

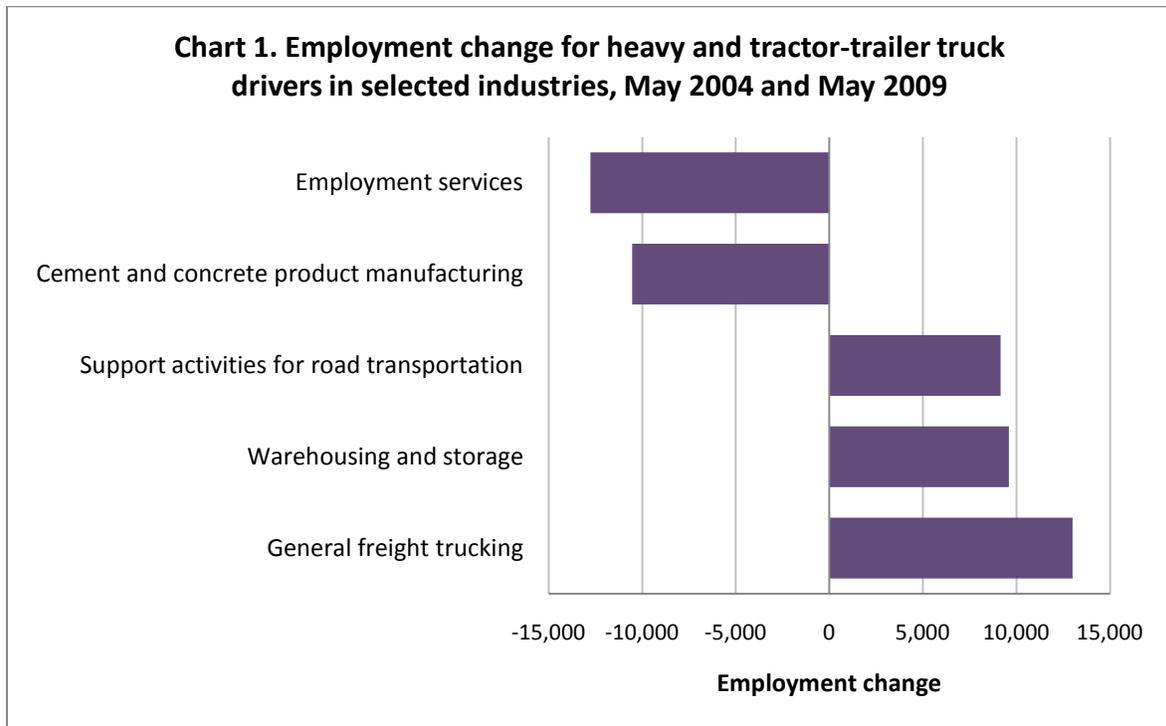
April 2011

# Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Highlights



## Using Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Data in a Job Search

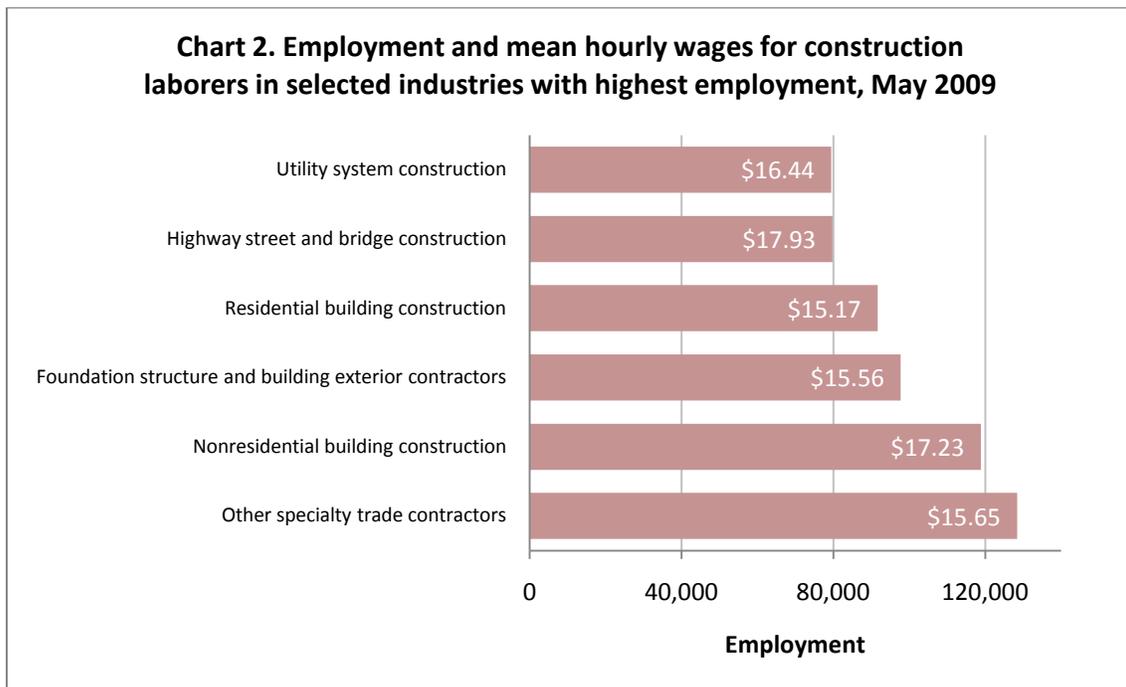
Searching for a job in a recovering economy can be a daunting task. Whether they are recent graduates or professionals contemplating switching careers, job seekers can ease this process by understanding the distinct resources available to them. More specifically, prospective employees can use Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) data to find the industries and geographic areas with the highest employment and wages for occupations that are of interest to them.



