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County Employment and Wages in Arkansas – Fourth Quarter 2018

Employment increased in the three largest Arkansas counties from December 2017 to December 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with 2017 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted the rates of job growth in two large Arkansas counties, although below the national average of 1.5 percent, ranked in the top half of the 349 large U.S. counties. Washington County's 1.4-percent rate of job growth ranked 139th and Benton County's 1.3-percent job gain ranked 149th nationwide. Pulaski County's 0.3-percent gain ranked 258th. (See [table 1](#).)

Nationally, 296 of the 349 largest U.S. counties registered increases from December 2017 to December 2018. Midland, TX, recorded the largest percentage increase in the country, up 10.0 percent over the year. Bay, FL, experienced the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment, with a loss of 5.6 percent.

Among the three largest counties in Arkansas, employment was highest in Pulaski County (254,700) in December 2018. Benton and Washington Counties had employment levels of 121,500 and 109,200, respectively. Together, the three largest Arkansas counties accounted for 39.6 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 349 largest counties made up 73.2 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the fourth quarter of 2017 to the fourth quarter of 2018, Benton County had the largest percentage increase in average weekly wages among Arkansas's large counties, up 5.5 percent. (See [table 1](#).) Benton also recorded the highest average weekly wage among the state's large counties at \$1,067. Nationally, the average weekly wage increased 3.2 percent from a year ago, rising to \$1,144 in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 72 counties in Arkansas with employment levels below 75,000. Wage levels in all of these smaller counties were below the national average in December 2018. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in Benton County increased 5.5 percent, which ranked 34th among the 349 largest U.S. counties. (See [table 1](#).) Pulaski County's 1.1-percent wage increase placed 310th. Washington County had an over-the-year wage decline of 1.8 percent, ranking 343rd among the largest U.S. counties.

Among the 349 large U.S. counties, 332 had over-the-year wage increases. Tippecanoe, IN, had the largest fourth quarter over-the-year wage gain at 15.1 percent. Among the large U.S. counties, 15 had over-the-year wage decreases. Washington, PA, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in average weekly wages with a loss of 6.6 percent.

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wage levels in the state's three large counties were below the nationwide average (\$1,144) in the fourth quarter of 2018. Benton County's average weekly wage of \$1,067 ranked 147th among the 349 large U.S. counties. Weekly wages in Washington and Pulaski Counties, at \$984 and \$982, respectively, ranked 215th and 218th nationally.

Of the 349 large U.S. counties, 255 reported average weekly wages below the national average of \$1,144. Hidalgo, TX, reported the lowest weekly wage (\$680), followed by Cameron, TX, and Horry, SC (\$685 each).

Nationally, 94 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2018. Santa Clara, CA, held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,670. San Francisco, CA, was second at \$2,452. The average weekly wage in the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, CA, was nearly four times the average weekly wage in the lowest-ranked county, Hidalgo, TX (\$680).

Average weekly wages in Arkansas's smaller counties

All 72 of Arkansas's smaller counties – those with employment of less than 75,000 – reported weekly wages below the national average of \$1,144 in the fourth quarter of 2018. Among these smaller counties, three had average weekly wages greater than \$1,000: Mississippi (\$1,071); Benton (\$1,067); and Calhoun (\$1,049). The lowest weekly wage was in Newton (\$518). (See [table 2](#).)

When all 75 counties in Arkansas were considered, 22 reported average weekly wages under \$650, 31 reported wages from \$650 to \$749, 15 had wages from \$750 to \$849, and 7 averaged \$850 or more per week. (See [chart 1](#).) Higher-paying counties were generally located around the metropolitan areas of Blytheville, Fayetteville, Fort Smith, Little Rock, Texarkana, and along the southern border of the state. Lower-paying counties were generally concentrated along the northern and western borders of the state.

Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the Technical Note or visit www.bls.gov/cew.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2017 edition of this publication, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2018 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from the 2017 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn17.htm. The 2018 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2019.

The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2019 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, August 21, 2019.

BLS Local Data App Now Available for Android Devices

The BLS Local Data app, first released for iPhones last fall, is now available for Android devices. Search using your current location, a zip code, or a location name to find employment and wage data for detailed industries and occupations. BLS continues to partner with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of the Chief Information Officer to expand the features and data in the app. For more information please visit: <https://beta.bls.gov/labs/blogs/2019/04/17/bls-local-data-app-now-available-for-android-devices/>.

