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County Employment and Wages in California – Fourth Quarter 2016

Job growth in 21 of the state's large counties exceeded the national rate of 1.2 percent

Employment increased in 26 of the 29 large counties in California from December 2015 to December 2016, 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 2015 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the annual rates of job growth in 21 large counties in California exceeded the national rate of 1.2 percent in December 2016. San Joaquin County had the largest increase in employment at 3.4 percent, followed by Merced County at 3.2 percent. San Bernardino and Ventura Counties were the only large counties in the state with employment declines, each down 0.1 percent.

Nationally, employment increased in 280 of the 344 largest U.S. counties from December 2015 to December 2016. Williamson, Tenn., had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 5.1 percent over the year. Lafayette, La., had the largest employment decline among the large U.S. counties, down 5.1 percent.

Among the 29 largest counties in California, employment was highest in Los Angeles County (4,415,700) in December 2016, while Napa County had the smallest employment level (73,200). Together, California's large counties accounted for 94.1 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 344 largest counties made up 72.8 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the fourth quarter of 2015 to the fourth quarter of 2016, average weekly wages decreased in 19 of the 29 large California counties. Nationally, average weekly wages declined 1.5 percent. This is one of only eight declines for the nation in the history of the series, which dates back to 1978. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 29 counties in California with employment below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average of $1,067 in the fourth quarter of 2016. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in 19 large California counties declined from the fourth quarter of 2015 to the fourth quarter of 2016. Yolo County's 3.7-percent wage decline was the largest in the state and ranked 301st among the 344 large U.S. counties. Nine large counties in California had over-the-year wage gains. The wage increases in three of these counties ranked in the top 10 nationally: Marin (4.3 percent, 3rd), San Francisco (3.7 percent, 5th), and Placer (2.0 percent, 10th). (See table 1.)

Among the 344 large U.S. counties, 290 had over-the-year wage decreases. McLean, Ill., had the largest percentage decline in average weekly wages with a loss of 9.2 percent. Clay, Mo., had the second largest percentage decrease, down 8.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016, followed by Lafayette, La. (-8.0 percent), and Douglas, Colo. (-6.8 percent).

Forty-eight large U.S. counties experienced over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the largest wage gain, up 11.3 percent from the fourth quarter of 2015. Washington, Pa., was second with a wage gain of 4.9 percent, followed by the counties of Marin, Calif., (4.3 percent), and Elkhart, Ind. (4.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 13 of the 29 large counties in California exceeded the national average of $1,067 in the fourth quarter of 2016. Santa Clara ($2,365, 1st), San Mateo ($2,098, 3rd), and San Francisco ($2,068, 4th) had average weekly wages that ranked in the top five nationwide. Butte ($790, 327th) and Tulare ($772, 330th) had the lowest weekly wages in the state and placed in the bottom fifth of the national ranking.

Seventy-one percent of the large U.S. counties (243) reported average weekly wages below the national average of $1,067. Cameron, Texas reported the lowest weekly wage ($640), followed by Hidalgo, Texas ($648), and Horry, S.C. ($654).

Nationally, 100 large counties had average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2016. Joining the three California counties (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco) in the top five nationwide for average weekly wages were New York, N.Y. ($2,212, 2nd) and Suffolk, Mass. ($1,888, 5th).

Average weekly wages in California's smaller counties

All 29 counties in California with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of $1,067. Among these smaller counties, Yuba had the highest average weekly wage at $961 in the fourth quarter of 2016, while Alpine ($692) had the lowest weekly wage. (See table 2.)

When all 58 counties in California were considered, 16 had wages of $799 or lower. Twenty counties had average weekly wages ranging from $800 to $899, 5 had wages from $900 to $999, 6 had wages from $1,000 to $1,099, and 11 had wages at or above $1,100. (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 2015 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 2016 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2015* are now available online at https://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn15.htm. The 2016 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2017.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2017 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 6, 2017.

Beginning with the release of first quarter 2017 data, the program will switch to the 2017 version of the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) as the basis for the assignment and tabulation of economic data by industry. For more information on the change, please see the Federal Register notice at www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/federal_register_notices/notices/fr08au16.pdf.

