

For release 10:00 a.m. (EDT) Thursday, April 15, 2010

USDL-10-0468

Technical information: (202) 691-6378 • cpsinfo@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/cps
Media contact: (202) 691-5902 • PressOffice@bls.gov

USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS FIRST QUARTER 2010

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 96.8 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$754 in the first quarter of 2010, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. This was 2.2 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 2.4 percent in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) over the same period.

Data on usual weekly earnings are collected as part of the Current Population Survey, a nationwide sample survey of households in which respondents are asked, among other things, how much each wage and salary worker usually earns. (See the Technical Note.) Highlights from the first-quarter data are:

- **Women** who usually worked full time had median earnings of \$665 per week, or 78.8 percent of the \$844 median for **men**. The **female-to-male earnings ratios** were higher among blacks (92.0 percent) and Hispanics (85.6 percent) than among whites (78.0 percent) or Asians (81.6 percent). (See table 1.)
- Among the major **race and ethnicity groups**, median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$635 per week, 73.1 percent of the median for white men (\$869). The difference was less among women, as black women's median earnings (\$584) were 86.1 percent of those for white women (\$678). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics who worked full time (\$554) were lower than those of blacks (\$610), whites (\$772), and Asians (\$859). (See table 1.)
- Usual weekly earnings of full-time workers varied by **age**. Among men, those age 45 to 54 and age 55 to 64 had the highest median weekly earnings, \$972 and \$980, respectively. Among women, weekly earnings also were highest for those two age groups, \$736 and \$733, respectively. (See table 2.)
- Among the major **occupational** groups, persons employed full time in management, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,268 for men and \$915 for women. Persons employed in service jobs earned the least. (See table 3.)
- By **educational attainment**, full-time workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$448, compared with \$624 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,140 for those holding at least a bachelor's degree. Among college graduates with advanced degrees (professional or master's degree and above), the highest earning 10 percent

of male workers made \$3,319 or more per week, compared with \$2,277 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 4.)

**Upcoming Changes to the Usual Weekly Earnings of
Wage and Salary Workers News Release**

Effective with the release of data for the second quarter of 2010 on July 20, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics will introduce seasonally adjusted data in the Usual Weekly Earnings of Wage and Salary Workers news release. A new table will provide seasonally adjusted data for the number of full-time wage and salary workers, median weekly earnings in current dollars, and median weekly earnings in constant (1982-84) dollars. These data will be available for total (both sexes), men, and women. The new table will appear as table 1 in the news release; the existing tables will be renumbered.

Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides the basic information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment. The survey is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau from a scientifically selected national sample of about 60,000 households, with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The earnings data are collected from one-quarter of the CPS monthly sample and are limited to wages and salaries. The data, therefore, exclude self-employment income.

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.

Reliability

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample rather than the entire population is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the "true" population values they represent. The exact difference, or *sampling error*, varies depending on the particular sample selected, and this variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the "true" population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling error*. Nonsampling errors can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information on a timely basis, mistakes made by respondents, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

For a full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors, see the Household Data section of the "Explanatory Notes and Estimates of Error" available on the BLS Web site at http://www.bls.gov/cps/eetech_methods.pdf.

Definitions

The principal definitions used in connection with the earnings series are described briefly below.

Usual weekly earnings. Data represent earnings before taxes and other deductions and include any overtime pay,

commissions, or tips usually received (at the main job in the case of multiple jobholders). Prior to 1994, respondents were asked how much they usually earned per week. Since January 1994, respondents have been asked to identify the easiest way for them to report earnings (hourly, weekly, biweekly, twice monthly, monthly, annually, other) and how much they usually earn in the reported time period.

Earnings reported on a basis other than weekly are converted to a weekly equivalent. The term "usual" is as perceived by the respondent. If the respondent asks for a definition of usual, interviewers are instructed to define the term as more than half the weeks worked during the past 4 or 5 months.

