



**County Technical Services, Inc.  
2019 County Salary Survey**

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## Executive Summary

According to the *Colorado Business Economic Outlook*, the U.S. and Colorado economies will continue to expand in 2019 and 2020. But momentum is expected to slow due to the global economic slowdown and stronger headwinds from tightening labor markets. Improved job opportunities and rising wages have lured additional workers into the labor force and supported growth in consumption. However, labor shortages continue to hamper certain industries, which will erode business profits as wages rise further. As the stimulating impacts of the federal tax cuts wear off, growth in business investment and consumer activity is expected to be moderate but remain at elevated levels.

Higher housing costs and rising interest rates have cooled housing markets in many regions of the U.S., contributing to a decline in residential construction activity. Within Colorado, construction activity remains robust, but has shifted from the metro Denver and northern Front Range areas to more affordable areas of the state. A higher cost of living in a growing number of areas in Colorado will put downward pressure on consumer activity unless wage growth can keep pace with rising housing costs.

### Unemployment Rate in Colorado Remains Low

The current unemployment rate is 3.4 percent in Colorado. Employers will add 53,200 jobs in 2019, which means a growth rate of 2 percent.

### The GDP

Gross domestic product (GDP) is a monetary measure of the value of all final goods and services produced in a period. The GDP is at 2.2 percent. Consumer activity is expected to decelerate in 2019 and 2020 with moderation in household income growth and as auto sales remain soft and demand eases for light-weight trucks.

### The Employment Cost Index

The Employment Cost Index (ECI) measures the relative changes in wages, benefits, and bonuses for a specific group of occupations. The reason the ECI is thought to be an indicator of inflation is that as wages increase, the added cost is often passed on to consumers shortly thereafter in the form of higher prices (which is inflation). In combination with the productivity report, the ECI can reveal whether the increased cost of labor is justified or not.

According to *Trading Economics*, compensation costs for civilian workers in the U.S. increased 0.7 percent in the first quarter of 2019, the same pace as in the previous three-month period and in line with market expectations. Wages and salaries, which make up about 70 percent of compensation costs, rose 0.7 percent (vs 0.6 percent in Q4) and benefit costs, which make up the remaining 30 percent of compensation, went up 0.7 percent (the same as in Q4). Year-on-year, employment costs grew 2.8 percent in the first quarter. The ECI averaged 0.80 percent from 1982 until 2019, reaching an all-time high of 1.60 percent in the third quarter of 1982 and a record low of 0.20 percent in the second quarter of 2015.

Compensation costs for state and local government workers increased 3.0 percent for the 12-month period ending in March 2019. In March 2018, the increase was 2.2 percent. Wages and salaries increased 2.5 percent for the 12-month period ending in March 2019, compared with 1.8 percent a year ago. Benefit costs increased 3.6 percent for the 12-month period ending in March 2019.

This year shows that consumer confidence has dipped in recent months. Despite a strong labor market and improving wage gains, consumer confidence was shaken in December and January. The end of 2018 and start of the new year included stock market volatility, uncertainty around international trade negotiations, and the beginning of a 35-day federal government shutdown, all of which dampened consumer sentiment. On an inflation-adjusted basis, retail sales in January 2019 rose a meager 0.7 percent relative to year-ago levels, reflecting a dip in activity in December. The broader indicator of consumer spending, personal consumption expenditures, shows that consumers continue to be the primary driver of economic activity, though their contribution has moderated over the past.

### **Future of the Economy**

Labor market indicators for both the U.S. and Colorado finished 2018 on a strong note despite signs of growing worker shortages. After growing by 1.6 percent in 2017, national job growth picked up slightly in 2018, increasing by 1.7 percent. In February 2019, the nation posted its 101st consecutive month of job growth, and the unemployment rate remained near historical lows at 3.8 percent. Similarly, labor market activity in Colorado remained strong into the start of 2019 as most sectors added workers to their payrolls.

U.S. nonfarm employment added jobs at a pace of 1.4 percent in 2017, and the expectation is that it will moderate to 0.9 percent in 2020 as labor markets grow tighter. The U.S. unemployment rate is expected to average 3.7 percent in 2019 and rise to 4.0 percent in 2020 as an increasing number of workers seek employment.

