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## **USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS: SECOND QUARTER 2009**

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 100.1 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$734 in the second quarter of 2009, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. This was 2.1 percent higher than a year earlier. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) fell by 1.2 percent 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 second-quarter data are:

- Women who usually worked full time had median earnings of \$652 per week, or 80.0 percent of the \$815 median for men. The female-to-male earnings ratios were higher among blacks (91.5 percent) and Hispanics (88.9 percent) than among whites (79.1 percent) or Asians (80.6 percent). (See table 1.)
- Median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$620 per week, 73.6 percent of the median for white men (\$842). The difference was smaller among women, as black women's median earnings (\$567) were 85.1 percent of those for white women (\$666). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics who worked full time (\$547) were lower than those of blacks (\$592), whites (\$754), and Asians (\$909). (See table 1.)
- Among men, those age 45 to 54 and age 55 to 64 had the highest median weekly earnings, \$961 and \$964, respectively. Among women, weekly earnings were highest for those age 55 to 64 (\$721). (See table 2.)
- Among the major occupational groups, persons employed full time in management, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,250 for men and \$900 for women. Persons employed 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 \$465, compared with \$630 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 \$3,434 or more per week, compared with \$2,130 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 4.)

# 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; TDD message referral phone: 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 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](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			
	II 2008	II 2009	In current dollars		In constant (1982) dollars	
			II 2008	II 2009	II 2008	II 2009
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>						
Total, 16 years and over .....	107,119	100,130	\$719	\$734	\$320	\$330
Men, 16 years and over .....	59,759	55,419	800	815	356	367
16 to 24 years .....	6,169	5,128	469	450	209	203
25 years and over .....	53,589	50,290	862	872	384	393
Women, 16 years and over .....	47,360	44,711	634	652	282	294
16 to 24 years .....	4,692	3,911	415	413	185	186
25 years and over .....	42,668	40,801	668	679	297	306
<b>RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX</b>						
White .....	86,389	81,012	738	754	329	339
Men .....	49,412	45,921	827	842	368	379
Women .....	36,977	35,091	648	666	289	300
Black or African American .....	12,889	11,785	591	592	263	267
Men .....	6,105	5,436	615	620	274	279
Women .....	6,785	6,349	568	567	253	255
Asian .....	5,267	4,976	855	909	381	409
Men .....	2,804	2,739	975	969	434	437
Women .....	2,463	2,237	741	781	330	352
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	15,951	14,900	537	547	239	246
Men .....	10,059	9,265	569	575	253	259
Women .....	5,892	5,635	494	511	220	230

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, second quarter 2009 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 .....	100,130	\$734	55,419	\$815	44,711	\$652
16 to 24 years .....	9,039	432	5,128	450	3,911	413
16 to 19 years .....	1,211	327	695	340	515	317
20 to 24 years .....	7,828	455	4,433	471	3,395	435
25 years and over .....	91,091	770	50,290	872	40,801	679
25 to 54 years .....	73,878	762	41,032	854	32,846	674
25 to 34 years .....	24,027	672	13,500	710	10,527	632
35 to 44 years .....	24,624	823	13,942	915	10,682	699
45 to 54 years .....	25,227	824	13,591	961	11,636	703
55 years and over .....	17,213	823	9,258	945	7,955	703
55 to 64 years .....	14,618	840	7,797	964	6,821	721
65 years and over .....	2,594	705	1,461	826	1,134	635
<b>White</b>						
16 years and over .....	81,012	754	45,921	842	35,091	666
16 to 24 years .....	7,432	443	4,251	462	3,181	422
25 years and over .....	73,580	797	41,670	896	31,910	698
25 to 54 years .....	59,158	785	33,744	879	25,413	694
55 years and over .....	14,422	852	7,926	963	6,497	717
<b>Black or African American</b>						
16 years and over .....	11,785	592	5,436	620	6,349	567
16 to 24 years .....	1,031	395	509	412	522	374
25 years and over .....	10,754	613	4,926	660	5,827	583
25 to 54 years .....	9,060	610	4,163	649	4,897	583
55 years and over .....	1,694	643	763	730	930	583
<b>Asian</b>						
16 years and over .....	4,976	909	2,739	969	2,237	781
16 to 24 years .....	272	451	180	475	93	430
25 years and over .....	4,704	938	2,560	1,009	2,145	813
25 to 54 years .....	3,908	950	2,127	1,060	1,782	810
55 years and over .....	796	841	433	856	363	829
<b>Hispanic or Latino ethnicity</b>						
16 years and over .....	14,900	547	9,265	575	5,635	511
16 to 24 years .....	1,802	416	1,105	424	697	401
25 years and over .....	13,099	582	8,161	605	4,938	535
25 to 54 years .....	11,601	580	7,277	603	4,324	531
55 years and over .....	1,497	599	884	628	613	564

