

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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Compiled by **Anneliese Vance-Sherman, Ph.D., Regional Labor Economist**

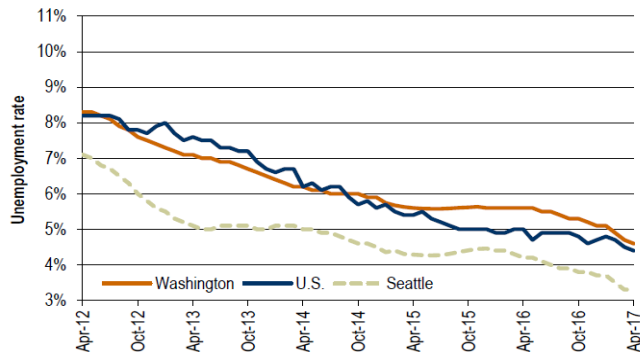
Phone: (425)258-6315 avancesherman@esd.wa.gov

www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 1,200 from March 2017 to April 2017.¹ BLS estimates the private sector lost 700 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 1,900 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for April 2016 through April 2017 indicate an increase in employment of 76,500 for the state. The private sector added 61,700 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 14,800 jobs over the year.

Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted
U.S., Washington and Seattle, April 2012 through April 2017
Source: Employment Security Department/WITS; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2017 is 4.6 percent. The revised estimated March 2017 unemployment rate was at 4.7 percent. The April 2016 unemployment rate was 5.6 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Apr-17	Mar-17	Apr-16	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.1%	4.6%	4.7%	-0.6%
Washington state	4.3%	4.8%	5.3%	-1.0%
Whatcom	4.8%	5.3%	6.0%	-1.2%
Skagit	5.4%	6.0%	6.8%	-1.4%
Island	5.0%	5.3%	6.1%	-1.1%
San Juan	4.0%	4.6%	5.0%	-1.0%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. March’s preliminary estimated gain of 10,700 jobs was revised to a gain of 11,700 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.8 percent in April 2017 (preliminary), down from 5.3 percent in March (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate in April 2016 was 6.0 percent.

- Compared to April 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,844 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 1,214, resulting in a 1.5 percent increase in the size of the labor force and a drop in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 108,290 in April 2017.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 724 in March to 603. Altogether, 1,583 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in April; down from 1,681 in March.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)
 Data benchmarked through September 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Apr-17	Revised Mar-17	Revised Apr-16	Change		
				Mar-17 Apr-17	Apr-16 Apr-17	Apr-16 Apr-17
Total Nonfarm	93,000	92,600	91,000	400	2,000	2.2%
Total Private	74,800	74,100	72,400	700	2,400	3.3%
Goods Producing	18,500	18,300	16,300	200	2,200	13.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,100	8,100	6,500	0	1,600	24.6%
Manufacturing	10,400	10,200	9,800	200	600	6.1%
Service Providing	74,500	74,300	74,700	200	-200	-0.3%
Private Services Providing	56,300	55,800	56,100	500	200	0.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,000	16,800	16,200	200	800	4.9%
Retail Trade	11,400	11,200	11,000	200	400	3.6%
Financial Activities	3,300	3,200	3,300	100	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	8,200	8,100	8,100	100	100	1.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,800	10,600	10,600	200	200	1.9%
Government	18,200	18,500	18,600	-300	-400	-2.2%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,600	7,100	7,100	-500	-500	-7.0%
Total Local Government	10,200	10,000	10,100	200	100	1.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 400 from March to April 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 2,000 or 2.2 percent.

- In April, goods producing industries collectively added 200 jobs. Private service providers added 500 jobs and government employers shed 300 over the month. All private sector

industries detailed in this report added jobs over the month, with the exception of construction which remained unchanged.

- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 2,000 jobs over the past 12 months, marking a 2.2 percent increase in employment. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+1,600). Jobs were added by employers in all industries detailed in this report, except for government which shed 400 and financial activities which remained unchanged.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.4 percent in April 2017 (preliminary), down from 6.0 percent in March (revised). The unemployment rate in April 2016 was 6.8 percent. Skagit County's unemployment rate has been on a slow but steady decline.