In Colorado, nonfarm employment will grow 2.1 percent in 2019 before slowing to grow 1.5 percent in 2020. Rising labor force participation will sustain employment gains. The Colorado unemployment rate is expected to average 3.6 percent in 2019 and 3.9 percent in 2020.

Strong labor markets are counteracting structural shifts. Colorado's labor force participation rate is climbing despite the aging of the state population. Growing labor force participation since 2015 suggests that improved job opportunities are strong enough to offset demographic change and structural shifts toward automation, which have reduced demand for lower-skilled workers in many industries. Over the last two years, those over the age of 65 have shown some of the strongest growth in labor force participation in Colorado.

While it is true that Colorado's labor market remains tight, the Colorado labor market remains one of the strongest in the country, posting a 1.8 percent employment gain in January. The state added roughly 5,400 new jobs each month in 2018 for a total of 64,800 jobs for the year. As of the start of the year, job gains have continued across most sectors, with professional and business services posting the largest gains relative to levels in January 2018. Employment in the mining and logging super sector continues to trend upward, although volatility in oil markets may put a drag on hiring in 2019. Employment in federal government and finance and insurance sectors was down slightly from the same month last year.

Colorado's unemployment rate remains near its historic low, starting the year at 3.7 percent. The state unemployment rate has been ticking up slightly since July 2017 due to a growing labor force. In 2018, the state added over 102,000 people to its labor force, a 3.4 percent increase from 2017. In spite of the increase in labor force participation, many employers are reporting that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find the talent and skilled labor needed to grow their businesses.

The previous statistics are from Richard Wobbekind, *2019 Business Outlook*, University of Colorado Leeds School of Business, 2018 and *Trading Economics.com*.

## Participation in the 2019 CTSI County Wage Survey

A total of thirty-one counties participated in the 2019 survey: Alamosa, Archuleta, Bent, Clear Creek, Conejos, Crowley, Custer, Delta, Elbert, Fremont, Gilpin, Grand, Gunnison, Hinsdale, Huerfano, Kiowa, Lake, LaPlata, Logan, Montezuma, Montrose, Morgan, Ouray, Prowers, Pueblo, Rio Blanco, Saguache, Sedgwick, Summit, Teller, and Yuma.

### Vacation and Sick Leave

Twenty-five counties provided information on their health insurance and employee benefits. This chart depicts the average earned vacation and sick time based on employee length of employment.

Sick Days-Management	Earned after years of service					
	less than 2	2	5	10	15	20+
Average	11	11	11	11	11	11
Minimum	4	4	4	4	4	4
Maximum	15	15	15	15	15	15

Sick Days-Others	Earned after years of service					
	less than 2	2	5	10	15	20+
Average	11	11	11	11	11	11
Minimum	4	4	4	4	4	4
Maximum	15	15	15	15	15	15

Vacation Days-Management	Earned after years of service					
	less than 2	2	5	10	15	20+
Average	11	12	15	18	20	20
Minimum	5	5	6	9	10	10
Maximum	26	26	29	33	36	36

Vacation Days-Others	Earned after years of service					
	less than 2	2	5	10	15	20+
Average	11	12	14	17	19	19
Minimum	5	5	5	5	5	5
Maximum	26	26	29	33	36	36

## Medical Costs

The Society for Human Resource Management reports that the employer's health care cost has plateaued. Nonetheless, the price of health care is still being passed on to workers, the end- result being that salary increases get absorbed by the price an employee must pay for health care. That trend is tempered in county government where many of the counties absorb some or all of the employee health care costs.

This chart shows the distribution of cost of health insurance benefits between the employer and employee for the twenty-five reporting counties.

Distribution of Cost of Health Insurance	
Employer Pays 100%	40%
Employer Pays 80% - 99%	36%
Employer Pays 25% - 79%	24%

## Conclusion

While employee compensation overall has been rejuvenated over the past year, wage and salary growth is weighed down by demographic factors. On an inflation-adjusted, per-worker basis, wages and salaries fell during both 2016 and 2017. Many economists attribute this phenomenon to the retirement of long-tenured veteran employees who earned relatively high wages and salaries and their replacement by younger, less-experienced employees who earn less. This demographic skew may dissipate if remaining employees receive wage increases commensurate with the responsibility they assume as their retiring coworkers depart. In addition to the aging population, technological advances and automation continue to dampen wage growth by competing with or replacing many lower-skilled jobs.

