

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2017, Number 12

December 2017

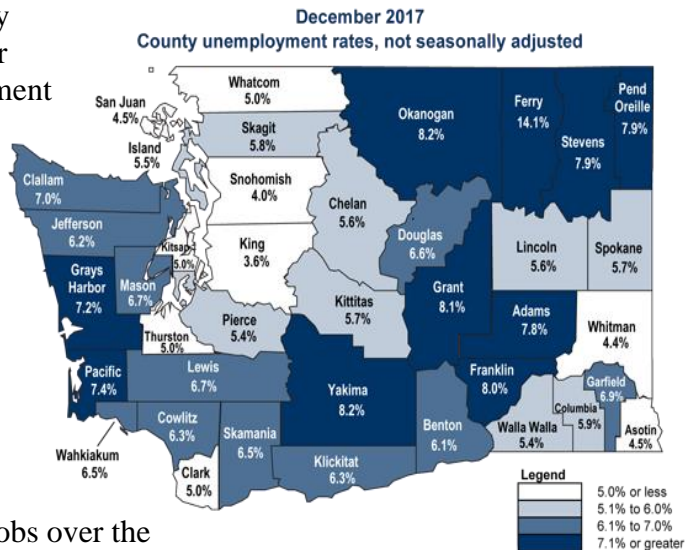
Compiled by **Anneliese Vance-Sherman, Ph.D., Regional Labor Economist**

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 6,100 from November 2017 to December 2017. BLS estimates the private sector gained 2,000 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 4,100 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for December 2016 through December 2017 indicate an increase in employment of 95,500 for the state. The private sector added 84,100 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 11,400 jobs over the year.



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2017 is 4.5 percent. The revised estimated November 2017 unemployment rate was at 4.4 percent. The December 2016 unemployment rate was 5.1 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Dec-17	Nov-17	Dec-16	Year-to- Year Change
USA	3.9%	3.9%	4.5%	-0.6%
Washington state	4.9%	4.4%	5.3%	-0.4%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	5.2%	4.5%	6.0%	-0.8%
Whatcom County	5.0%	4.3%	5.8%	-0.8%
Skagit County	5.8%	4.8%	6.7%	-0.9%
Island County	5.5%	4.7%	5.7%	-0.2%
San Juan County	4.5%	3.7%	5.1%	-0.6%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. November’s preliminary estimated gain of 9,800 jobs was revised to a gain of 11,100 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.0 percent in December 2017 (preliminary), up from 4.3 percent reported in November (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.8 percent.

- Compared to December 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,484 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 793, resulting in a 2.5 percent increase in the size of the labor force and a drop in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 112,196 in December.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 805 in November to 900. Altogether, 1,622 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in December; up from 1,372 in November.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)
 Data benchmarked through June 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Dec-17	Revised Nov-17	Revised Dec-16	Revised Nov-16	Change		
					Nov-17 Dec-17	Dec-16 Dec-17	Dec-16 Dec-17
Total Nonfarm	94,600	95,100	91,900	92,300	-500	2,700	2.9%
Total Private	75,700	76,000	74,000	74,000	-300	1,700	2.3%
Goods Producing	18,000	18,600	17,300	17,300	-600	700	4.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,000	8,200	7,200	7,200	-200	800	11.1%
Manufacturing	10,000	10,400	10,100	10,100	-400	-100	-1.0%
Service Providing	76,600	76,500	74,600	75,000	100	2,000	2.7%
Private Services Providing	57,700	57,400	56,700	56,700	300	1,000	1.8%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,000	17,000	16,900	16,800	0	100	0.6%
Retail Trade	11,400	11,400	11,600	11,600	0	-200	-1.7%
Financial Activities	3,500	3,500	3,200	3,300	0	300	9.4%
Professional and Business Services	8,500	8,600	8,100	8,100	-100	400	4.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,300	10,200	10,600	10,700	100	-300	-2.8%
Government	18,900	19,100	17,900	18,300	-200	1,000	5.6%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,900	7,100	6,400	6,800	-200	500	7.8%
Total Local Government	10,600	10,600	10,100	10,100	0	500	5.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County dropped by 500 from November to December 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2,700 or 2.9 percent.

- In December, goods producing industries collectively shed 600 jobs. Private services providers added 300 and government employers shed 200. The only sector reporting employment gains over the month was leisure and hospitality (+100). The deepest losses were attributable to manufacturing (-400), construction and government (-200 each).
- Year over year, the largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+800) and professional and business services (+400). Three industries shed jobs: leisure and hospitality (-300), retail trade (-200) and manufacturing (-100). Government added 1,000 jobs over the year.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.8 percent in December 2017 (preliminary), up from 4.8 reported in November (revised). The unemployment rate in December 2016 was 6.7 percent.

