



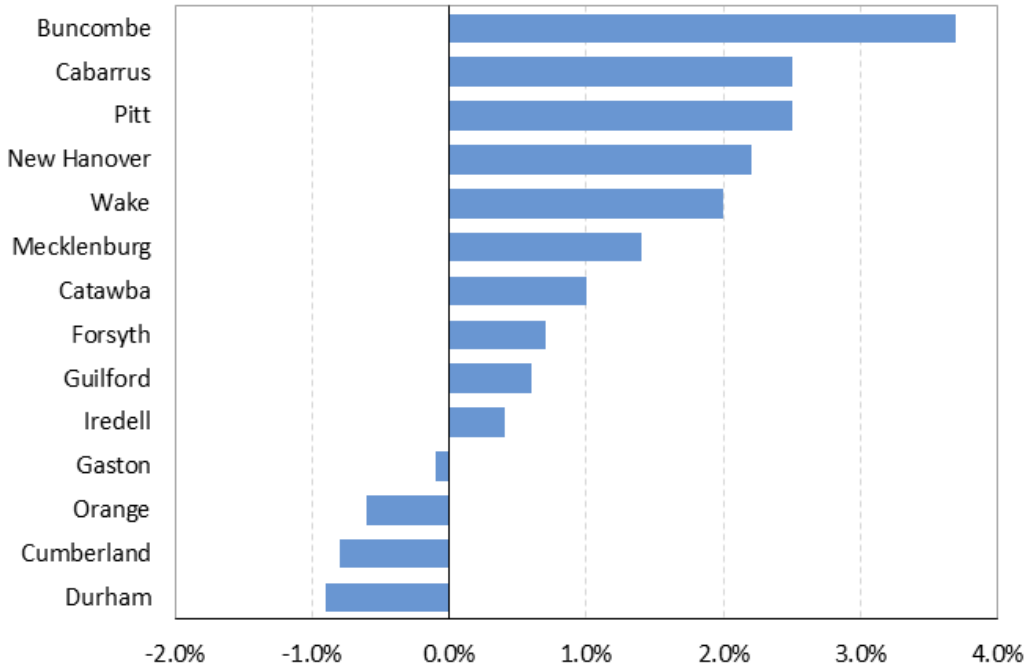
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County Employment and Wages in North Carolina — Fourth Quarter 2025

Employment rose in 10 of the 14 largest counties in North Carolina from December 2024 to December 2025, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Victoria G. Lee noted that Buncombe County (+3.7 percent) had the largest over-the-year increase in employment. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in covered employment among the largest counties in North Carolina, December 2025



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

[View Chart Data](#)

Mecklenburg County (803,200) had the highest employment level in North Carolina in December 2025. Together, the 14 largest counties accounted for 62.2 percent of total covered employment within the state. Nationwide, the 372 largest counties comprise 73.4 percent of total covered employment in the United States. (Large counties and county equivalents are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2024.)

Large county average weekly wages in the fourth quarter 2025

Average weekly wage gains in 7 of 13 large counties in North Carolina with published data were above the national average of 4.2 percent. (See [chart 2](#).) Gaston had the largest gain (+6.8 percent). Over-the-year wage gains among the other 12 large North Carolina counties ranged from 6.1 percent to 1.5 percent.