County wages continue to increase and decrease in the various classifications. This is to be expected based on economic factors both locally and nationally. The challenge for county commissioners is to base pay on experience and parity when evaluating wages for all employee classifications.

## 2019 Reported Wages by Benchmark Job Titles

Benchmark Job Title	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Count
Accountant	\$26.22	\$16.78	\$36.69	34
Accounting Technician	\$20.49	\$11.50	\$52.79	56
Administrative Assistant	\$17.70	\$8.72	\$40.00	359
Administrative Supervisor	\$24.66	\$13.00	\$39.43	120
Appraisal or Property Records Technician	\$19.74	\$11.31	\$60.00	50
Appraiser (Personal Property)	\$17.99	\$15.26	\$25.58	18
Appraiser (Real Property)	\$23.62	\$14.42	\$38.08	51
Assistant County Clerk	\$16.70	\$10.55	\$29.47	95
Bailing Foreman	\$24.82	\$12.50	\$34.44	6
Benefits Technician	\$21.90	\$14.31	\$28.92	16
Building Inspector	\$24.92	\$13.85	\$41.13	24
Captain	\$35.19	\$22.43	\$53.88	30
Chief County Engineer	\$44.23	\$21.79	\$60.47	7
Chief or Deputy Assessor	\$26.20	\$14.31	\$43.40	31
Chief or Deputy County Clerk	\$21.14	\$10.09	\$36.64	51
Civil/Water/Traffic Engineer	\$21.71	\$13.23	\$41.88	5
Communications Dispatcher	\$19.46	\$13.25	\$35.00	142
Computer Systems Operator	\$25.13	\$16.00	\$39.68	25
Computer Systems Programmer	\$29.83	\$15.38	\$47.30	17
County Attorney	\$51.38	\$21.63	\$103.14	34
County Manager	\$53.54	\$18.67	\$95.08	22
Degreed Professional	\$28.08	\$20.60	\$37.91	16
Department Manager	\$38.93	\$14.00	\$77.49	181
Deputy Patrol	\$23.58	\$10.76	\$38.37	384
Detention Manager	\$26.07	\$14.00	\$52.36	36
Detention Officer	\$19.13	\$10.26	\$35.00	503
DHS Case Manager	\$23.66	\$13.00	\$44.29	93
DHS Caseworker (all levels)	\$21.81	\$13.10	\$38.08	306
DHS Intake Technician	\$17.31	\$11.20	\$34.10	251
Emergency Medical Technician	\$15.36	\$11.00	\$52.88	119
Engineering Technician (all levels)	\$28.80	\$20.80	\$40.19	8
Finance Analyst	\$36.51	\$24.66	\$49.91	16
Geographic Information Systems Specialist	\$29.36	\$17.55	\$40.08	15
Grant Contract Program Manager	\$18.83	\$11.10	\$30.44	18
Investigator or Sergeant	\$28.83	\$13.52	\$51.35	181
Landfill Operator	\$16.95	\$11.10	\$20.99	40
Legal Assistant	\$24.03	\$16.18	\$32.61	21
Maintenance Mechanic	\$18.14	\$11.10	\$33.42	127
Manager, Coordinator Emergency Medical Services	\$24.39	\$14.00	\$54.00	32
Mapper/Cartographer	\$22.62	\$16.89	\$33.26	10
Networked Systems Administrator	\$39.30	\$28.19	\$50.34	22
Personnel Analyst	\$26.54	\$18.45	\$34.06	9
Personnel Director	\$33.66	\$22.48	\$47.86	16
Planner	\$27.33	\$16.00	\$44.23	34

