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Occupational Employment and Wages in Grand Rapids-Wyoming — May 2017

Workers in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$21.53 in May 2017, about 12 percent below the nationwide average of \$24.34, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 18 of the 22 major occupational groups, including legal; computer and mathematical; and arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 4 of the 22 occupational groups, including production; transportation and material moving; and architecture and engineering. Conversely, 12 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including office and administrative support; food preparation and serving related; and computer and mathematical. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2017

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Grand Rapids	United States	Grand Rapids	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0	\$24.34	\$21.53*	-12
Management	5.1	4.4*	57.65	53.48*	-7
Business and financial operations	5.2	4.5*	36.70	30.49*	-17
Computer and mathematical	3.0	1.8*	43.18	31.82*	-26
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.6*	41.44	34.13*	-18
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	(2)	35.76	27.68*	-23
Community and social service.....	1.5	1.4	23.10	22.46	-3
Legal.....	0.8	0.4*	51.62	37.01*	-28
Education, training, and library.....	6.1	5.1*	26.67	24.25*	-9
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.4	1.6*	28.34	19.62*	-31
Healthcare practitioners and technical	6.0	6.0	38.83	35.67*	-8
Healthcare support	2.9	2.7	15.05	14.75	-2
Protective service	2.4	1.3*	22.69	19.78*	-13
Food preparation and serving related	9.3	7.9*	11.88	11.48*	-3
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance ...	3.1	3.4	13.91	12.87*	-7
Personal care and service.....	3.6	2.6*	13.11	12.92	-1
Sales and related	10.2	9.4*	19.56	19.83	1
Office and administrative support.....	15.4	14.0*	18.24	17.58*	-4
Farming, fishing, and forestry.....	0.3	0.1*	13.87	12.54*	-10
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	3.1*	24.01	21.90*	-9
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.1	23.02	21.81*	-5
Production	6.3	14.8*	18.30	16.72*	-9

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2017 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Grand Rapids	United States	Grand Rapids	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Transportation and material moving	7.0	8.2*	17.82	16.01*	-10

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

(2) Estimate not released.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—production—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Grand Rapids-Wyoming had 81,480 jobs in production, accounting for 14.8 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.3-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$16.72, significantly below the national wage of \$18.30.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the production group included assemblers and fabricators, all other, including team assemblers (17,530); packaging and filling machine operators and tenders (5,940); and inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers (5,540). Among the higher paying jobs in this group were power distributors and dispatchers with mean hourly wages of \$36.86 and gas plant operators at \$34.57 per hour. At the lower end of the wage scale were pressers, textile, garment, and related materials (\$11.17) and tailors, dressmakers, and custom sewers (\$11.32). (Detailed data for production occupations are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_24340.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in many of the occupations within the production group. For instance, tool and die makers were employed at 8.2 times the national rate in Grand Rapids, and molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic, at 5.4 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, bakers had a location quotient of 1.0 in Grand Rapids, indicating that this particular occupation’s local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget.

Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

With the release of the May 2017 estimates, the OES program has replaced 21 detailed occupations found in the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) with 10 new aggregations of those occupations. In addition, selected 4- and 5-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industries previously published by OES will no longer be published separately. Some of the 4-digit NAICS industries that are no longer being published separately will instead be published as OES-specific industry aggregations. More information about the new occupational and industry aggregations is available at www.bls.gov/oes/changes_2017.htm.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES data available from BLS include cross-industry occupational employment and wage estimates for the nation; over 650 areas, including states and the District of Columbia, metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), metropolitan divisions, nonmetropolitan areas, and territories; national industry-specific estimates at the NAICS sector, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industry levels, and national estimates by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Each year, two semiannual panels of approximately 200,000 sampled establishments are contacted, one panel in May and the other in November. Responses are obtained by mail, Internet or other electronic means, email, telephone, or personal visit. The May 2017 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2017, November 2016, May 2016, November 2015, May 2015, and November 2014. The overall national response rate for the six panels, based on the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is 72 percent based on establishments and 68 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted sample employment of 82 million across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 58 percent of total national employment. The sample in the Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area included 3,540 establishments with a response rate of 75 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_tec.htm.

The May 2017 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2017 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2017 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Metropolitan area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Grand Rapids-Wyoming, Mich. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Barry, Kent, Montcalm, and Ottawa Counties.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/midwest. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2017