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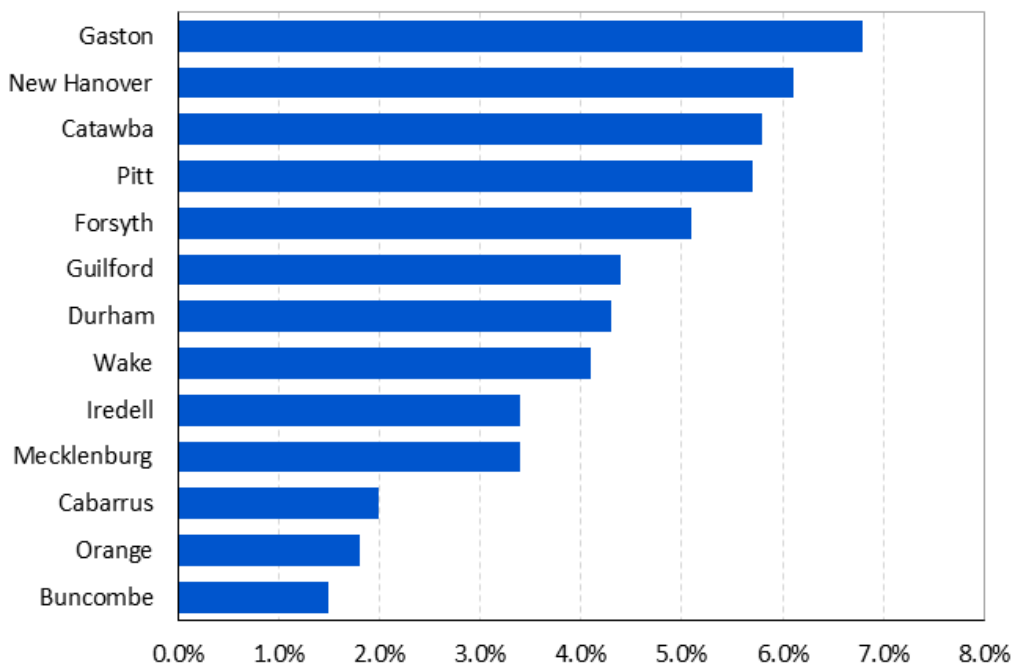
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[QCEW Charts](#)

Chart 2. Over-the-year percent change in covered average weekly wages among the largest counties in North Carolina, fourth quarter 2025



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

[View Chart Data](#)

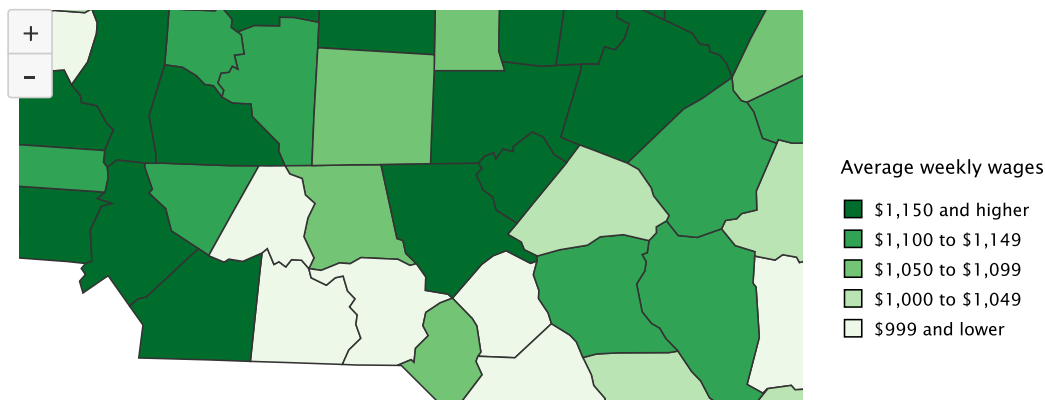
Weekly wages in 4 of the 14 largest counties in North Carolina were above the national average of \$1,569. Average weekly wages ranged from \$2,074 in Durham to \$1,111 in Cumberland.

Smaller county average weekly wages in the fourth quarter of 2025

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 86 smaller counties in North Carolina, defined as having employment below 75,000 in 2024. (See [table 2](#).) Wage levels in all smaller counties were below the national average. Union reported the highest average weekly wage (\$1,307). Pamlico reported the lowest average weekly wage (\$799) in the state.

Among all 100 North Carolina counties, 34 reported average weekly wages less than \$1,000, 18 had wages from \$1,000 to \$1,049, 17 had wages from \$1,050 to \$1,099, 11 had wages from \$1,100 to \$1,149, and 20 had average weekly wages of \$1,150 or higher. (See [map 1](#) and [table 2](#).)

