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County Employment and Wages in Texas – Third Quarter 2018

Employment rose in 24 of the 25 largest counties in Texas from September 2017 to September 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2017 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Stanley W. Suchman noted that job growth in Midland, Fort Bend, and Brazoria Counties ranked among the top 10 nationwide. Midland County ranked first with an increase of 11.9 percent, Fort Bend ranked fifth (6.5 percent), and Brazoria ranked seventh (5.5 percent). (See table 1.)

Nationwide, employment advanced 1.6 percent from September 2017 to September 2018 as 295 of the 349 largest U.S. counties registered increases. As noted, Midland County had the fastest employment gain in the nation (11.9 percent). Within Midland, the largest employment increase was in natural resources and mining, which gained 5,824 jobs over the year (23.7 percent). New Hanover, NC, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment, down 2.0 percent. Within New Hanover, leisure and hospitality had the largest employment decrease, with a loss of 1,466 jobs (-8.0 percent).

Among the largest counties in Texas, employment was highest in Harris County (2,307,600) in September 2018, followed by Dallas County (1,711,900). Three other counties (Tarrant, Bexar, and Travis) had employment levels exceeding 750,000. Together, the 25 largest Texas counties accounted for 79.7 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 349 largest counties made up 73.0 percent of total U.S. employment.

From the third quarter of 2017 to the third quarter of 2018, average weekly wages nationwide increased 3.3 percent to $1,055. Among the large counties in Texas, Midland had the largest increase in average weekly wages with a gain of 7.4 percent, which ranked seventh in the nation in terms of percentage increase. (See table 1.) In the third quarter of 2018, Midland also had the highest average weekly wage among the state's largest counties at $1,401.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 229 counties in Texas with annual average employment levels below 75,000 in 2017. Among these smaller counties, 207 had average weekly wages below the national average in September 2018. (See table 2.)

Large county wage changes

All of the 25 large Texas counties recorded wage gains from the third quarter of 2017 to the third quarter of 2018. Over-the-year wage growth in three large Texas counties ranked among the top 50 nationwide: Midland (7.4 percent, 7th), Travis (4.4 percent, 44th), and Lubbock (4.3 percent, 49th). (See table 1.) Webb County, one

of the lowest-paying counties in the nation, ranked 52nd in wage growth with a 4.2-percent gain. Montgomery County (0.9 percent) had the smallest over-the-year wage increase among the state's large counties. Nationally, average weekly wages rose 3.3 percent.

Nationwide, 336 of the 349 largest counties had over-the-year wage increases. Chatham, GA, had the largest third quarter over-the-year wage gain at 8.5 percent. Chatham was followed by King County, WA (7.9 percent), and Santa Clara and Stanislaus, CA (each at 7.8 percent).

Of the 349 largest counties nationwide, 11 experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Elkhart, IN, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in average weekly wages with a loss of 4.2 percent. Elkhart was followed by Union, NJ (-3.7 percent) and Providence, RI (-3.4 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Average weekly wages in 5 of the 25 large Texas counties were more than 15 percent above the national average of $1,055 in the third quarter of 2018. Midland County led at $1,401 per week and ranked 16th among the 349 large U.S. counties. Midland was followed by Harris ($1,271, 29th), Travis ($1,247, 34th), Dallas ($1,245, 36th), and Collin ($1,244, 37th). Two additional Texas counties reported average weekly wages above the national average: Brazoria ($1,101, 76th) and Jefferson ($1,060, 93rd).

Texas also had a number of low-paying large counties. Three of the four lowest-paying large counties in the nation were located along the Texas-Mexico border: Cameron ($632, 349th), Hidalgo ($662, 347th), and Webb ($698, 346th). Other Texas counties with low national rankings included El Paso ($735, 340th), Brazos ($785, 331st), and Lubbock ($825, 309th).

Nationally, weekly wages were higher than the U.S. average in 94 of the largest counties in the country. Santa Clara, CA, held the top position with an average weekly wage of $2,460. San Mateo, CA, was second at $2,363, followed by San Francisco, CA. ($2,097).

Among the largest U.S. counties, nearly three-fourths (255) reported average weekly wages below the national average in the third quarter of 2018. The lowest weekly wage was reported in Cameron, TX ($632), followed by Horry, SC ($635), and the Texas counties of Hidalgo ($662) and Webb ($698). Wages in these lowest-ranked counties were less than 30 percent of the average weekly wage in the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, CA.

