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County Employment and Wages in California – Fourth Quarter 2017

Job growth in 19 of the state's large counties exceeded the national rate of 1.5 percent

Employment increased in all 29 large counties in California from December 2016 to December 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 Richard Holden noted that the annual rates of job growth in 19 large counties in California exceeded the national rate of 1.5 percent in December 2017. Placer County had the largest increase in employment at 4.3 percent, followed by Merced County at 3.8 percent and San Bernardino County at 3.3 percent.

Nationally, employment increased in 316 of the 346 largest U.S. counties from December 2016 to December 2017. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 11.5 percent over the year. Shawnee, Kan. and Caddo, La., had the largest decrease among the largest counties in the U.S., with losses of 1.8 percent each.

Among the 29 largest counties in California, employment was highest in Los Angeles County (4,494,500) in December 2017, while Napa County had the smallest employment level (74,400). Together, California's large counties accounted for 94.2 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 346 largest counties made up 73.0 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the fourth quarter of 2016 to the fourth quarter of 2017, average weekly wages increased in all of California's large counties. Nationally, average weekly wages advanced 3.9 percent. (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 $1,109 in the fourth quarter of 2017. (See table 2).

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in all 29 large California counties increased from the fourth quarter of 2016 to the fourth quarter of 2017. San Mateo County's 11.5-percent wage increase was the largest in the state and ranked 1st among the 346 large U.S. counties. Two other counties' wage gains ranked in the top 10 nationally: Santa Clara (8.9 percent, 5th) and San Francisco (7.4 percent, 7th). (See table 1.)

Among the 346 largest U.S. counties, 339 had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. San Mateo, Calif., and Ada, Idaho, had the largest percentage wage increases among the largest U.S. counties (11.5 percent each). New York, N.Y., followed with an increase of 10.4 percent.

Of the 346 largest counties, 7 experienced an over-the-year decrease in average weekly wages. Clayton, Ga., had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages (-6.7 percent), followed by Champaign, Ill. (-1.6 percent); and Benton, Ark. (-1.4 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 13 of the 29 large counties in California exceeded the national average of $1,109 in the fourth quarter of 2017. Santa Clara ($2,576, 1st), San Mateo ($2,341, 3rd), and San Francisco ($2,232, 4th) had average weekly wages that ranked in the top five nationwide. Tulare ($812, 327th), Merced ($816, 326th), and Butte ($826, 322nd) had the lowest weekly wages in the state and placed in the bottom fifth of the national ranking.

Nationwide, average weekly wages were above the U.S. average ($1,109) in 95 of the 346 largest counties in the fourth quarter of 2017. Santa Clara, Calif., recorded the highest average weekly wage at $2,576, followed by New York, N.Y. ($2,439); San Mateo, Calif. ($2,341); and San Francisco, Calif. ($2,232).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 251 had weekly wages below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2017. Cameron, Texas ($652) reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas ($664); Horry, S.C. ($674); and Webb, Texas ($706).

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 $1,109. Among these smaller counties, Yuba had the highest average weekly wage at $997 in the fourth quarter of 2017, while Alpine ($650) had the lowest weekly wage. (See table 2.)

When all 58 counties in California were considered, 12 had wages of $799 or lower. Nineteen counties had average weekly wages ranging from $800 to $899, 10 had wages from $900 to $999, and 17 had wages at or above $1,000. (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 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 2016* are now available online at https://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn15.htm. The 2017 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2018.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2018 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 22, 2018.

QCEW Publication Acceleration and Conversion to Two Data Releases

The national QCEW publication process has accelerated for a more timely release. Beginning with the national fourth quarter 2017 release, QCEW data are now published in two parts. The current County Employment and Wages news release and associated data have been accelerated and published first. The full QCEW data release, with smaller county data contained in this release, occurs two weeks later.

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 10.0 million employer reports cover 145.9 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.