- Compared to April 2016, the number of people counted as 'employed' increased by 2,360 and the number of people counted as 'unemployed' decreased by 707. Skagit County's labor force was estimated as 58,743, having increased by 2.9 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 491 in March to 437. Altogether, 1,088 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in April. This is down from 1,162 in March.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)

Data benchmarked through September 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Apr-17	Revised Mar-17	Revised Apr-16	Change		
				Mar-17 Apr-17	Apr-16 Apr-17	Apr-16 Apr-17
Total Nonfarm	50,100	49,200	48,800	900	1,300	2.7%
Total Private	38,300	37,500	37,200	800	1,100	3.0%
Goods Producing	9,800	9,500	9,300	300	500	5.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,900	3,800	3,600	100	300	8.3%
Manufacturing	5,900	5,700	5,700	200	200	3.5%
Service Providing	40,300	39,700	39,500	600	800	2.0%
Private Services Providing	28,500	28,000	27,900	500	600	2.2%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,900	9,700	9,900	200	0	0.0%
Retail Trade	7,300	7,200	7,100	100	200	2.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,000	4,900	5,100	100	-100	-2.0%
Government	11,800	11,700	11,600	100	200	1.7%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,600	1,500	1,500	100	100	6.7%
Local Government	9,800	9,800	9,700	0	100	1.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In April 2017, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls expanded by 900. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,300 or 2.7 percent.

- Over the month, all industries detailed in this report added jobs, with the largest increases observed in manufacturing and trade transportation and utilities (+200 each).
- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 1,300 or 2.7 percent, with most industries adding jobs. The largest employment gains were observed in construction (+300). Leisure and hospitality is the only industry that shed jobs over the year.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.0 percent (preliminary) in April 2017. This is down from 5.3 percent (revised) in March. For comparison, the unemployment rate in April 2016 was 6.1 percent. The unemployment rate in Island County has been slowly but steadily declining since 2010. In the past year the downward momentum appears to have picked up.

- Compared to March 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,024 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by

328. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 33,044, having increased by 2.2 percent over the year.

- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County increased from 165 in March to 203. Altogether, 400 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in April. This is up from 386 the previous month.

Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)

Data benchmarked through September 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Apr-17	Revised Mar-17	Revised Apr-16	Change		
				Mar-17 Apr-17	Apr-16 Apr-17	Apr-16 Apr-17
Total Nonfarm	16,320	16,210	15,960	110	360	2.3%
Total Private	11,610	11,500	11,280	110	330	2.9%
Goods Producing	1,740	1,730	1,630	10	110	6.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	910	900	860	10	50	5.8%
Manufacturing	830	830	770	0	60	7.8%
Service Providing	14,580	14,480	14,330	100	250	1.7%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,560	2,540	2,600	20	-40	-1.5%
Retail Trade	2,100	2,070	2,150	30	-50	-2.3%
Information and Financial Activities	840	830	760	10	80	10.5%
Professional and Business Services	1,230	1,230	1,200	0	30	2.5%
Education and Health Services	2,280	2,270	2,150	10	130	6.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,160	2,120	2,190	40	-30	-1.4%
Government	4,710	4,710	4,680	0	30	0.6%
Federal Government	1,330	1,330	1,340	0	-10	-0.7%
State and Local Government	3,380	3,380	3,340	0	40	1.2%
State and Local Government Education	1,520	1,530	1,500	-10	20	1.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 110 in April 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2.3 percent or 360.

- From March to April, the largest job gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+40).
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 360, with growth observed in most industry sectors detailed in this report. The largest gains were attributable to hiring in education and health services (+130). Losses were observed in retail trade (within trade transportation and utilities) and leisure and hospitality.

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County fell from 4.6 percent in March (revised) to 4.0 percent (preliminary) in April. For reference, the unemployment rate 12 months earlier was 5.0 percent. The unemployment rate in San Juan County is highly-seasonal as a result of an orientation toward tourism. When seasonality is ironed out, average annual unemployment rates reveal that the unemployment rate has basically plateaued at about 5 percent since 2014.

- Compared to April 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 97 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 72. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force increased by 0.3 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County decreased from 16 in March to 9. Altogether, 57 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in April. This is down from 81 in March.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through September 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Apr-17	Revised Mar-17	Revised Apr-16	Change		
				Mar-17 Apr-17	Apr-16 Apr-17	Apr-16 Apr-17
Total Nonfarm	5,320	5,110	5,350	210	-30	-0.6%
Total Private	4,460	4,270	4,510	190	-50	-1.1%
Goods Producing	790	780	800	10	-10	-1.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	640	640	630	0	10	1.6%
Manufacturing	150	140	170	10	-20	-11.8%
Service Providing	4,530	4,330	4,550	200	-20	-0.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	940	920	880	20	60	6.8%
Information and Financial Activities	290	280	300	10	-10	-3.3%
Professional and Business Services	410	400	410	10	0	0.0%
Education and Health Services	640	640	600	0	40	6.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,210	1,080	1,330	130	-120	-9.0%
Government	860	840	840	20	20	2.4%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County expanded by 210 in April. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 30 jobs or 0.6 percent.

- San Juan County has a highly-seasonal economy, due to its orientation toward tourism. Most industries shed jobs in the winter and return with the sun. In April, goods producing employment increased by 10 jobs in manufacturing. The largest month to month changes were attributable to hiring in leisure and hospitality (+130).

- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively shed 30 jobs. The largest gains were observed in trade transportation and utilities (+60). The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-120).