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## **USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS: SECOND QUARTER 2006**

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 105.9 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$659 in the second quarter of 2006, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. This was 2.5 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 4.0 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 second-quarter data are:

—Women who usually worked full time had median earnings of \$593 per week, or 81.1 percent of the \$731 median for men. The female-to-male earnings ratios were higher among blacks (89.2 percent) and Hispanics or Latinos (86.1 percent) than among Asians (81.6 percent) or whites (79.9 percent). (See table 1.)

—Median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$573 per week, 76.1 percent of the median for white men (\$753). The difference was less among women, as black women's median earnings (\$511) were 84.9 percent of those for their white counterparts (\$602). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics or Latinos who worked full time (\$485) were lower than those of blacks (\$534), whites (\$678), and Asians (\$765). (See table 1.)

—Among men, those age 55 to 64 and age 45 to 54 had the highest median weekly earnings, \$900 and \$897, respectively. Among women, earnings were highest for those age 45 to 54 (\$646). (See table 2.)

—Among the major occupational groups, persons employed full time in managerial, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,159 for men and \$829 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 \$591 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,047 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 \$2,888 or more per week, compared with \$1,994 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			
	II 2005	II 2006	In current dollars		In constant (1982) dollars	
			II 2005	II 2006	II 2005	II 2006
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>						
Total, 16 years and over .....	103,332	105,881	\$643	\$659	\$319	\$315
Men, 16 years and over .....	58,242	59,983	713	731	354	349
16 to 24 years .....	6,511	6,684	407	421	202	201
25 years and over .....	51,730	53,299	762	783	378	374
Women, 16 years and over .....	45,090	45,897	580	593	288	283
16 to 24 years .....	4,708	4,710	374	395	186	188
25 years and over .....	40,382	41,188	608	619	301	295
<b>RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX</b>						
White .....	83,903	85,831	663	678	329	323
Men .....	48,487	49,804	732	753	363	359
Women .....	35,416	36,026	590	602	293	287
Black or African American .....	12,293	12,748	518	534	257	255
Men .....	5,882	6,084	565	573	280	274
Women .....	6,411	6,664	487	511	241	244
Asian .....	4,697	4,858	743	765	369	365
Men .....	2,580	2,780	810	843	402	402
Women .....	2,118	2,078	664	688	329	328
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	14,817	15,715	473	485	235	231
Men .....	9,575	10,044	487	504	242	241
Women .....	5,242	5,671	437	434	217	207

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, second 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
<b>TOTAL</b>						
16 years and over .....	105,881	\$659	59,983	\$731	45,897	\$593
16 to 24 years .....	11,394	410	6,684	421	4,710	395
16 to 19 years .....	1,804	330	1,055	355	749	307
20 to 24 years .....	9,590	427	5,629	438	3,961	416
25 years and over .....	94,487	705	53,299	783	41,188	619
25 to 54 years .....	78,777	700	44,689	772	34,088	619
25 to 34 years .....	25,350	617	14,703	647	10,647	583
35 to 44 years .....	27,273	735	15,639	815	11,634	638
45 to 54 years .....	26,153	766	14,347	897	11,807	646
55 years and over .....	15,710	728	8,611	858	7,100	619
55 to 64 years .....	13,617	749	7,341	900	6,276	633
65 years and over .....	2,093	559	1,270	614	823	510
<b>White</b>						
16 years and over .....	85,831	678	49,804	753	36,026	602
16 to 24 years .....	9,273	414	5,591	427	3,682	396
25 years and over .....	76,558	727	44,213	814	32,345	630
25 to 54 years .....	63,423	723	36,883	800	26,540	630
55 years and over .....	13,134	746	7,330	889	5,804	628
<b>Black or African American</b>						
16 years and over .....	12,748	534	6,084	573	6,664	511
16 to 24 years .....	1,388	386	679	394	709	375
25 years and over .....	11,360	570	5,405	595	5,955	530
25 to 54 years .....	9,768	575	4,640	596	5,128	535
55 years and over .....	1,592	546	765	592	826	517
<b>Asian</b>						
16 years and over .....	4,858	765	2,780	843	2,078	688
16 to 24 years .....	304	487	174	483	130	496
25 years and over .....	4,553	803	2,605	897	1,948	714
25 to 54 years .....	3,840	810	2,246	893	1,594	724
55 years and over .....	713	761	359	912	354	664
<b>Hispanic or Latino ethnicity</b>						
16 years and over .....	15,715	485	10,044	504	5,671	434
16 to 24 years .....	2,266	378	1,517	384	749	362
25 years and over .....	13,449	507	8,526	533	4,922	454
25 to 54 years .....	12,065	507	7,671	535	4,394	450
55 years and over .....	1,383	506	855	522	528	485