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 143.7 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.

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 29 largest counties in California, fourth quarter 2016

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2015-16 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, fourth quarter 2015-16 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	143,749.9	1.2	--	$1,067	--	-1.5	--
California	16,923.3	1.9	--	1,271	5	-0.3	4
Alameda, Calif.	760.6	2.0	105	1,377	19	-1.9	191
Butte, Calif.	81.3	1.8	114	790	327	-1.3	144
Contra Costa, Calif.	364.3	2.0	105	1,289	32	0.2	39
Fresno, Calif.	371.4	1.8	114	857	290	1.2	16
Kern, Calif.	310.3	0.8	211	868	274	-2.0	198
Los Angeles, Calif.	4,415.7	1.1	184	1,256	38	-0.6	84
Marin, Calif.	115.3	1.2	172	1,378	18	4.3	3
Merced, Calif.	75.9	3.2	28	807	317	1.3	15
Monterey, Calif.	170.2	2.4	76	915	227	-0.2	60
Napa, Calif.	73.2	0.4	250	1,065	102	-0.2	60
Orange, Calif.	1,588.8	2.0	105	1,200	55	-0.6	84
Placer, Calif.	157.4	2.9	48	1,083	87	2.0	10
Riverside, Calif.	707.1	3.1	32	835	304	-0.5	76
Sacramento, Calif.	643.7	2.0	105	1,132	66	-0.4	70
San Bernardino, Calif.	725.7	-0.1	287	890	251	0.5	33
San Diego, Calif.	1,427.5	1.6	139	1,170	58	-1.5	164
San Francisco, Calif.	715.5	2.7	58	2,068	4	3.7	5
San Joaquin, Calif.	242.6	3.4	20	893	249	-0.3	67
San Luis Obispo, Calif.	113.7	1.9	110	884	257	-2.5	242
San Mateo, Calif.	398.8	1.7	130	2,098	3	-1.5	164
Santa Barbara, Calif.	192.0	0.0	281	1,025	125	-1.2	138
Santa Clara, Calif.	1,064.0	2.5	71	2,365	1	0.9	18
Santa Cruz, Calif.	99.4	1.6	139	933	211	-2.0	198
Solano, Calif.	138.2	1.9	110	1,074	93	-0.9	110
Sonoma, Calif.	203.5	1.5	146	1,018	134	-2.5	242
Stanislaus, Calif.	182.3	1.5	146	884	257	0.0	49
Tulare, Calif.	160.0	3.1	32	772	330	0.9	18
Ventura, Calif.	322.2	-0.1	287	1,044	111	-1.6	168
Yolo, Calif.	98.2	0.9	205	1,106	74	-3.7	301

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 2016(1)

Area	Employment December 2016	Average Weekly Wage(2)
United States(1)	143,749,910	$1,067
California	16,923,322	1,271
Alameda	760,609	1,377
Alpine	909	692
Amador	11,527	847
Butte	81,329	790
Calaveras	9,235	789
Colusa	8,487	832
Contra Costa	364,278	1,289
Del Norte	8,033	741
El Dorado	55,255	943
Fresno	371,368	857
Glenn	8,978	774
Humboldt	48,692	764
Imperial	64,441	722
Inyo	7,522	823
Kern	310,329	868
Kings	46,124	821
Lake	15,841	720
Lassen	10,012	872
Los Angeles	4,415,671	1,256
Madera	48,150	817
Marin	115,324	1,378
Mariposa	5,106	749
Mendocino	31,608	745
Merced	75,871	807
Modoc	2,439	717
Mono	7,542	703
Monterey	170,232	915
Napa	73,167	1,065
Nevada	31,295	873
Orange	1,588,801	1,200
Placer	157,401	1,083
Plumas	5,742	801
Riverside	707,108	835
Sacramento	643,654	1,132
San Benito	16,081	902
San Bernardino	725,708	890
San Diego	1,427,498	1,170
San Francisco	715,472	2,068
San Joaquin	242,550	893
San Luis Obispo	113,690	884
San Mateo	398,753	2,098
Santa Barbara	191,955	1,025
Santa Clara	1,063,990	2,365
Santa Cruz	99,433	933
Shasta	64,616	809
Sierra	507	715
Siskiyou	13,476	751
Solano	138,248	1,074
Sonoma	203,517	1,018
Stanislaus	182,331	884
Sutter	28,793	809
Tehama	17,522	820
Trinity	2,549	745
Tulare	159,963	772