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 2017

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, fourth quarter 2016-17 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	145,921.1	1.5	--	$1,109	--	3.9	--
California	17,293.0	2.1	--	1,346	4	5.7	4
Alameda, Calif.	785.6	3.0	32	1,457	17	5.4	22
Butte, Calif.	83.1	1.3	158	826	322	4.8	38
Contra Costa, Calif.	369.9	0.7	240	1,344	27	4.0	85
Fresno, Calif.	380.2	1.8	102	888	282	3.6	117
Kern, Calif.	313.6	1.1	181	888	282	2.5	227
Los Angeles, Calif.	4,494.5	1.6	121	1,343	28	6.4	11
Marin, Calif.	116.8	1.5	135	1,400	21	1.8	288
Merced, Calif.	79.4	3.8	16	816	326	1.0	317
Monterey, Calif.	175.0	0.7	240	951	218	4.5	52
Napa, Calif.	74.4	1.4	144	1,119	85	5.6	17
Orange, Calif.	1,621.4	1.7	111	1,234	55	2.8	188
Placer, Calif.	164.6	4.3	12	1,107	96	3.1	163
Riverside, Calif.	732.3	2.8	48	873	295	4.7	44
Sacramento, Calif.	656.4	2.4	69	1,180	64	4.5	52
San Bernardino, Calif.	754.0	3.3	23	906	262	2.0	270
San Diego, Calif.	1,462.0	1.8	102	1,221	57	4.3	67
San Francisco, Calif.	730.9	2.9	38	2,232	4	7.4	7
San Joaquin, Calif.	251.9	2.4	69	923	241	3.8	98
San Luis Obispo, Calif.	115.9	1.6	121	929	236	4.6	47
San Mateo, Calif.	407.5	1.8	102	2,341	3	11.5	1
Santa Barbara, Calif.	195.4	1.6	121	1,066	120	3.9	92
Santa Clara, Calif.	1,093.4	2.5	62	2,576	1	8.9	5
Santa Cruz, Calif.	100.4	1.1	181	970	201	4.1	78
Solano, Calif.	140.8	1.3	158	1,115	93	4.1	78
Sonoma, Calif.	208.3	2.0	90	1,070	117	4.8	38
Stanislaus, Calif.	187.1	3.0	32	915	253	3.5	122
Tulare, Calif.	159.3	0.7	240	812	327	4.9	35
Ventura, Calif.	326.3	0.8	229	1,076	113	3.0	171
Yolo, Calif.	101.6	2.6	56	1,151	71	3.9	92

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 2017

Area	Employment December 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	145,921,109	$1,109
California	17,292,974	1,346
Alameda	785,570	1,457
Alpine	1,014	650
Amador	12,111	883
Butte	83,124	826
Calaveras	9,416	804
Colusa	9,120	844
Contra Costa	369,886	1,344
Del Norte	8,035	741
El Dorado	57,887	983
Fresno	380,167	888
Glenn	8,957	836
Humboldt	50,107	792
Imperial	63,361	767
Inyo	7,710	837
Kern	313,616	888
Kings	47,374	838
Lake	16,082	751
Lassen	10,174	877
Los Angeles	4,494,526	1,343
Madera	49,447	846
Marin	116,787	1,400
Mariposa	5,215	780
Mendocino	32,258	792
Merced	79,443	816
Modoc	2,280	745
Mono	7,638	749
Monterey	175,020	951
Napa	74,447	1,119
Nevada	31,760	919
Orange	1,621,398	1,234
Placer	164,630	1,107
Plumas	5,931	863
Riverside	732,338	873
Sacramento	656,378	1,180
San Benito	15,783	952
San Bernardino	753,973	906
San Diego	1,462,039	1,221
San Francisco	730,861	2,232
San Joaquin	251,893	923
San Luis Obispo	115,929	929
San Mateo	407,496	2,341
Santa Barbara	195,415	1,066
Santa Clara	1,093,379	2,576
Santa Cruz	100,415	970
Shasta	66,154	856
Sierra	460	761
Siskiyou	13,438	782
Solano	140,801	1,115
Sonoma	208,283	1,070
Stanislaus	187,061	915
Sutter	29,740	825
Tehama	18,362	854
Trinity	2,582	783
Tulare	159,324	812

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in California, fourth quarter 2017 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2017	Average weekly wage(1)
Tuolumne	17,322	875
Ventura	326,292	1,076
Yolo	101,552	1,151
Yuba	17,600	997

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.