Technical Note

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

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. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 3 largest counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2018

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2018 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2017-18 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, fourth quarter 2017-18 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	148,061.8	1.5	--	\$1,144	--	3.2	--
Arkansas	1,227.0	0.8	--	869	50	2.4	43
Benton, AR	121.5	1.3	149	1,067	147	5.5	34
Pulaski, AR	254.7	0.3	258	982	218	1.1	310
Washington, AR.....	109.2	1.4	139	984	215	-1.8	343

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2018

Area	Employment December 2018	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
United States ⁽²⁾	148,061,773	1,144
Arkansas	1,226,959	869
Arkansas	10,062	839
Ashley.....	6,642	848
Baxter	15,073	707
Benton	121,517	1,067
Boone	14,360	775
Bradley	3,883	708
Calhoun	3,122	1,049
Carroll.....	10,499	614
Chicot	3,114	662
Clark	9,716	667
Clay	3,208	618
Cleburne	6,262	673
Cleveland	1,095	633
Columbia	8,158	795
Conway	6,373	787
Craighead.....	52,095	785
Crawford.....	19,492	728
Crittenden.....	16,355	732
Cross	4,831	676
Dallas	2,748	638
Desha	4,847	689
Drew	6,537	685
Faulkner	41,285	847
Franklin.....	4,703	737
Fulton	2,059	602
Garland.....	37,308	729
Grant	4,316	790
Greene	15,710	750
Hempstead.....	7,992	712
Hot Spring	8,196	721
Howard	6,864	644
Independence.....	16,448	786
Izard	3,199	639
Jackson	5,243	719
Jefferson.....	27,783	800
Johnson.....	8,652	659
Lafayette.....	1,178	632
Lawrence.....	3,965	661
Lee	1,973	751
Lincoln	2,829	681
Little River	3,437	936
Logan	5,339	637
Lonoke.....	14,125	700
Madison.....	3,384	722
Marion	3,739	635
Miller.....	13,203	809
Mississippi.....	17,975	1,071
Monroe	2,053	609
Montgomery	1,286	556
Nevada	2,505	716
Newton	1,054	518
Ouachita.....	6,932	718
Perry.....	1,158	659
Phillips.....	5,529	666
Pike	2,666	673

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2018 - Continued

Area	Employment December 2018	Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾
Poinsett	5,377	729
Polk	5,975	626
Pope	26,661	844
Prairie	1,477	647
Pulaski	254,736	982
Randolph	5,768	621
Saline	25,027	725
Scott	3,064	611
Searcy	1,473	536
Sebastian	65,568	843
Sevier	4,945	644
Sharp	3,592	555
St. Francis	7,361	742
Stone	2,710	583
Union	17,611	935
Van Buren	3,420	717
Washington	109,152	984
White	24,328	741
Woodruff	1,700	736
Yell	6,602	628

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2018

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	December 2018 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2017-18	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2017-18	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	148,061.8	1.5	\$1,144	--	3.2	--
Alabama	1,986.6	1.6	957	36	3.1	33
Alaska	308.3	0.4	1,103	16	4.9	7
Arizona	2,921.1	3.0	1,017	24	4.1	11
Arkansas	1,227.0	0.8	869	50	2.4	43
California	17,556.7	1.7	1,392	4	3.3	26
Colorado	2,713.7	2.2	1,180	10	4.1	11
Connecticut	1,697.9	0.5	1,334	5	1.3	49
Delaware	451.2	1.1	1,107	15	2.4	43
District of Columbia	775.1	0.6	1,943	1	7.3	2
Florida	8,902.7	2.1	1,006	27	3.1	33
Georgia.....	4,499.8	1.8	1,053	21	2.4	43
Hawaii.....	669.3	0.6	1,016	25	3.3	26
Idaho	734.4	3.2	890	47	3.6	20
Illinois	6,026.0	0.3	1,189	9	3.3	26
Indiana.....	3,086.2	0.9	941	38	2.8	37
Iowa	1,558.4	0.5	966	35	3.0	35
Kansas	1,402.2	0.8	927	41	3.7	18
Kentucky.....	1,914.0	0.3	924	42	3.2	30
Louisiana	1,934.1	0.7	968	34	3.8	15
Maine.....	618.4	1.3	906	44	2.5	41
Maryland.....	2,702.5	0.8	1,228	8	1.7	48
Massachusetts	3,620.3	1.0	1,457	2	3.3	26
Michigan	4,366.5	1.0	1,077	19	1.3	49
Minnesota.....	2,902.3	0.9	1,140	14	3.6	20
Mississippi.....	1,144.3	0.2	793	51	2.5	41
Missouri.....	2,821.3	0.5	980	31	3.6	20
Montana	468.8	1.6	888	48	5.2	5
Nebraska	983.0	0.2	930	40	3.2	30
Nevada	1,397.4	3.3	1,006	27	5.3	4
New Hampshire.....	666.0	0.7	1,158	12	2.3	46
New Jersey.....	4,125.6	0.8	1,298	6	2.7	38
New Mexico.....	830.2	1.5	905	45	4.6	9
New York	9,613.2	1.5	1,445	3	1.0	51
North Carolina	4,458.9	1.6	1,013	26	5.1	6
North Dakota	422.3	1.5	1,057	20	4.7	8
Ohio	5,442.9	0.5	1,006	27	3.4	24
Oklahoma	1,632.3	1.5	932	39	4.1	11
Oregon	1,935.8	1.7	1,052	22	3.7	18
Pennsylvania.....	5,932.5	1.0	1,103	16	2.6	39
Rhode Island	487.2	0.8	1,085	18	2.6	39
South Carolina.....	2,119.6	2.8	893	46	1.9	47
South Dakota.....	428.4	1.2	885	49	3.4	24
Tennessee.....	3,039.8	1.8	1,030	23	3.0	35
Texas	12,531.7	2.5	1,148	13	3.5	23
Utah	1,511.5	3.2	972	33	3.8	15
Vermont.....	314.2	-0.4	954	37	3.2	30
Virginia.....	3,927.2	1.1	1,164	11	3.8	15
Washington.....	3,384.2	2.4	1,292	7	6.3	3
West Virginia	704.2	1.5	917	43	8.3	1
Wisconsin.....	2,892.3	0.6	989	30	4.0	14
Wyoming	272.1	1.8	978	32	4.4	10
Puerto Rico.....	896.4	0.8	576	(3)	0.9	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	34.5	0.5	925	(3)	2.3	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

