# Utah's Life Science Industry

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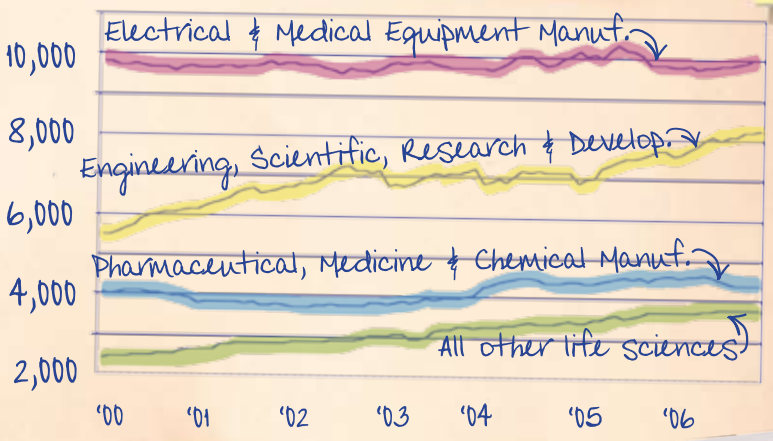
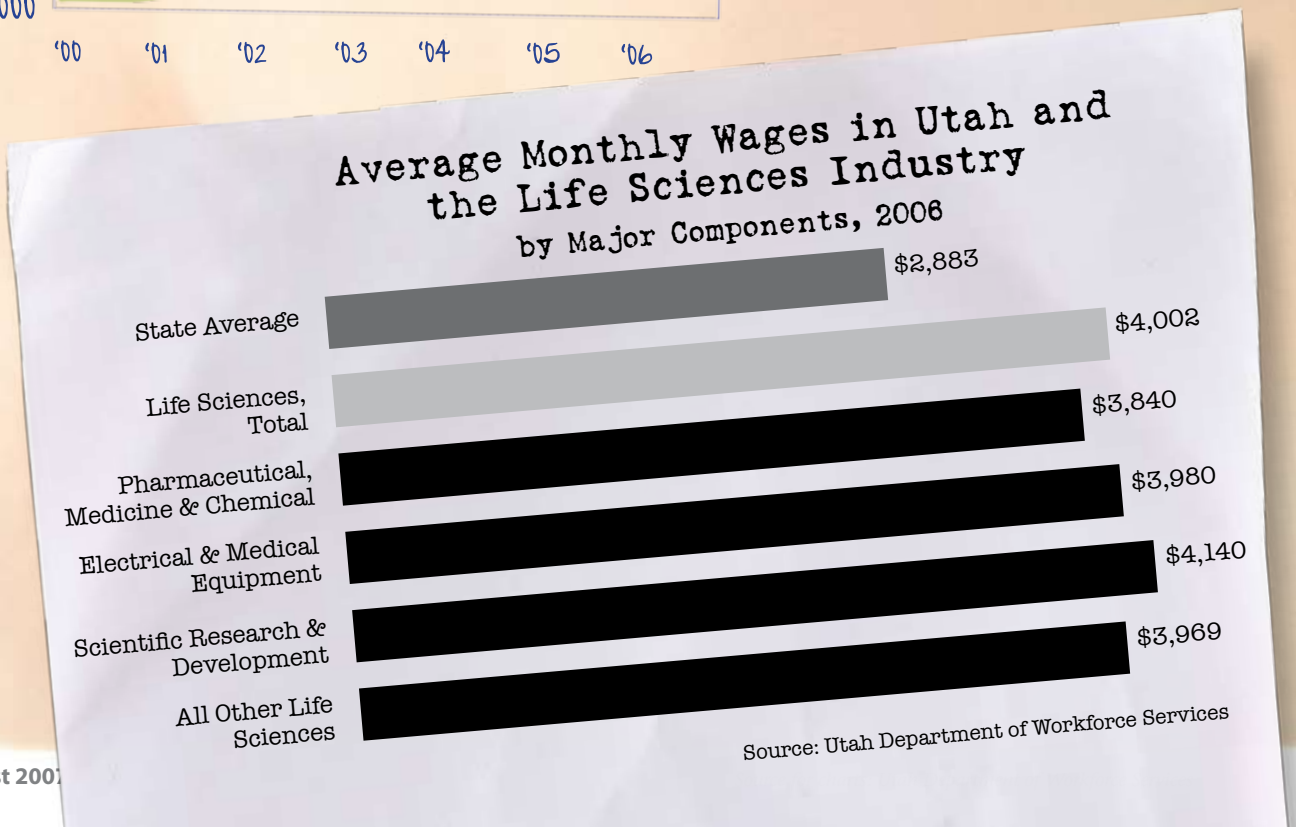



Employment in Life Sciences Industry (by major components)



# Ahh, Life is Good!!

Utah, like many other states, tries to identify industries in its economy that might provide a comparative advantage. Programs are designed to stimulate these industries by various economic incentives. The Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development has identified life sciences as one of its key industries.

One of the challenges in measuring the life sciences industry is that it doesn't exist—well, at least within the current federal government coding structure used to measure industries. In reality, the life science industry is a hybrid of bits and pieces of other industries, such as manufacturing, professional and business services, and health care. Utah's life science industry encompasses a broad range of activities that include basic chemical and biological process, scientific laboratories, and medical equipment and supplies.

In 2006, the life science industry accounted for around 26,100 jobs in Utah, or slightly more than 2 percent of all nonfarm employment statewide. These jobs typically pay above-average wages. The average monthly wage for all nonfarm employment in Utah for 2006 was around $2,900. However, the average monthly wage for life science jobs was $4,000—well above the state average. This pay disparity reflects the need for higher levels of knowledge, skills, and training in math and sciences; which are essential to the success of the life science industry. This places its pay range among the top industries in the state, along with mining, utilities, management of companies, and professional and business services.

In most industries, there are certain segments that drive economic growth. Fortunately, since 2000, the life science industry has been driven by employment growth in its highest-paying sector—engineering, and scientific research and development—adding more than 2,000 jobs. Medical laboratories have seen lesser employment growth. The largest concentration of employment is in electrical and medical equipment manufacturing, but it saw scant employment growth between 2000 and 2006. Likewise, pharmaceutical, medicine, and chemical manufacturing (including herbal supplement manufacturers) experienced modest employment growth.

Life science's most difficult challenge is finding a sustained pool of skilled labor. Utah's new USTAR (Utah Science Technology and Research) initiative is designed to supplement the expansion of life science and biotechnology jobs in Utah.

*For more information relating to life sciences, USTAR and Utah industries try the following links:*
*http://goed.utah.gov/initiatives/clusters/definition.html*
*http://ustar.utah.gov/*
*http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi/statewide/ifsheets*