NEWS RELEASE
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For Release: Wednesday, July 31, 2019 19-1410-SAN

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County Employment and Wages in California – Fourth Quarter 2018

Job growth in 15 of the state's large counties exceeded the national rate of 1.5 percent

Employment increased in 28 of the 29 large counties in California from December 2017 to December 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with 2017 annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that the annual rates of job growth in 15 large counties in California exceeded the national rate of 1.5 percent in December 2018. San Francisco County had the largest increase in employment at 3.8 percent, followed by Kern County at 3.6 percent. The only large county with an employment decline was Butte (-0.9 percent).

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 29 largest counties in California, employment was highest in Los Angeles County (4,515,900) in December 2018, while Napa County had the smallest employment level (76,300). Together, California's large counties accounted for 94.2 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, average weekly wages increased in all but one of California's large counties. Nationally, average weekly wages advanced 3.2 percent. (See table 1.)

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 29 counties in California with employment below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average of $1,144 in the fourth quarter of 2018. (See table 2).

Large county wage changes

As noted, average weekly wages in 28 large California counties increased from the fourth quarter of 2017 to the fourth quarter of 2018. San Francisco County's 10.4-percent wage increase was the largest in the state and ranked seventh among the 349 large U.S. counties. Seven other counties' wage gains in the state ranked in the top quarter nationally. The only county with a wage decline in the state was San Mateo, down 1.1 percent. (See table 1.)

Nationally, 332 of the 349 largest counties had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages. Tippecanoe, IN, had the largest over-the-year wage gain at 15.1 percent, followed by Williamson, TN (13.1 percent) and Olmsted, MN (13.0 percent).

Of the 349 largest U.S. counties, 15 had over-the-year wage decreases. Washington, PA, had the largest percentage decrease in average weekly wages (-6.6 percent), followed by Elkhart, IN (-5.0 percent).

Large county average weekly wages

Nationwide, average weekly wages were above the U.S. average ($1,144) in 94 of the 349 largest counties in the fourth quarter of 2018. In California, wages in 13 of the 29 large counties exceeded the national average during the same period. Three California counties held the top positions in the nation: Santa Clara ($2,670, 1st), San Francisco ($2,452, 2nd), and San Mateo ($2,410, 3rd).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 255 had weekly wages below the national average in the fourth quarter of 2018. Hidalgo, TX ($680) reported the lowest wage, followed by the counties of Cameron, TX, and Horry, SC ($685 each).

The lowest average weekly wages in California counties were Tulare ($813, 333rd), Merced ($837, 329th), and Butte ($869, 313th), all within the bottom fifth of the national ranking.

Average weekly wages in California's smaller counties

All 29 counties in California with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of $1,144. Among these smaller counties, Yuba had the highest average weekly wage at $1,033 in the fourth quarter of 2018, while Alpine ($647) had the lowest weekly wage. (See table 2.)

When all 58 counties in California were considered, 7 had wages of $799 or lower. Eighteen counties had average weekly wages ranging from $800 to $899, 13 had wages from $900 to $999, and 20 had wages at or above $1,000. (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 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 2017* are now available online at https://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. The County Employment and Wages full data update for first quarter 2019 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, September 4, 2019.

