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## USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS THIRD QUARTER 2009

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 100.1 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$738 in the third quarter of 2009, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. This was 2.5 percent higher than a year earlier. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) fell by 1.6 percent over the same period.

Data on usual weekly earnings are collected as part of the Current Population Survey, a nationwide sample survey of households in which respondents are asked, among other things, how much each wage and salary worker usually earns. (See the Technical Note.) Highlights from the third-quarter data are:

- Women who usually worked full time had median earnings of \$657 per week, or 80.9 percent of the \$812 median for men. The female-to-male earnings ratios were higher among blacks (95.3 percent) and Hispanics (95.2 percent) than among whites (80.0 percent) or Asians (82.6 percent). (See table 1.)
- Median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$622 per week, 74.5 percent of the \$835 median for white men. The difference was smaller among women, as black women's median earnings (\$593) were 88.8 percent of those for white women (\$668). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics who worked full time (\$527) were lower than those of blacks (\$607), whites (\$753), and Asians (\$877). (See table 1.)
- Among men, those age 45 to 54 and age 55 to 64 had the highest median weekly earnings, \$944 and \$979, respectively. Among women, weekly earnings were highest for those age 35 to 44 and age 45 to 54, \$720 and \$727, respectively. (See table 2.)
- Among the major occupational groups, persons employed full time in management, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,259 for men and \$913 for women. Persons in service jobs earned the least. (See table 3.)
- Full-time workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$448, compared with \$621 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,145 for those holding at least a bachelor's degree. Among college graduates with advanced degrees (professional or master's degree and above), the highest earning 10 percent of male workers made \$3,260 or more per week, compared with \$2,252 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 4.)

# Technical Note

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides the basic information on the labor force, employment, and unemployment. The survey is conducted monthly for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau from a scientifically selected national sample of about 60,000 households, with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The earnings data are collected from one-quarter of the CPS monthly sample and are limited to wages and salaries. The data, therefore, exclude self-employment income.

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.

## Reliability

Statistics based on the CPS are subject to both sampling and nonsampling error. When a sample rather than the entire population is surveyed, there is a chance that the sample estimates may differ from the "true" population values they represent. The exact difference, or *sampling error*, varies depending on the particular sample selected, and this variability is measured by the standard error of the estimate. There is about a 90-percent chance, or level of confidence, that an estimate based on a sample will differ by no more than 1.6 standard errors from the "true" population value because of sampling error. BLS analyses are generally conducted at the 90-percent level of confidence.

The CPS data also are affected by *nonsampling error*. Nonsampling errors can occur for many reasons, including the failure to sample a segment of the population, inability to obtain information for all respondents in the sample, inability or unwillingness of respondents to provide correct information on a timely basis, mistakes made by respondents, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

For a full discussion of the reliability of data from the CPS and information on estimating standard errors, see the Household Data section of the "Explanatory Notes and Estimates of Error" available on the BLS Web site at [http://www.bls.gov/cps/eetech\\_methods.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/cps/eetech_methods.pdf).

## Definitions

The principal definitions used in connection with the earnings series are described briefly below.

*Usual weekly earnings.* Data represent earnings before taxes and other deductions and include any overtime pay,

commissions, or tips usually received (at the main job in the case of multiple jobholders). Prior to 1994, respondents were asked how much they usually earned per week. Since January 1994, respondents have been asked to identify the easiest way for them to report earnings (hourly, weekly, biweekly, twice monthly, monthly, annually, other) and how much they usually earn in the reported time period.

Earnings reported on a basis other than weekly are converted to a weekly equivalent. The term "usual" is as perceived by the respondent. If the respondent asks for a definition of usual, interviewers are instructed to define the term as more than half the weeks worked during the past 4 or 5 months.

*Medians (and other quantiles) of weekly earnings.* The median (or upper limit of the second quartile) is the amount which divides a given earnings distribution into two equal groups, one having earnings above the median and the other having earnings below the median. Ten percent of a given distribution have earnings below the upper limit of the first decile (90 percent have higher earnings); 25 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the first quartile (75 percent have higher earnings); 75 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the third quartile (25 percent have higher earnings); and 90 percent have earnings below the upper limit of the ninth decile (10 percent have higher earnings).