Average weekly wages in smaller Texas counties

Of the 229 smaller Texas counties – those with employment below 75,000 – 22 reported average weekly wages above the national average of $1,055. Two of these smaller counties had wages that were also the highest in the state: Carson ($1,661) and La Salle ($1,410). Real County registered the lowest weekly wage, averaging $489 in the third quarter of 2018. (See table 2.)

When all 254 counties in Texas were considered, all but 29 had wages below the national average. Forty-three counties reported average weekly wages under $700, 85 registered wages from $700 to $799, 57 had wages from $800 to $899, 27 had wages from $900 to $999, and 42 had wages of $1,000 or higher. (See chart 1.) The counties with the highest average weekly wages were concentrated around the larger metropolitan areas of Dallas, Houston, and Austin, as well as the smaller areas of Midland, Odessa, and Amarillo. Lower-paying counties tended to be located in the agricultural areas of central Texas, the Texas Panhandle, and along the Texas-Mexico border.

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 *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn17.htm.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2018 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 22, 2019.

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. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cew/; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Technical Note below) and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

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 25 largest counties in Texas, third quarter 2018

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2018 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2017-18 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level [3]	Percent change, third quarter 2017-18 [2]	National ranking by percent change [3]
United States [4]	146,824.1	1.6	--	$1,055	--	3.3	--
Texas	12,327.0	2.6	--	1,064	14	3.1	25
Bell, Texas	118.0	0.6	219	882	256	2.2	259
Bexar, Texas	867.5	1.2	161	930	195	2.9	169
Brazoria, Texas	113.5	5.5	7	1,101	76	2.8	186
Brazos, Texas	107.0	3.7	28	785	331	1.7	290
Cameron, Texas	138.3	1.4	139	632	349	2.6	208
Collin, Texas	416.1	3.7	28	1,244	37	4.1	59
Dallas, Texas	1,711.9	1.6	123	1,245	36	2.6	208
Denton, Texas	246.5	2.2	78	946	186	2.3	241
El Paso, Texas	306.9	1.6	123	735	340	2.7	196
Fort Bend, Texas	190.8	6.5	5	953	183	1.4	309
Galveston, Texas	108.5	1.8	104	912	220	2.1	267
Harris, Texas	2,307.6	2.1	85	1,271	29	2.1	267
Hidalgo, Texas	258.9	2.3	72	662	347	2.0	272
Jefferson, Texas	123.0	3.3	40	1,060	93	1.6	299
Lubbock, Texas	139.7	1.0	179	825	309	4.3	49
McLennan, Texas	113.8	1.3	148	871	269	3.2	141
Midland, Texas	105.7	11.9	1	1,401	16	7.4	7
Montgomery, Texas	185.9	3.8	26	1,007	134	0.9	323
Nueces, Texas	162.0	0.5	235	906	230	2.6	208
Potter, Texas	77.3	0.0	296	851	284	3.8	86
Smith, Texas	103.7	1.3	148	849	288	2.4	232
Tarrant, Texas	900.5	2.1	85	1,029	116	3.3	128
Travis, Texas	753.0	3.3	40	1,247	34	4.4	44
Webb, Texas	100.9	0.3	262	698	346	4.2	52
Williamson, Texas	172.9	4.6	15	1,016	127	1.7	290

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 Texas, third quarter 2018

Area	Employment September 2018	Average weekly wage(1)
United States(2)	146,824,093	$1,055
Texas	12,326,987	1,064
Anderson	20,390	825
Andrews	7,754	1,290
Angelina	35,318	769
Aransas	5,283	740
Archer	1,784	728
Armstrong	403	722
Atascosa	13,554	999
Austin	10,417	885
Bailey	2,630	738
Bandera	3,314	686
Bastrop	18,255	751
Baylor	1,208	685
Bee	8,870	706
Bell	118,046	882
Bexar	867,478	930
Blanco	3,172	916
Borden	204	703
Bosque	3,628	722
Bowie	41,193	768
Brazoria	113,527	1,101
Brazos	106,972	785
Brewster	3,941	756
Briscoe	318	571
Brooks	2,565	844
Brown	15,905	705
Burleson	4,562	850
Burnet	14,312	802
Caldwell	9,039	799
Calhoun	11,953	1,243
Callahan	2,568	817
Cameron	138,314	632
Camp	3,756	747
Carson	4,916	1,661
Cass	7,712	718
Castro	2,577	682
Chambers	15,791	1,177
Cherokee	14,478	694
Childress	2,557	705
Clay	1,502	675
Cochran	642	740
Coke	726	801
Coleman	1,983	592
Collin	416,145	1,244
Collingsworth	851	758
Colorado	6,752	783
Comal	57,366	804
Comanche	3,695	652
Concho	612	706
Cooke	14,591	892
Coryell	16,596	789
Cottle	400	703
Crane	1,495	1,222
Crockett	1,547	776
Crosby	1,320	667