Map 1. Average weekly wages by county in North Carolina, fourth quarter 2025
(U.S. average = \$1,569)



Hover, tap on mobile devices, or use tab and arrow keys to see area data.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Additional statistics and other information

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#).

Nationwide coverage of the largest counties is published in the [County Employment and Wages news release](#). Additional information about quarterly employment and wages data is available in the [news release Technical Note](#) and from the [Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages website](#).

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Table 1. Covered establishments, employment, and wages in the United States and the 14 largest counties in North Carolina, fourth quarter 2025

Area	Establishments, fourth quarter (thousands)	Employment			Average weekly wage (1)			
		December 2025 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2024–25 (2)	National ranking by percent change (3)	Fourth quarter 2025 (\$)	National ranking by level (3)	Percent change, fourth quarter 2024–25 (2)	National ranking by percent change (3)
United States (4)	12,428.4	156,700.2	0.2	--	1,569	--	4.2	--
North Carolina	392.1	4,991.1	0.9	--	1,409	26	3.8	34
Buncombe	13.8	137.2	3.7	1	1,240	294	1.5	337
Cabarrus	7.4	94.9	2.5	8	1,143	342	2.0	322
Catawba	5.4	90.6	1.0	61	1,175	331	5.8	39
Cumberland	7.6	122.8	-0.8	282	1,111	350	(5)	-
Durham	12.2	233.2	-0.9	297	2,074	13	4.3	151
Forsyth	11.7	192.5	0.7	84	1,345	211	5.1	79
Gaston	6.0	81.9	-0.1	181	1,160	337	6.8	20
Guilford	17.9	296.7	0.6	89	1,270	268	4.4	138
Iredell	7.7	82.2	0.4	107	1,314	228	3.4	251
Mecklenburg	55.4	803.2	1.4	43	1,723	49	3.4	251
New Hanover	11.9	133.2	2.2	16	1,308	236	6.1	30
Orange	5.6	77.4	-0.6	254	1,622	72	1.8	331
Pitt	4.6	83.4	2.5	8	1,287	253	5.7	42
Wake	54.1	673.1	2.0	20	1,638	65	4.1	182

Footnotes:

- (1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
- (2) Percent changes were computed from employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.
- (3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
- (4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
- (5) Data do not meet BLS or state agency disclosure standards.

Note: Data are preliminary. Dashes indicate data not applicable or available. Covered employment and wages include workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 2. Covered establishments, employment, and wages in the United States and all counties in North Carolina, fourth quarter 2025

Area	Establishments	Employment December 2025	Average weekly wage (\$) (1)
United States (2)	12,428,415	156,700,218	1,569
North Carolina	392,124	4,991,060	1,409
Alamance	4,549	67,237	1,055
Alexander	761	8,835	972
Alleghany	357	3,181	886
Anson	514	6,825	997
Ashe	787	7,601	1,087
Avery	722	7,310	962
Beaufort	1,380	16,265	1,085
Bertie	360	5,322	931
Bladen	711	12,087	1,012
Brunswick	4,989	43,485	1,136
Buncombe	13,787	137,219	1,240
Burke	1,856	29,535	1,038

Footnotes:

