

# **NEWS RELEASE**



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# USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS THIRD QUARTER 2010

**Median weekly earnings** of the nation's 101.4 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$740 in the third quarter of 2010 (not seasonally adjusted), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. This was 0.3 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 1.2 percent in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) 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.) Data shown in this release are not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Highlights from the third-quarter data are:

- **Seasonally adjusted median weekly earnings** were \$745 in the third quarter of 2010, little changed from the previous quarter, \$744. (See table 1.)
- On a not seasonally adjusted basis, **median weekly earnings** were \$740 in the third quarter of 2010. **Women** who usually worked full time had median weekly earnings of \$662, or 81.4 percent of the \$813 median for **men**. (See table 2.)
- The **female-to-male earnings ratio** was lowest among Asians and whites (80.3 and 80.7 percent, respectively), compared with blacks (93.1 percent) and Hispanics (93.3 percent). (See table 2.)
- Among the major **race and ethnicity groups**, median earnings for black men working at full-time jobs were \$634 per week, 75.6 percent of the median for white men, \$839. The difference was less among women, as black women's median earnings (\$590) were 87.1 percent of those for white women (\$677). Overall, median earnings of Hispanics who worked full time (\$522) were lower than those of blacks (\$611), whites (\$759), and Asians (\$854). (See table 2.)
- Usual weekly earnings of full-time workers varied by **age**. Among men, those age 45 to 54 and age 55 to 64 had the highest median weekly earnings, \$941 and \$983, respectively. Usual weekly earnings were highest for women from age 35 to 64; median weekly earnings were \$729 for women age 35 to 44 and age 45 to 54, essentially the same as the \$739 median for women age 55 to 64. (See table 3.)

- Among the major **occupational groups**, persons employed full time in management, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,255 for men and \$921 for women. Men and women employed in service jobs earned the least, \$511 and \$425, respectively. (See table 4.)
- By educational attainment, full-time workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$449, compared with \$622 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,158 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 \$3,146 or more per week, compared with \$2,207 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 5.)

## Revision of Seasonally Adjusted Usual Weekly Earnings Data

The Usual Weekly Earnings news release for the fourth quarter of 2010 will incorporate annual revisions to seasonally adjusted data for the number of full-time wage and salary workers and median weekly earnings in current dollars. (See table 1.) Estimates for constant (1982-84) dollar median weekly earnings also will be affected by revisions to the current dollar series. Seasonally adjusted estimates back to the first quarter of 2006 will be subject to revision.

# **Technical Note**

The estimates in this release were obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which provides 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 wage and salary workers (both incorporated and unincorporated self-employed are excluded). 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.

A full discussion of the reliability of data from the Current Population Survey and information on estimating standard errors is available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability.

#### **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 estimation 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, or \$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 (1982-84) 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.

#### Seasonal adjustment

Over the course of a year, the size of the nation's labor force and other measures of labor market activity undergo regularly occurring fluctuations. These recurring events include seasonal changes in weather, major holidays, and the opening and closing of schools. The effect of such seasonal variations can be very large.

Because seasonal events follow a more or less regular pattern each year, their influence on the level of a series can be tempered by adjusting for regular seasonal variation. These adjustments make nonseasonal developments easier to spot. The seasonally adjusted figures provide a more useful tool with which to analyze changes in quarter-to-quarter activity.

At the end of each calendar year, the seasonally adjusted data are revised for the past 5 years when the seasonal adjustment factors are updated. More information on seasonal adjustment is available on the BLS Web site at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#sa.

