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## **USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS: FIRST QUARTER 2005**

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 100.9 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$653 in the first quarter of 2005, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. This was 3.0 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 3.0 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 \$586 per week, or 80.4 percent of the \$729 median for men. The female-to-male earnings ratios were higher among Hispanics or Latinos (88.7 percent) and blacks (88.6 percent) than among Asians (84.0 percent) or whites (79.8 percent). (See table 1.)

—Median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$555 per week, 73.9 percent of the median for white men (\$751). The difference was less among women, as black women's median earnings (\$492) were 82.1 percent of those for their white counterparts (\$599). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics or Latinos who worked full time (\$470) were lower than those of blacks (\$513), whites (\$677), and Asians (\$738). (See table 1.)

—Among men, the highest median weekly earnings were for those age 55 to 64 and age 45 to 54, \$877 and \$853, respectively. Among women, earnings were highest for 45- to 54-year olds (\$657). (See table 2.)

—Among the major occupational groups, persons employed full time in managerial, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,127 for men and \$804 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 \$404, compared with \$579 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,013 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 \$2,896 or more per week, compared with \$1,902 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 2004	I 2005	In current dollars		In constant (1982) dollars	
			I 2004	I 2005	I 2004	I 2005
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>						
Total, 16 years and over .....	99,720	100,884	\$634	\$653	\$328	\$328
Men, 16 years and over .....	55,888	56,719	711	729	368	367
16 to 24 years .....	5,762	5,904	410	401	212	201
25 years and over .....	50,126	50,815	757	775	392	390
Women, 16 years and over .....	43,832	44,165	567	586	294	295
16 to 24 years .....	4,342	4,331	387	380	200	191
25 years and over .....	39,490	39,834	592	610	307	307
<b>RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX</b>						
White .....	81,271	82,155	652	677	338	340
Men .....	46,562	47,364	729	751	378	378
Women .....	34,709	34,790	580	599	300	301
Black or African American .....	11,796	12,023	521	513	270	258
Men .....	5,585	5,722	567	555	293	279
Women .....	6,211	6,301	498	492	258	247
Asian .....	4,440	4,425	712	738	369	371
Men .....	2,489	2,403	790	798	409	401
Women .....	1,951	2,022	615	670	318	337
Hispanic or Latino .....	13,648	14,040	450	470	233	236
Men .....	8,678	9,021	478	488	248	245
Women .....	4,970	5,019	417	433	216	218

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 2005, 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 2005 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
<b>TOTAL</b>						
16 years and over .....	100,884	\$653	56,719	\$729	44,165	\$586
16 to 24 years .....	10,235	392	5,904	401	4,331	380
16 to 19 years .....	1,279	311	771	313	507	307
20 to 24 years .....	8,956	403	5,132	411	3,824	392
25 years and over .....	90,649	696	50,815	775	39,834	610
25 to 54 years .....	76,404	691	43,061	765	33,344	610
25 to 34 years .....	24,515	610	14,264	658	10,250	556
35 to 44 years .....	26,509	725	15,193	828	11,315	617
45 to 54 years .....	25,381	751	13,603	853	11,778	657
55 years and over .....	14,245	730	7,755	851	6,490	609
55 to 64 years .....	12,423	746	6,687	877	5,735	622
65 years and over .....	1,822	553	1,067	655	755	481
<b>White</b>						
16 years and over .....	82,155	677	47,364	751	34,790	599
16 to 24 years .....	8,340	399	4,948	409	3,391	384
25 years and over .....	73,815	723	42,416	805	31,399	623
25 to 54 years .....	61,767	716	35,762	790	26,005	624
55 years and over .....	12,048	751	6,654	884	5,394	619
<b>Black or African American</b>						
16 years and over .....	12,023	513	5,722	555	6,301	492
16 to 24 years .....	1,253	338	597	322	655	348
25 years and over .....	10,770	540	5,124	591	5,646	506
25 to 54 years .....	9,381	539	4,472	594	4,909	503
55 years and over .....	1,389	548	652	556	737	542
<b>Asian</b>						
16 years and over .....	4,425	738	2,403	798	2,022	670
16 to 24 years .....	290	411	168	405	121	419
25 years and over .....	4,135	775	2,235	853	1,900	694
25 to 54 years .....	3,548	784	1,900	876	1,648	715
55 years and over .....	587	743	335	810	252	532
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>						
16 years and over .....	14,040	470	9,021	488	5,019	433
16 to 24 years .....	1,997	337	1,377	332	620	349
25 years and over .....	12,043	498	7,644	515	4,398	454
25 to 54 years .....	10,899	499	6,959	515	3,940	456
55 years and over .....	1,144	485	686	517	458	437

