

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2017, Number 8

August 2017

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 2,000 from July 2017 to August 2017.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 4,900 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 2,900 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for August 2016 through August 2017 indicate an increase in employment of 83,000 for the state. The private sector added 67,200 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 15,800 jobs over the year.

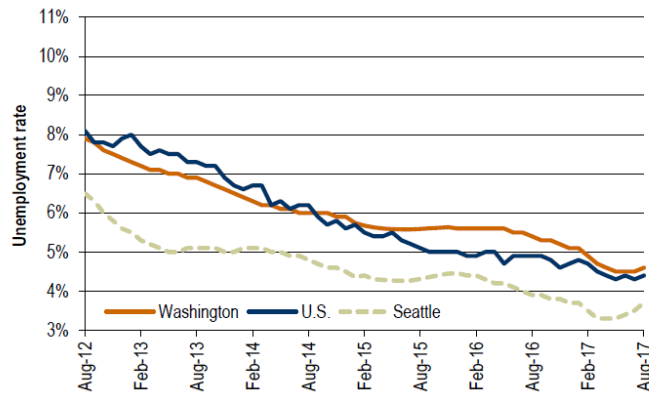
Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August 2017 is 4.6 percent. The revised estimated July 2017 unemployment rate was at 4.5 percent. The August 2016 unemployment rate was 5.4 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Aug-17	Jul-17	Aug-16	Year-to- Year Change
USA	4.5%	4.6%	5.0%	-0.5%
Washington state	4.5%	4.4%	5.3%	-0.8%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	4.7%	4.7%	6.1%	-1.4%
Whatcom County	4.7%	4.7%	6.1%	-1.4%
Skagit County	4.9%	4.9%	6.6%	-1.7%
Island County	4.9%	4.9%	5.8%	-0.9%
San Juan County	2.9%	3.1%	3.7%	-0.8%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. July’s preliminary estimated gain of 1,600 jobs was revised to a gain of 5,200 jobs.

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



Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.7 percent in August 2017 (preliminary), unchanged July (revised). The unemployment rate in August 2016 was 6.1 percent.

- Compared to August 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 4,849 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 1,268, resulting in a 3.4 percent increase in the size of the labor force and a drop in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 109,633 in August 2017.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 654 in July to 582. Altogether, 1,450 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in August; down from 1,618 in July.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)

Data benchmarked through March 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-17	Revised Jul-17	Revised Aug-16	Change		
				Jul-17 Aug-17	Aug-16 Aug-17	Aug-16 Aug-17
Total Nonfarm	91,000	92,100	89,100	-1,100	1,900	2.1%
Total Private	76,100	76,200	74,300	-100	1,800	2.4%
Goods Producing	18,400	18,300	17,400	100	1,000	5.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,600	7,500	7,200	100	400	5.6%
Manufacturing	10,800	10,800	10,200	0	600	5.9%
Service Providing	72,600	73,800	71,700	-1,200	900	1.3%
Private Services Providing	57,700	57,900	56,900	-200	800	1.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,700	17,200	16,700	-500	0	0.0%
Retail Trade	11,300	11,700	11,400	-400	-100	-0.9%
Financial Activities	3,400	3,400	3,400	0	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	8,300	8,300	8,300	0	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	11,100	11,100	10,800	0	300	2.8%
Government	14,900	15,900	14,800	-1,000	100	0.7%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	4,300	4,500	4,400	-200	-100	-2.3%
Total Local Government	9,200	10,000	9,000	-800	200	2.2%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County contracted by 1,100 from July to August 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 1,900 or 2.1 percent.

- In August, goods producing industries collectively added 100 jobs. Private services providers shed 200 jobs and government employers shed 1,000. Construction added 100 jobs but trade, transportation and utilities shed 500, 400 of which were in retail trade. The large drop

in local and state government employment is reflective of the academic calendar and can be expected to rise again in the fall.

- Year over year, the largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in manufacturing (+600) and construction (+400). Most industries either added jobs over the year or remained unchanged. Retail trade is the lone exception, which shed 100.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 4.9 percent in August 2017 (preliminary), unchanged from July (revised). The unemployment rate in August 2016 was 6.6 percent.