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	
	II 2008	II 2009	II 2008	II 2009
<b>TOTAL</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations .....	39,861	38,820	\$1,028	\$1,046
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	15,947	15,634	1,135	1,145
Professional and related occupations .....	23,914	23,186	978	994
Service occupations .....	14,700	14,530	475	468
Sales and office occupations .....	25,792	23,747	610	622
Sales and related occupations .....	10,325	9,575	645	665
Office and administrative support occupations .....	15,467	14,172	598	607
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	11,815	10,469	691	707
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	800	736	409	440
Construction and extraction occupations .....	6,551	5,325	677	702
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	4,464	4,407	778	763
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	14,951	12,564	600	611
Production occupations .....	8,045	6,453	594	622
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	6,905	6,111	606	595
<b>Men</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations .....	19,623	18,979	1,243	1,250
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	8,816	8,630	1,356	1,342
Professional and related occupations .....	10,807	10,348	1,169	1,188
Service occupations .....	7,255	7,225	539	520
Sales and office occupations .....	9,820	9,078	730	726
Sales and related occupations .....	5,727	5,349	786	782
Office and administrative support occupations .....	4,093	3,729	643	638
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	11,317	10,021	693	716
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	638	589	414	455
Construction and extraction occupations .....	6,407	5,192	676	704
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	4,271	4,240	773	772
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	11,745	10,115	648	656
Production occupations .....	5,797	4,774	664	696
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	5,947	5,341	629	616
<b>Women</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations .....	20,238	19,841	884	900
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	7,131	7,004	922	968
Professional and related occupations .....	13,108	12,838	868	862
Service occupations .....	7,445	7,305	416	419
Sales and office occupations .....	15,973	14,669	575	589
Sales and related occupations .....	4,598	4,226	500	541
Office and administrative support occupations .....	11,375	10,442	591	599
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	498	448	616	548
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	162	147	389	394
Construction and extraction occupations .....	144	133	733	629
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	192	167	806	563
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	3,206	2,448	467	478
Production occupations .....	2,248	1,679	470	479
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	958	769	450	476

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, second quarter 2009 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 .....	100,130	\$351	\$491	\$734	\$1,140	\$1,736
Men .....	55,419	382	523	815	1,265	1,905
Women .....	44,711	327	450	652	978	1,429
White .....	81,012	358	501	754	1,161	1,765
Men .....	45,921	388	544	842	1,310	1,943
Women .....	35,091	331	460	666	995	1,442
Black or African American .....	11,785	322	418	592	881	1,245
Men .....	5,436	337	441	620	940	1,297
Women .....	6,349	313	402	567	820	1,181
Asian .....	4,976	381	548	909	1,437	1,919
Men .....	2,739	401	599	969	1,540	2,118
Women .....	2,237	349	498	781	1,279	1,794
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	14,900	302	394	547	805	1,224
Men .....	9,265	323	415	575	847	1,303
Women .....	5,635	283	352	511	737	1,071
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						
Total, 25 years and over .....	91,091	378	518	770	1,177	1,770
Less than a high school diploma .....	7,565	281	351	465	622	857
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	25,846	346	461	630	894	1,229
Some college or associate degree .....	25,094	382	511	719	1,024	1,403
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	32,585	558	772	1,140	1,704	2,395
Bachelor's degree only .....	20,678	511	716	1,031	1,544	2,171
Advanced degree .....	11,907	668	925	1,332	1,915	2,879
Men, 25 years and over .....	50,290	407	579	872	1,339	1,968
Less than a high school diploma .....	5,072	300	388	503	689	917
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	15,021	389	508	714	979	1,344
Some college or associate degree .....	12,820	423	584	836	1,167	1,573
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	17,377	616	897	1,337	1,916	2,889
Bachelor's degree only .....	10,989	587	819	1,209	1,767	2,505
Advanced degree .....	6,388	741	1,039	1,546	2,281	3,434
Women, 25 years and over .....	40,801	345	479	679	1,016	1,471
Less than a high school diploma .....	2,493	251	305	387	507	645
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	10,826	311	404	550	738	1,010
Some college or associate degree .....	12,274	357	471	630	876	1,167
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	15,208	505	690	973	1,381	1,908
Bachelor's degree only .....	9,690	471	632	882	1,240	1,770
Advanced degree .....	5,518	630	829	1,149	1,587	2,130

<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. 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	
	II 2008	II 2009	II 2008	II 2009
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>				
Total, 16 years and over .....	22,534	24,705	\$218	\$225
Men, 16 years and over .....	7,362	8,318	207	219
16 to 24 years .....	3,604	3,676	162	169
25 years and over .....	3,758	4,642	274	278
Women, 16 years and over .....	15,172	16,387	224	230
16 to 24 years .....	4,564	4,811	160	159
25 years and over .....	10,608	11,576	263	269
<b>RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX</b>				
White .....	18,828	20,785	220	226
Men .....	6,096	6,927	207	220
Women .....	12,732	13,858	227	230
Black or African American .....	2,289	2,401	206	213
Men .....	767	809	206	196
Women .....	1,523	1,592	206	223
Asian .....	875	887	244	266
Men .....	305	346	213	289
Women .....	569	542	270	248
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	2,687	3,332	220	224
Men .....	996	1,303	234	227
Women .....	1,692	2,028	214	223

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.