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in California, fourth quarter 2016(1) - Continued

Area	Employment December 2016	Average Weekly Wage(2)
Tuolumne	17,635	809
Ventura	322,228	1,044
Yolo	98,245	1,106
Yuba	16,685	961

Footnotes(1) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
(2) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

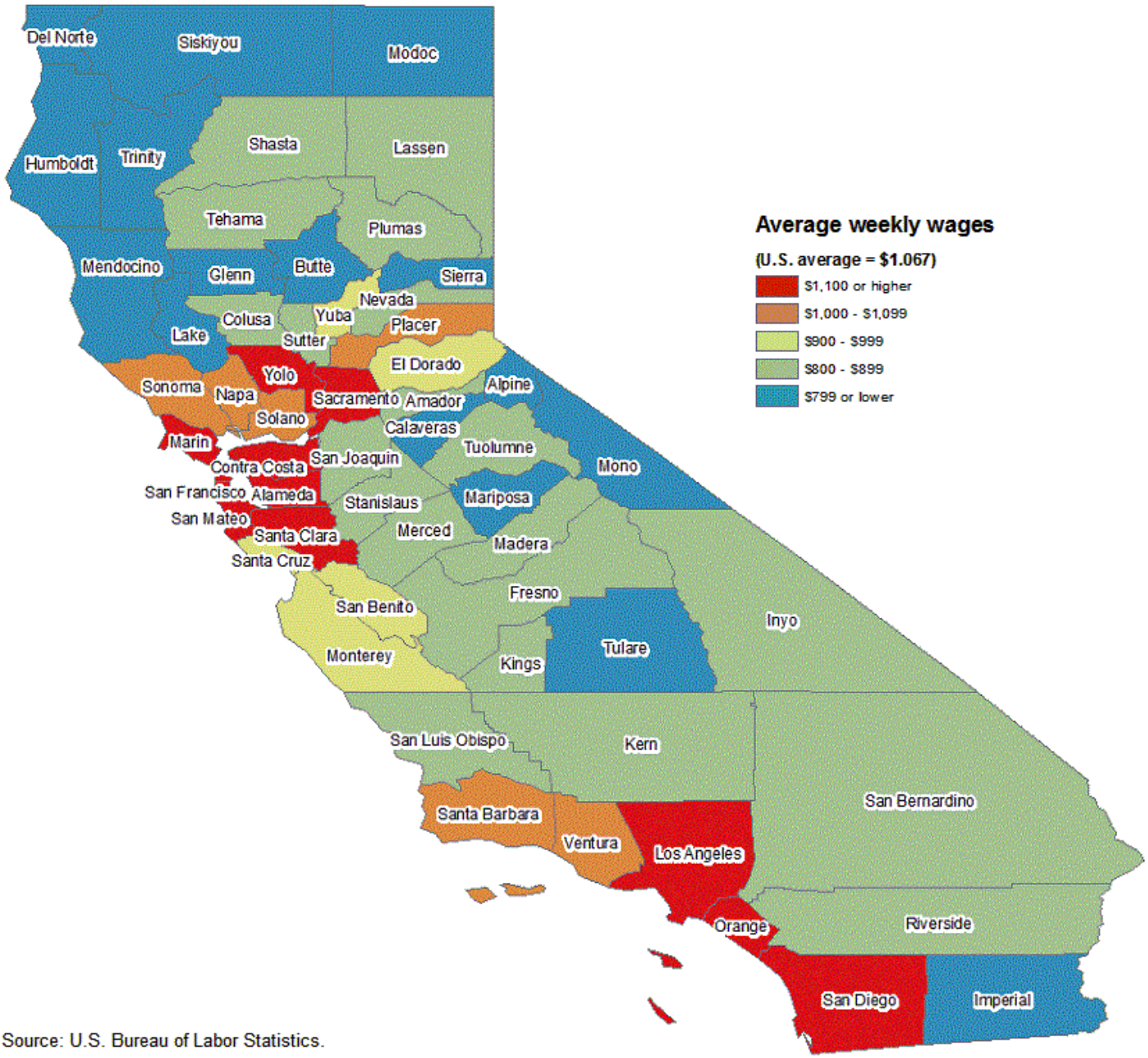
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2016

