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Occupational Employment and Wages in Lake Charles, May 2013

Workers in the Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$17.92 in May 2013, about 20 percent below the nationwide average of \$22.33, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were significantly higher than their respective national averages in 2 of the 22 major occupational groups, including production, while nineteen groups had significantly lower wages including legal; protective service; and computer and mathematical.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 6 of the 22 occupational groups, including construction and extraction; installation, maintenance, and repair; and personal care and service. Conversely, 9 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including business and financial operations; computer and mathematical; and office and administrative support. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2013

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
	United States	Lake Charles		United States	Lake Charles		
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%		\$22.33	\$17.92	*	-20
Management	4.9	4.3		53.15	40.33	*	-24
Business and financial operations	5.0	2.3	*	34.14	25.39	*	-26
Computer and mathematical	2.8	0.4	*	39.43	28.58	*	-28
Architecture and engineering	1.8	2.1		38.51	37.82		-2
Life, physical, and social science	0.9	0.7	*	33.37	27.54	*	-17
Community and social service	1.4	1.3		21.50	18.93	*	-12
Legal	0.8	0.5	*	47.89	25.99	*	-46
Education, training, and library	6.3	5.6	*	24.76	20.17	*	-19
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	0.5	*	26.72	19.01	*	-29
Healthcare practitioners and technical	5.8	6.2	*	35.93	28.85	*	-20
Healthcare support	3.0	3.1		13.61	11.18	*	-18
Protective service	2.5	3.2	*	20.92	15.15	*	-28
Food preparation and serving related	9.0	9.7	*	10.38	9.54	*	-8
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	2.7	*	12.51	10.17	*	-19
Personal care and service	3.0	4.0	*	11.88	10.14	*	-15
Sales and related	10.6	10.2		18.37	13.41	*	-27
Office and administrative support	16.2	14.5	*	16.78	13.47	*	-20
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1	*	11.70	15.20	*	30
Construction and extraction	3.8	9.0	*	21.94	18.82	*	-14

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2013 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment			Mean hourly wage			
	United States	Lake Charles		United States	Lake Charles		Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	5.3	*	21.35	19.65	*	-8
Production	6.6	6.9		16.79	21.00	*	25
Transportation and material moving	6.8	7.4		16.28	15.31	*	-6

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Lake Charles 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. Lake Charles had 6,090 jobs in production, accounting for 6.9 percent of local area employment, not significantly different from the national share of 6.6 percent. However, the local wage for this occupational group was significantly above the U.S. average. At \$21.00 an hour, the mean wage for Lake Charles production workers was 25 percent above the national average of \$16.79.

With employment of 840, chemical plant and system operators was among the largest occupation within the production group, as were welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers (670) and inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers (480). Among the higher paying jobs were first-line supervisors of production and operating workers and petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers, with mean hourly wages of \$32.89 and \$29.17, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers (\$10.18) and production workers’ helpers (\$13.49). (Detailed occupational data for production workers are presented in table 1; for a complete listing of all occupations see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29340.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 Lake Charles metropolitan area, above average concentrations of employment were found in several of the occupations within the production group. For instance, local chemical plant and system operators were employed at 32.2 times the U.S. average, the fifth highest location quotient for this job among all U.S. metropolitan areas, while chemical equipment operators and tenders were employed at 7.2 times the national rate, the ninth highest ratio in the country. On the other hand, machinists had a location quotient of 1.1 in Lake Charles, 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 Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Note

OES wage and employment data for the 22 major occupational groups in the Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area were compared to their respective national averages based on statistical significance testing. Only those occupations with wages or employment shares above or below the national wage or share after testing for significance at the 90-percent confidence level meet the criteria.

Note: 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. Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are also surveyed, but their data are not included in the national estimates. OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year for a 3-year period. May 2013 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected in May 2013, November 2012, May 2012, November 2011, May 2011, and November 2010. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 75.3 percent based on establishments and 71.6 percent based on employment. The sample in the Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area included 1,329 establishments with a response rate of 72 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The OES survey provides estimates of employment and hourly and annual wages for wage and salary workers in 22 major occupational groups and 821 detailed occupations for the nation, states, metropolitan statistical areas, metropolitan divisions, and nonmetropolitan areas. In addition, employment and wage estimates for 94 minor groups and 458 broad occupations are available in the national data. OES data by state and metropolitan/nonmetropolitan area are available from www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcst.htm and www.bls.gov/oes/current/oessrcma.htm, respectively.

The May 2013 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.

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 **Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)** includes Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes in Louisiana.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southwest/home.htm. 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/2013/may/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: 1-800-877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Lake Charles Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2013

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Production occupations	6,090	1.0	\$21.00	\$43,670
First-line supervisors of production and operating workers	490	1.3	32.89	68,420
Structural metal fabricators and fitters	70	1.3	23.26	48,380
Team assemblers	(5)	(5)	15.00	31,200
Bakers	90	0.8	10.36	21,540
Butchers and meat cutters	40	0.5	14.59	30,340
Meat, poultry, and fish cutters and trimmers	130	1.2	10.18	21,170
Computer-controlled machine tool operators, metal and plastic	30	0.4	21.69	45,120
Cutting, punching, and press machine setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	30	0.3	12.50	26,000
Grinding, lapping, polishing, and buffing machine tool setters, operators, and tenders, metal and plastic	(5)	(5)	13.23	27,520
Machinists	290	1.1	16.27	33,850
Welders, cutters, solderers, and brazers	670	2.8	21.38	44,460
Printing press operators	40	0.4	12.87	26,760
Laundry and dry-cleaning workers	120	0.9	8.99	18,710
Water and wastewater treatment plant and system operators	50	0.7	19.10	39,730
Chemical plant and system operators	840	32.2	21.83	45,410
Petroleum pump system operators, refinery operators, and gaugers	(5)	(5)	29.17	60,680
Chemical equipment operators and tenders	290	7.2	22.83	47,480
Mixing and blending machine setters, operators, and tenders	(5)	(5)	21.64	45,000
Inspectors, testers, sorters, samplers, and weighers ..	480	1.5	22.11	45,990
Packaging and filling machine operators and tenders ..	90	0.4	10.90	22,660
Helpers—production workers	330	1.2	13.49	28,050

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in the Lake Charles MSA, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_29340.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) Estimates not released.