

Real Earnings – January 2010

Every month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics releases data on real earnings for production or nonsupervisory workers in the private sector. Real earnings reflect the value of workers' paychecks adjusted for inflation. They indicate whether or not wage increases have actually translated into an improved standard of living.

Real Earnings Stats at a Glance - January

Year	Private Sector		Manufacturing	
	Average Hourly Earnings	Earnings Adjusted for Inflation (Jan. 2010 dollars)	Average Hourly Earnings	Earnings Adjusted for Inflation (Jan. 2010 dollars)
2005	15.91	18.15	16.38	18.68
2006	16.43	18.00	16.70	18.30
2007	17.11	18.41	17.02	18.31
2008	17.76	18.24	17.51	17.99
2009	18.43	19.06	18.01	18.63
2010		18.89		18.42

The weak economy continues to keep inflation in check and is also holding wage growth down. Over the month, hourly purchasing power stayed the same, however, it was down compared with January 2009.

- Real average hourly earnings were essentially unchanged in January compared to December, as increases in the price index offset increases in hourly earnings.
- An uptick in weekly hours worked led to a small (0.3 percent) increase in real weekly earnings.
- On a year-over-year basis, real earnings fell 17 cents in the private sector and 21 cents in manufacturing.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics report can be found at:
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/realer.pdf>

Next release: March 18, 2010

UAW Research Department
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