



Quality Information, Informed Choices
Labor Market Information

State of Oregon • Employment Department • 875 Union NE, Salem, OR 97311 • www.QualityInfo.org

Dwayne Stevenson
 Economic Analyst
 (503) 947-1261
Dwayne.Stevenson@state.or.us

Graham Slater
 Administrator for Research
 (503) 947-1212
Graham.J.Slater@state.or.us

Measures to Reflect the Wages of Oregonians

Introduction

The Oregon Employment Department's Workforce and Economic Research Division develops three measures of wage levels in Oregon:

- Average annual wage per job – from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).
- Average and median wages by occupation – from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey.
- Average annual earnings per worker – from quarterly Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

The QCEW is based on quarterly tax reports filed by all businesses covered by Oregon's unemployment insurance program. These data represent about 95 percent of total employment. Examples of excluded employment are railroad jobs, certain commission-only sales agents, and certain agricultural jobs.

This measure, like most of our employment measures, is actually a job count, not a worker count. The average annual wage is thus an average wage per job, not an average wage per worker.

Table 1 tells us that the average annual wage for all jobs in Oregon in 2007 was \$39,566.

Table 1

Oregon Employment and Wages, 2007				
QCEW data				
Ownership	Units	Employment	Payroll	Average Pay
All	130695	1,728,036	\$68,371,055,182	\$39,566
Private	125835	1,457,022	\$57,086,268,331	\$39,180
All Govt.	4861	271,015	\$11,284,786,851	\$41,639
Federal Govt.	984	29,042	\$1,781,829,565	\$61,354
State Govt.	1022	62,595	\$2,443,836,393	\$39,042
Local Govt.	2855	179,378	\$7,059,120,893	\$39,353

Occupational Employment Statistics Survey

OES data are based on surveys of nonfarm businesses covered by Oregon's unemployment insurance program. The survey collects information on hourly wages. The annualized wage data reflect hourly wages adjusted to an annual level based on an assumption of full-time, year-round work, an assumption that is not true for all occupations.

Table 2

Oregon Wage Indicators, 2007 2nd Quarter OES data		
	Hourly	Annual
Mean	\$19.10	\$39,732
1st quartile	\$10.55	\$21,935
Median	\$15.25	\$31,721
3rd quartile	\$22.99	\$47,809

The OES survey provides us with occupational wage levels for several hundred occupations. The wages shown here are a summary of all occupations.

Table 2 tell us that the mean annual wage for all Oregon occupations was \$39,732 while the median wage was \$31,721. The median is often a better representation of "typical" wages, as it is less impacted by a few jobs with unusual or atypical wage levels.

Unemployment Insurance Wage Files

UI wage record wage information is based on quarterly reports from businesses covered by Oregon's unemployment insurance program. These reports provide wages for each person covered by unemployment insurance for each job they held during the year.

Federal government wage records are not included in this data set.

The wage indicators shown are based on total wages per worker rather than per job. The four tables on the last page show wage levels based on work continuity during the year and hours worked.

Whereas the QCEW and OES data tell us about jobs, the UI wage files tell us about individuals.

Table 3 tells us that the median wage of all those who worked in Oregon in 2007 was \$21,392. However, this includes individuals who may have worked only a few hours, days, or weeks.

The median for those employed in each of the four calendar quarters of 2007 was \$32,000. The median for those who worked at least 200 hours in each quarter was \$36,747. And the median for those who worked at least 350 hours in all four quarters was \$40,190. (An individual working 40 hours per week for a calendar quarter would work 520 hours.) Note that fewer than half of all workers work 350 or more hours per quarter.

Closing Comments

Each of these data series have value in different contexts and for different purposes.

If the Public Officials Compensation Commission's primary goal is to get a sense of the "average" wage for all nonfarm jobs in Oregon, the mean or median from the OES survey might be most useful.

If the Public Officials Compensation Commission's primary goal is to get a sense of the "average" earnings for individuals in Oregon, the mean or median from UI wage files might be most useful.

The Employment Department's Research staff would be happy to provide additional information or more detail on the above wage series.

Oregon - Annual Wages by Quintile and Hours Worked, 2007

2007 Wages

Percent Change from Prior Year

All Workers

All Workers

	All ¹	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5		All	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quintiles		\$5,016	\$15,351	\$28,174	\$47,335	N/A	Quintiles		5.1%	4.7%	3.7%	3.4%
Mean	\$31,409	\$2,020	\$9,872	\$21,510	\$36,758	\$86,884	Mean	4.1%	4.5%	5.2%	4.0%	3.4%
Median	\$21,392	\$1,787	\$9,722	\$21,392	\$36,291	\$66,837	Median	4.1%	3.6%	5.3%	4.1%	3.3%

¹2,101,638 SSNs

Employed in All 4 Quarters

Employed in All 4 Quarters

	All ²	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5		All	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quintiles		\$16,423	\$26,478	\$38,346	\$57,739	N/A	Quintiles		3.1%	2.9%	3.0%	3.4%
Mean	\$42,499	\$10,159	\$21,419	\$32,144	\$46,845	\$101,931	Mean	3.5%	2.9%	3.0%	2.9%	3.1%
Median	\$32,000	\$10,681	\$21,406	\$32,000	\$46,269	\$78,000	Median	2.8%	2.8%	3.0%	2.8%	3.0%

²1,404,482 SSNs

Employed 200+ Hours in All 4 Quarters

Employed 200+ Hours in All 4 Quarters

	All ³	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5		All	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quintiles		\$22,145	\$31,508	\$42,929	\$62,990	N/A	Quintiles		3.1%	2.9%	2.9%	3.7%
Mean	\$48,488	\$16,667	\$26,786	\$36,912	\$51,721	\$110,355	Mean	3.8%	3.2%	3.0%	2.9%	3.4%
Median	\$36,747	\$17,241	\$26,760	\$36,747	\$51,100	\$84,656	Median	2.9%	3.4%	3.0%	2.9%	3.3%

³1,067,154 SSNs

Employed 350+ Hours in All 4 Quarters

Employed 350+ Hours in All 4 Quarters

	All ⁴	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5		All	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Quintiles		\$25,790	\$35,028	\$46,512	\$67,404	N/A	Quintiles		2.9%	2.9%	3.2%	3.7%
Mean	\$53,000	\$20,422	\$30,364	\$40,378	\$55,644	\$118,194	Mean	3.9%	2.9%	2.9%	3.0%	3.5%
Median	\$40,190	\$20,926	\$30,322	\$40,190	\$55,015	\$90,520	Median	3.0%	2.9%	2.7%	3.0%	3.5%

⁴835,246 SSNs