The 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/blslocal-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. 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 29 largest counties in California, 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	--
California	17,556.7	1.7	--	1,392	4	3.3	26
Alameda, Calif.	793.0	1.5	134	1,511	15	4.2	80
Butte, Calif.	82.8	-0.9	340	869	313	5.5	34
Contra Costa, Calif.	370.1	0.1	282	1,387	28	3.4	137
Fresno, Calif.	392.0	3.1	24	904	291	1.7	279
Kern, Calif.	326.1	3.6	14	923	276	3.6	113
Los Angeles, Calif.	4,515.9	1.2	161	1,380	30	2.1	249
Marin, Calif.	116.7	0.6	227	1,466	19	4.2	80
Merced, Calif.	79.6	0.4	251	837	329	2.6	210
Monterey, Calif.	178.2	1.7	114	966	230	1.7	279
Napa, Calif.	76.3	2.0	81	1,158	84	3.5	128
Orange, Calif.	1,647.4	0.8	198	1,251	58	0.6	320
Placer, Calif.	170.1	2.6	41	1,120	107	1.4	296
Riverside, Calif.	750.5	2.1	69	883	306	1.1	310
Sacramento, Calif.	672.6	2.2	60	1,208	68	2.9	187
San Bernardino, Calif.	773.0	2.2	60	934	262	3.0	176
San Diego, Calif.	1,485.8	1.6	126	1,260	55	3.2	155
San Francisco, Calif.	759.6	3.8	11	2,452	2	10.4	7
San Joaquin, Calif.	255.0	1.3	149	961	235	4.0	89
San Luis Obispo, Calif.	117.3	1.8	100	976	224	4.6	65
San Mateo, Calif.	412.5	2.0	81	2,410	3	-1.1	341
Santa Barbara, Calif.	197.8	1.3	149	1,111	113	4.5	69
Santa Clara, Calif.	1,118.3	2.3	54	2,670	1	4.7	62
Santa Cruz, Calif.	101.1	0.6	227	1,023	181	5.7	31
Solano, Calif.	143.4	1.2	161	1,153	87	3.3	146
Sonoma, Calif.	211.6	1.4	139	1,122	105	5.1	51
Stanislaus, Calif.	188.4	0.8	198	943	254	3.1	164
Tulare, Calif.	162.8	1.9	86	813	333	0.1	332
Ventura, Calif.	330.2	0.5	242	1,102	120	2.4	227
Yolo, Calif.	104.0	2.0	81	1,204	71	3.6	113

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 California, fourth quarter 2018

Area	Employment December 2018	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2)	148,061,773	$1,144
California	17,556,654	1,392
Alameda	792,968	1,511
Alpine	1,104	647
Amador	12,278	907
Butte	82,781	869
Calaveras	9,724	827
Colusa	8,718	912
Contra Costa	370,060	1,387
Del Norte	7,963	760
El Dorado	59,380	1,019
Fresno	391,986	904
Glenn	9,142	863
Humboldt	51,124	806
Imperial	62,578	799
Inyo	7,536	890
Kern	326,083	923
Kings	49,050	863
Lake	16,122	777
Lassen	9,844	939
Los Angeles	4,515,898	1,380
Madera	50,906	864
Marin	116,740	1,466
Mariposa	5,317	803
Mendocino	32,518	798
Merced	79,605	837
Modoc	2,350	781
Mono	7,691	767
Monterey	178,180	966
Napa	76,261	1,158
Nevada	32,488	921
Orange	1,647,448	1,251
Placer	170,087	1,120
Plumas	6,142	860
Riverside	750,475	883
Sacramento	672,611	1,208
San Benito	16,238	972
San Bernardino	772,975	934
San Diego	1,485,827	1,260
San Francisco	759,635	2,452
San Joaquin	255,034	961
San Luis Obispo	117,300	976
San Mateo	412,452	2,410
Santa Barbara	197,802	1,111
Santa Clara	1,118,270	2,670
Santa Cruz	101,127	1,023
Shasta	67,052	888
Sierra	506	839
Siskiyou	13,404	816
Solano	143,437	1,153
Sonoma	211,580	1,122
Stanislaus	188,401	943
Sutter	29,929	842
Tehama	18,572	895
Trinity	2,653	911
Tulare	162,794	813

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

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

Area	Employment December 2018	Average Weekly Wage(1)
Tuolumne	17,735	883
Ventura	330,221	1,102
Yolo	103,963	1,204
Yuba	18,148	1,033

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.