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment September 2018	Average weekly wage(1)
Culberson	1,122	984
Dallam	4,774	836
Dallas	1,711,908	1,245
Dawson	4,137	758
De Witt	7,746	844
Deaf Smith	7,582	793
Delta	1,032	502
Denton	246,546	946
Dickens	436	643
Dimmit	6,810	1,051
Donley	949	751
Duval	3,614	742
Eastland	8,271	1,067
Ector	80,212	1,172
Edwards	401	664
El Paso	306,862	735
Ellis	52,304	833
Erath	16,951	697
Falls	3,189	712
Fannin	8,008	764
Fayette	9,374	775
Fisher	830	790
Floyd	1,573	672
Foard	345	588
Fort Bend	190,756	953
Franklin	3,039	803
Freestone	4,657	792
Frio	7,728	957
Gaines	6,333	919
Galveston	108,520	912
Garza	1,798	740
Gillespie	10,683	718
Glasscock	699	1,099
Goliad	1,331	695
Gonzales	7,330	823
Gray	7,714	939
Grayson	46,929	818
Gregg	74,358	899
Grimes	7,283	934
Guadalupe	41,448	830
Hale	11,822	703
Hall	806	539
Hamilton	2,588	700
Hansford	2,197	1,052
Hardeman	1,247	715
Hardin	13,073	807
Harris	2,307,566	1,271
Harrison	23,627	930
Hartley	2,604	771
Haskell	1,507	679
Hays	69,854	773
Hemphill	2,296	1,051
Henderson	17,142	700
Hidalgo	258,867	662
Hill	10,093	779

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment September 2018	Average weekly wage(1)
Hockley	9,993	1,043
Hood	16,419	839
Hopkins	12,740	742
Houston	6,866	900
Howard	13,303	958
Hudspeth	1,333	1,136
Hunt	29,887	1,008
Hutchinson	8,179	1,119
Irion	931	1,024
Jack	3,646	1,154
Jackson	5,870	837
Jasper	9,852	755
Jeff Davis	942	602
Jefferson	123,028	1,060
Jim Hogg	1,658	756
Jim Wells	16,733	893
Johnson	47,233	857
Jones	2,889	730
Karnes	6,394	1,024
Kaufman	31,193	806
Kendall	16,182	951
Kenedy	573	1,218
Kent	273	715
Kerr	18,084	792
Kimble	1,248	589
King	116	785
Kinney	988	883
Kleberg	11,398	738
Knox	1,074	783
La Salle	3,816	1,410
Lamar	21,589	776
Lamb	3,918	773
Lampasas	4,549	657
Lavaca	5,649	724
Lee	7,150	949
Leon	4,855	984
Liberty	18,208	870
Limestone	7,657	825
Lipscomb	1,314	848
Live Oak	3,700	1,054
Llano	4,735	704
Loving	117	899
Lubbock	139,707	825
Lynn	1,588	916
Madison	4,504	763
Marion	1,908	627
Martin	2,437	1,028
Mason	1,028	654
Matagorda	10,863	962
Maverick	17,929	650
McCulloch	2,918	743
McLennan	113,826	871
McMullen	490	963
Medina	9,708	708
Menard	430	518

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment September 2018	Average weekly wage(1)
Midland	105,749	1,401
Milam	5,290	779
Mills	1,242	633
Mitchell	1,924	792
Montague	4,813	768
Montgomery	185,851	1,007
Moore	11,246	857
Morris	3,636	912
Motley	306	545
Nacogdoches	22,635	708
Navarro	17,360	744
Newton	1,301	712
Nolan	5,985	811
Nueces	161,976	906
Ochiltree	4,578	917
Oldham	1,004	775
Orange	22,902	993
Palo Pinto	8,791	843
Panola	8,916	901
Parker	33,897	856
Parmer	5,779	839
Pecos	5,826	884
Polk	11,393	774
Potter	77,293	851
Presidio	2,107	808
Rains	1,918	656
Randall	31,636	806
Reagan	2,070	1,237
Real	706	489
Red River	2,589	677
Reeves	7,520	1,138
Refugio	2,316	806
Roberts	243	869
Robertson	4,144	845
Rockwall	30,924	814
Runnels	2,830	682
Rusk	13,654	819
Sabine	2,249	718
San Augustine	1,832	728
San Jacinto	2,033	683
San Patricio	18,548	913
San Saba	1,878	774
Schleicher	797	881
Scurry	6,587	1,058
Shackelford	1,371	1,057
Shelby	8,435	736
Sherman	1,020	819
Smith	103,725	849
Somervell	3,938	1,054
Starr	14,811	578
Stephens	3,136	716
Sterling	520	821
Stonewall	490	743
Sutton	1,851	1,222
Swisher	1,875	698

