



# Idaho at a Glance

Facts and Figures  
about living and working in Idaho



STATE OF  
**IDAHO**  
U.S.A.

## IDAHO AT A GLANCE

Idaho's 82,413 square miles varies geographically from high desert in the south to beautiful forests and rugged mountains in the north. There's something here for everyone, and we're pleased to have the opportunity to share these facts and figures about living and working in our beautiful state.



## EMPLOYMENT

Idaho has a diversified economy. While the traditional resource-based industries of agriculture, forest products, and mining continue to contribute to the economy, high-tech, tourism, retail trade, health services, renewable energy, recreation technology, business to business and information-oriented services are among the growth sectors.

Until late 2008 Idaho's economy was among the best in the nation, which influenced growth from in-migration. Idaho's labor force grew 14.9 percent from 1999 to 2009 despite a decline for 2008 to 2009. The states average annual unemployment rate has been below the national level since 2002. By 2007 the unemployment was a record low 2.7 percent. The current recession has taken a heavy toll on Idaho's labor force and in August 2011 it was 9.2 percent.

After yearly increases since 2003, nonfarm jobs began to decline in 2008 for the first time since 1986. In 2011, nonfarm jobs dropped to 607,000. Education, health care and government were the only major sectors to report increases.

For employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors, visit [www.labor.idaho.gov](http://www.labor.idaho.gov) or contact the Idaho Department of Labor at 317 W. Main Street, Boise, Idaho 83735. They have 24 job service offices throughout the state to assist you. Idaho's larger communities are also served by excellent private firms that match job seekers with employment opportunities in the private sector.

### COVERED EMPLOYMENT & AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES PER JOB FOR 2010

	Avg. Employment	Avg. Wages
Agriculture	21,563	\$27,573
Mining	2,291	\$66,873
Construction	31,213	\$38,808
Manufacturing	53,103	\$49,392
Trade, Utilities & Transportation	120,114	\$31,670
Information	9,683	\$40,959
Financial Activities	26,877	\$41,604
Professional & Business Services	74,813	\$42,484
Educational and Health Services	80,518	\$35,340
Leisure and Hospitality	57,893	\$13,813
Other Services	15,390	\$24,370
Government	112,584	\$36,242
Computer Specialist	12,530	\$56,705
Health Care Pract. & Tech. Occ.	30,280	\$65,332

### Occupational Wages 2010

### Starting Wage

Retail Sales	\$7.71
General Manager	\$18.83
Truck Drivers, Heavy	\$11.89
Registered Nurse	\$22.05
Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants	\$8.62
Secondary School Teacher (annual)	\$42,025
Construction Trade Workers	\$11.69
Computer Specialist	\$15.26
Electrical Engineer	\$30.06
Detectives & Investigators	\$18.31
Bank Teller	\$9.21
Medical Secretaries	\$11.04
Environmental Scientists	\$19.99
Zoologist & Wildlife Biologist	\$21.40
Clinical & School Psychologists	\$16.18

## POPULATION

### Idaho Ranks Fourth in Fastest Growing States in 2010 Census

Idaho's percentage of population growth – 21 percent – from April 2000 to April 2010 according to initial 2010 Census data makes it the fourth fastest growing state. Idaho's population increased 273,629 from the 2000 Census to a new total of 1,567,582, ranking 40th in the nation in overall population.

STATE OF IDAHO: (2010)	
1,567,582	
Largest Cities	2010
Boise City	205,671
Nampa	81,557
Meridian	75,902
Idaho Falls	56,813
Pocatello	54,255
Caldwell	46,237
Coeur d'Alene	44,137
Twin Falls	44,125
Lewiston	31,894
Post Falls	27,574
Rexburg	25,484
Moscow	23,800
Eagle	19,908
Kuna	15,210
Mountain Home	14,206
Chubbuck	13,922
Ammon	13,816
Hayden	13,294
Blackfoot	11,899
Garden City	10,972

Source: [spokesman.com/census](http://spokesman.com/census)

## COST OF LIVING

On the basis of average housing costs, utilities, healthcare, transportation, groceries, and other services, Idaho ranks 12th lowest cost of living in the US. The chart at the right provides a comparison of the relative cost of living in the western states, 2011 second quarter.

Source: C2ER.org



Idaho is one of five states poised to lead the U.S. out of the recession.