- Compared to August 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,737 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ decreased by 917. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated as 60,856, having increased by 3.1 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 408 in July to 412. Altogether, 855 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in August. This is down from 945 in July.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through March 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-17	Revised Jul-17	Revised Aug-16	Change		
				Jul-17 Aug-17	Aug-16 Aug-17	Aug-16 Aug-17
Total Nonfarm	51,900	52,500	49,900	-600	2,000	4.0%
Total Private	40,900	40,900	38,900	0	2,000	5.1%
Goods Producing	11,300	11,300	9,800	0	1,500	15.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,800	4,700	3,900	100	900	23.1%
Manufacturing	6,500	6,600	5,900	-100	600	10.2%
Service Providing	40,600	41,200	40,100	-600	500	1.2%
Private Services Providing	29,600	29,600	29,100	0	500	1.7%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,800	9,900	10,300	-100	-500	-4.9%
Retail Trade	7,300	7,300	7,300	0	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,400	5,400	5,500	0	-100	-1.8%
Government	11,000	11,600	11,000	-600	0	0.0%
Federal Government	500	500	500	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,400	1,400	1,300	0	100	7.7%
Local Government	9,100	9,700	9,200	-600	-100	-1.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In August 2017, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls contracted by 600. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 2,000 or 4.0 percent.

- Over the month, most industries reported no change or reduced employment. Trade transportation warehousing and utilities and manufacturing each shed 100 jobs over the month. Government employment was down 600. Most of the government job losses were in local government, and are reflective of the school calendar. Expect these jobs to return in the fall.
- Over the year, the largest employment gains were observed in construction (+900) and manufacturing (+600). Trade transportation warehousing and utilities shed jobs (-500) as did leisure and hospitality (-100).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 4.9 percent (preliminary) in August 2017. This is unchanged from July (revised). The unemployment rate in August 2016 was 5.8 percent.

- Compared to August 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,240 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work fell by 243. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 33,825, increasing by 3.0 percent over the year.
- There were 166 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County, the same number as the previous month. Altogether, 364 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in August. This is down from 377 in July.

Island County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through March 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-17	Revised Jul-17	Revised Aug-16	Change		
				Jul-17 Aug-17	Aug-16 Aug-17	Aug-16 Aug-17
Total Nonfarm	16,580	16,690	16,360	-110	220	1.3%
Total Private	12,070	12,020	11,950	50	120	1.0%
Goods Producing	1,880	1,850	1,760	30	120	6.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,060	1,030	970	30	90	9.3%
Manufacturing	820	820	790	0	30	3.8%
Service Providing	14,700	14,840	14,600	-140	100	0.7%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,690	2,680	2,660	10	30	1.1%
Retail Trade	2,200	2,200	2,210	0	-10	-0.5%
Information and Financial Activities	810	800	850	10	-40	-4.7%
Professional and Business Services	1,230	1,230	1,240	0	-10	-0.8%
Education and Health Services	2,130	2,160	2,100	-30	30	1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,490	2,450	2,560	40	-70	-2.7%
Government	4,510	4,670	4,410	-160	100	2.3%
Federal Government	1,340	1,340	1,340	0	0	0.0%
State and Local Government	3,170	3,330	3,070	-160	100	3.3%
State and Local Government Education	1,260	1,420	1,200	-160	60	5.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County decreased by 110 in August 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 220 or 1.3 percent.

- From July to August, the largest job gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+40) and the deepest losses were observed in government (-160), related to the school calendar.
- Year-over-year, the largest payroll gains were observed in government (+100) and construction (+90). The deepest losses came from leisure and hospitality (-70) and information and financial activities (-40).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County fell from 3.1 percent in July (revised) to 2.9 percent (preliminary) in August. The unemployment rate in August 2016 was 3.7 percent.

- Compared to August 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 233 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 64. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 9,092 people and increased by 1.9 percent over the year.

- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County decreased from 12 in July to 7. Altogether, 26 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in August. This is up from 21 in July.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through March 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-17	Revised Jul-17	Revised Aug-16	Change		
				Jul-17 Aug-17	Aug-16 Aug-17	Aug-16 Aug-17
Total Nonfarm	6,650	6,650	6,730	0	-80	-1.2%
Total Private	5,870	5,840	5,890	30	-20	-0.3%
Goods Producing	920	920	920	0	0	0.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	720	720	710	0	10	1.4%
Manufacturing	200	200	210	0	-10	-4.8%
Service Providing	5,730	5,730	5,810	0	-80	-1.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,040	1,030	1,110	10	-70	-6.3%
Information and Financial Activities	330	330	370	0	-40	-10.8%
Professional and Business Services	400	400	440	0	-40	-9.1%
Education and Health Services	590	600	570	-10	20	3.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,390	2,360	2,290	30	100	4.4%
Government	780	810	840	-30	-60	-7.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County did not change from July to August. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 80 jobs or 1.2 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 August the largest gains were attributable to hiring in leisure and hospitality (+30) and the deepest losses came from government (-30).
- Over the year, the largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+100) and education and health services (+20). The deepest losses were observed in trade transportation and utilities (-70) and both professional and business services and information and financial activities (-40 each).