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Occupational Employment and Wages in Chattanooga – May 2016

Workers in the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$20.16 in May 2016, about 16 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.86, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, 19 of the 22 major occupational groups had significantly lower wages than their respective national averages, including arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media; management; and healthcare practitioners and technical. One group—farming, fishing, and forestry—had a significantly higher wage than its respective national average.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including production; transportation and material moving; and healthcare practitioners and technical. Conversely, 11 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including business and financial operations; education, training, and library; 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 Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2016

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Chattanooga	United States	Chattanooga	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0	100.0	\$23.86	\$20.16*	-16
Management	5.1	5.8*	56.74	44.82*	-21
Business and financial operations	5.2	3.8*	36.09	30.22*	-16
Computer and mathematical	3.0	1.9*	42.25	35.76*	-15
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.8	40.53	37.59	-7
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.5*	35.06	28.32*	-19
Community and social service.....	1.4	1.1*	22.69	19.37*	-15
Legal.....	0.8	0.5*	50.95	45.51	-11
Education, training, and library.....	6.2	4.9*	26.21	21.03*	-20
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media.....	1.4	0.9*	28.07	21.19*	-25
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.9	7.0*	38.06	31.27*	-18
Healthcare support	2.9	2.7	14.65	13.67*	-7
Protective service	2.4	2.0*	22.03	16.98*	-23
Food preparation and serving related	9.2	9.4	11.47	9.82*	-14
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance ...	3.2	3.1	13.47	10.87*	-19
Personal care and service.....	3.2	2.5*	12.74	11.22*	-12
Sales and related	10.4	10.3	19.50	17.46*	-10
Office and administrative support.....	15.7	16.6*	17.91	16.07*	-10
Farming, fishing, and forestry.....	0.3	0.2*	13.37	13.99*	5
Construction and extraction.....	4.0	3.0*	23.51	19.66*	-16
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.6*	22.45	21.38*	-5
Production	6.5	9.1*	17.88	15.85*	-11

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2016 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Chattanooga	United States	Chattanooga	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Transportation and material moving	6.9	8.2*	17.34	15.75*	-9

Footnotes:

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

* 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. Chattanooga had 21,720 jobs in production, accounting for 9.1 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 6.5-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$15.85, significantly below the national wage of \$17.88.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the production group included team assemblers (4,360), welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers (1,350), and first-line supervisors of production and operating workers (1,250). Among the higher paying jobs were power plant operators and first-line supervisors of production and operating workers, with mean hourly wages of \$34.31 and \$26.24, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were laundry and dry-cleaning workers (\$9.45) and meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers (\$10.18). (Detailed occupational data for production are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_16860.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 Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the production group. For instance, photographic process workers and processing machine operators were employed at 14.2 times the national rate in Chattanooga, and team assemblers, at 2.3 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, packaging and filling machine operators and tenders had a location quotient of 1.0 in Chattanooga, 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 Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development.

Note on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

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 mail 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 2016 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2016, November 2015, May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, and November 2013. The overall national response rate for the six panels, based on the 50 states and the District of Columbia, is 73 percent based on establishments and 69 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 58 percent of total national employment. The sample in the Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area included 2,653 establishments with a response rate of 74 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2016 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 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 2012 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 **Chattanooga, Tenn.-Ga. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Hamilton, Marion, Sequatchie Counties of Tennessee and Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties of Georgia.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southeast. 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, Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2016

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production occupations	21,720	1.4	\$15.85	\$32,960
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	1,250	1.2	26.24	54,570
Electrical and electronic equipment assemblers	100	0.3	15.25	31,710
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	370	2.9	16.52	34,370
Fiberglass laminators and fabricators	(5)	(5)	15.56	32,360
Team assemblers	4,360	2.3	14.30	29,740
Assemblers and fabricators, all other	540	1.4	13.61	28,300
Bakers	380	1.3	10.63	22,110
Butchers and meat cutters	170	0.8	12.92	26,870
Meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers	300	1.2	10.18	21,170
Food batchmakers	400	1.6	13.98	29,080
Computer-controlled machine tool operators, metal and plastic	100	0.4	20.31	42,250
Forging machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	40	1.2	15.25	31,730
Rolling machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	(5)	(5)	14.10	29,330
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	520	1.6	14.62	30,420
Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	130	1.0	16.42	34,160
Milling and planing machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	50	1.6	16.25	33,790
Machinists	790	1.2	18.83	39,160
Model makers, metal and plastic	30	3.2	23.67	49,230
Foundry mold and coremakers	70	3.1	16.86	35,080
Molding, coremaking, and casting machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	350	1.4	14.83	30,860
Multiple machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	170	0.9	17.61	36,640
Tool and die makers	140	1.2	22.44	46,680
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	1,350	2.1	19.97	41,540
Welding, soldering, and brazing machine setters, operators, and tenders	370	4.7	21.85	45,450
Metal workers and plastic workers, all other	40	1.0	16.75	34,840
Prepress technicians and workers	70	1.2	14.95	31,100
Printing press operators	680	2.4	14.68	30,540
Print binding and finishing workers	(5)	(5)	16.29	33,890
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	610	1.8	9.45	19,650
Pressers, textile, garment, and related materials	30	0.4	9.29	19,320
Sewing machine operators	200	0.8	10.40	21,640
Textile bleaching and dyeing machine operators and tenders	160	8.9	14.49	30,130
Textile knitting and weaving machine setters, operators, and tenders	530	14.5	14.49	30,150
Textile winding, twisting, and drawing out machine setters, operators, and tenders	(5)	(5)	13.28	27,620
Textile, apparel, and furnishings workers, all other	50	2.0	12.73	26,480
Cabinetmakers and bench carpenters	120	0.7	14.66	30,490
Woodworking machine setters, operators, and tenders, except sawing	120	1.0	13.94	28,990
Power plant operators	80	1.3	34.31	71,360
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	180	0.9	19.07	39,660
Chemical plant and system operators	40	0.7	30.84	64,150
Chemical equipment operators and tenders	160	1.3	18.14	37,730
Crushing, grinding, and polishing machine setters, operators, and tenders	(5)	(5)	14.28	29,710

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Chattanooga Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2016 - Continued

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Grinding and polishing workers, hand	40	0.8	17.24	35,870
Mixing and blending machine setters, operators, and tenders	130	0.6	14.63	30,430
Cutters and trimmers, hand	(5)	(5)	12.83	26,680
Extruding, forming, pressing, and compacting machine setters, operators, and tenders	(5)	(5)	14.43	30,020
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers	930	1.1	17.41	36,210
Medical appliance technicians.....	30	1.4	19.45	40,460
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders	680	1.0	11.88	24,710
Coating, painting, and spraying machine setters, operators, and tenders	180	1.2	16.64	34,610
Photographic process workers and processing machine operators	630	14.2	(5)	(5)
Helpers--production workers	660	0.9	12.10	25,160
Production workers, all other.....	230	0.5	15.03	31,260

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Chattanooga, TN-GA Metropolitan Statistical Area, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_16860.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.