Table 1. Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by sex, quarterly averages,

seasonally adjusted

seasonany adjusted	1	nber of wor			Median weekly earnings				
Year and quarter			In	current doll	ars	In constant (1982-84) dollars			
·	Total	Men	Women	Total \$	Men \$	Women \$	Total \$	Men \$	Women \$
2001									
3rd Quarter	101,096	56,910	44,186	601	685	510	338	386	287
4th Quarter	100,343	56,541	43,802	603	677	519	340	382	292
2002									
1st Quarter	99,924	56,096	43,829	607	677	525	341	380	295
2nd Quarter	100,286	56,640	43,646	608	678	524	339	378	292
3rd Quarter	100,183	56,390	43,793	608	679	531	337	376	294
4th Quarter	99,895	56,224	43,670	610	683	540	336	376	298
2003									
1st Quarter	100,136	56,079	44,057	615	689	546	335	376	297
2nd Quarter	100,255	56,013	44,242	619	692	551	338	378	301
3rd Quarter	100,139	56,178	43,961	621	697	554	337	378	300
4th Quarter	100,628	56,607	44,021	623	702	560	337	379	302
2004									
1st Quarter	100.905	56,848	44,057	629	705	562	337	378	301
2nd Quarter	101,135	56,914	44,221	642	715	576	341	380	306
3rd Quarter	101,148	56,931	44,217	635	712	574	335	376	303
4th Quarter	101,658	57,289	44,369	646	720	577	337	376	302
2005									
1st Quarter	102,091	57,710	44,381	647	723	580	336	376	302
2nd Quarter.	103,201	58.099	45,101	647	714	584	334	369	301
3rd Quarter	104,310	58,843	45,467	651	723	588	331	368	299
4th Quarter	104,605	58,967	45,638	658	730	588	332	368	296
2006	,	,	,						
1st Quarter	104,664	58,943	45,722	662	737	594	332	370	298
2nd Quarter	105,801	59,834	45,967	663	732	597	329	364	296
3rd Quarter	107,108	60,090	47,018	678	755	602	334	371	296
4th Quarter	106,835	60,126	46,709	682	749	609	337	370	301
2007									
1st Quarter	107,049	60,034	47,015	687	752	609	336	368	298
2nd Quarter	106,842	60,354	46,488	693	764	610	335	370	295
3rd Quarter	107,257	60,269	46,988	698	773	619	335	372	297
4th Quarter	108,228	60,547	47,681	700	775	617	333	368	293
2008									
1st Quarter	107,601	60,282	47,319	713	783	632	335	368	297
2nd Quarter	107,111	59,602	47,509	722	800	637	335	371	296
3rd Quarter	106,229	59,319	46,910	724	802	634	331	366	290
4th Quarter	105,677	58,567	47,110	728	808	649	341	378	304
2009									
1st Quarter	101,417	56,164	45,253	731	816	644	344	384	303
2nd Quarter	100,112	55,268	44,844	736	815	655	345	382	307
3rd Quarter	99,125	54,517	44,608	741	819	661	344	380	307
4th Quarter	98,659	54,498	44,162	749	826	668	345	381	308
2010									
1st Quarter	97,914	53,976	43,939	748	836	662	344	384	304
2nd Quarter	99,681	55,073	44,608	744	813	674	343	374	310
3rd Quarter	100,291	55,547	44,744	745	821	668	342	377	306
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NOTE: 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 selected characteristics,

quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

		of workers usands)	Median weekly earnings				
Characteristic	3rd 2009	3rd 2010	In current dollars		In constant (1982-84 dollars		
			3rd 2009	3rd 2010	3rd 2009	3rd 2010	
SEX AND AGE							
Fotal, 16 years and over	100,060	101,385	\$738	\$740	\$342	\$339	
Men, 16 years and over	55,359	56,473	812	813	377	373	
16 to 24 years	5,261	5,454	448	424	208	194	
25 years and over	50,098	51,019	870	869	404	398	
Women, 16 years and over	44,701	44,912	657	662	305	304	
16 to 24 years	4,204	4,172	415	419	192	192	
25 years and over	40,497	40,741	691	702	320	322	
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX							
White	81,315	82,280	753	759	349	348	
Men	45,963	47,013	835	839	387	384	
Women	35,352	35,267	668	677	310	310	
Black or African American	11,514	11,761	607	611	281	280	
Men	5,335	5,398	622	634	288	290	
Women	6,179	6,363	593	590	275	270	
Asian	4,919	5,000	877	854	407	391	
Men	2,764	2,737	941	963	436	441	
Women	2,155	2,263	777	773	360	354	
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	14,586	15,067	527	522	244	239	
Men	9,203	9,433	539	539	250	247	
Women	5,383	5,634	513	503	238	230	

