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# County Employment and Wages in Nebraska — Fourth Quarter 2015

The two largest counties in Nebraska reported employment gains from December 2014 to December 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2014 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Charlene Peiffer noted that employment rose 2.2 percent each in Douglas and Lancaster Counties. (See table 1.)

Nationally, employment advanced 1.9 percent from December 2014 to December 2015 with 308 of the 342 largest U.S. counties registering increases. Williamson, Tenn., had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 6.8 percent over the year. Ector, Texas, had the largest percentage employment decline among the large counties, down 11.8 percent.

Among the two largest counties in Nebraska, employment was higher in Douglas (338,600) in December 2015. Lancaster County recorded an employment level of 168,800. Collectively, Nebraska's two large counties accounted for 52.2 percent of the state's employment. Nationwide, the 342 largest counties made up 72.5 percent of total U.S. employment.

The average weekly wage in Douglas was $994 in the fourth quarter of 2015, an increase of 6.5 percent from the fourth quarter of 2014. (See table 1.) Average weekly wages in Lancaster were $853, up 4.2 percent over the year. Nationally, the average weekly wage was $1,082, up 4.4 percent from a year ago.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 91 counties in Nebraska with employment levels below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average. (See table 2.)

**Large county wage changes**

As noted, average weekly wages in Douglas County increased 6.5 percent, ranking it 53rd among the nation's 342 largest counties. Lancaster County's 4.2-percent wage gain ranked 218th nationwide. (See table 1.)

Among the 342 large U.S. counties, 325 had over-the-year wage increases. Wyandotte, Kan., had the largest wage gain, up 10.4 percent from the fourth quarter of 2014. Sonoma, Calif., was second with a wage gain of 10.0 percent, followed by the counties of Lake, Ill. (9.8 percent) and Passaic, N.J. (9.4 percent).

Ten large U.S. counties experienced over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage decline in average weekly wages with a loss of 11.5 percent. Ector, Texas, had the second largest decrease, down 8.0 percent from the fourth quarter of 2014, followed by Lafayette, La. (-4.3 percent) and Gregg, Texas (-3.2 percent).

**Large county average weekly wages**

Douglas County's $994 average weekly wage placed near the middle of the national ranking at 170th in the fourth quarter of 2015. Lancaster County's average weekly wage of $853 ranked 295th among the nation's largest counties.

Seventy percent of the large U.S. counties (241) reported average weekly wages below the national average of $1,082. Cameron, Texas, reported the lowest weekly wage ($649), followed by Horry, S.C. ($653) and Hidalgo, Texas ($661).

Nationally, 100 large counties registered average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the fourth quarter of 2015. Santa Clara, Calif., held the top position with an average weekly wage of $2,335. New York, N.Y., was second at $2,235, followed by San Mateo, Calif., at $2,095. Average weekly wages in the highest-ranked county, Santa Clara, Calif., were more than three times the average weekly wage in the lowest-ranked county, Cameron, Texas ($649).

**Average weekly wages in Nebraska's smaller counties**

Among the counties with employment below 75,000, Stanton ($1,060) and Washington ($1,009) had average weekly wages above those of the state's two largest counties. Loup County reported the lowest weekly wage in the state, averaging $459 in the fourth quarter of 2015. (See table 2.)

When all 93 counties in the state were considered, 12 reported average weekly wages less than $600, 28 reported wages from $600 to $699, 35 reported wages from $700 to $799, and 18 had wages of $800 or more. (See chart 1.)

**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 2014 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 2015 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2014* are now available online at https://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn14.htm. The 2015 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2016.

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**The County Employment and Wages release for first quarter 2016 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 7, 2016.**

## 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 9.7 million employer reports cover 141.9 million full- and part-time workers. 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 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 2 largest counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2015**

| Area | Employment | | | Average weekly wage [1] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | December 2015 (thousands) | Percent change, December 2014-15 [2] | National ranking by percent change [3] | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level [3] | Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15 [2] | National ranking by percent change [3] |
| United States [4] | 141,924.5 | 1.9 | -- | $1,082 | -- | 4.4 | -- |
| Nebraska | 971.8 | 1.4 | -- | 880 | 42 | 5.1 | 18 |
| Douglas, Neb. | 338.6 | 2.2 | 144 | 994 | 170 | 6.5 | 53 |
| Lancaster, Neb. | 168.8 | 2.2 | 144 | 853 | 295 | 4.2 | 218 |