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment September 2018	Average weekly wage(1)
Tarrant	900,510	1,029
Taylor	62,365	804
Terrell	270	815
Terry	3,777	859
Throckmorton	461	521
Titus	15,793	730
Tom Green	48,003	817
Travis	753,044	1,247
Trinity	2,249	642
Tyler	3,823	687
Upshur	6,950	714
Upton	1,557	1,200
Uvalde	9,575	657
Val Verde	17,904	711
Van Zandt	11,271	663
Victoria	39,253	871
Walker	25,318	774
Waller	16,969	893
Ward	5,842	1,193
Washington	14,863	751
Webb	100,913	698
Wharton	16,180	764
Wheeler	2,112	811
Wichita	54,550	768
Wilbarger	5,988	706
Willacy	3,584	679
Williamson	172,921	1,016
Wilson	8,656	734
Winkler	3,605	1,263
Wise	20,603	859
Wood	9,961	724
Yoakum	3,607	1,203
Young	6,879	779
Zapata	3,592	945
Zavala	2,394	721

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.

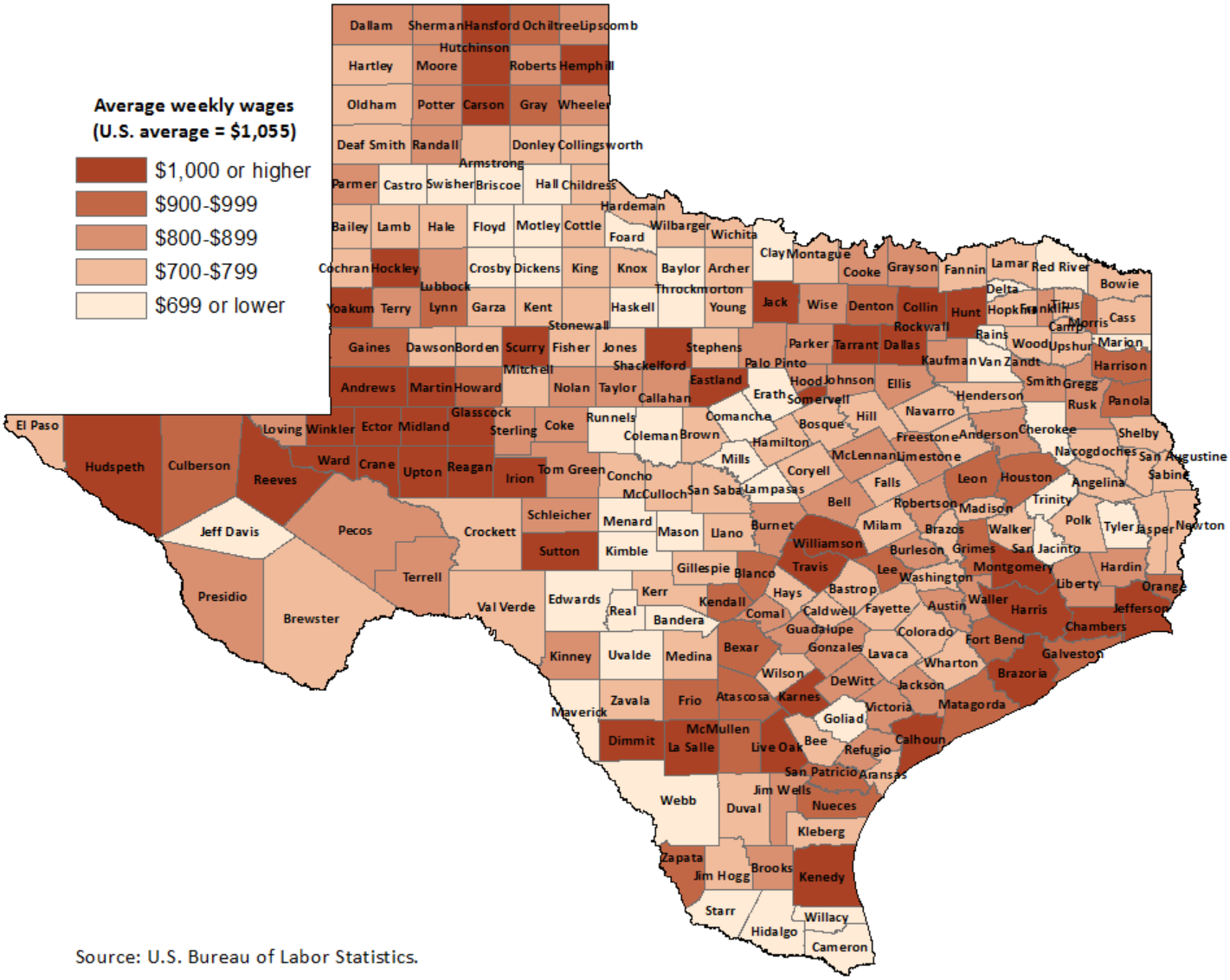
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2018