(See page 9 to view these data in table format.)

Chart 1 shows how employment for heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers declined between 2004 and 2009 in specific industries, including employment services and cement and concrete product manufacturing. For this occupation, the employment level in the employment services industry declined by 12,770. Meanwhile, other industries, such as general freight trucking, warehousing and storage, and support activities for road transportation, experienced an increase in the number of heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers. The general freight trucking industry increased its employment by 12,993 between 2004 and 2009. These data could be beneficial to heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers who may have been working in an industry that experienced an employment decline by providing them with options for considering other industries that are experiencing growth in employment in their occupation.

A similar example would be individuals who have been laid off in the residential construction industry. Employment in the residential construction industry has declined since early 2006; a similar industry that has also experienced decline, although not as much, is the nonresidential construction industry. The nonresidential construction industry also tends to pay higher wages compared with the residential construction industry. Chart 2 shows the employment levels and mean hourly wages for construction laborers in some of the industries with the highest employment levels.



(See page 9 to view these data in table format.)

Some occupations, such as accountants, financial managers, administrative services managers, clerks, sales workers, human resources specialists, and laborers, can be found in almost every industry. Other occupations are concentrated in a few industries, but they can still be found in other industries. For example, paralegals might focus their job searches on finding work within the legal services industry, an industry that traditionally employs 73 percent of paralegals. However, job seekers could broaden their searches to include government employers, which account for another 15 percent of jobs in this occupation. In other words, to maximize their potential opportunities, job seekers might want to examine alternative industries for employment. Different industries often pay different wages. As a jobseeker, if earning a higher salary is a priority, then applying to jobs that pay higher wages should be considered.

### **Considering related occupations**

The OES website has a comprehensive list of 800 occupations, which allows individuals to consider related occupations. For example, heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers not only can consider switching industries to improve their employment opportunities, but they also can consider related occupations under "Transportation and Material Moving Occupations." Bus drivers and taxi drivers and chauffeurs are two of many driving-related occupations that require a very similar skill set and training to that of heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers.

Similarly, under "Protective Service Occupations" individuals will find occupations such as police officers, security guards, correctional officers, and private investigators. The occupational profiles list can be especially useful for people who would like more information about jobs with a similar skill set. There were an estimated 1,028,830 security guards employed in May 2009, and their mean hourly wage was \$12.70. A comparable occupation that may require slightly different training is correctional officers and jailers. Employment in that occupation was estimated at 455,350 in May 2009, with a mean hourly wage of \$20.49.



(See page 9 to view these data in table format.)

### **Contemplating a specific industry**

Alternatively, if job seekers are interested in working in a particular industry, they can find information on the variety of jobs in that industry. For instance, jobs in the healthcare industry include orderlies, surgeons, and medical records technicians and jobs in education include teachers, school bus drivers, and education administrators.

A jobseeker interested in working in the motion picture and sound recording industries could work in any number of occupations involved in preproduction, production, and postproduction. For example, writers and authors who take an idea or existing work and create a screenplay or script could be considered as working in preproduction. A production occupation might be sound engineering technicians who supervise all sound generated during filming. In May 2009, sound engineering technicians earned a mean hourly wage of \$28.08. A postproduction occupation might be a film and video editor who studies and assembles the footage recorded. Training requirements and job outlook for these and over 250 occupations are available through the *Occupational Outlook*

*Handbook.* Selected occupations in the motion picture and sound recording industries are included in Chart 4 alongside their mean hourly wages.

