

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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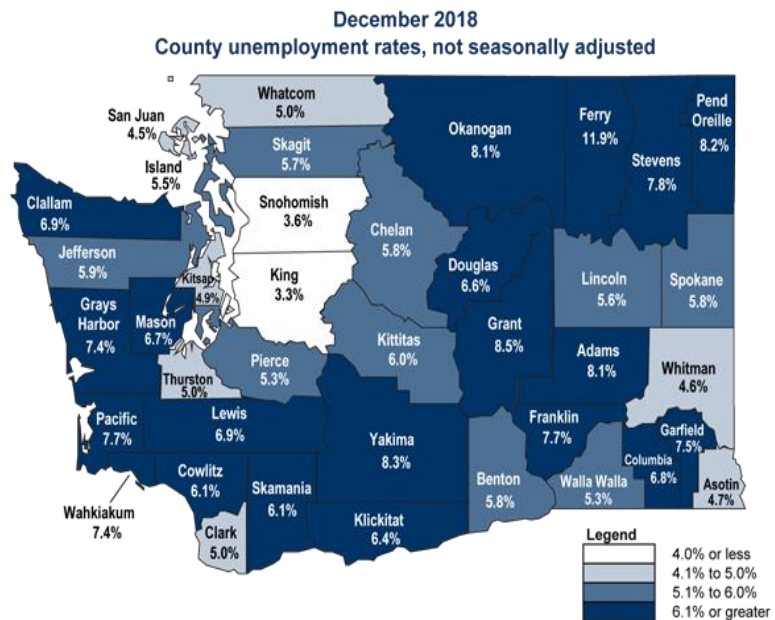
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 11,400 in December 2018. ¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 9,800 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 1,600 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for December 2017 through December 2018 indicate an increase in employment of 101,900 for the state. The private sector added 98,400 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 3,500 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2018 is 4.3 percent. The revised estimated November 2018 unemployment rate is at 4.3 percent. The December 2017 unemployment rate was 4.7 percent.



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Dec-18	Nov-18	Dec-17	Year-to- Year Change
USA	3.7%	3.5%	3.9%	-0.2%
Washington state	4.7%	4.4%	4.9%	-0.2%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	4.4%	4.1%	4.6%	-0.2%
Whatcom County	5.0%	4.6%	5.0%	0.0%
Skagit County	5.7%	5.1%	5.8%	-0.1%
Island County	5.5%	5.1%	5.5%	0.0%
San Juan County	4.5%	4.0%	4.4%	0.1%

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 5,100 jobs was revised to a gain of 7,300 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.0 percent in December 2018 (preliminary), up relative to 4.6 percent reported in November (revised). The unemployment rate in December 2017 was 5.0 percent.

- Compared to December 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,214 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 194, resulting in a 3.0 percent increase in the size of the labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 115,192 at the conclusion of 2018.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 831 in November to 1,062. Altogether, 1,745 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in December; up from 1,365 in November.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)

Data benchmarked through June 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Dec-18	Revised Nov-18	Revised Dec-17	Revised Nov-17	Change		
					Nov-18 Dec-18	Dec-17 Dec-18	Dec-17 Dec-18
Total Nonfarm	96,500	96,900	93,900	94,800	-400	2,600	2.8%
Total Private	77,700	77,800	75,800	76,200	-100	1,900	2.5%
Goods Producing	18,800	18,900	18,200	18,700	-100	600	3.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,300	8,300	7,900	8,400	0	400	5.1%
Manufacturing	10,500	10,600	10,300	10,300	-100	200	1.9%
Service Providing	77,700	78,000	75,700	76,100	-300	2,000	2.6%
Private Services Providing	58,900	58,900	57,600	57,500	0	1,300	2.3%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,500	17,600	16,800	16,800	-100	700	4.2%
Retail Trade	11,600	11,700	11,500	11,600	-100	100	0.9%
Financial Activities	3,900	3,900	3,500	3,500	0	400	11.4%
Professional and Business Services	8,200	8,300	8,300	8,300	-100	-100	-1.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,900	10,900	10,600	10,500	0	300	2.8%
Government	18,800	19,100	18,100	18,600	-300	700	3.9%
Federal Government	1,600	1,500	1,400	1,400	100	200	14.3%
Total State Government	6,700	7,000	6,400	6,900	-300	300	4.7%
Total Local Government	10,500	10,600	10,300	10,300	-100	200	1.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County decreased by 400 from November to December 2018. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2,600 or 2.8 percent.

- In December, private employers collectively shed 100 jobs and Government employers shed 300 jobs. Losses in December are not unexpected.
- Over the year, most industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities and government (+700 each). Professional and business services is the only set of industries detailed in this report that reported net losses over the year (-100).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.7 percent in December 2018 (preliminary), up from 5.1 percent in November (revised). The unemployment rate in December 2017 was 5.8 percent.