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 age, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, 3rd quarter 2010 averages, not seasonally adjusted

	To	otal	Men		Women	
Age, race, and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings	Number of workers (in thousands)	Median weekly earnings
TOTAL						
16 years and over	101,385	\$740	56,473	\$ 813	44,912	\$662
16 to 24 years	9,626	422	5,454	424	4,172	419
16 to 19 years	1,383	335	856	343	526	326
20 to 24 years	8,243	446	4,598	449	3,645	442
25 years and over	91,759	780	51,019	869	40,741	702
25 to 54 years	73,614	768	41,338	848	32,276	696
25 to 34 years	24,565	676	13,992	705	10,573	650
35 to 44 years	23,860	814	13,664	909	10,195	729
45 to 54 years	25,190	841	13,681	941	11,508	729
55 years and over	18,145	840	9,681	967	8,464	725
55 to 64 years	15,384	863	8,152	983	7,232	739
65 years and over	2,761	704	1,529	792	1,232	636
White						
16 years and over	82,280	759	47,013	839	35,267	677
16 to 24 years	7,978	422	4,640	429	3,338	416
25 years and over	74,302	806	42,373	895	31,929	720
25 to 54 years	59,040	789	34,060	871	24,981	710
55 years and over	15,262	878	8,313	997	6,949	747
Black or African American						
16 years and over	11,761	611	5,398	634	6,363	590
16 to 24 years	1,068	408	514	392	554	424
25 years and over	10,693	638	4,884	668	5,809	617
25 to 54 years	8,838	637	4,087	656	4,751	623
55 years and over	1,855	643	797	738	1,058	587
Asian						
16 years and over	5,000	854	2,737	963	2,263	773
16 to 24 years	296	507	138	474	158	539
25 years and over	4,704	888	2,599	1,005	2,105	798
25 to 54 years	3,955	910	2,186	1,021	1,769	824
55 years and over	750	732	414	832	336	663
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity						
16 years and over	15,067	522	9,433	539	5,634	503
16 to 24 years	1,803	389	1,136	391	667	385
25 years and over	13,264	563	8,297	581	4,967	530
25 to 54 years	11,730	561	7,451	579	4,278	531
55 years and over	1,534	578	846	621	689	524

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

Opportable and a second		of workers usands)	Median weekly earnings		
Occupation and sex	3rd 2009	3rd 2010	3rd 2009	3rd 2010	
TOTAL					
Management, professional, and related occupations	. 38,592	39,301	\$1,048	\$1,062	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	15,697	15,830	1,138	1,149	
Professional and related occupations		23,471	1,000	1,010	
Service occupations		14,774	471	466	
Sales and office occupations		23,474	622	637	
Sales and related occupations.		9,306	668	667	
Office and administrative support occupations	· ·	14,168	606	624	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations		10,445	706	713	
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations		789	408	436	
Construction and extraction occupations		5,510	719	710	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations		4,145	763	797	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations		13,391	602	594	
Production occupations.		7,226	610	596	
Transportation and material moving occupations	· ·	6,165	594	591	
	. 0,079	0,103	334	391	
Men					
Management, professional, and related occupations		19,220	1,259	1,255	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	. 8,451	8,750	1,329	1,308	
Professional and related occupations	. 10,245	10,470	1,229	1,218	
Service occupations	. 7,497	7,467	515	511	
Sales and office occupations	. 9,062	9,105	736	746	
Sales and related occupations	. 5,242	5,184	792	803	
Office and administrative support occupations	. 3,820	3,920	648	687	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	. 9,932	10,007	714	720	
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	. 653	595	422	465	
Construction and extraction occupations	. 5,213	5,404	721	709	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	. 4,067	4,008	772	803	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	. 10,171	10,674	640	624	
Production occupations		5,313	680	656	
Transportation and material moving occupations		5,361	609	607	
Women					
Wanagement, professional, and related occupations	. 19,897	20,081	913	921	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations		7,080	955	983	
			886	893	
Professional and related occupations.	· ·	13,001 7,307	426	425	
Service occupations		1	590	596	
Sales and office occupations.	. 14,687	14,370			
Sales and related occupations.	· ·	4,122	545	519	
Office and administrative support occupations		10,248	598	610	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations		438	527	486	
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations		195	338	393	
Construction and extraction occupations.		107	648	739	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations		137	652	628	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations		2,717	473	476	
Production occupations		1,914	470	488	
Transportation and material moving occupations	. 791	804	478	413	

