



# IDES Releases New Wage Data for Illinois and Local Areas

*by Yolanda Y. Harris*

The Illinois Department of Employment Security in August released 2011 wage data for occupations in Illinois, its metropolitan areas, counties, local workforce areas and economic development regions. For the first time, the wages reflect trends for an entire calendar year, versus the traditional quarterly time frame. Entry level, median and experienced wages on both an hourly and annual basis for nearly 800 occupations in Illinois are now available on IDES' web site: [www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=913](http://www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=913).

In past years, the wage data reflected a specific quarter from a prior year. Now that the data reflects an entire year, future wage data will be more standardized. When making wage comparisons across geographical areas, IDES labor market economist Ron Payne suggests considering such factors as the cost of living and the

labor supply and demand in particular metropolitan areas.

“If there’s a surplus of workers and a limited number of job openings, employers don’t have to pay as much,” said Payne, who specializes in workforce data in central Illinois, including the Springfield and Decatur metropolitan statistical areas. Also, since the cost of living in the Chicago metro area traditionally is higher than the rest of the state, it is not uncommon to find higher wages for occupations in the Chicago area.

IDES produces wage data from a semiannual mail survey that measures occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. Wage estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million jobs.

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