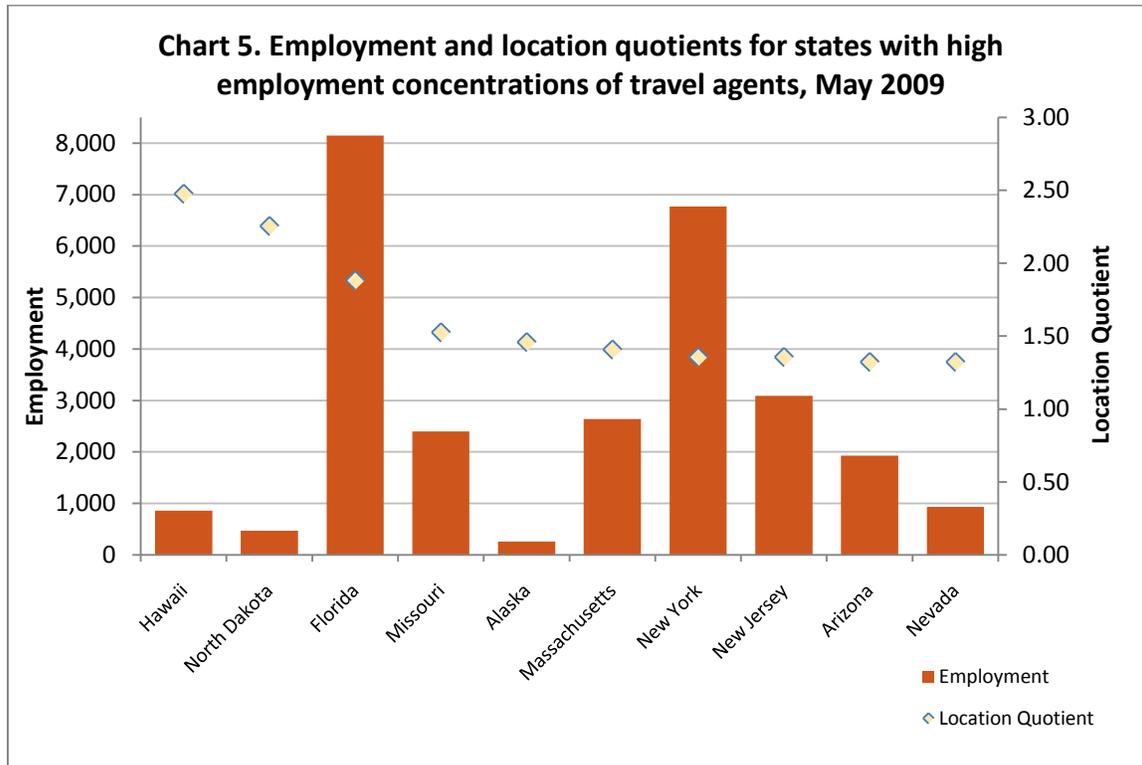


(See page 10 to view these data in table format.)

### **Location matters**

Geographically, OES produces cross-industry data for the nation as a whole, for individual states, and for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. Employment concentration for an area, which can be measured by location quotients, is one important factor to consider as a job seeker. The national location quotient for an occupation is always one. A location quotient greater than 1.0 indicates more local concentration in an occupation compared with the national average. Job seekers interested in working as travel agents will notice that specific states have higher-than-average employment concentrations in this occupation, such as Hawaii, North Dakota, Florida, and Missouri. Chart 5 details how travel agents are almost 2.5 times more concentrated in Hawaii compared with the national average, but the employment level was at 860 for May 2009. Meanwhile, Florida had a slightly lower location quotient, since travel agents were 1.88 times more concentrated in Florida compared with the national average, but the employment level for that occupation

