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USUAL WEEKLY EARNINGS OF WAGE AND SALARY WORKERS FIRST QUARTER 2021

Median weekly earnings of the nation's 112.1 million full-time wage and salary workers were \$989 in the first quarter of 2021 (not seasonally adjusted), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. This was 3.3 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a gain of 1.9 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 in this news release.) Data shown in this news release are not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified.

Highlights from the first-quarter data:

- **Median weekly earnings** of full-time workers were \$989 in the first quarter of 2021. **Women** had median weekly earnings of \$900, 82.6 percent of the \$1,089 median for **men**. (See table 2.)
- The women's-to-men's earnings ratio varied by race and ethnicity. White women earned 81.6 percent as much as their male counterparts, compared with 92.1 percent for Black women, 80.5 percent for Asian women, and 88.3 percent for Hispanic women. (See table 2.)
- Among the major **race and ethnicity groups**, median weekly earnings for Blacks (\$799) and Hispanics (\$750) working full-time jobs were lower than those of Whites (\$1,006) and Asians (\$1,286). By sex, median weekly earnings for Black men were \$834, or 74.6 percent of the median for White men (\$1,118). Median earnings for Hispanic men were \$788, or 70.5 percent of the median for White men. The difference was less among women, as Black women's median earnings were \$768, or 84.2 percent of those for White women (\$912), and earnings for Hispanic women were \$696, or 76.3 percent of those for White women. Earnings for Asian men (\$1,408) and women (\$1,134) were higher than those of their White counterparts. (See table 2.)
- By age, median weekly earnings were highest for men ages 45 to 54 (\$1,334). Usual weekly earnings were highest for women ages 35 to 64: median weekly earnings were \$999 for women ages 35 to 44, \$1,002 for women ages 45 to 54, and \$964 for women ages 55 to 64. Men and women ages 16 to 24 had the lowest median weekly earnings, \$634 and \$593, respectively. Men's and women's earnings were closer among younger workers than older workers; for example, women ages 16 to 24

earned 93.5 percent as much as men in the same age group, while the women's-to-men's earnings ratio was 79.9 percent for those age 55 and over. (See table 3.)

- Among the major **occupational groups**, persons employed full time in management, professional, and related occupations had the highest median weekly earnings—\$1,615 for men and \$1,179 for women. Men and women employed in service occupations earned the least, \$741 and \$582, respectively. (See table 4.)
- By educational attainment, full-time workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$613, compared with \$792 for high school graduates (no college) and \$1,426 for those holding at least a bachelor's degree. Among college graduates with advanced degrees (master's, professional, and doctoral degrees), the highest earning 10 percent of male workers made \$4,355 or more per week, compared with \$2,907 or more for their female counterparts. (See table 5.)
- Seasonally adjusted median weekly earnings were \$984 in the first quarter of 2021, essentially unchanged from the previous quarter. (See table 1.)

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic Impact on Usual Weekly Earnings Data

Usual weekly earnings data for the first quarter of 2021 continue to reflect the impact on the labor market of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and efforts to contain it. More information on labor market developments in recent months is available at www.bls.gov/covid19/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-and-response-on-the-employment-situation-news-release.htm.

Revision of Seasonally Adjusted Usual Weekly Earnings Data

Seasonally adjusted data for median usual weekly earnings in constant (1982-84) dollars have been updated using revised seasonally adjusted data for the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). (Data are shown in table 1 of this news release.) Seasonally adjusted constant (1982-84) dollar estimates back to the first quarter of 2016 were 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 (BLS) by the U.S. Census Bureau using a scientifically selected national sample of about 60,000 eligible households, with coverage in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The earnings data are collected from one-fourth of the CPS monthly sample and are limited to wage and salary workers. All self-employed workers, both incorporated and unincorporated, are excluded from CPS earnings estimates.

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Definitions

The principal definitions used in connection with the earnings data in this news release 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, or 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 determined by each respondent's own understanding of the term. 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 midpoint in a given earnings distribution, with half of workers having earnings above the median and the other half 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 BLS procedure for estimating the median of an earnings distribution places each reported or calculated weekly earnings value into a \$50-wide interval that is centered around a multiple of \$50. The median is calculated through the linear interpolation of the interval in which the median lies.