- (1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
- (2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Dashes indicate data not applicable or available. Covered employment and wages include workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Area	Establishments	Employment December 2025	Average weekly wage (\$) (1)
Cabarrus	7,354	94,854	1,143
Caldwell	1,677	25,401	1,052
Camden	232	1,277	1,098
Carteret	2,905	25,102	999
Caswell	347	2,971	1,070
Catawba	5,432	90,582	1,175
Chatham	2,674	20,634	1,156
Cherokee	981	7,960	956
Chowan	451	5,110	1,085
Clay	403	2,373	955
Cleveland	2,336	36,897	1,062
Columbus	1,233	14,616	966
Craven	2,851	40,239	1,136
Cumberland	7,564	122,785	1,111
Currituck	1,095	6,783	970
Dare	2,402	18,795	1,026
Davidson	3,769	46,655	1,121
Davie	1,180	14,749	1,104
Duplin	1,198	19,996	947
Durham	12,238	233,194	2,074
Edgecombe	932	14,914	1,028
Forsyth	11,705	192,509	1,345
Franklin	1,846	14,770	1,161
Gaston	5,968	81,888	1,160
Gates	207	1,477	984
Graham	226	1,879	1,058
Granville	1,229	21,363	1,255
Greene	405	4,499	978
Guilford	17,854	296,689	1,270
Halifax	1,078	15,318	970
Harnett	2,716	29,827	1,011
Haywood	2,084	17,550	1,004
Henderson	4,352	44,340	1,151
Hertford	478	8,448	1,010
Hoke	784	9,680	953
Hyde	211	1,508	890
Iredell	7,665	82,169	1,314
Jackson	1,339	19,724	1,023
Johnston	5,924	67,316	1,118
Jones	202	1,604	1,005
Lee	1,866	27,665	1,162
Lenoir	1,416	30,333	1,115
Lincoln	2,903	29,089	1,131
McDowell	1,013	15,547	966
Macon	1,548	12,425	981

Footnotes:

- (1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
- (2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Dashes indicate data not applicable or available. Covered employment and wages include workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Area	Establishments	Employment December 2025	Average weekly wage (\$) (1)
Madison	621	4,359	978
Martin	506	6,203	835
Mecklenburg	55,394	803,188	1,723
Mitchell	455	4,722	1,000
Montgomery	636	8,584	1,055
Moore	3,735	43,372	1,174
Nash	2,523	40,647	1,098
New Hanover	11,880	133,231	1,308
Northampton	360	4,672	1,073
Onslow	4,632	54,747	956
Orange	5,563	77,409	1,622
Pamlico	357	3,755	799
Pasquotank	1,196	15,763	1,027
Pender	2,235	15,967	1,024
Perquimans	291	2,304	933
Person	837	9,147	1,020
Pitt	4,641	83,382	1,287
Polk	770	5,673	948
Randolph	3,302	45,381	1,056
Richmond	925	13,626	985
Robeson	2,132	37,717	967
Rockingham	1,937	24,108	970
Rowan	3,547	51,861	1,223
Rutherford	1,557	18,427	976
Sampson	1,286	17,631	1,116
Scotland	718	12,673	1,055
Stanly	1,775	24,976	923
Stokes	904	7,708	855
Surry	2,096	29,139	1,035
Swain	530	7,172	1,007
Transylvania	1,319	9,694	1,071
Tyrrell	106	996	985
Union	8,734	80,120	1,307
Vance	989	14,041	972
Wake	54,054	673,073	1,638
Warren	370	2,925	879
Washington	284	3,081	1,050
Watauga	2,057	24,998	1,055
Wayne	2,632	41,334	1,020
Wilkes	1,429	19,120	1,035
Wilson	2,165	35,580	1,112
Yadkin	826	9,942	983
Yancey	530	5,054	1,007

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Dashes indicate data not applicable or available. Covered employment and wages include workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

Table 3. Covered establishments, employment, and wages by state, fourth quarter 2025