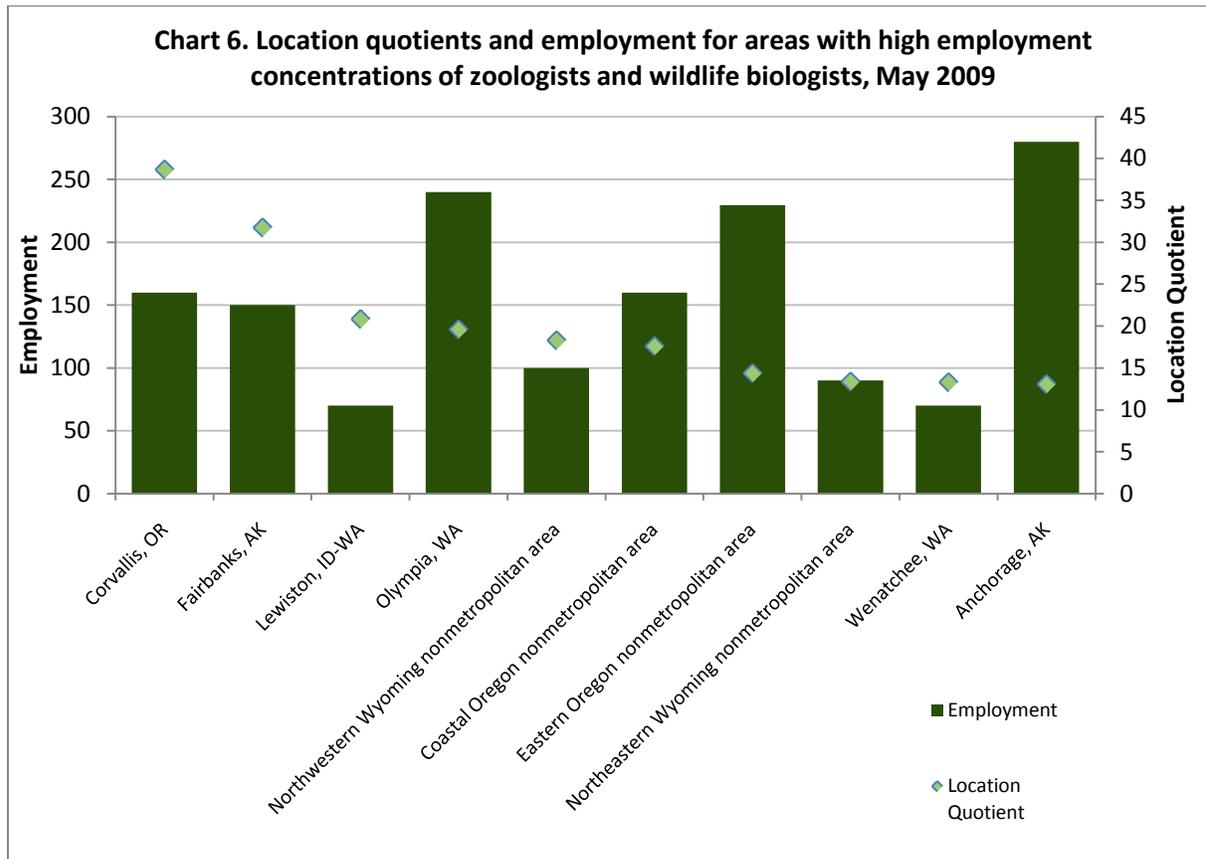
was almost 9.5 times higher than Hawaii's, at 8,150. When considering where to look for employment opportunities, job seekers can use OES data to examine both the employment concentration and overall level of employment for various occupations.



(See page 10 to view these data in table format.)

Although job seekers may be tempted to move to areas where wages are significantly higher, which tend to be large metropolitan areas, they should consider cost of living before packing up. For example, the New York metropolitan area may have higher-than-average wages and employment, yet the high cost of living can offset higher wages. Besides, not all occupations are concentrated in the largest metropolitan areas in the United States. For example, aspiring zoologists and wildlife biologists could search for jobs in Corvallis, OR; Fairbanks, AK; and Lewiston, ID, which represent some of the locations with high employment concentrations for this occupation. (See chart 6.) Zoologists and wildlife biologists are about 39 times more concentrated in Corvallis, OR; 32 times more concentrated in Fairbanks, AK; and 21 times more concentrated in Lewiston, ID, compared with the national average. Such a job seeker could also consider cities where employment levels are highest, some of which include Seattle, Portland, and San Diego.

The Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA, metropolitan area employed an estimated 920 zoologists and wildlife biologists in May 2009. Meanwhile, the Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA, metropolitan area had employment of 710 in this occupation and the San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA, metropolitan area employed 340.



(See page 10 to view these data in table format.)