Changes over time 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 as follows: (1) there could be a change in the relative weights of the subgroups. For example, the median of 16- to 24-year-olds and the median earnings of those 25 years and over may rise, but if the lower earning 16to-24 age 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 change could be caused by survey observations that are clustered at rounded values, such as \$400 or \$500. 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.

Constant dollars. The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) is used to convert current dollars to constant (1982-84) dollars.

Wage and salary workers. These are 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, it excludes all self-employed persons, both those with incorporated businesses and those with unincorporated businesses.

Full-time workers. For the purpose of producing estimates of earnings, workers who usually work 35 hours or more per week at their sole or principal job are defined as working full time.

Part-time workers. For the purpose of producing estimates of earnings, workers who usually work fewer than 35 hours per week at their sole or principal job are defined as working part time.

Race. In the survey process, race is determined by the household respondent. In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget guidelines, White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander are terms used to describe a person's race. Estimates for the latter two race groups and persons who selected more than one race are not included in this release due to insufficient sample size.

Hispanic or Latino ethnicity. This refers to people who identified themselves in the survey process as being of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. People whose ethnicity is identified as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

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 component of this difference that occurs because samples differ by chance is known as *sampling error*, and its 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 error 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, and errors made in the collection or processing of the data.

Additional information about the reliability of data from the CPS is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/cps/documentation.htm#reliability.

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 website 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

	Number of workers (in thousands)			Median weekly earnings					
Year and quarter	(In	current doll	ars	In constant (1982-84) dollars		
	Total	Men	Women	Total \$	Men \$	Women \$	Total \$	Men \$	Women \$
2012									
1st quarter	102,161	57,110	45,051	764	841	693	335	368	303
2nd quarter	102,525	57,079	45,447	772	870	687	337	380	300
3rd quarter	102,587	57,207	45,380	766	836	693	333	364	302
4th quarter	103,748	57,772	45,977	771	868	690	333	375	298
2013									
1st quarter	103,928	57,884	46,044	768	860	699	331	370	301
2nd quarter	103,988	57,944	46,044	777	863	706	335	372	304
3rd quarter	104,400	58,082	46,318	779	855	705	334	367	302
4th quarter	104,764	58,095	46,669	782	865	712	334	369	304
2014									
1st quarter	105,633	58,682	46,951	790	865	716	335	367	304
2nd quarter	106,342	59,486	46,855	781	860	715	330	363	302
3rd quarter	106,726	59,543	47,183	798	878	721	336	370	304
4th quarter	107,436	60,123	47,313	795	878	724	336	371	306
2015	100 110	00.040	40.400	000		705	0.4.4	077	
1st quarter.	108,448	60,346	48,102	802	886	725	341	377	308
2nd quarter	108,541	60,386	48,154	803	890	725	339	376	306
3rd quarter	109,315	61,004	48,311	809	896	727	340	377	306
4th quarter	110,060	61,292	48,768	821	904	729	345	380	307
2016	110,323	61,559	48,764	823	904	744	346	380	313
1st quarter	110,323	61,770	49,152	828	913	744	345	381	311
3rd quarter	111,789	62,239	49,550	834	918	748	347	381	311
4th quarter	111,763	62,182	49,175	845	924	759	349	381	313
2017			·						
1st quarter	111,846	62,372	49,474	857	941	760	352	386	312
2nd quarter	113,121	62,938	50,184	863	938	783	354	384	321
3rd quarter	113,880	63,327	50,552	865	943	768	352	385	313
4th quarter	114,265	63,310	50,955	853	943	770	345	381	311
2018									
1st quarter	114,502	63,888	50,615	874	956	778	351	384	312
2nd quarter	115,502	64,146	51,356	881	964	784	351	384	312
3rd quarter	116,223	64,379	51,844	892	979	796	354	389	316
4th quarter	116,059	64,178	51,881	897	990	795	355	392	314
2019									
1st quarter	117,202	64,896	52,306	898	995	802	355	393	317
2nd quarter	117,299	65,054	52,244	914	1,005	818	358	393	320
3rd quarter	117,426	64,842	52,585	922	1,009	824	360	394	322
4th quarter	118,423	65,250	53,173	934	1,019	844	362	395	327
2020 1st quarter	116,986	64,352	52,634	949	1,057	853	367	409	330
2nd quarter	104,204	57,686	46,517	1,009	1,057	918	393	409 426	358
3rd quarter	104,204	59,909	48,846	996	1,110	900	384	428	347
4th quarter	111,617	61,710	49,908	983	1,069	896	377	410	343
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1st quarter	112,993	62,092	50,901	984	1,080	898	373	410	341

