

Incomes of Employees in the USA

A Summary of Public HR Articles

In this document, we will present some statistics and charts about the incomes of employees in the USA, based on data collected from various public HR articles. We will compare the average salaries of different occupations, industries, and regions, as well as the factors that influence them, such as education, experience, and gender. We will also highlight some trends and challenges that affect the income distribution and mobility of workers in the USA.

Average Salaries by Occupation

One of the most common ways to measure the incomes of employees is by their occupation, or the type of work they do. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the median annual wage for all occupations in the USA was \$41,950 in 2020. However, this figure varies widely depending on the specific occupation. For example, the highest-paying occupations in 2020 were in the fields of medicine, engineering, and management, while the lowest-paying occupations were in the fields of food service, personal care, and farming.

- The top five highest-paying occupations in 2020 were:
- Anesthesiologists, with a median annual wage of \$261,730
- Surgeons, with a median annual wage of \$252,040
- Oral and maxillofacial surgeons, with a median annual wage of \$237,570
- Obstetricians and gynecologists, with a median annual wage of \$233,610
- Orthodontists, with a median annual wage of \$230,830
- The top five lowest-paying occupations in 2020 were:
- Cooks, fast food, with a median annual wage of \$24,800
- Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food, with a median annual wage of \$24,880
- Dishwashers, with a median annual wage of \$25,520
- Shampooers, with a median annual wage of \$25,620
- Waiters and waitresses, with a median annual wage of \$25,820

The following chart shows the median annual wages of some selected occupations in 2020, compared to the median annual wage for all occupations.

{chart_1}

Average Salaries by Industry

Another way to measure the incomes of employees is by their industry, or the sector of the economy they work in. According to the BLS, the average annual wage for all industries in the USA was \$58,490 in 2020. However, this figure also varies widely depending on the specific industry. For example, the highest-paying industries in 2020 were in the fields of information, finance, and

professional services, while the lowest-paying industries were in the fields of leisure and hospitality, retail, and education.

- The top five highest-paying industries in 2020 were:
- Information, with an average annual wage of \$103,590
- Finance and insurance, with an average annual wage of \$91,560
- Professional, scientific, and technical services, with an average annual wage of \$90,220
- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction, with an average annual wage of \$89,910
- Management of companies and enterprises, with an average annual wage of \$89,700
- The top five lowest-paying industries in 2020 were:
- Leisure and hospitality, with an average annual wage of \$25,610
- Retail trade, with an average annual wage of \$33,460
- Education services, with an average annual wage of \$40,460
- Other services, except public administration, with an average annual wage of \$40,700
- Health care and social assistance, with an average annual wage of \$49,560

The following chart shows the average annual wages of some selected industries in 2020, compared to the average annual wage for all industries.

{chart_2}

Average Salaries by Region

A third way to measure the incomes of employees is by their region, or the geographic area they live in. According to the BLS, the average annual wage for all regions in the USA was \$58,490 in 2020. However, this figure also varies widely depending on the specific region. For example, the highest-paying regions in 2020 were in the Northeast and the West, while the lowest-paying regions were in the South and the Midwest.

- The top five highest-paying regions in 2020 were:
- District of Columbia, with an average annual wage of \$94,820
- New York, with an average annual wage of \$72,830
- Massachusetts, with an average annual wage of \$72,780
- Connecticut, with an average annual wage of \$71,640
- California, with an average annual wage of \$70,460
- The top five lowest-paying regions in 2020 were:
- Mississippi, with an average annual wage of \$42,920
- Arkansas, with an average annual wage of \$44,180
- West Virginia, with an average annual wage of \$44,840
- South Dakota, with an average annual wage of \$45,110
- Alabama, with an average annual wage of \$45,150

The following chart shows the average annual wages of some selected regions in 2020, compared to the average annual wage for all regions.

{chart_3}

Factors Influencing Salaries

Besides occupation, industry, and region, there are other factors that influence the incomes of employees in the USA, such as education, experience, and gender. Generally speaking, the more education and experience a worker has, the higher their salary is. However, there are also significant gaps in pay between men and women, as well as between different racial and ethnic groups, that cannot be explained by these factors alone. These gaps reflect the persistent inequalities and discrimination that affect the labor market and the society as a whole.

- **Education:** According to the BLS, the median weekly earnings of full-time workers in 2020 increased with the level of education. For example, workers with less than a high school diploma earned \$592 per week, while workers with a bachelor's degree earned \$1,248 per week, and workers with a doctoral degree earned \$1,883 per week. The following chart shows the median weekly earnings of full-time workers by educational attainment in 2020.
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- **Experience:** According to the BLS, the median weekly earnings of full-time workers in 2020 also increased with the age group, which is a proxy for experience. For example, workers aged 16 to 24 earned \$588 per week, while workers aged 55 and over earned \$1,057 per week. The following chart shows the median weekly earnings of full-time workers by age group in 2020.
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- **Gender:** According to the BLS, the median weekly earnings of full-time workers in 2020 were higher for men than for women, regardless of the level of education or the age group. For example, men with a bachelor's degree earned \$1,402 per week, while women with a bachelor's degree earned \$1,144 per week. Similarly, men aged 55 and over earned \$1,144 per week, while women aged 55 and over earned \$933 per week. The following chart shows the median weekly earnings of full-time workers by gender, education, and age group in 2020.
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- **Race and Ethnicity:** According to the BLS, the median weekly earnings of full-time workers in 2020 were also higher for some racial and ethnic groups than for others, regardless of the level of education or the gender. For example, Asian workers earned \$1,261 per week, while Black or African American workers earned \$775 per week. Similarly, White men earned \$1,002 per week, while Hispanic or Latino women earned \$672 per week. The following chart shows the median weekly earnings of full-time workers by race and ethnicity, education, and gender in 2020.
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Trends and Challenges

The incomes of employees in the USA are influenced by various factors, such as occupation, industry, region, education, experience, gender, and race and ethnicity. However, these factors are

not static, but change over time, reflecting the dynamic nature of the labor market and the society. Some of the trends and challenges that affect the income distribution and mobility of workers in the USA are:

- The rise of automation and artificial intelligence, which may replace some jobs and create new ones, requiring workers to adapt and reskill.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has disrupted the economy and the labor force, affecting some sectors and groups more than others.
- The growing inequality and polarization, which may widen the gap between the rich and the poor, and between different regions and groups.
- The need for more education and training, which may increase the demand for higher skills and credentials, and the cost of acquiring them.
- The demand for more flexibility and diversity, which may change the preferences and expectations of workers and employers, and the modes and conditions of work.

These trends and challenges pose both opportunities and risks for the incomes of employees in the USA, and require careful analysis and policy responses to ensure a fair and prosperous future for all.