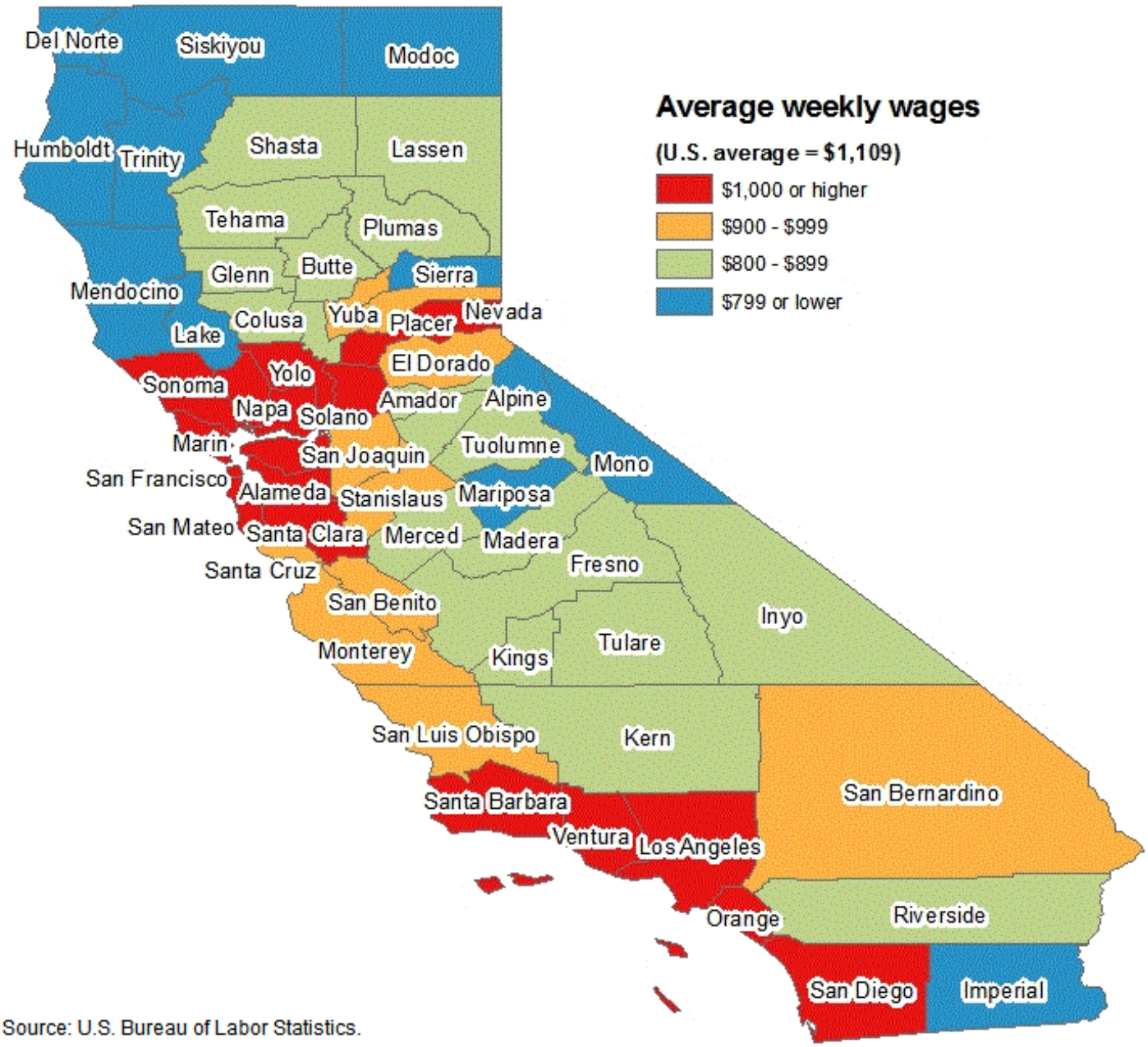
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2017