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 2005, 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 2004	I 2005	I 2004	I 2005
<b>TOTAL</b>				
Managerial, professional, and related occupations .....	36,362	36,935	\$914	\$937
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	15,047	15,034	982	1,016
Professional and related occupations .....	21,315	21,901	865	895
Service occupations .....	12,985	13,467	410	416
Sales and office occupations .....	24,705	24,142	555	570
Sales and related occupations .....	9,978	9,304	605	623
Office and administrative support occupations .....	14,726	14,838	532	543
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	10,617	11,218	629	634
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	637	690	327	370
Construction and extraction occupations .....	5,641	6,164	608	615
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	4,340	4,365	713	712
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	15,052	15,122	519	543
Production occupations .....	8,588	8,475	522	539
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	6,465	6,646	515	550
<b>Men</b>				
Managerial, professional, and related occupations .....	18,013	18,403	1,099	1,127
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	8,277	8,086	1,168	1,234
Professional and related occupations .....	9,736	10,317	1,037	1,048
Service occupations .....	6,510	6,846	476	477
Sales and office occupations .....	9,380	8,865	656	691
Sales and related occupations .....	5,620	5,140	741	772
Office and administrative support occupations .....	3,759	3,726	566	598
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	10,240	10,745	635	639
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	505	562	345	387
Construction and extraction occupations .....	5,543	6,028	608	616
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	4,192	4,155	712	713
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	11,745	11,860	575	592
Production occupations .....	6,118	6,046	594	606
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	5,627	5,814	538	579
<b>Women</b>				
Managerial, professional, and related occupations .....	18,349	18,532	767	804
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	6,769	6,948	809	838
Professional and related occupations .....	11,579	11,584	750	784
Service occupations .....	6,475	6,620	375	381
Sales and office occupations .....	15,325	15,277	515	519
Sales and related occupations .....	4,358	4,164	476	487
Office and administrative support occupations .....	10,967	11,113	523	527
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	377	473	460	505
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	132	128	306	326
Construction and extraction occupations .....	98	136	( <sup>1</sup> )	592
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	147	210	\$724	680
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	3,308	3,262	404	432
Production occupations .....	2,469	2,430	400	433
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	838	832	413	429

<sup>1</sup> Data not shown where base is less than 100,000.

NOTE: Beginning in January 2005, 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 2005 averages, not seasonally adjusted**

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)	Upper limit of:				
		First decile	First quartile	Second quartile (median)	Third quartile	Ninth decile
<b>SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY</b>						
Total, 16 years and over .....	100,884	\$312	\$433	\$653	\$999	\$1,509
Men .....	56,719	331	478	729	1,130	1,692
Women .....	44,165	294	400	586	856	1,244
White .....	82,155	319	452	677	1,028	1,542
Men .....	47,364	341	492	751	1,154	1,735
Women .....	34,790	300	411	599	871	1,257
Black or African American .....	12,023	284	367	513	764	1,127
Men .....	5,722	293	386	555	854	1,208
Women .....	6,301	276	351	492	714	996
Asian .....	4,425	330	474	738	1,160	1,753
Men .....	2,403	364	499	798	1,310	1,884
Women .....	2,022	308	422	670	1,046	1,544
Hispanic or Latino .....	14,040	277	332	470	695	1,033
Men .....	9,021	283	345	488	732	1,079
Women .....	5,019	262	315	433	639	927
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						
Total, 25 years and over .....	90,649	333	473	696	1,050	1,558
Less than a high school diploma .....	8,427	257	309	404	578	789
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	26,777	311	412	579	799	1,084
Some college or associate degree .....	25,074	357	484	667	956	1,319
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	30,372	496	704	1,013	1,529	2,099
Bachelor's degree only .....	19,587	470	643	931	1,395	1,908
Advanced degree .....	10,785	602	840	1,176	1,744	2,476
Men, 25 years and over .....	50,815	367	512	775	1,173	1,756
Less than a high school diploma .....	5,640	281	334	449	641	886
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	15,388	350	475	644	913	1,198
Some college or associate degree .....	13,219	398	540	769	1,088	1,447
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	16,569	560	792	1,171	1,755	2,407
Bachelor's degree only .....	10,653	511	734	1,081	1,617	2,205
Advanced degree .....	5,916	675	937	1,401	1,918	2,896
Women, 25 years and over .....	39,834	307	421	610	890	1,278
Less than a high school diploma .....	2,786	228	279	341	430	597
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	11,389	286	369	496	667	857
Some college or associate degree .....	11,855	326	434	587	791	1,084
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	13,804	465	628	877	1,235	1,721
Bachelor's degree only .....	8,934	439	587	798	1,144	1,556
Advanced degree .....	4,870	563	752	1,003	1,403	1,902

<sup>1</sup> Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

<sup>2</sup> 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 2005, 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 2004	I 2005	I 2004	I 2005
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>				
Total, 16 years and over .....	22,127	22,398	\$192	\$197
Men, 16 years and over .....	7,057	6,951	180	188
16 to 24 years .....	3,624	3,404	140	146
25 years and over .....	3,433	3,547	240	248
Women, 16 years and over .....	15,071	15,447	198	201
16 to 24 years .....	4,614	4,707	136	138
25 years and over .....	10,457	10,740	232	242
<b>RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX</b>				
White .....	18,665	19,040	194	197
Men .....	5,813	5,851	179	188
Women .....	12,852	13,190	200	202
Black or African American .....	2,098	1,948	191	186
Men .....	721	609	200	188
Women .....	1,377	1,340	189	184
Asian .....	856	815	168	220
Men .....	342	276	161	211
Women .....	514	539	175	223
Hispanic or Latino .....	2,338	2,497	195	193
Men .....	825	953	203	200
Women .....	1,513	1,544	190	188

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 2005, data reflect revised population controls used in the household survey.