State	Establishments, fourth quarter (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage (1)			
		December 2025 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2024–25	Fourth quarter 2025 (\$)	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2024–25	National ranking by percent change
United States (2)	12,428.4	156,700.2	0.2	1,569	--	4.2	--
Alabama	167.4	2,135.3	0.5	1,301	36	3.7	37
Alaska	25.3	317.3	-0.3	1,497	16	4.7	14
Arizona	227.4	3,278.3	0.0	1,446	20	3.0	47
Arkansas	113.0	1,318.2	0.4	1,213	49	5.0	8
California	2,013.7	18,351.7	0.6	1,954	4	4.6	16
Colorado	258.5	2,896.4	-0.6	1,683	8	5.6	3
Connecticut	149.8	1,706.5	0.1	1,801	6	5.0	8
Delaware	47.3	481.0	0.1	1,502	15	4.7	14
District of Columbia	51.0	726.1	-4.5	2,587	1	4.1	24
Florida	886.2	10,013.2	0.3	1,471	17	4.8	12
Georgia	398.7	4,925.4	0.1	1,440	21	3.5	40
Hawaii	63.0	650.0	-0.2	1,411	25	5.0	8
Idaho	104.3	875.7	1.8	1,303	35	5.8	2
Illinois	387.7	6,089.5	-0.1	1,588	11	3.3	42
Indiana	195.6	3,211.2	0.1	1,276	40	4.5	17
Iowa	110.6	1,560.0	-0.2	1,282	39	3.7	37
Kansas	101.8	1,443.2	-0.1	1,268	44	4.1	24
Kentucky	161.3	2,008.7	-0.1	1,235	46	3.8	34
Louisiana	159.2	1,927.3	-0.5	1,267	45	3.2	44
Maine	67.6	644.7	-0.1	1,332	33	4.2	21
Maryland	199.5	2,754.6	-1.1	1,616	10	3.0	47
Massachusetts	298.5	3,625.5	-0.9	1,980	2	4.9	11
Michigan	316.9	4,412.7	0.0	1,427	23	4.2	21
Minnesota	215.2	2,948.0	0.0	1,505	14	3.7	37
Mississippi	92.2	1,180.9	0.3	1,075	51	5.1	7
Missouri	259.9	2,920.8	-0.1	1,324	34	4.4	18
Montana	62.3	512.3	-0.1	1,296	38	3.3	42
Nebraska	78.5	1,024.0	-0.2	1,275	42	4.0	31
Nevada	111.0	1,592.1	1.7	1,395	27	3.2	44
New Hampshire	67.9	688.8	-0.6	1,652	9	4.8	12
New Jersey	343.1	4,343.1	0.2	1,691	7	3.9	33
New Mexico	69.7	875.3	-0.3	1,275	42	4.1	24
New York	719.1	9,907.5	0.4	1,975	3	5.4	4
North Carolina	392.1	4,991.1	0.9	1,409	26	3.8	34
North Dakota	37.0	430.4	-0.2	1,350	31	2.7	49
Ohio	348.5	5,554.4	0.0	1,358	30	4.1	24
Oklahoma	129.3	1,717.1	0.1	1,217	48	4.1	24
Oregon	177.9	1,975.8	-1.0	1,468	19	3.2	44
Pennsylvania	398.1	6,094.8	0.2	1,470	18	4.0	31
Rhode Island	49.1	500.3	-0.1	1,429	22	6.0	1

Footnotes:
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.
(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.
(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Dashes indicate data not applicable or available. Covered employment and wages include workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

State	Establishments, fourth quarter (thousands)	Employment		Average weekly wage (1)			
		December 2025 (thousands)	Percent change, December 2024–25	Fourth quarter 2025 (\$)	National ranking by level	Percent change, fourth quarter 2024–25	National ranking by percent change
South Carolina	192.4	2,344.7	1.5	1,276	40	4.3	20
South Dakota	41.2	458.9	-0.2	1,230	47	4.1	24
Tennessee	225.2	3,281.6	-0.3	1,424	24	3.8	34
Texas	860.8	14,255.2	0.8	1,549	13	4.2	21
Utah	144.6	1,761.6	1.4	1,389	28	4.1	24
Vermont	34.5	309.3	-0.9	1,378	29	5.3	5
Virginia	324.0	4,166.9	0.5	1,585	12	2.6	50
Washington	242.1	3,590.3	-0.3	1,948	5	2.4	51
West Virginia	62.8	698.3	-0.6	1,203	50	3.5	40
Wisconsin	213.9	2,946.2	-0.1	1,346	32	5.3	5
Wyoming	31.7	278.4	-0.8	1,297	37	4.4	18
Puerto Rico	53.5	974.7	-0.2	735	(3)	2.8	(3)
Virgin Islands	3.0	34.7	0.3	1,068	(3)	2.7	(3)

Footnotes:

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