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 Nebraska, fourth quarter 2015**

| Area | Employment December 2015 | Average weekly wage [1] |
|---|---|---|
| United States [2] | 141,924,459 | $1,082 |
| Nebraska | 971,774 | 880 |
| Adams | 15,374 | 748 |
| Antelope | 2,077 | 705 |
| Arthur | 91 | 517 |
| Banner | 145 | 814 |
| Blaine | 126 | 626 |
| Boone | 2,398 | 696 |
| Box Butte | 3,857 | 709 |
| Boyd | 618 | 561 |
| Brown | 1,169 | 696 |
| Buffalo | 27,102 | 781 |
| Burt | 1,907 | 709 |
| Butler | 2,627 | 747 |
| Cass | 5,397 | 738 |
| Cedar | 2,699 | 712 |
| Chase | 1,900 | 699 |
| Cherry | 2,325 | 595 |
| Cheyenne | 5,648 | 956 |
| Clay | 2,447 | 822 |
| Colfax | 5,091 | 805 |
| Cuming | 3,734 | 782 |
| Custer | 4,430 | 788 |
| Dakota | 12,592 | 814 |
| Dawes | 3,332 | 603 |
| Dawson | 11,456 | 732 |
| Deuel | 601 | 604 |
| Dixon | 1,613 | 714 |
| Dodge | 17,328 | 753 |
| Douglas | 338,551 | 994 |
| Dundy | 595 | 799 |
| Fillmore | 2,227 | 773 |
| Franklin | 775 | 775 |
| Frontier | 802 | 673 |
| Furnas | 2,078 | 678 |
| Gage | 9,250 | 709 |
| Garden | 562 | 630 |
| Garfield | 848 | 619 |
| Gosper | 402 | 706 |
| Grant | 267 | 723 |
| Greeley | 612 | 597 |
| Hall | 34,656 | 776 |
| Hamilton | 3,451 | 820 |
| Harlan | 849 | 620 |
| Hayes | 207 | 633 |
| Hitchcock | 679 | 721 |
| Holt | 4,571 | 701 |
| Hooker | 248 | 498 |
| Howard | 1,604 | 658 |
| Jefferson | 3,470 | 667 |
| Johnson | 1,634 | 695 |
| Kearney | 2,194 | 734 |
| Keith | 3,382 | 673 |
| Keya Paha | 160 | 624 |
| Kimball | 1,390 | 871 |
| Knox | 2,927 | 619 |

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

**Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Nebraska, fourth quarter 2015 - Continued**

| Area | Employment December 2015 | Average weekly wage [1] |
|---|---|---|
| Lancaster | 168,831 | 853 |
| Lincoln | 14,883 | 759 |
| Logan | 192 | 577 |
| Loup | 111 | 459 |
| Madison | 21,820 | 777 |
| McPherson | 76 | 603 |
| Merrick | 2,275 | 789 |
| Morrill | 1,553 | 746 |
| Nance | 1,075 | 668 |
| Nemaha | 3,185 | 933 |
| Nuckolls | 1,416 | 595 |
| Otoe | 6,292 | 728 |
| Pawnee | 936 | 620 |
| Perkins | 1,150 | 854 |
| Phelps | 4,758 | 835 |
| Pierce | 1,996 | 740 |
| Platte | 18,394 | 844 |
| Polk | 1,482 | 735 |
| Red Willow | 5,182 | 689 |
| Richardson | 2,576 | 627 |
| Rock | 465 | 631 |
| Saline | 7,120 | 819 |
| Sarpy | 70,201 | 881 |
| Saunders | 5,226 | 707 |
| Scotts Bluff | 17,267 | 760 |
| Seward | 6,159 | 789 |
| Sheridan | 1,719 | 574 |
| Sherman | 815 | 550 |
| Sioux | 144 | 657 |
| Stanton | 1,317 | 1,060 |
| Thayer | 2,440 | 784 |
| Thomas | 269 | 584 |
| Thurston | 2,900 | 843 |
| Valley | 1,712 | 687 |
| Washington | 7,980 | 1,009 |
| Wayne | 4,142 | 685 |
| Webster | 1,067 | 571 |
| Wheeler | 321 | 631 |
| York | 7,613 | 787 |

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: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.
Data are preliminary.