The estimating procedure places each reported or calculated weekly earnings value into \$50-wide intervals which are centered around multiples of \$50. The actual value is estimated through the linear interpolation of the interval in which the quantile boundary lies.

Over-the-year changes in the medians (and other quantile boundaries) for specific groups may not necessarily be consistent with the movements estimated for the overall quantile boundary. The most common reasons for this possible anomaly are: (1) There could be a change in the relative weights of the subgroups. For example, the medians of both 16-to-24 year olds and those 25 years and over may rise; but if the lower-earning 16-to-24 group accounts for a greatly increased share of the total, the overall median could actually fall. (2) There could be a large change in the shape of the distribution of reported earnings, particularly near a quantile boundary. This could be caused by survey observations that are clustered at rounded values, such as \$250, \$300, \$400. An estimate lying in a \$50-wide centered interval containing such a cluster or "spike" tends to change more slowly than one in other intervals.

*Wage and salary workers.* Workers who receive

wages, salaries, commissions, tips, payment in kind, or piece rates. The group includes employees in both the private and public sectors but, for the purposes of the earnings series, excludes all self-employed persons, regardless of whether or not their businesses are incorporated.

*Full-time workers.* Workers who usually work 35 hours or more per week at their sole or principal job.

*Part-time workers.* Workers who usually work fewer

than 35 hours per week at their sole or principal job.

*Constant dollars.* The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) is used to convert current dollars to constant (1982) dollars.

*Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.* Refers to persons who identified themselves in the enumeration process as being Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

**Table 1. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted**

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings			
	III 2008	III 2009	In current dollars		In constant (1982) dollars	
			III 2008	III 2009	III 2008	III 2009
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>						
Total, 16 years and over .....	107,194	100,060	\$720	\$738	\$317	\$330
Men, 16 years and over .....	60,170	55,359	796	812	350	363
16 to 24 years .....	6,439	5,261	446	448	196	201
25 years and over .....	53,731	50,098	857	870	377	389
Women, 16 years and over .....	47,025	44,701	631	657	278	294
16 to 24 years .....	4,886	4,204	406	415	179	186
25 years and over .....	42,139	40,497	666	691	293	309
<b>RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX</b>						
White .....	86,600	81,315	739	753	325	337
Men .....	49,727	45,963	816	835	359	373
Women .....	36,873	35,352	649	668	286	299
Black or African American .....	12,878	11,514	589	607	259	272
Men .....	6,085	5,335	646	622	284	278
Women .....	6,793	6,179	530	593	233	265
Asian .....	5,266	4,919	854	877	376	392
Men .....	3,004	2,764	960	941	422	421
Women .....	2,261	2,155	723	777	318	348
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	16,095	14,586	529	527	233	236
Men .....	10,197	9,203	566	539	249	241
Women .....	5,898	5,383	498	513	219	229

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

**Table 2. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by age, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, third quarter 2009 averages, not seasonally adjusted**

