

This glossary is designed to help you better understand the terms for the data and other statistical information associated with and provided by the Labor & Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) of the North Carolina Department of Commerce.

## #

**10th Percentile Wages:** Ten percent of workers in an occupation earn wages below this level; 90 percent of workers in an occupation earn wages above this level.

**25th Percentile Wages:** Twenty-five percent of workers in an occupation earn wages below this level; 75 percent of workers in an occupation earn wages above this level.

**75th Percentile Wages:** Seventy-five percent of workers in an occupation earn wages below this level; 25 percent of workers in an occupation earn wages above this level.

**90th Percentile Wages:** Ninety percent of workers in an occupation earn wages below this level; 10 percent of workers in an occupation earn wages above this level.

## A

**Average Quarterly Employment:** The sum of three months of employment divided by three. Used in the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program.

**Average Quarterly Wages:** Derived from the division of gross quarterly wages by the average monthly employment in the quarter.

**Average Weekly Wages (AWW):** Derived from the division of average quarterly wages by 13 (the average number of weeks in each quarter).

**Average Annual Wages:** Average annual pay values are calculated by dividing total annual wages by the average of the twelve-monthly employment levels.

## B

**Benchmark:** A point of reference (either an estimate or a count) from which measurements can be made or upon which adjustments to estimates are based. Benchmarking is an annual statistical audit of data, replacing and/ or recalculating results, using the most up-to-date information to correct for estimating or reporting errors.

**Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS):** A part of the U.S. Department of Labor. BLS functions as the principal data-gathering agency of the federal government in the field of labor economics. BLS collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates data relating to employment, unemployment, the labor force, productivity, prices, family expenditures, wages, industrial relations, and occupational safety and health.



**Civilian Labor Force:** The total number of age 16+, noninstitutionalized civilians who are working or are actively seeking work and are available for employment. Mathematically, it is the sum of employed plus unemployed.

**Combined Statistical Area:** Combined statistical area (CSA) is a United States Office of Management and Budget term for a combination of adjacent metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas across the 50 US states and the territory of Puerto Rico that can demonstrate economic or social linkage. There are 9 CSAs in North Carolina. <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-maps/2020/geo/csa.html>

**Covered Employer:** An employer covered under statutes relating to the payment of unemployment insurance taxes who meets the following requirements:

1. Employs at least one worker at any time.
  2. Acquires all or a substantial portion of a covered employer.
  3. Subject to the Federal Unemployment Tax Act.
  4. A nonprofit organization and has four or more employees for at least 20 weeks during the calendar year.
  5. A state agency, state-operated hospital or school of higher education, or a political subdivision of the state.
  6. An employer of agricultural labor and pays \$20,000 or more in any one quarter of a calendar year, or employs 10 workers for 20 weeks during the year.
  7. Pays cash wages of \$1,000 or more in any calendar year for domestic help in your private home.
- The following are specific exclusions from the coverage:

1. Agriculture employment not defined above.
2. Sole proprietors.
3. Railroad workers.
4. Children under 21 in the employ of a parent.
5. Elected officials.
6. Students or inmate workers.
7. Commissioned real estate, insurance and direct seller salespeople.
8. Church employees.
9. Work relief program participants.

All covered employers are included in QCEW data.

**Crosswalk:** A method that provides a means of matching components of different systems.

**Current Employment Statistics (CES):** Statistics based on monthly survey of nonfarm business establishments. The numbers include wage and salary employment, worker hours, and payroll by industry and area statistics. Through a federal/state cooperative effort, these data are used to compute current monthly employment, hours and earnings estimates, by industry, for the nation, the 50 states & the District of Columbia and all Metropolitan Areas.

**Current Population Statistics (CPS):** Monthly household survey of the civilian non-institutional population of the United States. The survey provides monthly statistics on employment, unemployment, and related subjects. The data are analyzed and published each month by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html>

## D

**Data Suppressed:** Publication of employment and wage data is withheld for any subsector which consists of fewer than three reporting units or in which a single establishment accounts for 80 percent or more of an industry's employment. In the event that only one subsector is restricted, the next smallest subsector (by number of establishments) also is restricted to allow disclosure of total industry information.