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

	Number of workers (in thousands)		Median weekly earnings				
Characteristic	1st	1st 2021	In current dollars		In constant (1982-84) dollars		
	2020		1st 2020	1st 2021	1st 2020	1st 2021	
SEX AND AGE							
Total, 16 years and over	115,930	112,070	\$957	\$989	\$370	\$376	
Men, 16 years and over	63,555	61,401	1,066	1,089	413	414	
16 to 24 years	5,251	5,392	593	634	230	241	
25 years and over	58,303	56,009	1,131	1,154	438	438	
Women, 16 years and over	52,375	50,669	857	900	332	342	
16 to 24 years	4,428	4,420	582	593	226	225	
25 years and over	47,946	46,250	894	941	346	357	
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX							
White	89,322	86,452	980	1,006	379	382	
Men	49,905	48,307	1,096	1,118	424	425	
Women	39,417	38,146	873	912	338	347	
Black or African American	14,902	14,279	775	799	300	304	
Men	7,065	6,836	823	834	319	317	
Women	7,837	7,443	742	768	287	292	
Asian	7,736	7,532	1,221	1,286	473	489	
Men	4,404	4,264	1,360	1,408	527	535	
Women	3,332	3,268	1,106	1,134	428	431	
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	21,160	20,312	721	750	279	285	
Men	12,477	12,026	763	788	295	299	
Women	8,683	8,286	678	696	262	265	

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, 1st quarter 2021 averages, not seasonally adjusted

Number of workers (in thousands)	\$900 593 467 607 941 937 850 999 1,002 954
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25 years and over. 13,001 842 6,171 901 6,830 25 to 54 years. 10,299 826 4,898 888 5,401	768
25 to 54 years	564
	803
55 years and over	794
	854
Asian	
16 years and over	1,134
16 to 24 years	933
25 years and over	1,162
25 to 54 years	1,257
55 years and over	946
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	
16 years and over	696
16 to 24 years	538
25 years and over	733
25 to 54 years	735
55 years and over	728

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

Occupation and any		of workers usands)	Median weekly earnings		
Occupation and sex	1st 2020	1st 2021	1st 2020	1st 2021	
TOTAL					
Management, professional, and related occupations	51,719	50,956	\$1,332	\$1,361	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	21,475	21,273	1,445	1,475	
Professional and related occupations	30,244	29,683	1,235	1,288	
Service occupations	15,373	13,468	605	626	
Sales and office occupations	22,031	21,576	796	817	
Sales and related occupations	9,597	9,266	877	887	
Office and administrative support occupations	12,434	12,310	761	795	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	11,106	10,448	880	900	
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	842	686	579	582	
Construction and extraction occupations	6,013	5,910	884	885	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	4,251	3,851	958	982	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	15,700	15,621	738	738	
Production occupations	7,297	7,191	759	781	
Transportation and material moving occupations	8,403	8,430	719	705	
Men	2,122	3,100			
Management, professional, and related occupations	24,815	24,461	1,556	1,615	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	11,189	11,142	1,652	1,741	
Professional and related occupations.	13,626	13,318	1,497	1,536	
Service occupations.	7,332	6,507	666	741	
Sales and office occupations.	8,752	8,594	961	960	
Sales and related occupations.	5,379	5,163	1,046	1,031	
Office and administrative support occupations	3,373	3,431	842	887	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	10,471	9,983	898	911	
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.	622	562	601	596	
Construction and extraction occupations.	5,789	5,709	892	892	
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations.	4,060	3,712	970	985	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	12,185	11,856	789	790	
Production occupations	5,357	5,186	838	853	
Transportation and material moving occupations	6,828	6,670	753	739	
	0,020	0,070	755	700	
Women Management, professional, and related occupations	26,904	26,496	1,137	1,179	
Management, business, and financial operations occupations	10,286	10,131	1,250	1,261	
Professional and related occupations.	16,618	16,365	1,067	1,143	
Service occupations.	8,042	6,961	559	582	
Sales and office occupations.	13,279	12,982	726	758	
Sales and related occupations.	4,217	4,102	707	720	
Office and administrative support occupations.	9,062	8,879	732	769	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	9,062 635	465	653	717	
·	220	124	531	499	
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations.	220 224	202	624	784	
Construction and extraction occupations.					
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	191	139	804	903	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	3,515	3,765	619	612	
Production occupations.	1,940	2,006	618	616	
Transportation and material moving occupations	1,575	1,760	620	608	

NOTE: Updated population controls are introduced annually with the release of January data. Effective with January 2020 data, occupations reflect the introduction of the 2018 Census occupational classification system, derived from the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). No historical data have been revised. Data for 2020 are not strictly comparable with earlier years.