Medians (and other quantiles) of weekly earnings. The median (or upper limit of the second quartile) is the amount which divides a given earnings distribution into two equal groups, one having earnings above the median and the other having earnings below the median. Ten percent of a given distribution have earnings below the upper limit of the first decile (90 percent have higher earnings); 25 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the first quartile (75 percent have higher earnings); 75 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the third quartile (25 percent have higher earnings); and 90 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the ninth decile (10 percent have higher earnings).

The estimating procedure places each reported or calculated weekly earnings value into \$50-wide intervals which are centered around multiples of \$50. The actual value is estimated through the linear interpolation of the interval in which the quantile boundary lies.

Over-the-year changes in the medians (and other quantile boundaries) for specific groups may not necessarily be consistent with the movements estimated for the overall quantile boundary. The most common reasons for this possible anomaly are: (1) There could be a change in the relative weights of the subgroups. For example, the medians of both 16-to-24 year olds and those 25 years and over may rise; but if the lower-earning 16-to-24 group accounts for a greatly increased share of the total, the overall median could actually fall. (2) There could be a large change in the shape of the distribution of reported earnings, particularly near a quantile boundary. This could be caused by survey observations that are clustered at rounded values, such as \$250, \$300, \$400. An estimate lying in a \$50-wide centered interval containing such a cluster or "spike" tends to change more slowly than one in other intervals.

Wage and salary workers. Workers who receive

wages, salaries, commissions, tips, payment in kind, or piece rates. The group includes employees in both the private and public sectors but, for the purposes of the earnings series, excludes all self-employed persons, regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated.

Full-time workers. Workers who usually work 35 hours or more per week at their sole or principal job.

Part-time workers. Workers who usually work fewer

than 35 hours per week at their sole or principal job.

Constant dollars. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) is used to convert current dollars to constant (1982) dollars.

Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. Refers to persons who identified themselves in the enumeration process as being Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

Table 1. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings			
	1st 2009	1st 2010	In current dollars		In constant (1982) dollars	
			1st 2009	1st 2010	1st 2009	1st 2010
SEX AND AGE						
Total, 16 years and over.....	100,370	96,821	\$738	\$754	\$336	\$335
Men, 16 years and over.....	55,231	53,028	823	844	375	375
16 to 24 years.....	5,009	4,209	461	473	210	210
25 years and over.....	50,222	48,818	879	887	400	394
Women, 16 years and over.....	45,139	43,794	649	665	295	296
16 to 24 years.....	4,010	3,558	448	422	204	188
25 years and over.....	41,128	40,236	679	698	309	311
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX						
White.....	81,201	78,418	758	772	345	343
Men.....	45,882	44,040	855	869	389	386
Women.....	35,319	34,378	666	678	303	301
Black or African American.....	12,023	11,375	577	610	263	271
Men.....	5,448	5,140	595	635	271	282
Women.....	6,575	6,235	559	584	254	260
Asian.....	4,828	4,802	869	859	396	382
Men.....	2,662	2,670	951	940	433	418
Women.....	2,166	2,132	773	767	352	341
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	14,497	14,319	545	554	248	246
Men.....	9,125	8,875	577	589	263	262
Women.....	5,372	5,444	510	504	232	224

