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USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS: FIRST QUARTER 2006

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 103.5 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$668 in the first quarter of 2006, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. This was 2.3 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 3.6 percent in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) over the same period.

Data on usual 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 Explanatory Note.) Highlights from the first-quarter data are:

—Women who usually worked full time had median earnings of \$600 per week, or 80.6 percent of the \$744 median for men. The female-to-male earnings ratios were higher among blacks (93.9 percent) and Hispanics or Latinos (86.6 percent) than among whites (79.6 percent) or Asians (71.1 percent). (See table 1.)

—Median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$577 per week, 75.6 percent of the median for white men (\$763). The difference was less among women, as black women's median earnings (\$542) were 89.3 percent of those for their white counterparts (\$607). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics or Latinos who worked full time (\$487) were lower than those of blacks (\$560), whites (\$688), and Asians (\$766). (See table 1.)

—Among men, those 55 to 64 years old had the highest median weekly earnings (\$910). Among women, earnings were highest for those age 45 to 54 (\$663). (See table 2.)

—Among the major occupational groups, persons employed full time in managerial, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,160 for men and \$816 for women. Men and women in service jobs earned the least. (See table 3.)

—Full-time workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$420, compared with \$592 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,019 for college graduates 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 \$2,899 or more per week, compared with \$1,904 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 4.)

Explanatory 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; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

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 error 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, 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 "Explanatory Notes and Estimates of Error" section of *Employment and Earnings*.

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, e.g., \$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. This 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 and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by 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			
	I 2005	I 2006	In current dollars		In constant (1982) dollars	
			I 2005	I 2006	I 2005	I 2006
SEX AND AGE						
Total, 16 years and over	100,884	103,469	\$653	\$668	\$328	\$324
Men, 16 years and over	56,719	57,950	729	744	367	361
16 to 24 years	5,904	5,886	401	417	201	202
25 years and over	50,815	52,065	775	793	390	385
Women, 16 years and over	44,165	45,519	586	600	295	291
16 to 24 years	4,331	4,492	380	388	191	188
25 years and over	39,834	41,027	610	624	307	303
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX						
White	82,155	83,710	677	688	340	334
Men	47,364	48,039	751	763	378	370
Women	34,790	35,670	599	607	301	295
Black or African American	12,023	12,536	513	560	258	272
Men	5,722	5,920	555	577	279	280
Women	6,301	6,616	492	542	247	263
Asian	4,425	4,849	738	766	371	371
Men	2,403	2,695	798	932	401	452
Women	2,022	2,154	670	663	337	322
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	14,040	15,285	470	487	236	237
Men	9,021	9,701	488	506	245	246
Women	5,019	5,584	433	438	218	213

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. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race. Beginning in January 2006, data reflect revised population controls used in the household survey.

Table 2. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by age, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, first quarter 2006 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	103,469	\$668	57,950	\$744	45,519	\$600
16 to 24 years	10,377	405	5,886	417	4,492	388
16 to 19 years	1,382	322	815	358	567	293
20 to 24 years	8,995	417	5,070	428	3,925	404
25 years and over	93,092	712	52,065	793	41,027	624
25 to 54 years	77,717	705	43,774	778	33,943	623
25 to 34 years	24,808	617	14,370	656	10,438	578
35 to 44 years	26,884	748	15,459	839	11,424	646
45 to 54 years	26,026	763	13,945	888	12,081	663
55 years and over	15,374	744	8,290	880	7,084	628
55 to 64 years	13,272	763	7,049	910	6,223	648
65 years and over	2,103	596	1,241	707	861	488
White						
16 years and over	83,710	688	48,039	763	35,670	607
16 to 24 years	8,450	410	4,849	424	3,601	390
25 years and over	75,260	732	43,190	818	32,070	636
25 to 54 years	62,217	726	36,025	800	26,192	637
55 years and over	13,043	761	7,165	903	5,878	629
Black or African American						
16 years and over	12,536	560	5,920	577	6,616	542
16 to 24 years	1,244	364	652	356	592	375
25 years and over	11,292	588	5,268	616	6,024	571
25 to 54 years	9,853	584	4,602	617	5,251	560
55 years and over	1,439	614	666	614	773	613
Asian						
16 years and over	4,849	766	2,695	932	2,154	663
16 to 24 years	358	425	208	431	150	412
25 years and over	4,491	815	2,487	978	2,004	680
25 to 54 years	3,830	830	2,128	1,017	1,702	673
55 years and over	661	727	359	775	302	710
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
16 years and over	15,285	487	9,701	506	5,584	438
16 to 24 years	2,152	373	1,367	379	785	364
25 years and over	13,133	508	8,334	535	4,799	465
25 to 54 years	11,841	509	7,543	533	4,298	467
55 years and over	1,292	508	791	552	501	435

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. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race. Beginning in January 2006, data reflect revised population controls used in the household survey.