Table 5. Quartiles and selected deciles of usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by selected characteristics, 1st quarter 2021 averages, not seasonally adjusted

	Number of						
Characteristic	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	. 112,070	\$486	\$657	\$989	\$1,563	\$2,424	
Men	. 61,401	506	703	1,089	1,754	2,790	
Women	50,669	463	613	900	1,373	2,013	
White	. 86,452	495	674	1,006	1,593	2,476	
Men	. 48,307	517	720	1,118	1,773	2,818	
Women	. 38,146	474	622	912	1,390	2,021	
Black or African American	. 14,279	413	576	799	1,237	1,853	
Men	. 6,836	416	587	834	1,361	1,993	
Women	. 7,443	409	562	768	1,145	1,639	
Asian	. 7,532	568	781	1,286	2,024	3,107	
Men	. 4,264	602	838	1,408	2,305	3,270	
Women	. 3,268	515	741	1,134	1,801	2,887	
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	. 20,312	422	558	750	1,160	1,769	
Men	. 12,026	448	586	788	1,257	1,899	
Women	. 8,286	398	518	696	1,019	1,553	
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT							
otal, 25 years and over	. 102,259	508	695	1,040	1,640	2,510	
Less than a high school diploma	. 5,842	381	485	613	808	1,162	
High school graduates, no college ¹	. 24,209	446	589	792	1,153	1,613	
Some college or associate degree	. 25,390	493	649	912	1,325	1,881	
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	. 46,818	682	956	1,426	2,158	3,260	
Bachelor's degree only	. 28,896	632	875	1,296	1,923	2,908	
Advanced degree	. 17,922	819	1,142	1,667	2,510	3,801	
Men, 25 years and over	. 56,009	541	745	1,154	1,852	2,889	
Less than a high school diploma	. 3,966	399	511	664	914	1,299	
High school graduates, no college ¹	. 14,901	497	643	893	1,300	1,778	
Some college or associate degree		535	731	1,021	1,528	2,094	
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	. 23,886	722	1,073	1,658	2,518	3,828	
Bachelor's degree only	. 15,037	662	972	1,468	2,282	3,328	
Advanced degree	. 8,849	880	1,323	1,919	2,921	4,355	
Women, 25 years and over	. 46,250	484	642	941	1,431	2,088	
Less than a high school diploma	. 1,876	334	419	533	659	828	
High school graduates, no college ¹		390	512	675	922	1,295	
Some college or associate degree	. 12,134	466	593	794	1,119	1,531	
Bachelor's degree and higher ²	. 22,932	658	889	1,259	1,855	2,658	
Bachelor's degree only	. 13,859	616	810	1,149	1,688	2,408	
Advanced degree	. 9,073	771	1,043	1,441	2,028	2,907	

¹ 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 language data.

of January data.

² 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	1st 2020	1st 2021	1st 2020	1st 2021	
SEX AND AGE					
Total, 16 years and over	24,785	21,757	\$293	\$310	
Men, 16 years and over	8,684	7,725	285	303	
16 to 24 years	3,781	3,196	232	234	
25 years and over	4,903	4,529	349	366	
Women, 16 years and over	16,102	14,032	298	314	
16 to 24 years	4,666	4,231	217	239	
25 years and over	11,436	9,801	344	367	
RACE, HISPANIC OR LATINO ETHNICITY, AND SEX					
White	19,308	16,953	292	309	
Men	6,607	5,982	281	299	
Women	12,701	10,971	298	314	
Black or African American	3,147	2,554	285	303	
Men	1,190	962	290	299	
Women	1,957	1,592	280	305	
Asian	1,290	1,369	314	354	
Men	486	460	300	341	
Women	803	909	334	359	
Hispanic or Latino ethnicity	4,484	3,895	296	303	
Men	1,597	1,530	293	303	
Women	2,888	2,366	298	304	

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.