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	
	II 2005	II 2006	II 2005	II 2006
<b>TOTAL</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations .....	36,148	37,095	\$926	\$967
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	14,664	15,267	979	1,091
Professional and related occupations .....	21,484	21,827	894	911
Service occupations .....	14,217	14,933	406	421
Sales and office occupations .....	25,379	25,860	577	581
Sales and related occupations .....	10,460	10,682	624	615
Office and administrative support occupations .....	14,918	15,177	550	561
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	12,337	12,430	616	643
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	735	739	374	388
Construction and extraction occupations .....	7,061	7,204	595	610
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	4,542	4,487	692	736
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	15,250	15,564	546	554
Production occupations .....	8,373	8,576	552	549
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	6,878	6,988	536	565
<b>Men</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations .....	17,936	18,713	1,089	1,159
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	8,131	8,669	1,144	1,254
Professional and related occupations .....	9,805	10,044	1,054	1,090
Service occupations .....	6,937	7,237	473	492
Sales and office occupations .....	9,623	9,827	684	669
Sales and related occupations .....	5,806	5,952	744	735
Office and administrative support occupations .....	3,817	3,875	608	600
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	11,793	11,947	621	648
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	575	542	402	411
Construction and extraction occupations .....	6,873	7,071	599	611
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	4,344	4,334	693	734
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	11,952	12,259	593	598
Production occupations .....	6,026	6,153	607	615
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	5,926	6,105	580	587
<b>Women</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations .....	18,211	18,381	805	829
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	6,533	6,598	838	899
Professional and related occupations .....	11,679	11,783	785	781
Service occupations .....	7,281	7,696	371	389
Sales and office occupations .....	15,755	16,032	523	534
Sales and related occupations .....	4,655	4,730	495	491
Office and administrative support occupations .....	11,101	11,302	531	551
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	545	483	438	504
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	160	197	333	305
Construction and extraction occupations .....	188	133	406	542
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	197	153	659	837
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	3,298	3,305	409	424
Production occupations .....	2,347	2,423	417	427
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	951	883	391	415

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, second 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
<b>SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY</b>						
Total, 16 years and over .....	105,881	\$316	\$441	\$659	\$1,017	\$1,542
Men .....	59,983	339	486	731	1,148	1,750
Women .....	45,897	296	403	593	874	1,266
White .....	85,831	323	456	678	1,042	1,573
Men .....	49,804	349	497	753	1,165	1,772
Women .....	36,026	300	409	602	887	1,277
Black or African American .....	12,748	287	384	534	783	1,171
Men .....	6,084	296	396	573	852	1,259
Women .....	6,664	280	372	511	755	1,093
Asian .....	4,858	341	502	765	1,273	1,900
Men .....	2,780	375	533	843	1,400	2,008
Women .....	2,078	316	475	688	1,112	1,555
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	15,715	277	349	485	696	1,032
Men .....	10,044	293	372	504	732	1,119
Women .....	5,671	244	315	434	639	920
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						
Total, 25 years and over .....	94,487	338	480	705	1,078	1,604
Less than a high school diploma .....	9,339	258	319	420	592	791
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	28,256	314	416	591	836	1,160
Some college or associate degree .....	25,905	359	488	676	957	1,312
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	30,987	506	721	1,047	1,563	2,205
Bachelor's degree only .....	20,163	480	660	968	1,441	1,925
Advanced degree .....	10,824	613	841	1,217	1,835	2,513
Men, 25 years and over .....	53,299	376	520	783	1,206	1,842
Less than a high school diploma .....	6,328	287	360	475	637	853
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	16,372	354	488	669	952	1,283
Some college or associate degree .....	13,463	403	554	779	1,108	1,467
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	17,136	545	792	1,200	1,839	2,482
Bachelor's degree only .....	11,048	501	736	1,112	1,641	2,253
Advanced degree .....	6,088	663	954	1,440	2,005	2,888
Women, 25 years and over .....	41,188	311	423	619	914	1,338
Less than a high school diploma .....	3,011	224	278	356	466	642
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	11,883	289	373	496	675	895
Some college or associate degree .....	12,442	329	433	597	808	1,084
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	13,851	484	648	923	1,287	1,770
Bachelor's degree only .....	9,115	451	612	856	1,198	1,658
Advanced degree .....	4,736	582	749	1,026	1,465	1,994

<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 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	
	II 2005	II 2006	II 2005	II 2006
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>				
Total, 16 years and over .....	21,891	21,862	\$204	\$204
Men, 16 years and over .....	6,962	6,660	194	190
16 to 24 years .....	3,339	3,433	152	152
25 years and over .....	3,623	3,227	245	248
Women, 16 years and over .....	14,929	15,202	209	210
16 to 24 years .....	4,633	4,746	151	148
25 years and over .....	10,296	10,456	245	249
<b>RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX</b>				
White .....	18,479	18,382	205	206
Men .....	5,839	5,508	192	190
Women .....	12,640	12,874	211	212
Black or African American .....	2,120	2,125	201	193
Men .....	697	710	206	187
Women .....	1,423	1,415	197	195
Asian .....	792	876	197	213
Men .....	256	267	189	193
Women .....	536	609	201	228
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	2,506	2,384	201	203
Men .....	868	755	209	219
Women .....	1,637	1,629	196	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.