

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) - Output File "Read Me"

ABOUT THE DATA:

These data represent the count of employment and wages for workers covered by unemployment insurance programs in the time period indicated. They are the product of a Federal-State cooperative program known as the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), or ES202, program. Learn more about these data, including the differences with the official employment estimates and their usage, at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/?PageID=176. The Employment Development Department compiles the data from reports filed by employers each quarter.

Note: These data are not the official estimates from the Employment Development Department. See the official "Employment by Industry" data at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/?PageID=166.

THE DATA FIELDS:

Year - The year the data represent.

Period - The time period - "An" is for annual data and "Q1" to "Q4" indicates the quarter. Quarterly data are not available prior to 2001.

GeoCode - The geographic code consisting of the two-digit state code - "06" for California and the three-digit FIPS county code. "06000" is California and "US000" is the United States.

Geography - The geographic area name.

Ownership - Permits the distinction between private and public sector. There are four ownership classifications:

- Private - private sector only
- Federal Government - activities of the United States government
- State Government - state government activities
- Local Government - county, city, special districts, etc.

Industry Codes –

NAICS Code - Beginning with 2001 data, industries are classified according to the North American Industry Classification System. NAICS not only represents the first major revision of the industrial classification used in the United States since the 1930s, but also represents a cooperative effort between the United States, Canada, and Mexico to develop a uniform coding structure which could be used by all three countries. For more information on this new coding scheme, go to www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/article.asp?ARTICLEID=659.

NOTE: Industry codes with "10" as the first two digits are NOT actual NAICS codes. They are codes assigned to super- and major-sectors within the NAICS schema.

Industry Title - The full title of the industry as found in the North American Industry Classification (NAICS) system.

"S" - Suppression Indicator -

A "0" in this column indicates no suppression and "1" indicates that data have been suppressed.

The publication of unemployment insurance-covered employment and wage data for any industry is withheld when it is necessary to protect the identity of cooperating employers. The data will be suppressed if there are fewer than three establishments, or if a single employer makes up more than 80 percent of the employment in that industry. The remaining data cells for an industry that has been suppressed will be "0". The "0" acts as a "placeholder" and does not represent an actual zero value.

Establishments - The average number of establishments reporting in the time period. An establishment is an economic unit, such as a farm, mine, factory, or store that produces goods or provides services. It is typically at a single physical location and is engaged in one, or predominantly one, type of business activity for which a single industrial classification has been assigned.

Employment - The average of the monthly employment for the time period. Employment is the number of filled jobs for the pay period that includes the 12th day of each month as reported by the employer and it includes full and part-time workers. If a person holds two jobs, that person would be counted twice in these data.

Total Payroll - The total compensation paid by an employer during the calendar year, regardless of when the services were performed. Wages include bonuses, stock options, the cash value of meals and lodging, tips and other gratuities. The payroll data in the downloadable file are in whole dollars; however, the data in the on-line display are in thousands of dollars.

Average Weekly - The result of dividing the Total Payroll by the Average Monthly Employment and then dividing by the number of weeks in the year (52) or quarter (13).

CAUTION about Average Weekly Pay! Average pay is affected by the ratio of full-time to part-time workers; the number of workers who worked for the full year; and the number of individuals in high-paying and low-paying occupations. When comparing average pay levels between geographic areas and industries, these factors should be taken into consideration. For example, industries characterized by high proportions of part-time workers will show average wage levels appreciably less than the pay levels of regular full-time employees in these industries. The opposite effect characterizes industries with low proportions of part-time workers, or industries that typically schedule heavy weekend and overtime work. Average wage data also may be influenced by work stoppages, labor turnover, retroactive payments, seasonal factors, bonus payments, and so on.

HOW TO DOWNLOAD THE FILE:

To generate a file to download, select "File to Download..." and select the button, "Get the Data". This is the file of all the data for the geography and time period you selected and want to save to your computer. To save the output file from your browser, go to the "File" menu on your browser and select "Save As...". A window should open so you can select the folder on your computer where you want to store the file. Save the file in a "text" format with the name of your choice.

Now you can import the file into the analysis software of your choice, such as Microsoft Excel or Access, QuatroPro, or Visual FoxPro. If necessary, review the help files of your software for how to import a fixed-width text file.

As an example, here are the steps to import a file saved as, ES202-sample.txt:

1. Open Microsoft Excel.
2. Go to "File" then to "Open..." and open the file, ES202-sample.txt. Since this file was saved with a ".txt." extension, Excel should automatically open the "Text Import Wizard" with three steps:

Step 1: In the "Original data type" box, select "Fixed width". Select "Next >".

Step 2: This is where you set the fields width. Move or delete the arrows shown to delineate the fields. You will notice that Excel has placed some arrows where it thinks they should be. Not all of these will be correct. Tip - the easiest way to put the arrows in the right place is to double click on the ruler just before the start of each field. Select "Next >"

Step 3: Here you will set the data formats for the different fields. Usually, Excel knows what formats to use. However, with this file there are two important fields that you will need to set. Select the second column for the "GeoCode". Now select "Text" under the "Column data format" in the upper right corner. Repeat this for the column for "NAICS". It is important to read codes as "text" so that any leading zeros will be retained. If you don't, geographic codes such as "06001" will come out as "6001". Select "Finish".

That's it - you are done!