Employers, Workers, and 
Wages Under OASI, April–June 1953

The number of workers with taxable wages in employment covered by old-age and survivors insurance in April–June 1953, excluding the self-employed covered by the program, is estimated at 48 million. This number is approximately a million more than that in the preceding quarter and is 4.3 percent greater than that in April–June 1952. The total number of workers in covered employment (again excluding the self-employed) is estimated at 48.5 million—an increase of 3.2 percent from the January–March 1953 total and 4.3 percent from the number in April–June 1952.

Taxable wages, estimated at $36 billion, were 10.3 percent higher than the amount paid in April–June 1952, and total wages in covered employment, estimated at $39 billion, increased 11.4 percent in the same period. In line with the increases in average hourly earnings and average weekly earnings in manufacturing, average taxable wages and average wages in covered employment, estimated at $750 and $894, respectively, increased 5.8 and 6.8 percent from the averages in the corresponding period of 1952. New estimating procedures have resulted in the retention of rounded figures for wages and employment as far back as the first quarter of 1951. Consequently, the amount of variation in average quarterly wages in covered employment is not significant in any comparison of seasonal changes from 1 quarter to the next.

Estimated number of employers 1 and workers and amount of earnings in employment covered under old-age and survivors insurance, for specified periods, 1940–53 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year, quarter 3</th>
<th>Employers reporting wages 4 (in thousands)</th>
<th>Workers with taxable earnings 4 during period 6 (in millions)</th>
<th>Taxable earnings 4 (in millions)</th>
<th>Average per worker</th>
<th>All workers in covered employment 4 during period 6 (in millions)</th>
<th>Total earnings in covered employment 4 (in millions)</th>
<th>Average per worker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940 * 5</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>38,975</td>
<td>$24,874</td>
<td>1,856</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td>$84,421</td>
<td>2,880</td>
</tr>
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<td>1953 * 5</td>
<td>3,440</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>$38,975</td>
<td>1,728</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>$102,000</td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Number corresponds to number of employer returns. A return may relate to more than 1 establishment if employer operates several separate establishments but reports for concern as a whole.
2 Data exclude joint coverage under the railroad retirement and old-age and survivors insurance programs.
3 Annual totals for 1951 and 1952 include the self-employed and their earnings (covered beginning for 1950).
4 Quarterly totals exclude the self-employed and their earnings.
5 For quarterly and annual data for 1937–39 see the Bulletin, February 1947, p. 31. Quarterly data for other years were in the Bulletin, August 1947, February 1948, and August 1953 issues.
6 For a description of the series and quarter data for 1940 see the Bulletin, August 1947, p. 30. Quarterly data for other years were in the Bulletin in the 1948 and January 1953 issues.

* Preliminary.
Old-Age Benefits in Current-Payment Status, December 31, 1953

Old-age benefits under the old-age and survivors insurance program were being paid on December 31, 1953, to more than 3.2 million persons, almost three-fifths of a million more than in December 1952. The accompanying table shows the average monthly benefit amount and gives a percentage distribution of the number of beneficiaries according to the size of their benefit; the data are classified by the beneficiaries' State of residence at the close of 1953.

In December 1953 the average old-age benefit amount was $51.10, almost $2 higher than the average a year earlier. One out of 9 old-age beneficiaries (11 percent) were receiving monthly amounts of $75.00-85.00 at the end of 1953, in comparison with 1 out of 15 (7 percent) as of December 1952. One-fifth of all old-age beneficiaries were receiving benefits in the $55.00-64.90 range, about the same proportion as at the end of 1952. Minimum benefits of $25.00 were being paid to about 600,000 old-age beneficiaries, 75,000 more than at the end of 1952; as a proportion of the total, however, the number of persons receiving minimum benefits declined about 1 percent to 18.5 percent.

Among the States the average monthly old-age benefit at the end of 1953 ranged from $36.41 in Connecticut to $40.59 in Mississippi. Benefits of $75.00-85.00 were being paid to 15 percent of the old-age beneficiaries in Connecticut and to 4 percent in Mississippi; minimum benefits of $25.00 went to only 11 percent of the beneficiaries in Connecticut and to 37 percent in Mississippi. In Puerto Rico, where the average benefit was only $37.10, 61 percent of the beneficiaries were receiving benefits of less than $35.00.

The average old-age benefit was highest in the Northeastern States and in certain North Central States, somewhat lower in the Middle West and Far West, and for the most part lowest in the Southern States. Five of the six States with the highest average old-age benefit are in the Northeast, while five of the six States with the lowest average benefit are in the South. The lower averages in the Southern States reflected mainly the more frequent periods of non-covered employment in the wage histories of beneficiaries in this area; the result was a reduction in the average monthly wages from which their benefits were computed. The averages also reflected, though to a lesser extent, the prevailing wage rates in different regions throughout the country.