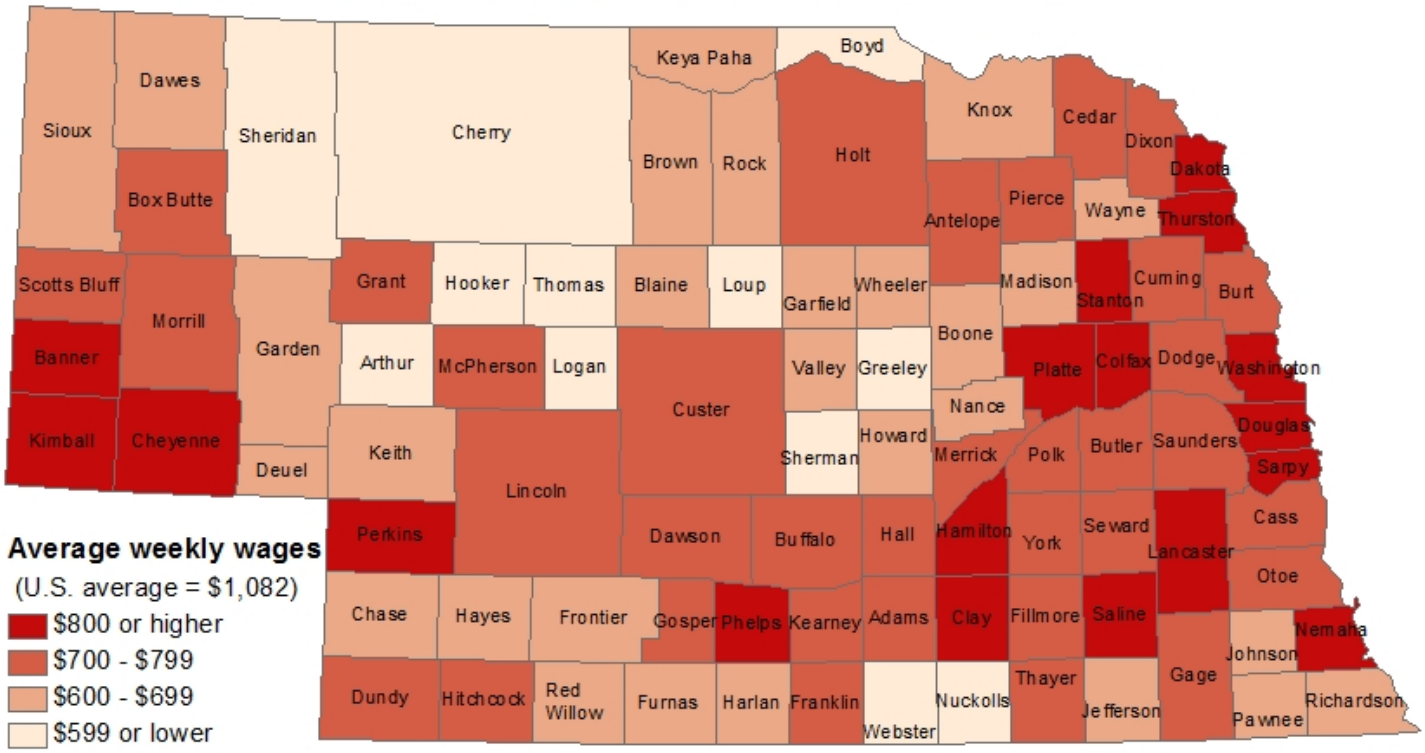
## Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2015

