January 15, 2015

When a raise is not a raise

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that Wisconsin workers were paid an average of $34,743 annually in 2004. By 2013, the average had risen to $42,777.

Although inflation has been relatively low during the past few years it has still eroded the buying power of workers. How much did an employee need to earn on an annual basis in 2013 to have the same buying power as $34,743 in 2004?

a) $35,111
b) $37,743
c) $39,987
d) $42,846

Answer: d) $42,846. In the last ten years, the average annual pay for Wisconsin workers has been essentially unchanged.

Between 2004 and 2013, average annual pay (adjusted for inflation) in the U.S. increased by $1,277 (2.6 percent). Iowa experienced a 3.9 percent increase while average pay Minnesota (0.6 percent) and Illinois (0.9 percent) increased marginally.

Dane County workers have fared better in the last decade. Average annual pay in Dane County increased by $2,186 (4.6 percent) between 2004 and 2013.

Thirty-one of Wisconsin’s seventy-two counties had an increase in average annual pay during the period. Only seven counties realized larger percentage increases than Dane County.

NOTE: Average annual pay includes all wages, salaries, bonuses, benefits, and travel and other work related expenses paid by employers.

Source: [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

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