—CNBC 2009

## Cost of Living Index 2011 (2nd qtr)

NAT'L:	100.00
IDAHO:	92.62
UTAH:	91.32
NEW MEXICO:	99.25
MONTANA:	99.96
WYOMING:	97.92
COLORADO:	101.10
WASHINGTON:	103.49
ARIZONA:	103.40
NEVADA:	96.63
OREGON:	105.93
CALIFORNIA:	131.98

## TAXES

The combined total of state and local taxes on income, property, sales, and autos for a family of three with a \$25,000 annual income in Boise is lower than that in the largest city of 37 other states, including the District of Columbia. For a family with an income level of \$50,000, the total tax is lower than that in the largest city of 36 other states. For a family with an income level of \$75,000, it is lower than that in the largest city of 31 other states. For a family with an income level of \$100,000, it is lower than that in the largest city of 25 other states.

Source: District of Columbia Government, Office of Revenue Analysis, 2007

### Property Taxes

Below are 2008 typical property tax rates within the following communities:

City	2010 Property Tax Rate %
Boise	1.73
Coeur d'Alene	1.22
Idaho Falls	1.86
Lewiston	1.94
Nampa	2.23
Pocatello	1.97
Twin Falls	1.57
Moscow	1.67
Mountain Home	1.92
Rexburg	1.58
Burley	1.39



### CRIME RATE

Idaho ranks 5th lowest crime rate in the nation, and is the lowest in the Western United States. In fact, according to FBI data, the rate of serious crime here is 30 percent less than the national average.

Because of the homeowner's exemption, these rates are applied to 50 percent of the first \$184,080 of market value of owner-occupied primary homes, including the home site.

Source: Idaho State Tax Commission, Oct. 2011

### Individual Income Tax

Idaho's income tax base closely parallels the definition used by the federal government. In general, the same income is taxed and the same deductions are allowed. The Idaho tax rates range from 1.6 percent to 7.8 percent of taxable income. The maximum rate begins at \$26,760 for single filers and \$53,520 for married couples and heads of households. Idaho income tax brackets are indexed for inflation each year. Contact: Idaho State Tax Commission, P.O. Box 36, Boise, Idaho 83722, 1-800-972-7660. [www.tax.idaho.gov](http://www.tax.idaho.gov)

## HOUSING

Since property values vary tremendously from community to community and even within a community, we suggest you contact a real estate broker in your locality who is a member of a national relocation network. As a free service, the broker can put you in touch with qualified real estate professionals in specific Idaho communities. Idaho's housing costs are moderate and affordable, and homes are available from modest cottages to executive estates. The following table portrays the average house value in geographically representative Idaho communities:

### AVERAGE SINGLE FAMILY HOUSING COST

Community (County)	Average Value
Blackfoot (Bingham)**	\$189,250
Boise (Ada)*	\$181,435
Burley (Cassia)*	\$122,996
Coeur d'Alene (Kootenai)**	\$182,176
Idaho Falls (Bonneville)**	\$169,902
Ketchum/Sun Valley (Blaine)*	\$162,464
Lewiston (Nez Perce)**	\$177,717
Moscow (Latah)**	\$214,005
Mountain Home (Elmore)*	\$127,883
Nampa/Caldwell (Canyon)*	\$104,508
Pocatello (Bannock)**	\$135,306
Rexburg (Madison)**	\$157,946
Sandpoint (Bonner)**	\$191,619
Twin Falls (Twin Falls)*	\$136,224

Source: \*intermountainmls.com (2010) \*\*realtytrac.com (2011)



## RESIDENTIAL ENERGY COSTS

Idaho provides a substantial energy cost advantage over much of the nation. Natural gas rates are competitive and residential electric rates are among the lowest in the country.

### NATURAL GAS

**Southwestern Idaho/Intermountain Gas**  
\$49.54 for RS2 Customers

**Avista**  
\$59.50 for general service

**Questar**  
\$44.85 for RS2 Customers

Estimates for natural gas reflect rates based on 65 therms/mo.

### ELECTRICITY Average Retail Price\*

<b>Idaho</b>	7.79
compared to:	
Colorado	10.50
Montana	9.83
Nevada	11.86
New Mexico	10.18
Utah	8.34

\*Cents per kilowatt hour, August 2010.

## AUTO REGISTRATION, TITLE AND DRIVER'S LICENSING

Automobile licensing, title transfer, and registration are decentralized in Idaho. The rates vary by jurisdiction, but are modest compared to those of most states.

### Service

Registration and Title Transfer  
Driver's Licenses

### Agency

County Assessor  
County Sheriff

## RECREATION

Idaho is world-famous for outdoor recreation and its landscape is bursting with variety. Mountains soar above 12,000 feet and canyons plunge to form the deepest river gorge in North America, Hells Canyon.

With over one million acres of wilderness area, Idaho has more wilderness than any other state in the lower 48. Thirteen national forests are great for fishing, hiking and hunting, and the backcountry is filled with mountain trails for backpacking and exploring wildlife.

The Salmon River, internationally known, bisects the rugged Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness and provides some of the best whitewater, kayaking and rafting in the world.