| State | Employment | | Average weekly wage [1] | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | December 2015 (thousands) | Percent change, December 2014-15 | Average weekly wage | National ranking by level | Percent change, fourth quarter 2014-15 | National ranking by percent change |
| United States [2] | 141,924.5 | 1.9 | $1,082 | -- | 4.4 | -- |
| Alabama | 1,916.2 | 1.4 | 912 | 37 | 3.4 | 37 |
| Alaska | 315.9 | -0.5 | 1,095 | 13 | 2.9 | 43 |
| Arizona | 2,701.8 | 2.6 | 967 | 24 | 4.4 | 28 |
| Arkansas | 1,201.4 | 1.7 | 838 | 46 | 3.8 | 35 |
| California | 16,593.8 | 3.1 | 1,274 | 5 | 5.4 | 10 |
| Colorado | 2,537.5 | 2.5 | 1,103 | 11 | 3.3 | 40 |
| Connecticut | 1,685.1 | 0.3 | 1,334 | 4 | 4.3 | 29 |
| Delaware | 441.2 | 1.8 | 1,086 | 15 | 3.4 | 37 |
| District of Columbia | 754.2 | 2.2 | 1,756 | 1 | 3.4 | 37 |
| Florida | 8,308.1 | 3.7 | 958 | 26 | 5.2 | 16 |
| Georgia | 4,249.4 | 2.9 | 1,001 | 21 | 4.5 | 27 |
| Hawaii | 653.0 | 2.2 | 957 | 27 | 5.4 | 10 |
| Idaho | 670.1 | 3.4 | 803 | 50 | 2.6 | 45 |
| Illinois | 5,931.2 | 1.4 | 1,146 | 8 | 5.1 | 18 |
| Indiana | 2,996.3 | 1.7 | 891 | 40 | 5.3 | 14 |
| Iowa | 1,539.0 | 0.7 | 920 | 34 | 5.7 | 3 |
| Kansas | 1,382.1 | 0.4 | 898 | 38 | 5.0 | 20 |
| Kentucky | 1,881.3 | 1.6 | 885 | 41 | 5.9 | 1 |
| Louisiana | 1,937.4 | -1.0 | 940 | 29 | 1.8 | 47 |
| Maine | 596.9 | 0.7 | 873 | 43 | 5.7 | 3 |
| Maryland | 2,636.7 | 1.7 | 1,175 | 7 | 5.6 | 5 |
| Massachusetts | 3,479.1 | 1.6 | 1,385 | 2 | 5.4 | 10 |
| Michigan | 4,218.9 | 1.5 | 1,043 | 18 | 5.9 | 1 |
| Minnesota | 2,805.8 | 1.5 | 1,073 | 16 | 4.8 | 22 |
| Mississippi | 1,133.8 | 1.3 | 770 | 51 | 3.1 | 41 |
| Missouri | 2,759.6 | 1.8 | 933 | 33 | 4.6 | 25 |
| Montana | 453.2 | 2.5 | 818 | 49 | 3.0 | 42 |
| Nebraska | 971.8 | 1.4 | 880 | 42 | 5.1 | 18 |
| Nevada | 1,272.2 | 3.5 | 935 | 32 | 4.0 | 31 |
| New Hampshire | 648.6 | 1.7 | 1,139 | 9 | 5.4 | 10 |
| New Jersey | 3,988.4 | 1.7 | 1,262 | 6 | 4.0 | 31 |
| New Mexico | 808.9 | -0.1 | 865 | 44 | 1.8 | 47 |
| New York | 9,227.6 | 1.7 | 1,372 | 3 | 3.9 | 34 |
| North Carolina | 4,247.1 | 2.5 | 939 | 30 | 5.5 | 8 |
| North Dakota | 428.1 | -5.9 | 1,021 | 20 | -2.8 | 51 |
| Ohio | 5,328.8 | 1.2 | 964 | 25 | 4.6 | 25 |
| Oklahoma | 1,605.0 | -0.7 | 896 | 39 | 2.3 | 46 |
| Oregon | 1,814.8 | 3.3 | 979 | 23 | 5.5 | 8 |
| Pennsylvania | 5,759.7 | 0.7 | 1,063 | 17 | 4.9 | 21 |
| Rhode Island | 478.1 | 1.5 | 1,043 | 18 | 4.0 | 31 |
| South Carolina | 1,987.1 | 2.8 | 860 | 45 | 5.3 | 14 |
| South Dakota | 417.7 | 1.2 | 832 | 47 | 5.2 | 16 |
| Tennessee | 2,898.1 | 2.8 | 980 | 22 | 5.6 | 5 |
| Texas | 11,832.1 | 1.4 | 1,099 | 12 | 2.7 | 44 |
| Utah | 1,375.6 | 3.8 | 913 | 36 | 4.7 | 23 |
| Vermont | 312.1 | 0.3 | 919 | 35 | 4.1 | 30 |
| Virginia | 3,806.2 | 3.0 | 1,094 | 14 | 3.5 | 36 |
| Washington | 3,137.2 | 2.3 | 1,132 | 10 | 4.7 | 23 |
| West Virginia | 703.7 | -1.3 | 829 | 48 | 1.3 | 49 |
| Wisconsin | 2,820.5 | 1.1 | 944 | 28 | 5.6 | 5 |
| Wyoming | 276.0 | -2.9 | 937 | 31 | -1.7 | 50 |
| Puerto Rico | 929.9 | -1.6 | 565 | [3] | 1.6 | [3] |
| Virgin Islands | 38.4 | -0.3 | 787 | [3] | 4.7 | [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 Nebraska, fourth quarter 2015**




Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.