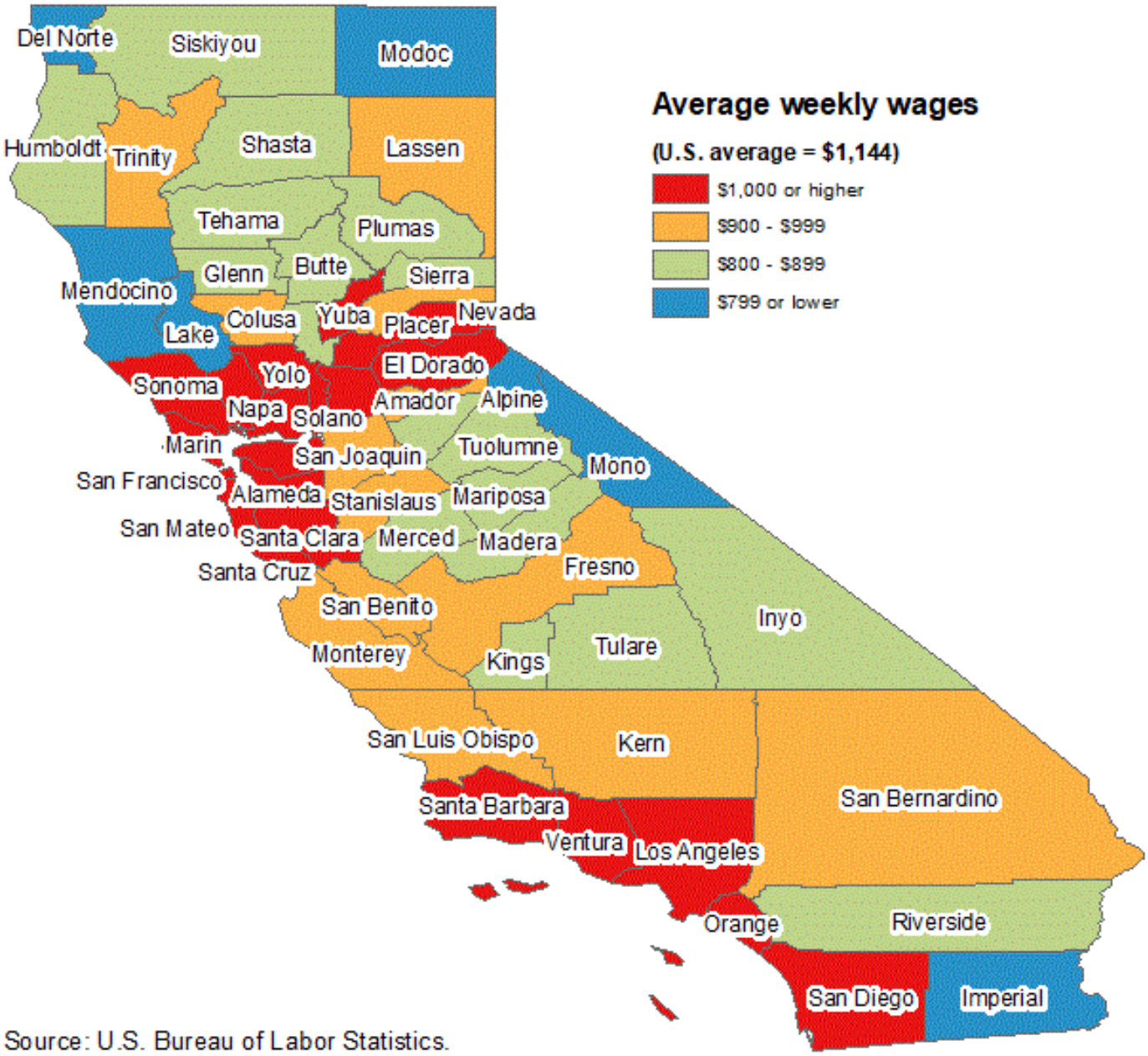
Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, fourth quarter 2018

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 California, fourth quarter 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.