Northern Idaho features the greatest concentration of lakes in the West and evergreen forests abound. The "crown jewel" mountain bicycle trail, Route of the Hiawatha, winds through 10 tunnels and 7 high trestles and was selected by *Forbes Traveler* as one of the top 10 Great American Bike Trails.

Winter is ideal for skiing powdery slopes at one of the 18 ski resorts, including legendary Sun Valley. Snowmobiling is boundless along thousands of miles of trails. Idaho is one big playground!

Contact: Idaho Tourism Division, 700 West State Street,  
P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0093, 800-714-3246.  
[www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org)

Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 25, Boise, Idaho,  
83707, 800-ASK-FISH. [www.fishandgame.idaho.gov](http://www.fishandgame.idaho.gov)

## HISTORY

8,000 to 14,000 years ago Paleo-Indian big game hunters lived in what is now Idaho. In 1805 Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark entered the area that would become Idaho at Lemhi Pass. Soon after, the first non-native establishment in the northwest was built near Lake Pend Oreille. From wagon trains on the Oregon Trail, to the loggers, trappers, miners, and residents like Ernest Hemingway – Idaho has a rich and colorful history.

Contact: Idaho State Historical Society, 210 Main Street,  
Boise, Idaho 83702, (208) 334-2682 or visit [www.idahohistory.net](http://www.idahohistory.net)



## HOSPITALS

Idaho has 48 licensed hospitals. All but two Idaho communities with a population of more than 2,500 are within 13 miles of a hospital. The other two communities are within 16 miles of a hospital.

## WATER & AIR QUALITY

Much of Idaho's surface water flows out of the high mountains and is generally of high quality. People swim and fish in the center of Boise, the state's largest city, and water-based sports are enjoyed throughout the state. In addition, high-quality groundwater is pumped extensively for agriculture, industrial, and residential use from the Snake River Plain aquifer across southern Idaho and from the Rathdrum Prairie aquifer in the northern panhandle.

Overall Idaho's air quality is good throughout the year. A few locations experience winter temperature inversions, and in some localities pollen affects people with allergies.

Contact: Department of Environmental Quality, 1410 N. Hilton, Boise, Idaho 83706, (208) 373-0502.  
[www.deq.idaho.gov](http://www.deq.idaho.gov)

## COMMUTING TIME

The average commuting time from home to work in Idaho is 20 minutes.

## CULTURE

Culture comes in many forms throughout the state: jazz and bluegrass music, symphony orchestra, classical ballet, professional contemporary theater and opera, big-name stars, nationally recognized music festivals, rodeos, county fairs, professional sports, community theatre and a nationally celebrated Shakespeare festival. We have always been proud of the health and quality of our arts community. With our inviting cities and great outdoors, there's always something to do in Idaho!

Contact: [www.visitidaho.org](http://www.visitidaho.org) or Idaho Tourism Division, 700 W. State Street, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0093, (800)714-3246.



## CLIMATE

Idaho's climate is diverse. It is influenced by Pacific weather patterns, which help moderate temperature extremes. Generally, the northern part of the state has greater precipitation than either southwestern or southeastern Idaho. The southern part of the state has warmer summer temperatures than the north and is drier throughout the year. Southeastern Idaho, however, tends to be cooler than the west and drier than the north. Idaho's growing season varies from about 200 days near the city of Lewiston to very brief at high altitudes. Idaho has no hurricanes. Tornadoes and hail storms are extremely rare. Winds may accompany cold fronts and thunderstorms. Geographically representative climate examples are:

	Elevation	Annual Mean Precipitation	Mean Snowfall	July Avg High Temp	Jan Avg Low Temp	July Avg Afternoon Humidity
Boise	2,838	11.8 in.	20.9 in.	90.0	22.0	22%
Coeur d'Alene	2,318	25.2 in.	46.2 in.	84.9	22.1	34%
Idaho Falls	4,739	16.9 in.	34.5 in.	90.2	26.9	25%
Lewiston	1,440	13.2 in.	9.0 in.	93.2	26.0	34%
Pocatello	4,454	12.8 in.	47.2 in.	89.4	18.0	38%
Twin Falls	3,745	9.5 in.	20.5 in.	91.0	18.0	27%

## EDUCATION

Idaho has a highly educated populace. Among the 50 states, Idaho ranks 21st for percentage of adults aged 25 and older who have graduated from high school (87.3 percent). Sixty-three percent of the state's total general fund is allocated to education. Idaho students score well above the national average on the SAT. Nearly 97 percent of Idaho's school-age children attend public schools, demonstrating a high level of public confidence and ensuring a demographically balanced student population. The Idaho Education Network will connect each public high school to the high-speed education network.