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

Table 5. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, 3rd quarter 2010 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic	Number of			Upper limit of:				
	workers (in thousands)	First decile	First quartile	Second quartile (median)	Third quartile	Ninth decile		
SEX, RACE, AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY								
Total, 16 years and over	101,385	\$351	\$ 488	\$ 740	\$1,155	\$1,767		
Men	56,473	370	515	813	1,275	1,910		
Women	44,912	335	453	662	1,001	1,527		
White	82,280	356	497	759	1,172	1,820		
Men	47,013	375	525	839	1,309	1,920		
Women	35,267	340	466	677	1,011	1,545		
Black or African American	11,761	325	419	611	920	1,355		
Men	5,398	343	446	634	950	1,447		
Women	6,363	314	406	590	889	1,271		
Asian	5,000	374	536	854	1,473	2,039		
Men	2,737	396	584	963	1,574	2,286		
Women	2,263	353	498	773	1,295	1,794		
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	15,067	300	380	522	795	1,245		
Men	9,433	305	389	539	840	1,313		
Women	5,634	292	365	503	744	1,127		
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT								
Total, 25 years and over	91,759	378	518	780	1,211	1,851		
Less than a high school diploma	7,490	287	351	449	611	844		
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup>	25,392	347	455	622	893	1,220		
Some college or associate degree	24,827	387	517	732	1,021	1,432		
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup>	34,050	551	776	1,158	1,741	2,414		
Bachelor's degree only	21,539	505	726	1,044	1,560	2,262		
Advanced degree	12,511	652	930	1,368	1,903	2,819		
Men, 25 years and over	51,019	397	575	869	1,349	1,969		
Less than a high school diploma	5,080	298	374	485	661	902		
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup>	14,921	380	503	701	996	1,356		
Some college or associate degree	12,953	427	594	838	1,158	1,566		
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup>	18,065	585	877	1,338	1,910	2,808		
Bachelor's degree only	11,455	535	810	1,217	1,827	2,503		
Advanced degree	6,610	681	1,043	1,543	2,205	3,146		
Women, 25 years and over	40,741	354	484	702	1,043	1,571		
Less than a high school diploma	2,410	265	320	400	510	684		
High school graduates, no college <sup>1</sup>	10,471	322	405	542	734	991		
Some college or associate degree	11,875	355	469	632	884	1,195		
Bachelor's degree and higher <sup>2</sup>	15,985	521	722 650	992	1,463	1,956		
Bachelor's degree only	10,084	480 633	652 866	909	1,324	1,876		
Advanced degree	5,901	033	800	1,194	1,648	2,207		

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

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.

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

Table 6. Median usual weekly earnings of part-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, quarterly averages, not seasonally adjusted

Characteristic		of workers usands)	Median weekly earnings		
Characteristic	3rd 2009	3rd 2010	3rd 2009	3rd 2010	
SEX AND AGE					
otal, 16 years and over	24,291	23,405	\$229	\$234	
Men, 16 years and over	8,512	8,005	227	226	
16 to 24 years	3,708	3,286	180	181	
25 years and over	4,804	4,719	278	269	
Women, 16 years and over	15,779	15,400	230	239	
16 to 24 years	4,553	4,402	172	176	
25 years and over	11,226	10,998	266	276	
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX					
White	20,308	19,506	230	234	
Men	7,038	6,406	229	225	
Women	13,270	13,100	231	239	
Black or African American	2,440	2,402	219	230	
Men	886	1,007	219	226	
Women	1,554	1,396	219	232	
Asian	969	914	246	253	
Men	355	375	230	238	
Women	614	539	256	264	
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	3,358	3,267	230	228	
Men	1,430	1,324	241	234	
Women	1,928	1,943	222	224	

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.