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2016 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2015-16	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2015-16	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	143,749.9	1.2	1067	--	-1.5	--
Alabama	1,932.6	0.7	901	35	-1.3	21
Alaska	310.0	-1.9	1038	17	-5.2	51
Arizona	2,760.1	2.1	945	25	-2.2	34
Arkansas	1,205.4	0.4	827	47	-1.4	22
California	16,923.3	1.9	1271	5	-0.3	4
Colorado	2,588.6	2.0	1086	12	-1.5	24
Connecticut	1,685.5	0.0	1289	4	-3.4	46
Delaware	441.2	-0.1	1055	15	-2.9	44
District of Columbia	760.9	0.5	1763	1	0.6	2
Florida	8,538.9	2.7	942	27	-1.8	28
Georgia	4,349.3	2.4	993	20	-0.9	14
Hawaii	658.3	0.7	954	24	-0.3	4
Idaho	691.6	3.2	800	50	-0.4	8
Illinois	5,947.6	0.4	1122	9	-2	31
Indiana	3,021.7	0.9	883	38	-0.9	14
Iowa	1,542.0	0.1	911	33	-1	16
Kansas	1,384.5	0.1	877	39	-2.2	34
Kentucky	1,894.2	0.6	874	41	-1.4	22
Louisiana	1,907.4	-1.6	914	32	-2.9	44
Maine	602.6	0.8	855	43	-2.1	33
Maryland	2,666.7	1.0	1169	7	-0.4	8
Massachusetts	3,530.4	1.3	1352	2	-2.4	39
Michigan	4,283.0	1.5	1026	19	-1.6	25
Minnesota	2,839.7	1.2	1062	14	-1.1	18
Mississippi	1,134.0	0.0	756	51	-1.8	28
Missouri	2,783.2	0.9	918	31	-1.7	27
Montana	456.5	0.7	822	48	0.5	3
Nebraska	972.4	0.0	876	40	-0.5	10
Nevada	1,307.8	2.7	924	29	-1.2	20
New Hampshire	656.9	1.3	1092	10	-4.1	48
New Jersey	4,042.1	1.4	1239	6	-1.9	30
New Mexico	811.4	0.0	844	45	-2.5	41
New York	9,332.5	1.2	1342	3	-2.3	36
North Carolina	4,326.3	1.8	932	28	-0.7	13
North Dakota	414.4	-3.2	978	21	-4.2	49
Ohio	5,365.6	0.7	943	26	-2.3	36
Oklahoma	1,587.7	-1.2	864	42	-3.5	47
Oregon	1,860.7	2.4	970	22	-1	16
Pennsylvania	5,799.8	0.7	1039	16	-2.3	36
Rhode Island	478.3	0.0	1027	18	-1.6	25
South Carolina	2,024.3	1.8	855	43	-0.6	12
South Dakota	419.9	0.5	828	46	-0.5	10
Tennessee	2,947.5	1.8	970	22	-1.1	18
Texas	11,974.7	1.2	1072	13	-2.5	41
Utah	1,415.1	2.9	910	34	-0.3	4
Vermont	312.6	0.1	897	36	-2.4	39
Virginia	3,831.6	0.6	1091	11	-0.3	4
Washington	3,227.9	2.8	1150	8	1.7	1
West Virginia	693.1	-1.6	809	49	-2.5	41
Wisconsin	2,842.4	0.5	924	29	-2	31
Wyoming	265.8	-3.9	894	37	-4.7	50
Puerto Rico	928.2	-0.3	555	[3]	-1.9	[3]
Virgin Islands	38.5	0.2	769	[3]	-1.8	[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 2016



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.