Almost every city with a population over 20,000 has a college or university. Off-campus programs are available at convenient locations throughout the state. Idaho's universities and colleges bring training, research and technical assistance programs within reach via computer, telecommunications and video. University Place in Idaho Falls provides programs through the University of Idaho and Idaho State University.

There are six professional-technical training centers. These centers provide training at business facilities off-campus. In addition to Eastern Idaho Technical College in Idaho Falls, professional-technical programs are offered through Boise State University, Idaho State University, College of Southern Idaho, North Idaho College, Lewis-Clark State College, and College of Western Idaho.

**Primary and secondary school information:** Superintendent of Public Instruction, Room 200, Len B. Jordan Building, 650 W. State Street, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0027, (208) 332-6800. [www.sde.idaho.gov](http://www.sde.idaho.gov)

**Colleges and universities:** Office of the State Board of Education, Room 307, Len B. Jordan Building, 650 W. State Street, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0037, (208) 334-2270. [www.boardofed.idaho.gov](http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov)

**Professional-technical education programs and certificates:** Idaho Division of Professional-Technical Education, Room 324, Len B. Jordan Building, 650 W. State Street, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0095, (208) 334-3216. [www.pte.idaho.gov](http://www.pte.idaho.gov)

### 2010 Full-Time Enrollment

<b>Public Universities</b>	Boise State University, Boise	19,993
	University of Idaho, Moscow	12,302
	Idaho State University, Pocatello	14,500
	Idaho State University, Idaho Falls	2,500
<b>Public Four-Year College</b>	Lewis-Clark State College, Lewiston	4,500
<b>Public Community Colleges</b>	North Idaho College, Coeur d'Alene	6,347
	College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls	8,859
	Eastern Idaho Technical College, Idaho Falls	1,307
	College of Western Idaho, Nampa	7,308
<b>Private Universities</b>	Northwest Nazarene University, Nampa	1,300
	BYU-Idaho, Rexburg	14,000
<b>Private Four-Year Colleges</b>	College of Idaho, Caldwell	1,055
	Boise Bible College, Boise	181

## ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The Idaho Blue Book describes Idaho's history, government, economy, educational system, and recreational opportunities in detail. It can be obtained for \$10.00 payable to the Secretary of State, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0080. Sections of the book are also available online at [www.sos.idaho.gov/elect/bluebook.htm](http://www.sos.idaho.gov/elect/bluebook.htm)

Starting A Business In Idaho provides entrepreneurs and new business with essential information. It is available by calling (208) 334-2470 or on-line as a flip book:

[www.commerce.idaho.gov>business>publications](http://www.commerce.idaho.gov>business>publications)

New residents also will find the local newspapers useful. Below are the addresses of Idaho's largest daily newspapers.

### **Boise** *The Idaho Statesman*

P.O. Box 40

Boise, Idaho 83707 (208) 377-6200

[www.idahostatesman.com](http://www.idahostatesman.com)

### **Coeur d'Alene** *The Coeur d'Alene Press*

P.O. Box 7000

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814 (208) 664-8176

[www.cdapress.com](http://www.cdapress.com)

### **Idaho Falls** *The Post Register*

P.O. Box 1800

Idaho Falls, Idaho 83403

(208) 522-1800

[www.idahonews.com](http://www.idahonews.com)

### **Lewiston** *The Lewiston Morning Tribune*

P.O. Box 957

Lewiston, Idaho 83501 (208) 743-9411

[www.lmtribune.com](http://www.lmtribune.com)

### **Moscow** *The Moscow-Pullman Daily News*

P.O. Box 8187

Moscow, Idaho 83843 (208) 882-5561

[www.dnews.com](http://www.dnews.com)

### **Nampa** *The IdahoPress-Tribune*

P.O. Box 9399

Nampa, Idaho 83652 (208) 467-9251

[www.idahopress.com](http://www.idahopress.com)

### **Pocatello** *The Idaho State Journal*

P.O. Box 431

Pocatello, Idaho 83204 (208) 232-4161

[www.journalnet.com](http://www.journalnet.com)

### **Twin Falls** *TheTimes-News*

P.O. Box 548

Twin Falls, Idaho 83303 (208) 733-0931

[www.magicvalley.com](http://www.magicvalley.com)





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**IDAHO**  
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For demographic and economic information pertaining to specific counties and communities, please visit:  
[GemStateProspector.com](http://GemStateProspector.com)

Idaho Department of Commerce 700 W. State Street P.O. Box 83720 Boise, Idaho 83720-0093 (208) 334-2470  
Upon request, information in this pamphlet will be provided in alternative formats for persons with disabilities.  
Idaho Department of Commerce is an equal opportunity employer.

[commerce.idaho.gov](http://commerce.idaho.gov)

2011-21000-1000