**Durable Goods:** Known as "hard goods," the term refers to manufactured or processed items generally considered to have a normal life expectancy of three years or more. The Durable Goods manufacturing industries are: Furniture and Related Product; Wood Product; Nonmetallic Mineral Product; Fabricated Metal Product; Machinery; Computer and Electronic Product; Electrical Equipment and Appliance; Transportation Equipment; and Furniture and Related Product.

## E

**Employed:** In the Current Population Survey (CPS), people are classified as employed, if they meet any of the following criteria:

(a) During the survey week, did any work at all as paid employees or in their own businesses or professions on their own farm, or worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family enterprise.

(b) Were not working, but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent because of illness, bad weather, vacation, labor management disputes, or personal reasons, whether or not they were paid for the time off.

(c) Worked at least 1 hour as a paid employee or worked 1 hour in their own business, profession, trade or farm.

**Employment to Population Rate (Ratio) (%):** Measures the civilian labor force currently employed against the total working-age population of a region, municipality, or country. It is calculated by dividing the number of people employed by the total number of people of working age, and it is used as a metric of labor and unemployment.  $(\text{Employed} \div \text{Civilian Noninstitutional Population}) \times 100$ .

**Establishments:** The physical location of a certain economic activity—for example, a factory, mine, store, or office. A single establishment generally produces a single good or provides a single service. An enterprise (a private firm, government, or nonprofit organization) can consist of a single establishment or multiple establishments. All establishments in an enterprise may be classified in one industry (e.g., a chain), or they may be classified in different industries (e.g., a conglomerate).

**Experience Wage:** Average of the highest two-thirds of wages paid in each occupation.

## F

**Female Employment:** Produces estimates of female employment. The data is only available for the U.S.

**G**

**Geography:** Indicates the area for which the data were reported.

**I**

**Industry:** A group of establishments that produce similar products or provide similar services. For example, all establishments that manufacture automobiles are in the same industry. A given industry, or even a particular establishment in that industry, might have employees in dozens of occupations. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) groups similar establishments into industries.

**Initial Claim:** A request for a determination of entitlement to and eligibility for compensation following unemployment. An additional initial claim is a subsequent initial claim filed to reopen a claim series during an existing benefit year. This occurs if a person again becomes unemployed when a break of one week or more has occurred in the claim series due to intervening employment.

**L**

**Labor Force:** See Civilian Labor Force.

**Labor Force Participation Rate:** Percentage of the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years and older that is working or actively looking for work. It is an important labor market measure because it represents the relative amount of labor resources available for the production of goods and services.

**Labor Market Information (LMI):** LMI is a body of knowledge that describes the nature, characteristics and operation of those mechanisms, institutions and participants involved in the matching of labor supply with demand. LMI is comprised of a variety of economic, social and demographic information. The information describes past and current conditions, as well as forecasts future conditions. LMI is comprised of population data, labor force data, occupational data, general economic trends, and career data. LMI has many planning uses. The information can be used to determine policy and program needs, to allocate resources, and to establish program performance standards.

**Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS):** A federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)/state cooperative statistical program which produces monthly and annual labor force, employment, unemployment, and unemployment rate estimates by place of residence for many geographic regions including states, counties, metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, and selected cities. The North Carolina Department of Commerce's Labor & Economic Analysis Division has such a cooperative agreement with BLS.

**M**

**Mean:** The sum of all values of a given list divided by the number of items in the list, also referred to as the average.

**Median:** The middle value of a distribution of numbers; half the values are above the median and half are below the median.

**Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA):** Geographic entities defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for use by federal statistical agencies in collecting, tabulating, and publishing federal statistics. The general concept of a metropolitan statistical area is that of a core area containing a substantial population nucleus of at least 50,000 people, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration with that core. There are 17 MSAs in North Carolina. [https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/metroarea/stcbsa\\_pg/Feb2013/cbsa2013\\_NC.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/metroarea/stcbsa_pg/Feb2013/cbsa2013_NC.pdf)

**Micropolitan Statistical Area:** A geographical area delineated by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that contains a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities having a high degree of economic and social integration. A Micropolitan Statistical Area must also have at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 in population. There are 26 Micropolitan Statistical Areas in North Carolina. [https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/metroarea/stcbsa\\_pg/Feb2013/cbsa2013\\_NC.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/metroarea/stcbsa_pg/Feb2013/cbsa2013_NC.pdf)



**Nondurable Goods:** Known as “soft goods,” Nondurable Goods refer to manufactured or processed items generally considered to last for a short time — three years or less. The Nondurable Goods manufacturing industries include Food; Beverage and Tobacco Products; Textiles; Apparel; Paper; Printing; Chemical; and Plastics and Rubber Manufacturing.

**North American Industry Classification System (NAICS):** A classification system developed jointly by the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to provide improved comparability in industrial statistics across North America. NAICS replaced the U.S. Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system.



**Occupation:** The kind of work a person does to make a living. Occupations are specific jobs usually found in several industries. For example, cafeteria worker is a service occupation found in many different industry sectors, including services (schools, hospitals, businesses), the trade sector (eating establishments, department stores), or in manufacturing industries.

**Occupational Employment Statistics (OES):** Data on employment and wages for more than 800 occupations and for about 400 nonfarm industries in the nation, plus occupational data for states and metropolitan areas.



**Prosperity Zones:** The State of North Carolina operates eight administrative regions known as Prosperity Zones. Each Zone features a one-stop, physical location, providing citizens and businesses the ability to interact with representatives from multiple state agencies, as well as to encourage better collaboration between the agencies themselves. The state deploys subject matter experts in each Zone, from transportation and environmental topics to workforce development, community planning and liaisons to existing businesses in the Zones.



**Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW):** Comprehensive employment and wage data by industry and geographic area, derived from quarterly unemployment insurance tax returns filed by employers.



**Salary:** Fixed compensation paid for labor or services. Most salaries are paid for fixed periods of working hours.

**Seasonal Factors:** Seasonal factors are events that cause normal fluctuations in business activity within individual or combinations of industries. Seasonal factors include, but are not limited to, such events as: weather conditions, holidays, and school schedules.

**Seasonally Adjusted:** A statistical adjustment eliminating the influence of weather, holidays, the opening and closing of schools, and other recurring seasonal events from an economic time series. By smoothing these seasonal fluctuations, the data are easier to compare month to month. Only the U.S. and North Carolina state civilian labor force and CES employment estimates are seasonally adjusted. Estimates for both series below the state level are unadjusted.

**Service Providing:** Industries including Trade, Transportation & Utilities; Information; Financial Activities; Professional and Business; Educational and Health; Leisure and Hospitality; Other; and Government.

**Standard Occupational Classification (SOC):** A system for classifying all occupations in the economy, including private, public and military, based on work performed and required skills, education, training and credentials.



**Unadjusted:** An economic time series that is not statistically adjusted to eliminate seasonal fluctuations such as weather, holidays and the opening and closing of schools. This data is not comparable month to month. All levels of civilian labor force and CES estimates have a not seasonally adjusted series.

**Unemployment:** Persons 16 years of age or older are classified as unemployed if they do not have a job, have actively looked for work in the prior four weeks, and are currently available for work. Persons who were not working and were waiting to be recalled to a job from which they had been temporarily laid off are also considered unemployed. The unemployment rate represents the number unemployed as a percent of the labor force.

**Unemployment Rate:** The unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed persons as a percent of the labor force.

**Unit:** A unit is an establishment, generally at a single physical location, where business is conducted or where services or industrial operations are performed.



**Wage and Salary Employment:** Full-time and part-time workers (including employees on paid vacation or paid sick leave) who work or receive compensation from establishments for any part of the pay period including the 12th of the month. Those workers involved in labor-management disputes are excluded. This is a count of the number of jobs, and is available by industry.

**Wages:** A payment, usually of money, for labor or services performed. Wages may not be reflective of full-time work schedules.