Benchmark Job Title	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Count
Planner Assistant	\$21.96	\$15.00	\$33.95	19
Plans Examiner	\$26.73	\$18.96	\$31.11	7
Public Health Nurse Manager	\$30.52	\$19.95	\$47.48	36
Public Health or EH Director	\$35.22	\$18.00	\$64.65	19
Public Health Personal Care Provider	\$15.59	\$10.20	\$36.47	95
R&B Equipment Operator (all levels)	\$19.99	\$11.21	\$31.53	542
R&B Foreman/Crew Leader	\$26.21	\$16.45	\$39.42	106
R&B Maintenance Worker	\$17.14	\$11.49	\$27.42	67
Recreation Specialist	\$18.10	\$11.35	\$23.08	12
Recreation Worker	\$14.30	\$11.10	\$20.00	34
Senior Center Van Driver	\$12.43	\$10.20	\$16.97	27
Transportation Inspector	\$29.32	\$19.24	\$37.00	9
Undersheriff Administration	\$38.55	\$18.33	\$71.69	26
Undersheriff Patrol	\$33.01	\$16.83	\$46.74	16
Vehicle Mechanic	\$22.37	\$14.50	\$32.85	72
Weed Pest Control Assistant	\$24.20	\$18.20	\$33.14	6
Weed Pest Control Supervision	\$28.72	\$20.90	\$35.40	9



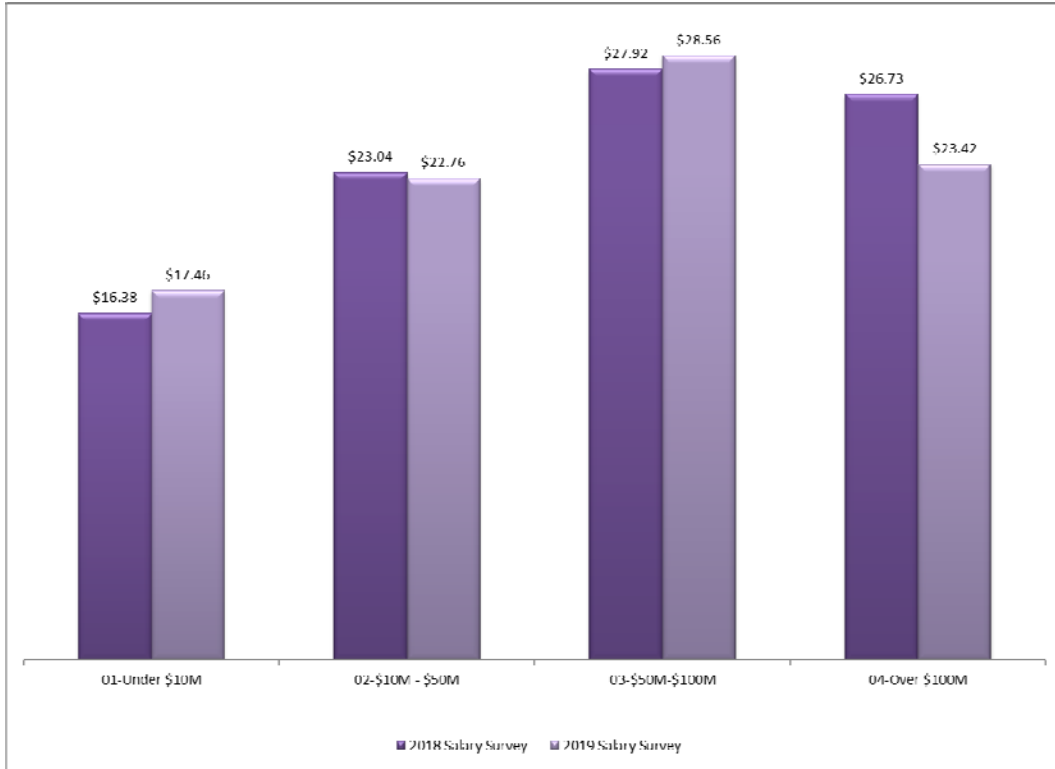
## Average Wage by County Revenue Group

In general, wages have been slightly higher for the higher revenue counties.