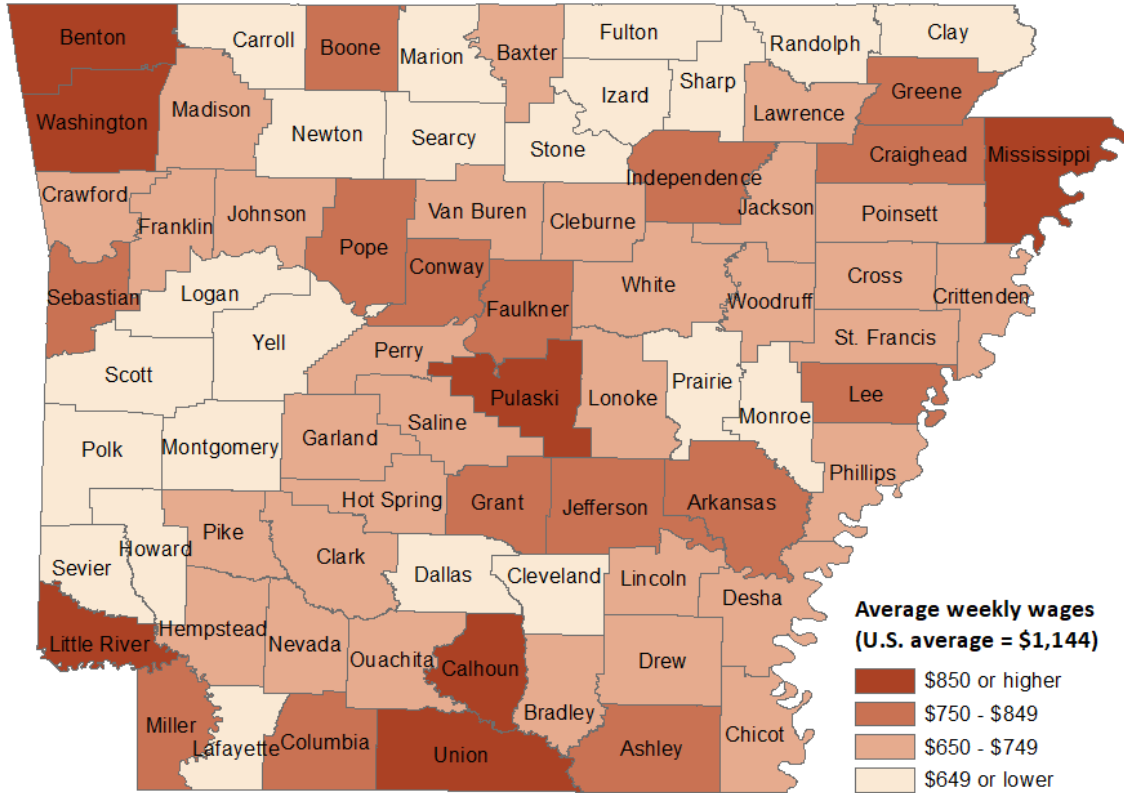
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Arkansas, fourth quarter 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.