

Oregon Wage Information Frequently Asked Questions

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Why is the Oregon Wage Information (OWI) published in June or July? Can it be published earlier in the year?

The wage data are not completed until the first of May. Formatting the tables, preparing the final graphics, printing the publication, and mailing the publication take about two more months. As much of the design and content as possible is completed in March and April, but the data tables are not ready until mid-May.

While the hard copy publication is delivered in June or July, the wage data are updated on the Oregon Employment Department's (OED) labor market information Web site, www.QualityInfo.org, in mid- to late May. Three ways wage data can be accessed are:

- Select "Regions" from the left-side menu, then select a region from the map. Click on the "Publications" tab and scroll about halfway down to the "Regional Wage Information Tables." You may view the state or region tables in print or online format. You can rotate the view when using print format (pdf).
- Select "Publications" from the left-side menu and scroll about halfway down to "Oregon Wage Information." Select "Go to publication" and then "PDF" for the print format of the full (state and all regions) publication. You can rotate the view when using print format.
- Farther down on the left-side menu under "Tools" select the "Occupational Info Center." Choose an occupation from either the "Key Word Search" or "Occupational Drill Down" tools. When you have the occupation, click "Continue" without further selections for geography or report style. Then click "Wages" in the "Report Contents" box or scroll down to "Wages." You can now see wages for your chosen occupation across all regions where we have publishable data.

How are the state's workforce regions determined, and why does it publish OWI only for those regions? Why isn't OWI information published at the county level, since in some region's counties differ greatly?

In an effort to use resources most effectively, OED provides wage data for the geographic areas most requested by its customers. These areas happen to be the workforce regions. These regions are established by the counties and the governor's Oregon Workforce Investment Board. Even if we were to provide data for each county, the number of occupations published would decrease to such a

degree that the geographic difference in wages for many occupations would not be seen. This decrease in occupational data results from several factors including confidentiality and statistical quality.

Why is all of the information in one publication? Can't you publish by regions?

In an effort to use resources most effectively, we provide the data in just one printed publication. This reduces printing costs and inventory-associated storage costs. However, the regional publication formats are available at www.QualityInfo.org. To download and print the regional files:

Select "Regions" from the left-side menu, then select a region from the map. Click on the "Publications" tab and scroll about halfway down to the "Regional Wage Information Tables." You may view the state or region tables in print or online format. You can rotate the view when using print format (pdf).

Why isn't wage data published for all occupations in the region? Why is there such a limited selection of job titles to choose from?

The occupations published are limited to those in the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). The SOC is used in the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Employment Survey, from which we obtain wage rates that employers are paying their Oregon workers.

Sometimes an occupation has no employment or reported wages in a given region. Other times the wage data reported in the survey are insufficient to calculate reliable wages. We also do not publish wages for an occupation if doing so would compromise the confidentiality of an employer's response in the survey.

Some occupations seem to be grouped together. How did you decide which to group, and which to publish separately?

The apparent grouping of occupations is part of the SOC structure. This classification system includes more than 750 separate occupations and is designed and reviewed by a national committee of experts from industry, government, and academia. Since the national wage survey uses the SOC, we are limited to that structure when publishing wage data.

Job descriptions aren't included in this publication. Where can I find descriptions of the occupations listed?

Occupational descriptions can be found on www.QualityInfo.org in two places:

- Select "Publications" from the left-side menu and scroll about three-fourths of the way down at the end of the "Data" box on the right-hand side. Select

“Standard Occupational Classification Descriptions” and then “PDF” for the print format of the full job description publication.

- Farther down on the left-side menu under “Tools” select the “Occupational Info Center.” Choose an occupation from either the “Key Word Search” or “Occupational Drill Down” tools. When you have the occupation, click “Continue” without further selections for geography or report style. Then click “Occupation Description” in the “Report Contents” box or scroll down to “Occupation Description.” You may also want to click on “Skills” to see a list of skill statements that may be used in a job description.

Does the wage information include workers in both the public and private sectors, or just in the private sector?

The wage data include both public and private employers across all industries except private only in natural resources (agriculture, forestry, and fishing).

Is it possible to get OWI data on just nonprofit businesses?

Nonprofit businesses are spread across many industries and are not separately sampled in the survey. Thus, it is not possible to get statistically reliable wages for nonprofits.

How can I use OWI data to establish pay ranges?

The 10th and 90th percentiles are more descriptive of atypical employees or exceptional organizations. So using something closer to the 25th and 75th percentiles better reflects prevailing pay ranges. Starting pay is typically somewhat lower than the 25th percentile (about the 20th percentile). Employees usually top out on a pay range in four to seven years, depending on an employer’s pay practices. At that top end, the pay is usually at about the 80th percentile.