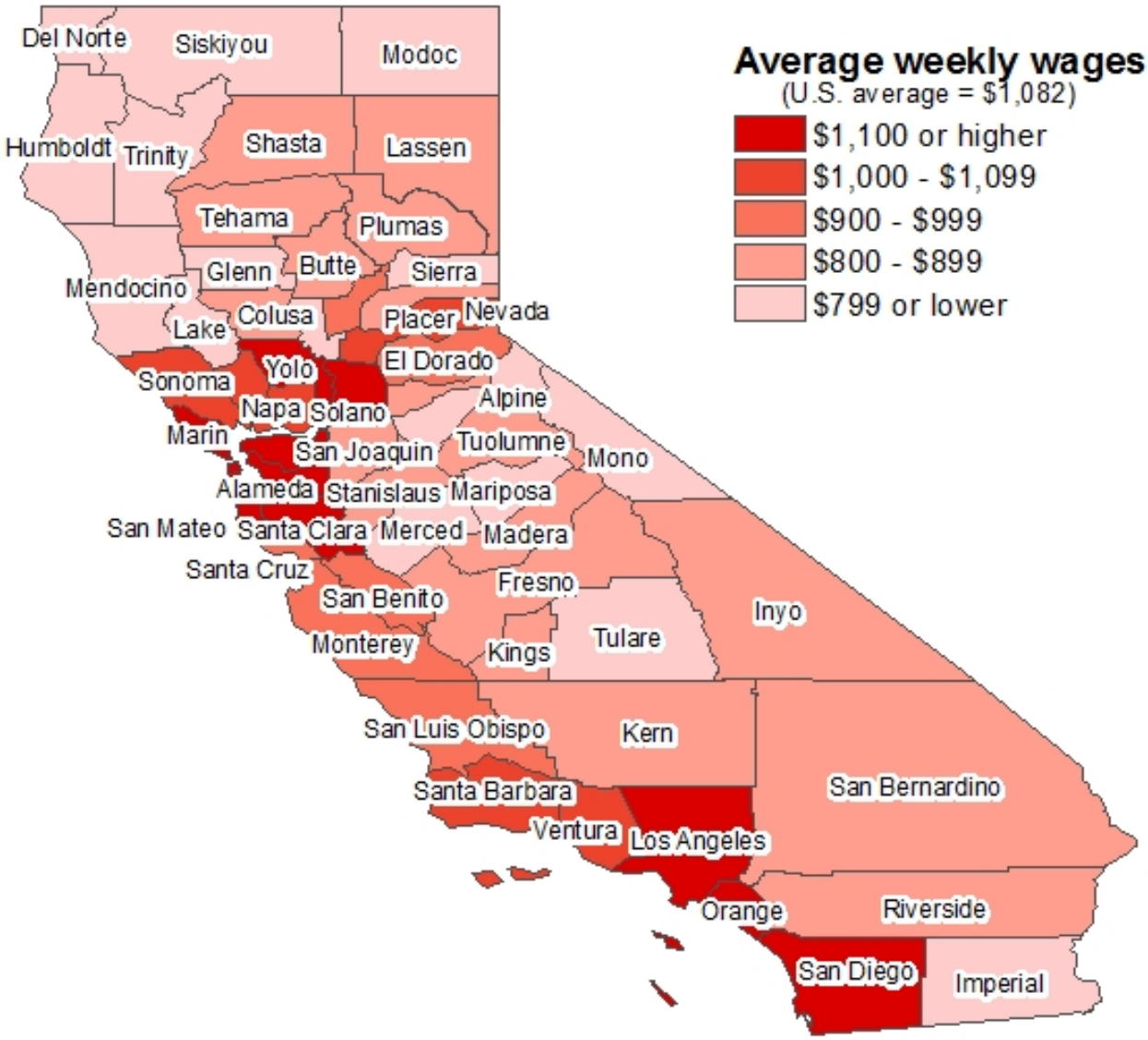
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2015

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2015 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2014-15	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	141,924.5	1.9	$1,082	--	4.4	--
Alabama	1,916.2	1.4	912	37	3.4	37
Alaska	315.9	-0.5	1,095	13	2.9	43
Arizona	2,701.8	2.6	967	24	4.4	28
Arkansas	1,201.4	1.7	838	46	3.8	35
California	16,593.8	3.1	1,274	5	5.4	10
Colorado	2,537.5	2.5	1,103	11	3.3	40
Connecticut	1,685.1	0.3	1,334	4	4.3	29
Delaware	441.2	1.8	1,086	15	3.4	37
District of Columbia	754.2	2.2	1,756	1	3.4	37
Florida	8,308.1	3.7	958	26	5.2	16
Georgia	4,249.4	2.9	1,001	21	4.5	27
Hawaii	653.0	2.2	957	27	5.4	10
Idaho	670.1	3.4	803	50	2.6	45
Illinois	5,931.2	1.4	1,146	8	5.1	18
Indiana	2,996.3	1.7	891	40	5.3	14
Iowa	1,539.0	0.7	920	34	5.7	3
Kansas	1,382.1	0.4	898	38	5.0	20
Kentucky	1,881.3	1.6	885	41	5.9	1
Louisiana	1,937.4	-1.0	940	29	1.8	47
Maine	596.9	0.7	873	43	5.7	3
Maryland	2,636.7	1.7	1,175	7	5.6	5
Massachusetts	3,479.1	1.6	1,385	2	5.4	10
Michigan	4,218.9	1.5	1,043	18	5.9	1
Minnesota	2,805.8	1.5	1,073	16	4.8	22
Mississippi	1,133.8	1.3	770	51	3.1	41
Missouri	2,759.6	1.8	933	33	4.6	25
Montana	453.2	2.5	818	49	3.0	42
Nebraska	971.8	1.4	880	42	5.1	18
Nevada	1,272.2	3.5	935	32	4.0	31
New Hampshire	648.6	1.7	1,139	9	5.4	10
New Jersey	3,988.4	1.7	1,262	6	4.0	31
New Mexico	808.9	-0.1	865	44	1.8	47
New York	9,227.6	1.7	1,372	3	3.9	34
North Carolina	4,247.1	2.5	939	30	5.5	8
North Dakota	428.1	-5.9	1,021	20	-2.8	51
Ohio	5,328.8	1.2	964	25	4.6	25
Oklahoma	1,605.0	-0.7	896	39	2.3	46
Oregon	1,814.8	3.3	979	23	5.5	8
Pennsylvania	5,759.7	0.7	1,063	17	4.9	21
Rhode Island	478.1	1.5	1,043	18	4.0	31
South Carolina	1,987.1	2.8	860	45	5.3	14
South Dakota	417.7	1.2	832	47	5.2	16
Tennessee	2,898.1	2.8	980	22	5.6	5
Texas	11,832.1	1.4	1,099	12	2.7	44
Utah	1,375.6	3.8	913	36	4.7	23
Vermont	312.1	0.3	919	35	4.1	30
Virginia	3,806.2	3.0	1,094	14	3.5	36
Washington	3,137.2	2.3	1,132	10	4.7	23
West Virginia	703.7	-1.3	829	48	1.3	49
Wisconsin	2,820.5	1.1	944	28	5.6	5
Wyoming	276.0	-2.9	937	31	-1.7	50
Puerto Rico	929.9	-1.6	565	[3]	1.6	[3]
Virgin Islands	38.4	-0.3	787	[3]	4.7	[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 California, fourth quarter 2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.