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	
	I 2005	I 2006	I 2005	I 2006
TOTAL				
Management, professional, and related occupations	36,935	37,912	\$937	\$954
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	15,034	15,591	1,016	1,029
Professional and related occupations	21,901	22,321	895	911
Service occupations	13,467	13,981	416	419
Sales and office occupations	24,142	25,048	570	588
Sales and related occupations	9,304	10,005	623	635
Office and administrative support occupations	14,838	15,043	543	565
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	11,218	11,739	634	650
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	690	611	370	405
Construction and extraction occupations	6,164	6,813	615	618
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,365	4,315	712	746
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	15,122	14,790	543	552
Production occupations	8,475	8,252	539	545
Transportation and material moving occupations	6,646	6,538	550	562
Men				
Management, professional, and related occupations	18,403	18,683	1,127	1,160
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	8,086	8,591	1,234	1,242
Professional and related occupations	10,317	10,092	1,048	1,119
Service occupations	6,846	6,963	477	500
Sales and office occupations	8,865	9,379	691	696
Sales and related occupations	5,140	5,631	772	758
Office and administrative support occupations	3,726	3,748	598	620
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	10,745	11,287	639	656
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	562	515	387	422
Construction and extraction occupations	6,028	6,641	616	618
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,155	4,131	713	750
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	11,860	11,639	592	591
Production occupations	6,046	5,904	606	601
Transportation and material moving occupations	5,814	5,735	579	580
Women				
Management, professional, and related occupations	18,532	19,229	804	816
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	6,948	7,000	838	851
Professional and related occupations	11,584	12,229	784	795
Service occupations	6,620	7,019	381	382
Sales and office occupations	15,277	15,669	519	532
Sales and related occupations	4,164	4,373	487	492
Office and administrative support occupations	11,113	11,296	527	546
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	473	452	505	514
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	128	96	326	(¹)
Construction and extraction occupations	136	172	592	\$588
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	210	184	680	653
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	3,262	3,151	432	426
Production occupations	2,430	2,348	433	423
Transportation and material moving occupations	832	803	429	436

¹ Data not shown where base is less than 100,000.

NOTE: Beginning in January 2006, data reflect revised population controls used in the household survey.

Table 4. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, first quarter 2006 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	103,469	\$318	\$445	\$668	\$1,030	\$1,535
Men	57,950	342	488	744	1,164	1,744
Women	45,519	299	405	600	877	1,262
White	83,710	325	460	688	1,056	1,560
Men	48,039	355	501	763	1,186	1,770
Women	35,670	301	409	607	890	1,266
Black or African American	12,536	289	384	560	823	1,198
Men	5,920	290	389	577	887	1,249
Women	6,616	288	380	542	775	1,135
Asian	4,849	340	492	766	1,290	1,877
Men	2,695	360	533	932	1,451	1,999
Women	2,154	325	458	663	1,037	1,479
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	15,285	278	351	487	713	1,108
Men	9,701	290	374	506	749	1,175
Women	5,584	254	319	438	659	958
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Total, 25 years and over	93,092	341	483	712	1,084	1,577
Less than a high school diploma	8,661	259	318	420	580	804
High school graduates, no college ¹	27,725	314	416	592	838	1,159
Some college or associate degree	25,492	365	492	691	988	1,375
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	31,214	510	705	1,019	1,532	2,171
Bachelor's degree only	20,349	477	648	933	1,394	1,924
Advanced degree	10,865	620	846	1,215	1,772	2,505
Men, 25 years and over	52,065	375	523	793	1,224	1,826
Less than a high school diploma	5,859	286	356	473	623	902
High school graduates, no college ¹	16,130	349	482	672	949	1,258
Some college or associate degree	13,367	405	561	792	1,139	1,514
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	16,708	569	793	1,223	1,823	2,497
Bachelor's degree only	10,693	518	729	1,112	1,619	2,292
Advanced degree	6,015	700	978	1,453	2,009	2,899
Women, 25 years and over	41,027	314	426	624	913	1,320
Less than a high school diploma	2,801	229	279	352	472	598
High school graduates, no college ¹	11,595	287	372	498	674	925
Some college or associate degree	12,125	332	435	603	832	1,117
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	14,506	477	637	868	1,236	1,675
Bachelor's degree only	9,657	434	604	797	1,141	1,557
Advanced degree	4,849	580	756	987	1,401	1,904

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. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race. Beginning in January 2006, data reflect revised population controls used in the household survey.

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	
	I 2005	I 2006	I 2005	I 2006
SEX AND AGE				
Total, 16 years and over	22,398	22,375	\$197	\$200
Men, 16 years and over	6,951	7,241	188	188
16 to 24 years	3,404	3,731	146	147
25 years and over	3,547	3,509	248	253
Women, 16 years and over	15,447	15,134	201	208
16 to 24 years	4,707	4,572	138	136
25 years and over	10,740	10,562	242	250
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX				
White	19,040	19,044	197	204
Men	5,851	6,099	188	191
Women	13,190	12,944	202	211
Black or African American	1,948	2,032	186	173
Men	609	692	188	170
Women	1,340	1,340	184	175
Asian	815	783	220	219
Men	276	248	211	205
Women	539	535	223	225
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	2,497	2,590	193	197
Men	953	1,042	200	195
Women	1,544	1,548	188	198

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. In addition, persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race and, therefore, are classified by ethnicity as well as by race. Beginning in January 2006, data reflect revised population controls used in the household survey.