

Real Earnings – September 2009

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 - September

Year	Private Sector		Manufacturing	
	Average Hourly Earnings	Earnings Adjusted for Inflation (Sept. 2009 dollars)	Average Hourly Earnings	Earnings Adjusted for Inflation (Sept. 2009 dollars)
2004	15.79	17.98	16.29	18.55
2005	16.21	17.55	16.59	17.96
2006	16.88	17.96	16.83	17.91
2007	17.57	18.19	17.37	17.98
2008	18.21	17.89	17.81	17.49
2009	18.67		18.31	

- The weak economy took a toll on workers' real earnings in September. Declines in average hourly earnings and the average work week, combined with increased prices, led to a decline in real average weekly earnings.
- Since December 2008, real average weekly earnings (purchasing power) have dropped 1.9 percent making it harder for families to make ends meet.
- Real wage growth won't return until employers start hiring and the unemployment rate begins to fall.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics report can be found at:

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/realer.pdf>

Next release: November 18, 2009

UAW Research Department
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