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production occupations	81,480	2.3	\$16.72	\$34,780
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	4,400	1.9	29.50	61,370
Coil winders, tapers, and finishers	60	1.1	15.24	31,700
Electrical, electronic, and electromechanical assemblers, except coil winders, tapers, and finishers ...	4,430	4.4	15.07	31,350
Engine and other machine assemblers	550	3.8	21.87	45,500
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	320	1.1	19.50	40,560
Fiberglass laminators and fabricators	30	0.4	14.83	30,850
Assemblers and fabricators, all other, including team assemblers	17,530	3.5	14.27	29,680
Bakers	690	1.0	12.07	25,120
Butchers and meat cutters	280	0.6	13.85	28,810
Meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers	230	0.4	12.72	26,460
Slaughterers and meat packers	410	1.4	13.59	28,270
Food and tobacco roasting, baking, and drying machine operators and tenders	340	4.2	16.12	33,540
Food batchmakers	620	1.1	16.66	34,640
Food cooking machine operators and tenders	30	0.2	16.58	34,480
Food processing workers, all other	100	0.6	14.83	30,850
Computer-controlled machine tool operators, metal and plastic	1,760	3.2	20.37	42,370
Computer numerically controlled machine tool programmers, metal and plastic	350	3.8	22.78	47,380
Extruding and drawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	290	1.0	14.84	30,860
Forging machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	(5)	(5)	19.78	41,150
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	3,370	4.6	15.03	31,260
Drilling and boring machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	130	3.1	20.44	42,510
Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	540	1.9	17.99	37,420
Lathe and turning machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	200	1.8	20.70	43,050
Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	160	2.4	21.64	45,020
Machinists	3,210	2.2	21.04	43,770
Metal-refining furnace operators and tenders	(5)	(5)	17.38	36,140
Model makers, metal and plastic	(5)	(5)	25.69	53,440
Foundry mold and coremakers	170	3.2	18.20	37,860
Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	3,220	5.4	15.10	31,410
Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	2,080	4.4	14.68	30,520
Tool and die makers	2,320	8.2	24.12	50,160
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	2,110	1.5	18.06	37,560
Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders	530	3.6	17.76	36,940
Heat treating equipment setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	90	1.1	17.78	36,990
Plating and coating machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	490	3.4	14.15	29,430
Tool grinders, filers, and sharpeners	80	2.4	19.06	39,650
Metal workers and plastic workers, all other	110	1.3	14.43	30,010
Prepress technicians and workers	200	1.7	18.50	38,490
Printing press operators	760	1.1	18.03	37,510
Print binding and finishing workers	380	2.0	15.80	32,870
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	890	1.1	12.44	25,890

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Grand Rapids-Wyoming Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2017 - Continued

Occupation (1)	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level (2)	Location quotient (3)	Hourly	Annual (4)
Pressers, textile, garment, and related materials	(5)	(5)	11.17	23,240
Sewing machine operators.....	360	0.7	13.00	27,040
Tailors, dressmakers, and custom sewers	(5)	(5)	11.32	23,540
Extruding and forming machine setters, operators, and tenders, synthetic and glass fibers	80	1.1	17.00	35,370
Upholsterers	100	0.8	15.04	31,270
Cabinetmakers and bench carpenters	710	1.9	17.77	36,960
Furniture finishers.....	330	4.8	16.53	34,390
Sawing machine setters, operators, and tenders, wood	260	1.3	17.09	35,540
Woodworking machine setters, operators, and tenders, except sawing.....	1,040	3.4	14.18	29,490
Power distributors and dispatchers	70	1.5	36.86	76,670
Power plant operators	160	1.2	32.39	67,370
Stationary engineers and boiler operators	50	0.4	29.05	60,420
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	210	0.5	23.96	49,840
Chemical plant and system operators	(5)	(5)	23.62	49,130
Gas plant operators.....	70	1.3	34.57	71,900
Chemical equipment operators and tenders	60	0.2	22.34	46,470
Separating, filtering, clarifying, precipitating, and still machine setters, operators, and tenders.....	270	1.5	18.33	38,120
Crushing, grinding, and polishing machine setters, operators, and tenders	80	0.7	16.50	34,310
Grinding and polishing workers, hand	320	2.7	14.43	30,010
Mixing and blending machine setters, operators, and tenders	640	1.3	16.88	35,110
Cutters and trimmers, hand.....	(5)	(5)	14.85	30,880
Cutting and slicing machine setters, operators, and tenders	460	2.0	16.07	33,430
Extruding, forming, pressing, and compacting machine setters, operators, and tenders	270	0.9	16.72	34,770
Furnace, kiln, oven, drier, and kettle operators and tenders	(5)	(5)	19.66	40,900
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers.....	5,540	2.7	14.98	31,160
Jewelers and precious stone and metal workers	120	1.2	19.38	40,300
Dental laboratory technicians	180	1.3	18.54	38,560
Ophthalmic laboratory technicians	90	0.8	16.97	35,290
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	5,940	3.9	14.65	30,470
Coating, painting, and spraying machine setters, operators, and tenders	1,010	3.0	13.32	27,710
Painters, transportation equipment	150	0.7	20.33	42,280
Painting, coating, and decorating workers	150	3.0	16.93	35,210
Photographic process workers and processing machine operators	40	0.5	13.66	28,420
Adhesive bonding machine operators and tenders.....	(5)	(5)	16.95	35,250
Cleaning, washing, and metal pickling equipment operators and tenders	210	3.2	16.34	33,980
Cooling and freezing equipment operators and tenders	(5)	(5)	15.60	32,440
Molders, shapers, and casters, except metal and plastic	(5)	(5)	12.59	26,180
Paper goods machine setters, operators, and tenders ...	820	2.2	16.97	35,300
Helpers--production workers	3,840	2.5	12.19	25,360
Production workers, all other.....	1,970	2.0	20.26	42,140

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_24340.htm

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the

occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a "year-round, full-time" hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Estimate not released.