Age, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Total		Men		Women	
	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings
<b>TOTAL</b>						
16 years and over .....	100,060	\$738	55,359	\$812	44,701	\$657
16 to 24 years .....	9,465	429	5,261	448	4,204	415
16 to 19 years .....	1,380	330	819	346	561	313
20 to 24 years .....	8,085	458	4,442	479	3,643	435
25 years and over .....	90,595	774	50,098	870	40,497	691
25 to 54 years .....	73,185	767	40,856	849	32,329	691
25 to 34 years .....	23,790	678	13,499	713	10,291	637
35 to 44 years .....	24,295	817	13,789	912	10,506	720
45 to 54 years .....	25,100	836	13,568	944	11,532	727
55 years and over .....	17,410	813	9,242	957	8,169	693
55 to 64 years .....	14,884	838	7,798	979	7,086	706
65 years and over .....	2,526	691	1,444	791	1,083	599
<b>White</b>						
16 years and over .....	81,315	753	45,963	835	35,352	668
16 to 24 years .....	7,798	429	4,401	450	3,396	415
25 years and over .....	73,518	795	41,562	890	31,955	705
25 to 54 years .....	58,936	785	33,713	871	25,224	703
55 years and over .....	14,581	838	7,850	980	6,732	709
<b>Black or African American</b>						
16 years and over .....	11,514	607	5,335	622	6,179	593
16 to 24 years .....	992	411	484	425	508	396
25 years and over .....	10,522	627	4,852	666	5,671	609
25 to 54 years .....	8,756	623	4,059	649	4,698	609
55 years and over .....	1,766	659	793	780	973	611
<b>Asian</b>						
16 years and over .....	4,919	877	2,764	941	2,155	777
16 to 24 years .....	311	533	165	540	145	524
25 years and over .....	4,608	899	2,599	973	2,010	800
25 to 54 years .....	3,820	926	2,158	998	1,663	841
55 years and over .....	788	766	441	876	347	665
<b>Hispanic or Latino ethnicity</b>						
16 years and over .....	14,586	527	9,203	539	5,383	513
16 to 24 years .....	1,743	385	1,057	380	686	391
25 years and over .....	12,843	560	8,146	577	4,697	537
25 to 54 years .....	11,328	554	7,241	569	4,086	534
55 years and over .....	1,515	612	905	665	610	566

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

**Table 3. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by occupation and sex, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted**

Occupation and sex	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	III 2008	III 2009	III 2008	III 2009
<b>TOTAL</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations .....	40,192	38,592	\$1,041	\$1,048
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	16,448	15,697	1,135	1,138
Professional and related occupations .....	23,744	22,896	1,000	1,000
Service occupations .....	15,475	14,699	470	471
Sales and office occupations .....	24,795	23,749	610	622
Sales and related occupations .....	9,728	9,604	657	668
Office and administrative support occupations .....	15,067	14,144	597	606
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	11,683	10,380	701	706
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	822	797	476	408
Construction and extraction occupations .....	6,536	5,331	689	719
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	4,325	4,252	779	763
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	15,049	12,640	590	602
Production occupations .....	7,991	6,561	592	610
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	7,058	6,079	589	594
<b>Men</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations .....	19,938	18,696	1,234	1,259
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	8,797	8,451	1,335	1,329
Professional and related occupations .....	11,141	10,245	1,167	1,229
Service occupations .....	7,637	7,497	545	515
Sales and office occupations .....	9,396	9,062	728	736
Sales and related occupations .....	5,432	5,242	787	792
Office and administrative support occupations .....	3,965	3,820	657	648
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	11,265	9,932	704	714
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	688	653	480	422
Construction and extraction occupations .....	6,387	5,213	688	721
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	4,190	4,067	781	772
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	11,933	10,171	637	640
Production occupations .....	5,797	4,883	650	680
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	6,136	5,288	620	609
<b>Women</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations .....	20,254	19,897	916	913
Management, business, and financial operations occupations .....	7,650	7,246	958	955
Professional and related occupations .....	12,604	12,651	886	886
Service occupations .....	7,838	7,201	416	426
Sales and office occupations .....	15,399	14,687	576	590
Sales and related occupations .....	4,297	4,362	524	545
Office and administrative support occupations .....	11,103	10,325	585	598
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations .....	417	448	599	527
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations .....	134	144	423	338
Construction and extraction occupations .....	149	118	755	648
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations .....	134	185	685	652
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations .....	3,116	2,469	456	473
Production occupations .....	2,194	1,678	468	470
Transportation and material moving occupations .....	923	791	423	478

NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

**Table 4. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, third quarter 2009 averages, not seasonally adjusted**

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)	Upper limit of:				
		First decile	First quartile	Second quartile (median)	Third quartile	Ninth decile
<b>SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY</b>						
Total, 16 years and over .....	100,060	\$346	\$488	\$738	\$1,147	\$1,755
Men .....	55,359	369	518	812	1,267	1,905
Women .....	44,701	328	449	657	984	1,459
White .....	81,315	350	497	753	1,166	1,795
Men .....	45,963	375	532	835	1,298	1,913
Women .....	35,352	329	458	668	997	1,479
Black or African American .....	11,514	327	420	607	903	1,286
Men .....	5,335	332	447	622	949	1,440
Women .....	6,179	323	408	593	848	1,171
Asian .....	4,919	378	546	877	1,354	1,991
Men .....	2,764	396	583	941	1,539	2,209
Women .....	2,155	346	511	777	1,225	1,782
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	14,586	296	376	527	806	1,250
Men .....	9,203	300	386	539	836	1,308
Women .....	5,383	291	358	513	761	1,147
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						
Total, 25 years and over .....	90,595	373	517	774	1,192	1,838
Less than a high school diploma .....	7,278	283	341	448	615	858
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	25,492	339	454	621	895	1,224
Some college or associate degree .....	24,958	382	509	720	1,029	1,419
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	32,867	569	774	1,145	1,732	2,410
Bachelor's degree only .....	21,030	519	726	1,026	1,548	2,206
Advanced degree .....	11,837	672	923	1,336	1,906	2,896
Men, 25 years and over .....	50,098	396	573	870	1,337	1,930
Less than a high school diploma .....	4,924	296	375	495	686	926
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	14,806	374	501	715	1,000	1,375
Some college or associate degree .....	12,923	419	578	824	1,164	1,562
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	17,445	602	879	1,310	1,905	2,883
Bachelor's degree only .....	11,251	575	807	1,194	1,775	2,490
Advanced degree .....	6,194	737	1,046	1,536	2,190	3,260
Women, 25 years and over .....	40,497	346	480	691	1,017	1,516
Less than a high school diploma .....	2,353	260	306	382	501	626
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup> .....	10,686	315	404	545	734	983
Some college or associate degree .....	12,036	352	467	624	867	1,196
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup> .....	15,422	518	721	981	1,414	1,930
Bachelor's degree only .....	9,779	492	659	905	1,273	1,857
Advanced degree .....	5,643	628	841	1,161	1,641	2,252

<sup>1</sup> Includes persons with a high school diploma or equivalent.

<sup>2</sup> Includes persons with bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees.

NOTE: Ten percent of all full-time wage and salary workers earn less than the upper limit of the first decile; 25 percent earn less than the upper limit of the first quartile; 50 percent earn less than the upper limit of the second quartile, or median; 75 percent earn less than the upper limit of the

third quartile; and 90 percent earn less than the upper limit of the ninth decile. Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.

**Table 5. Median usual weekly earnings of part-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted**

Characteristic	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings	
	III 2008	III 2009	III 2008	III 2009
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>				
Total, 16 years and over .....	22,345	24,291	\$223	\$229
Men, 16 years and over .....	7,262	8,512	212	227
16 to 24 years .....	3,533	3,708	169	180
25 years and over .....	3,729	4,804	280	278
Women, 16 years and over .....	15,083	15,779	229	230
16 to 24 years .....	4,517	4,553	172	172
25 years and over .....	10,566	11,226	262	266
<b>RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX</b>				
White .....	18,677	20,308	224	230
Men .....	5,926	7,038	212	229
Women .....	12,751	13,270	230	231
Black or African American .....	2,122	2,440	214	219
Men .....	782	886	206	219
Women .....	1,340	1,554	218	219
Asian .....	879	969	245	246
Men .....	301	355	244	230
Women .....	578	614	246	256
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity .....	2,781	3,358	220	230
Men .....	1,043	1,430	226	241
Women .....	1,739	1,928	216	222

NOTE: Estimates for the above race groups (white, black or African American, and Asian) do not sum to totals because data are not presented for all races. Persons whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race. Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data.