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	December 2017 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2016-17	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2016-17	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	145,921.1	1.5	$1,109	--	3.9	--
Alabama	1,955.3	1.1	928	36	2.9	32
Alaska	306.7	-1.2	1,052	19	1.5	51
Arizona	2,834.7	2.6	978	25	3.5	12
Arkansas	1,217.2	1.0	848	48	2.5	42
California	17,293.0	2.1	1,346	4	5.7	4
Colorado	2,653.3	2.5	1,133	10	4.3	9
Connecticut	1,689.7	0.3	1,317	5	2.2	46
Delaware	444.9	0.6	1,081	15	2.6	40
District of Columbia	769.0	0.9	1,812	1	2.7	37
Florida	8,712.0	2.0	975	26	3.4	16
Georgia	4,425.0	1.8	1,027	20	3.4	16
Hawaii	664.5	0.8	984	24	3.1	26
Idaho	712.4	3.0	857	46	7.1	1
Illinois	6,001.1	0.8	1,151	9	2.6	40
Indiana	3,057.8	1.1	915	38	3.6	11
Iowa	1,549.7	0.4	938	32	3.0	28
Kansas	1,390.3	0.4	894	41	1.9	49
Kentucky	1,903.8	0.5	892	42	2.1	47
Louisiana	1,918.8	0.4	933	35	2.1	47
Maine	610.3	1.2	884	43	3.4	16
Maryland	2,683.6	0.5	1,207	8	3.3	22
Massachusetts	3,582.2	1.3	1,411	3	4.4	8
Michigan	4,321.8	0.9	1,062	17	3.4	16
Minnesota	2,875.7	1.3	1,100	14	3.4	16
Mississippi	1,140.6	0.5	774	51	2.4	45
Missouri	2,809.5	1.0	945	31	2.9	32
Montana	461.4	1.0	843	50	2.7	37
Nebraska	980.9	0.9	901	39	3.0	28
Nevada	1,351.9	3.5	955	29	3.2	25
New Hampshire	661.3	0.7	1,132	11	3.7	10
New Jersey	4,106.9	1.6	1,262	6	1.8	50
New Mexico	816.7	0.6	865	45	2.5	42
New York	9,465.3	1.4	1,428	2	6.4	2
North Carolina	4,388.6	1.5	964	28	3.3	22
North Dakota	416.1	0.4	1,010	22	3.3	22
Ohio	5,409.2	0.8	973	27	3.1	26
Oklahoma	1,607.8	1.2	895	40	3.5	12
Oregon	1,900.4	2.0	1,014	21	4.5	7
Pennsylvania	5,870.4	1.2	1,075	16	3.5	12
Rhode Island	483.6	1.1	1,056	18	2.7	37
South Carolina	2,058.8	1.6	879	44	2.8	35
South Dakota	423.8	0.9	856	47	3.4	16
Tennessee	2,984.8	1.3	1,000	23	3.0	28
Texas	12,207.8	2.0	1,109	13	3.5	12
Utah	1,465.5	3.6	936	33	2.9	32
Vermont	314.7	0.5	919	37	2.5	42
Virginia	3,884.2	1.3	1,121	12	2.8	35
Washington	3,305.0	2.4	1,217	7	5.8	3
West Virginia	693.1	0.1	847	49	4.7	5
Wisconsin	2,872.6	1.0	951	30	3.0	28
Wyoming	267.5	0.6	935	34	4.6	6
Puerto Rico	887.0	-4.4	570	[3]	2.5	[3]
Virgin Islands	34.3	-11.1	827	[3]	7.7	[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 2017



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.