- Compared to December 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,611 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ decreased by 480. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated as 59,715, having increased by 1.9 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 674 in November to 588. Altogether, 1,209 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in December. This is up from 997 in November.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through June 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Dec-17	Revised Nov-17	Revised Dec-16	Change		
				Nov-17 Dec-17	Dec-16 Dec-17	Dec-16 Dec-17
Total Nonfarm	50,400	51,000	49,400	-600	1,000	2.0%
Total Private	38,600	39,000	37,900	-400	700	1.8%
Goods Producing	10,400	10,500	9,700	-100	700	7.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,300	4,400	3,900	-100	400	10.3%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,100	5,800	0	300	5.2%
Service Providing	40,000	40,500	39,700	-500	300	0.8%
Private Services Providing	28,200	28,500	28,200	-300	0	0.0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,300	10,400	10,200	-100	100	1.0%
Retail Trade	7,000	7,200	7,300	-200	-300	-4.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,300	5,200	4,900	100	400	8.2%
Government	11,800	12,000	11,500	-200	300	2.6%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,400	1,600	1,400	-200	0	0.0%
Local Government	10,000	10,000	9,700	0	300	3.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In December 2017, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls fell by 600 over the month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,000 or 2.0 percent.

- Over the month, job gains were observed in only one collection of industries: leisure and hospitality added 100 jobs. The deepest losses over the month were in retail trade and government (-200 each).
- Over the year, the largest employment gains were observed in construction and in leisure and hospitality (+400 each). Government added 300. The only industry reporting employment losses over the year was retail trade (-300).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.5 percent (preliminary) in December 2017. This is up from 4.7 percent in November (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.7 percent.

- Compared to December 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 877 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work fell by 29. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 34,821, increasing by 2.5 percent over the year.

- There were 182 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in December, down from 194 in November. Altogether, 473 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in December. This is up from 440 in November.

Island County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through June 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Dec-17	Revised Nov-17	Revised Dec-16	Change		
				Nov-17 Dec-17	Dec-16 Dec-17	Dec-16 Dec-17
Total Nonfarm	16,900	16,960	16,340	-60	560	3.4%
Total Private	12,160	12,170	11,670	-10	490	4.2%
Goods Producing	1,830	1,810	1,740	20	90	5.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	970	980	930	-10	40	4.3%
Manufacturing	860	830	810	30	50	6.2%
Service Providing	15,070	15,150	14,600	-80	470	3.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,700	2,680	2,630	20	70	2.7%
Retail Trade	2,180	2,160	2,170	20	10	0.5%
Information and Financial Activities	850	850	840	0	10	1.2%
Professional and Business Services	1,350	1,360	1,250	-10	100	8.0%
Education and Health Services	2,250	2,270	2,190	-20	60	2.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,370	2,390	2,220	-20	150	6.8%
Government	4,740	4,790	4,670	-50	70	1.5%
Federal Government	1,360	1,360	1,360	0	0	0.0%
State and Local Government	3,380	3,430	3,310	-50	70	2.1%
State and Local Government Education	1,490	1,540	1,460	-50	30	2.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County decreased by 60 from November to December 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 560 or 3.4 percent.

- From November to December, the largest job gains were observed in manufacturing (+30) and retail trade—a part of trade, transportation and utilities (+20). The deepest losses over the month came from government (-50).
- Year-over-year, all major industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+150) and professional and business services (+100).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 3.7 percent in November (revised) to 4.5 percent (preliminary) in December. The unemployment rate in December 2016 was 5.1 percent.

- Compared to December 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 321 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 38.

Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,937 people and increased by 3.7 percent over the year.

- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 39 in November to 45. Altogether, 92 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in December. This is up from 58 in November.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Dec-17	Revised Nov-17	Revised Dec-16	Change		
				Nov-17 Dec-17	Dec-16 Dec-17	Dec-16 Dec-17
Total Nonfarm	5,420	5,490	5,200	-70	220	4.2%
Total Private	4,610	4,690	4,380	-80	230	5.3%
Goods Producing	890	900	820	-10	70	8.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	730	730	660	0	70	10.6%
Manufacturing	160	170	160	-10	0	0.0%
Service Providing	4,530	4,590	4,380	-60	150	3.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	980	980	910	0	70	7.7%
Information and Financial Activities	340	330	320	10	20	6.3%
Professional and Business Services	360	360	400	0	-40	-10.0%
Education and Health Services	610	610	620	0	-10	-1.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,260	1,330	1,130	-70	130	11.5%
Government	810	800	820	10	-10	-1.2%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County dropped by 70 from November to December 2017. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 220 jobs or 4.2 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 December, most industries shed jobs. The largest drop came from the largest sector: leisure and hospitality (-70). The only sectors reporting gains were information and financial activities and government (+10 each).
- Most industries added jobs over the year; the largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+130 each) and construction and trade, transportation and utilities (+70 each). Employment levels in professional and business services and education and health services dropped (-40 and -10 respectively).