- Compared to December 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,574 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ increased by 13. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 61,005, increasing by 2.7 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 697 in November to 761. Altogether, 1,303 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in December. This is up from 1,049 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 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Dec-18	Revised Nov-18	Revised Dec-17	Change		
				Nov-18 Dec-18	Dec-17 Dec-18	Dec-17 Dec-18
Total Nonfarm	51,400	51,700	50,100	-300	1,300	2.6%
Total Private	39,300	39,500	38,500	-200	800	2.1%
Goods Producing	10,600	10,700	10,100	-100	500	5.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,500	4,600	4,200	-100	300	7.1%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,100	5,900	0	200	3.4%
Service Providing	40,800	41,000	40,000	-200	800	2.0%
Private Services Providing	28,700	28,800	28,400	-100	300	1.1%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	10,000	10,300	0	-300	-2.9%
Retail Trade	7,300	7,300	7,400	0	-100	-1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,200	5,200	4,900	0	300	6.1%
Government	12,100	12,200	11,600	-100	500	4.3%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,400	1,500	1,400	-100	0	0.0%
Local Government	10,300	10,300	9,800	0	500	5.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In December 2018, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls contracted by 300. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs increased by 1,300 or 2.6 percent.

- Over the month, all industries detailed in this report either shed jobs or remained unchanged. This is not uncommon for December.
- The industries reporting the largest annual gains were government (+500) and construction and leisure and hospitality (+300 each). Trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities shed 300 jobs over the year; 100 of the lost jobs came from retail trade.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.5 percent (preliminary) in December 2018. This is up from 5.1 percent in November (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.5 percent.

- Compared to December 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 287 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 39. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 35,349, an increase of 0.9 percent over the year.

- There were 213 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in December, up from 192 in November. Altogether, 431 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in December. This is up from 366 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 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Dec-18	Revised Nov-18	Revised Dec-17	Change		
				Nov-18 Dec-18	Dec-17 Dec-18	Dec-17 Dec-18
Total Nonfarm	16,830	16,830	16,680	0	150	0.9%
Total Private	12,090	12,100	11,960	-10	130	1.1%
Goods Producing	1,850	1,860	1,850	-10	0	0.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,070	1,080	1,020	-10	50	4.9%
Manufacturing	780	780	830	0	-50	-6.0%
Service Providing	14,980	14,970	14,830	10	150	1.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,630	2,620	2,700	10	-70	-2.6%
Retail Trade	2,070	2,060	2,170	10	-100	-4.6%
Information and Financial Activities	780	780	810	0	-30	-3.7%
Professional and Business Services	1,250	1,250	1,130	0	120	10.6%
Education and Health Services	2,340	2,320	2,390	20	-50	-2.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,390	2,420	2,280	-30	110	4.8%
Government	4,740	4,730	4,720	10	20	0.4%
Federal Government	1,330	1,310	1,340	20	-10	-0.7%
State and Local Government	3,410	3,420	3,380	-10	30	0.9%
State and Local Government Education	1,560	1,570	1,500	-10	60	4.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County remained unchanged from November to December. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 150 or 0.9 percent.

- From November to December, three major industries added jobs and two shed jobs. The largest month-to-month increase was observed in education and health services (+20) and the deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-30).
- Year-over-year, the industries adding the largest number of jobs were professional and business services and leisure and hospitality (120 and 110 respectively). The deepest loss was attributable to retail trade (-100).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 4.0 percent in November (revised) to 4.5 percent (preliminary) in December 2018. The unemployment rate 12 months earlier was 4.4 percent.

- Compared to December 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 10 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 2. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,932 workers and decreased by 0.1 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County totaled 40 in December, down from 42 the previous month. Altogether, 79 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in December. This is up from 50 in November.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Dec-18	Revised Nov-18	Revised Dec-17	Change		
				Nov-18 Dec-18	Dec-17 Dec-18	Dec-17 Dec-18
Total Nonfarm	5,360	5,440	5,290	-80	70	1.3%
Total Private	4,560	4,650	4,530	-90	30	0.7%
Goods Producing	940	960	920	-20	20	2.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	700	710	710	-10	-10	-1.4%
Manufacturing	240	250	210	-10	30	14.3%
Service Providing	4,420	4,480	4,370	-60	50	1.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	960	960	980	0	-20	-2.0%
Information and Financial Activities	390	390	340	0	50	14.7%
Professional and Business Services	350	350	350	0	0	0.0%
Education and Health Services	600	600	580	0	20	3.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,130	1,190	1,200	-60	-70	-5.8%
Government	800	790	760	10	40	5.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County decreased by 80 from November to December 2018. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 70 jobs or 1.3 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, all private sector industries detailed in this report shed jobs. Leisure and hospitality, the county’s largest industry, shed 60 jobs. Government employment levels increased by 10.

- Over the year, there was a net gain of employment. The largest one-year gains were attributable to hiring in the information and financial services industries (+50). The deepest 12 month losses were attributable to the leisure and hospitality industry (-70).

Forecast information for Washington state:

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. The most recent forecast was issued in November and updated in January. Forecast information is available at www.erfc.wa.gov.

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