### Looking at wages

Wages vary for numerous reasons, including skills, experience, geographic locations, and industry. OES provides not only mean and median wage data, but also wage range data by percentiles, including the 10th, 25th, 75th, and 90th percentiles. To demonstrate the usefulness of these data, consider a student graduating with a degree in psychology who is possibly interested in becoming a public relations specialist. This job seeker may expect wages near the 10th percentile, at \$30,520 annually, or the 25th percentile, at \$38,740 annually, since he or she is just starting a new career and may lack experience.

Meanwhile, a more experienced job seeker could expect wages in the 75th percentile, at \$72,180 annually, or the 90th percentile, at \$96,630 for the same occupation.

To get started, job seekers can select occupations of interest to them from the list at [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_stru.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_stru.htm) to see the occupation's profile. More information on employment and wages for all occupations in a particular area can be found at [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrcma.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrcma.htm), or occupations in industries of interest can be reviewed at [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrci.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oesrci.htm). Wage data for May 2010 will be released on May 17, 2011. Data on employment projections, including the projected growth and decline in the construction industry, are from the Employment Projections Program ([www.bls.gov/ep](http://www.bls.gov/ep)). The *Occupational Outlook Handbook* is available from the Occupational Outlook Handbook Program ([www.bls.gov/oco](http://www.bls.gov/oco)). This highlight was prepared by Claudia Calderón. For more information, please contact the OES program at [www.bls.gov/oes/home.htm#contact](http://www.bls.gov/oes/home.htm#contact).

**Table 1. Employment for heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, May 2004 and May 2009**

Industry	2004 Employment	2009 Employment	Employment change
General freight trucking	538,640	551,630	12,990
Warehousing and storage	23,560	33,140	9,580
Support activities for road transportation	24,160	33,310	9,150
Cement and concrete product manufacturing	71,570	61,030	-10,540
Employment services	41,580	28,810	-12,770

**Table 2. Employment and mean hourly wages for construction laborers in selected industries, May 2009**

Occupation	Employment	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage
Other specialty trade contractors	128,400	\$15.65	\$32,550
Nonresidential building construction	118,840	17.23	35,840
Foundation structure and building exterior contractors	97,700	15.56	32,370
Residential building construction	91,620	15.17	31,540
Highway street and bridge construction	79,720	17.93	37,290
Utility system construction	79,390	16.44	34,190

**Table 3. Employment and mean hourly wages for selected occupations in protective services, May 2009**

Occupation	Employment	Hourly mean wage	Annual mean wage
Security guards	1,028,830	\$12.70	\$26,430
Police and sheriff's patrol officers	641,590	26.53	55,180
Correctional officers and jailers	455,350	20.49	42,610
Fire fighters	305,500	22.72	47,270
Lifeguards, ski patrol, and other recreational protective service workers	115,640	9.85	20,490
Detectives and criminal investigators	110,380	31.66	65,860
Crossing guards	68,470	12.23	25,430
Animal control workers	15,320	16.14	33,560

**Table 4. Employment and mean hourly wages for selected occupations in motion picture and sound recording industries, May 2009**

Occupation	Employment	Hourly mean wage
Producers and directors	24,150	\$52.12
Film and video editors	11,960	33.70
Motion picture projectionists	9,830	10.90
Actors	9,750	47.65
Multi-media artists and animators	7,740	34.08
Sound engineering technicians	7,280	28.08
Camera operators, television, video, and motion picture	5,410	25.20
Office clerks, general	5,390	13.13
Writers and authors	2,190	41.74
Set and exhibit designers	1,390	31.27

**Table 5. Location quotients and employment for travel agents in selected states, May 2009**

State	Location Quotient	Employment
Hawaii	2.48	860
North Dakota	2.25	470
Florida	1.88	8,150
Missouri	1.53	2,400
Alaska	1.46	260
Massachusetts	1.41	2,640
New York	1.36	6,770
New Jersey	1.36	3,090
Arizona	1.32	1,930
Nevada	1.32	930

**Table 6. Location quotients and employment for zoologists and wildlife biologists in selected areas, May 2009**

Area	Location Quotient	Employment
Corvallis, OR	38.69	160
Fairbanks, AK	31.77	150
Lewiston, ID-WA	20.85	70
Olympia, WA	19.62	240
Northwestern Wyoming nonmetropolitan area	18.31	100
Coastal Oregon nonmetropolitan area	17.62	160
Eastern Oregon nonmetropolitan area	14.39	230
Northeastern Wyoming nonmetropolitan area	13.39	90
Wenatchee, WA	13.31	70
Anchorage, AK	13.08	280