Benchmark Job Title	01-Under \$10M	02-\$10M - \$50M	03-\$50M-\$100M	04-Over \$100M
Accountant	\$22.28	\$26.98	\$30.84	\$22.53
Accounting Technician	\$18.10	\$20.58	\$17.01	\$52.79
Administrative Assistant	\$15.96	\$17.60	\$20.47	\$19.20
Administrative Supervisor	\$19.69	\$25.79	\$25.51	\$26.04
Appraisal or Property Records Technician	\$24.55	\$18.64	\$16.29	\$19.29
Appraiser (Personal Property)	\$25.58	\$17.18	\$23.29	
Appraiser (Real Property)	\$17.96	\$22.66	\$27.70	\$20.11
Assistant County Clerk	\$12.91	\$17.03	\$18.70	
Bailing Foreman		\$21.57	\$31.32	
Benefits Technician	\$20.36	\$22.41		
Building Inspector	\$18.77	\$26.85	\$27.50	
Captain	\$22.43	\$33.43	\$43.76	\$42.96
Chief County Engineer		\$39.40	\$60.47	\$52.09
Chief or Deputy Assessor	\$18.86	\$26.69	\$41.56	\$43.40
Chief or Deputy County Clerk	\$16.77	\$23.92	\$28.86	\$34.19
Civil/Water/Traffic Engineer	\$16.66		\$41.88	
Communications Dispatcher	\$14.92	\$19.35	\$25.75	\$20.29
Computer Systems Operator	\$17.62	\$21.82	\$29.73	
Computer Systems Programmer	\$21.82	\$24.31	\$46.48	\$29.40
County Attorney	\$31.03	\$50.69	\$59.31	\$64.15
County Manager	\$36.60	\$57.94	\$84.20	
Degreed Professional	\$25.80	\$28.41		
Department Manager	\$25.31	\$38.43	\$54.62	\$49.23
Deputy Patrol	\$17.04	\$23.85	\$27.68	\$26.70
Detention Manager	\$17.42	\$27.95	\$40.84	\$47.98
Detention Officer	\$13.35	\$18.95	\$21.70	\$21.89
DHS Case Manager	\$23.41	\$23.06	\$24.95	\$28.27
DHS Caseworker (all levels)	\$21.39	\$21.22	\$23.29	\$22.91
DHS Intake Technician	\$17.33	\$17.41	\$18.26	\$16.98
Emergency Medical Technician	\$13.61	\$16.53	\$26.07	
Engineering Technician (all levels)		\$28.67	\$28.93	
Finance Analyst	\$35.06	\$38.20	\$27.82	
Geographic Information Systems Specialist		\$27.51	\$36.79	
Grant Contract Program Manager		\$18.83		
Investigator or Sergeant	\$18.28	\$26.96	\$34.59	\$34.25
Landfill Operator	\$14.04	\$17.93		
Legal Assistant	\$16.30	\$23.67	\$30.53	\$24.07
Maintenance Mechanic	\$16.29	\$18.04	\$20.12	\$20.77
Manager, Coordinator Emergency Medical Services	\$21.46	\$23.90	\$54.00	
Mapper/Cartographer	\$18.83	\$22.04	\$26.11	
Networked Systems Administrator	\$36.79	\$37.91	\$40.99	\$43.04
Personnel Analyst	\$25.64	\$23.45	\$28.71	\$28.55
Personnel Director	\$26.33	\$34.38	\$35.53	\$45.77
Planner	\$24.78	\$26.95	\$30.39	\$25.23
Planner Assistant	\$20.29	\$19.17	\$29.32	

Benchmark Job Title	01-Under \$10M	02-\$10M - \$50M	03-\$50M-\$100M	04-Over \$100M
Plans Examiner	\$18.96	\$28.01	\$28.06	
Public Health Nurse Manager	\$29.31	\$30.04	\$39.32	
Public Health or EH Director	\$29.68	\$35.37	\$51.05	
Public Health Personal Care Provider	\$11.65	\$21.65	\$34.51	
R&B Equipment Operator (all levels)	\$17.15	\$20.24	\$24.43	\$19.15
R&B Foreman/Crew Leader	\$21.82	\$26.99	\$31.71	\$24.87
R&B Maintenance Worker	\$15.02	\$18.90		\$13.71
Recreation Specialist	\$11.35	\$18.71		
Recreation Worker		\$14.28	\$14.87	
Senior Center Van Driver	\$12.91	\$12.01	\$16.97	
Transportation Inspector	\$20.24	\$30.67	\$29.80	
Undersheriff Administration	\$26.39	\$39.80	\$56.85	\$53.67
Undersheriff Patrol	\$23.16	\$36.57		\$46.74
Vehicle Mechanic	\$21.84	\$22.76	\$21.73	\$20.55
Weed Pest Control Assistant	\$18.20	\$25.37	\$25.53	
Weed Pest Control Supervision	\$25.25	\$28.89	\$34.65	

**Chart-Average Wage by County Revenue Group**



**Chart-Median Wage by County Revenue Group**