State	Employment		Average weekly wage [1]			
	September 2018 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2017-18	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2017-18	National ranking by percent change
United States [2]	146,824.1	1.6	$1,055	--	3.3	--
Alabama	1,966.0	1.2	885	38	3.1	25
Alaska	334.0	-0.4	1,065	13	3.7	12
Arizona	2,838.6	2.8	974	23	2.9	31
Arkansas	1,222.1	0.7	811	49	2.9	31
California	17,457.5	1.8	1,260	5	3.8	9
Colorado	2,684.0	2.1	1,104	9	3.5	18
Connecticut	1,681.5	0.3	1,209	6	2.5	41
Delaware	447.8	0.6	1,046	15	2.4	42
District of Columbia	770.7	0.7	1,807	1	2.8	36
Florida	8,690.7	4.6	924	29	3.1	25
Georgia	4,448.8	2.3	993	20	3.3	21
Hawaii	654.7	0.0	975	22	2.4	42
Idaho	743.5	3.0	805	50	3.2	23
Illinois	6,029.2	0.8	1,087	10	3.0	28
Indiana	3,072.3	0.9	883	39	2.4	42
Iowa	1,555.0	0.6	887	37	3.7	12
Kansas	1,390.4	1.0	867	42	3.5	18
Kentucky	1,898.7	0.5	855	43	2.2	47
Louisiana	1,915.4	0.5	901	33	3.7	12
Maine	626.5	0.6	851	45	3.7	12
Maryland	2,683.9	0.7	1,130	8	2.4	42
Massachusetts	3,598.1	0.7	1,305	2	3.2	23
Michigan	4,366.5	0.8	991	21	2.8	36
Minnesota	2,904.3	0.8	1,074	12	4.2	5
Mississippi	1,133.7	0.2	754	51	3.4	20
Missouri	2,812.0	0.4	907	31	3.3	21
Montana	473.3	1.0	815	48	2.8	36
Nebraska	980.3	0.6	873	41	2.8	36
Nevada	1,382.9	3.4	936	28	2.4	42
New Hampshire	662.3	0.5	1,040	16	1.7	49
New Jersey	4,072.6	0.8	1,181	7	2.1	48
New Mexico	826.2	1.2	855	43	3.9	7
New York	9,467.5	1.4	1,272	4	4.2	5
North Carolina	4,398.0	1.1	938	26	3.8	9
North Dakota	424.3	1.1	995	19	4.4	3
Ohio	5,424.4	0.7	947	25	2.9	31
Oklahoma	1,616.8	1.2	874	40	3.6	16
Oregon	1,939.8	1.5	1,005	18	3.8	9
Pennsylvania	5,894.8	1.0	1,031	17	3.0	28
Rhode Island	489.4	1.0	963	24	-1.3	51
South Carolina	2,088.2	2.8	834	46	0.8	50
South Dakota	431.5	1.3	827	47	3.0	28
Tennessee	3,005.6	1.7	938	26	3.9	7
Texas	12,327.0	2.6	1,064	14	3.1	25
Utah	1,494.4	3.4	911	30	3.6	16
Vermont	310.9	0.0	892	36	2.6	40
Virginia	3,889.6	1.1	1,082	11	2.9	31
Washington	3,425.6	2.4	1,280	3	6.2	2
West Virginia	706.0	1.7	894	35	8.1	1
Wisconsin	2,888.9	0.7	901	33	2.9	31
Wyoming	278.2	0.6	905	32	4.3	4
Puerto Rico	862.5	0.2	534	[3]	5.3	[3]
Virgin Islands	33.4	-8.0	888	[3]	18.6	[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 Texas, third quarter 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.