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 2. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by age, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 1st quarter 2010 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Age, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total		Men		Women	
	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings
TOTAL						
16 years and over.....	96,821	\$754	53,028	\$844	43,794	\$665
16 to 24 years.....	7,767	443	4,209	473	3,558	422
16 to 19 years.....	715	356	423	349	293	377
20 to 24 years.....	7,052	457	3,787	489	3,265	427
25 years and over.....	89,054	787	48,818	887	40,236	698
25 to 54 years.....	71,752	778	39,640	869	32,112	698
25 to 34 years.....	23,424	691	13,084	739	10,339	641
35 to 44 years.....	23,338	826	13,247	928	10,091	726
45 to 54 years.....	24,991	852	13,310	972	11,682	736
55 years and over.....	17,302	834	9,178	964	8,124	701
55 to 64 years.....	14,760	866	7,808	980	6,952	733
65 years and over.....	2,541	662	1,370	820	1,171	566
White						
16 years and over.....	78,418	772	44,040	869	34,378	678
16 to 24 years.....	6,316	455	3,517	484	2,799	428
25 years and over.....	72,102	813	40,523	913	31,579	716
25 to 54 years.....	57,530	803	32,639	893	24,891	717
55 years and over.....	14,573	866	7,884	990	6,689	712
Black or African American						
16 years and over.....	11,375	610	5,140	635	6,235	584
16 to 24 years.....	965	395	426	403	539	380
25 years and over.....	10,410	635	4,714	661	5,697	611
25 to 54 years.....	8,705	628	3,950	651	4,755	607
55 years and over.....	1,705	679	764	736	941	633
Asian						
16 years and over.....	4,802	859	2,670	940	2,132	767
16 to 24 years.....	243	424	131	496	112	412
25 years and over.....	4,559	882	2,539	955	2,019	789
25 to 54 years.....	3,827	896	2,149	971	1,678	791
55 years and over.....	732	785	390	790	342	783
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
16 years and over.....	14,319	554	8,875	589	5,444	504
16 to 24 years.....	1,538	390	970	387	568	396
25 years and over.....	12,781	583	7,905	611	4,876	522
25 to 54 years.....	11,213	581	6,977	606	4,236	521
55 years and over.....	1,568	598	928	664	640	526

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 3. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by occupation and sex, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Occupation and sex	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	1st 2009	1st 2010	1st 2009	1st 2010
TOTAL				
Management, professional, and related occupations.....	39,353	39,105	\$1,046	\$1,068
Management, business, and financial operations occupations.....	16,373	15,593	1,146	1,167
Professional and related occupations.....	22,981	23,512	990	1,007
Service occupations.....	13,967	13,906	457	476
Sales and office occupations.....	23,566	22,274	622	632
Sales and related occupations.....	9,386	8,713	666	674
Office and administrative support occupations.....	14,180	13,561	611	619
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.....	10,329	9,342	730	736
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.....	623	611	411	403
Construction and extraction occupations.....	5,293	4,832	720	719
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.....	4,413	3,900	790	796
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations.....	13,154	12,194	597	600
Production occupations.....	6,817	6,299	590	602
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	6,338	5,894	603	598
Men				
Management, professional, and related occupations.....	19,073	18,874	1,258	1,268
Management, business, and financial operations occupations.....	8,884	8,469	1,358	1,407
Professional and related occupations.....	10,189	10,405	1,183	1,176
Service occupations.....	6,737	6,825	516	558
Sales and office occupations.....	8,926	8,469	748	743
Sales and related occupations.....	5,173	4,848	834	832
Office and administrative support occupations.....	3,753	3,621	664	651
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.....	9,930	8,926	736	742
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.....	499	484	413	427
Construction and extraction occupations.....	5,186	4,722	720	717
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.....	4,245	3,720	791	798
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations.....	10,566	9,933	643	637
Production occupations.....	5,026	4,778	657	670
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	5,540	5,155	625	611
Women				
Management, professional, and related occupations.....	20,281	20,231	907	915
Management, business, and financial operations occupations.....	7,489	7,124	952	974
Professional and related occupations.....	12,792	13,107	879	887
Service occupations.....	7,230	7,081	411	420
Sales and office occupations.....	14,640	13,804	587	594
Sales and related occupations.....	4,213	3,864	513	508
Office and administrative support occupations.....	10,427	9,940	601	612
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.....	399	416	566	632
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.....	124	127	404	342
Construction and extraction occupations.....	107	109	696	828
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.....	168	180	743	744
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations.....	2,588	2,261	452	481
Production occupations.....	1,790	1,522	450	482
Transportation and material moving occupations.....	798	739	456	480

NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 4. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, 1st quarter 2010 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)	Upper limit of:				
		First decile	First quartile	Second quartile (median)	Third quartile	Ninth decile
SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY						
Total, 16 years and over.....	96,821	\$356	\$ 499	\$ 754	\$1,161	\$1,774
Men.....	53,028	382	545	844	1,327	1,990
Women.....	43,794	333	458	665	999	1,459
White.....	78,418	363	511	772	1,188	1,851
Men.....	44,040	389	568	869	1,362	2,065
Women.....	34,378	336	470	678	1,019	1,477
Black or African American.....	11,375	326	427	610	911	1,290
Men.....	5,140	340	452	635	983	1,400
Women.....	6,235	316	415	584	853	1,215
Asian.....	4,802	375	538	859	1,395	2,004
Men.....	2,670	382	592	940	1,571	2,283
Women.....	2,132	364	492	767	1,205	1,744
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	14,319	298	383	554	825	1,235
Men.....	8,875	310	398	589	893	1,380
Women.....	5,444	282	357	504	737	1,044
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Total, 25 years and over.....	89,054	377	523	787	1,207	1,859
Less than a high school diploma.....	6,762	271	338	448	608	822
High school graduates, no college ¹	24,601	344	453	624	897	1,242
Some college or associate degree.....	24,076	386	522	738	1,044	1,442
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	33,615	550	777	1,140	1,729	2,478
Bachelor's degree only.....	21,714	510	725	1,024	1,535	2,163
Advanced degree.....	11,900	667	929	1,361	1,918	2,898
Men, 25 years and over.....	48,818	402	584	887	1,379	2,075
Less than a high school diploma.....	4,422	294	372	494	680	908
High school graduates, no college ¹	14,191	377	501	710	1,001	1,427
Some college or associate degree.....	12,376	437	601	850	1,169	1,616
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	17,829	612	887	1,333	1,916	2,890
Bachelor's degree only.....	11,445	573	824	1,168	1,801	2,503
Advanced degree.....	6,384	740	1,059	1,570	2,295	3,319
Women, 25 years and over.....	40,236	347	483	698	1,038	1,501
Less than a high school diploma.....	2,340	231	297	383	501	633
High school graduates, no college ¹	10,410	317	408	551	739	997
Some college or associate degree.....	11,700	355	479	642	892	1,202
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	15,786	502	701	978	1,405	1,902
Bachelor's degree only.....	10,269	477	641	895	1,265	1,760
Advanced degree.....	5,516	598	840	1,160	1,611	2,277

1 Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

2 Includes persons with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

NOTE: Ten percent of all full-time wage and salary workers earn less than the upper limit of the first decile; 25 percent earn less than the upper limit of the first quartile; 50 percent earn less than the upper limit of the second quartile, or median; 75 percent earn less than the upper limit of the third quartile; and 90 percent earn less than the upper limit of the ninth decile. Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

Table 5. Median usual weekly earnings of part-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	1st 2009	1st 2010	1st 2009	1st 2010
SEX AND AGE				
Total, 16 years and over.....	24,180	25,242	\$222	\$228
Men, 16 years and over.....	8,007	8,673	218	224
16 to 24 years.....	3,429	3,593	165	169
25 years and over.....	4,578	5,080	272	281
Women, 16 years and over.....	16,173	16,569	225	231
16 to 24 years.....	4,671	4,632	156	161
25 years and over.....	11,502	11,937	269	269
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX				
White.....	20,264	20,982	223	229
Men.....	6,532	7,092	217	224
Women.....	13,732	13,890	226	231
Black or African American.....	2,342	2,568	221	224
Men.....	858	982	219	221
Women.....	1,484	1,586	222	227
Asian.....	954	919	234	257
Men.....	365	329	255	261
Women.....	589	590	221	254
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.....	3,296	3,732	224	228
Men.....	1,189	1,529	244	237
Women.....	2,108	2,204	212	222

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.