

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington fell by 8,700 in February 2019.<sup>1</sup> BLS estimates the private sector lost 7,900 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 800 jobs.

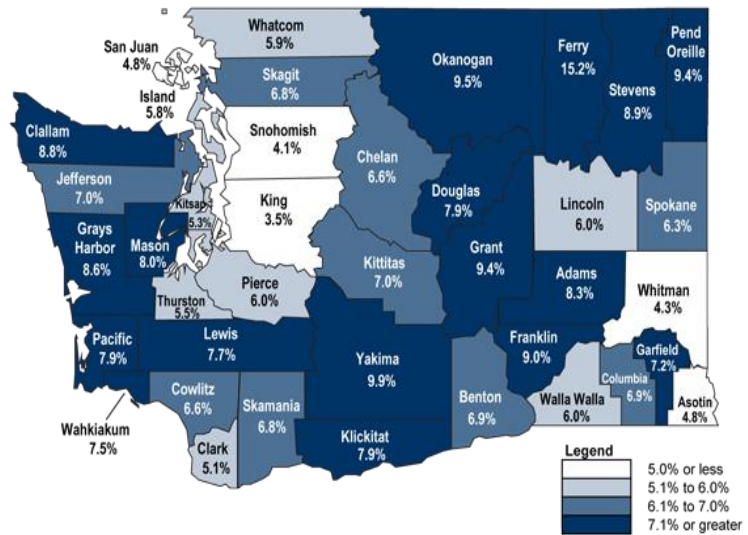
On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for February 2018 through February 2019 indicate an increase in employment of 64,400 for the state. The private sector added 70,700 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 6,300 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for February 2019 is 4.5 percent. The revised estimated January 2019 unemployment rate is at 4.5 percent. The February 2018 unemployment rate was 4.6 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Feb-19	Jan-19	Feb-18	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.1%	4.4%	4.4%	-0.3%
Washington state	5.2%	5.3%	5.3%	-0.1%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	6.1%	5.8%	5.9%	0.2%
Whatcom County	5.9%	5.5%	5.6%	0.3%
Skagit County	6.8%	6.3%	6.3%	0.5%
Island County	5.8%	5.9%	6.1%	-0.3%
San Juan County	4.8%	5.3%	5.2%	-0.4%

February 2019  
 County unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted



BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. January's preliminary estimated gain of 12,300 jobs was revised to a gain of 10,400 jobs.

## Whatcom County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.9 percent in February 2019 (preliminary), up relative to 5.5 percent reported in January (revised). The unemployment rate in February 2018 was 5.6 percent.

- Compared to 12 months ago, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 4,979 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 650, resulting in a 5.1 percent increase in the size of the labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 116,019 in February 2019.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 1,014 in January to 1,209. Altogether, 2,213 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in February; up from 1,962 in January.

### Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

#### Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)

Data benchmarked through September 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Feb-19	Revised Jan-19	Revised Feb-18	Revised Jan-18	Change		
					Jan-19 Feb-19	Feb-18 Feb-19	Feb-18 Feb-19
Total Nonfarm	96,600	96,500	93,800	93,300	100	2,800	3.0%
Total Private	77,500	77,600	75,100	74,900	-100	2,400	3.2%
Goods Producing	18,500	18,500	18,200	18,000	0	300	1.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,900	8,000	8,000	7,800	-100	-100	-1.3%
Manufacturing	10,600	10,500	10,200	10,200	100	400	3.9%
Service Providing	78,100	78,000	75,600	75,300	100	2,500	3.3%
Private Services Providing	59,000	59,100	56,900	56,900	-100	2,100	3.7%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,500	16,900	16,300	16,500	-400	200	1.2%
Retail Trade	11,400	11,400	11,100	11,300	0	300	2.7%
Financial Activities	3,900	3,900	3,600	3,600	0	300	8.3%
Professional and Business Services	8,300	8,200	8,100	8,000	100	200	2.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,800	10,800	10,700	10,700	0	100	0.9%
Government	19,100	18,900	18,700	18,400	200	400	2.1%
Federal Government	1,500	1,400	1,400	1,400	100	100	7.1%
Total State Government	7,000	7,000	7,000	6,900	0	0	0.0%
Total Local Government	10,600	10,500	10,300	10,100	100	300	2.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County increased by 100 from January to February 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2,800 or 3.0 percent.

- In February, private sector employers collectively shed 100 jobs and government employers added 200. The largest one month losses were attributable to trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (-400).
- Over the year, all but one of the major industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in manufacturing and government (+400 each). Financial activities and retail trade each added 300 jobs. The only industry reporting losses was construction (-100).

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 6.8 percent in February 2019 (preliminary), up from 6.3 percent in January (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 6.3 percent.

- Compared to February 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,344 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ increased by 516. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 61,750, increasing by 4.9 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 573 in January to 918. Altogether, 1,481 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in February. This is up from 1,376 in January.

## Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

### Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)

Data benchmarked through September 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Feb-19	Revised Jan-19	Revised Feb-18	Change		
				Jan-19 Feb-19	Feb-18 Feb-19	Feb-18 Feb-19
Total Nonfarm	51,000	51,000	49,600	0	1,400	2.8%
Total Private	38,800	39,000	38,000	-200	800	2.1%
Goods Producing	10,200	10,400	10,000	-200	200	2.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,200	4,400	4,100	-200	100	2.4%
Manufacturing	6,000	6,000	5,900	0	100	1.7%
Service Providing	40,800	40,600	39,600	200	1,200	3.0%
Private Services Providing	28,600	28,600	28,000	0	600	2.1%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,200	10,300	9,800	-100	400	4.1%
Retail Trade	7,200	7,300	7,100	-100	100	1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,100	5,100	4,800	0	300	6.3%
Government	12,200	12,000	11,600	200	600	5.2%
Federal Government	400	300	300	100	100	33.3%
State Government	1,500	1,400	1,500	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 February 2019, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls neither increased nor decreased. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,400 or 2.8 percent.

- Over the month, several major industries detailed in this report shed jobs. This is not uncommon for February.
- All major industries in this report added jobs over the year. The industries reporting the largest annual gains were government (+600) trade, transportation and utilities (+400), and leisure and hospitality (+300).

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.8 percent (preliminary) in February 2019. This is down slightly from 5.9 percent in January (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 6.1 percent.

- Compared to February 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,280 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 44. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 35,488, an increase of 3.6 percent over the year.

- There were 275 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in February, up from 231 in January. Altogether, 497 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in February. This is up from 485 in January.

## Island County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through September 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Feb-19	Revised Jan-19	Revised Feb-18	Change		
				Jan-19 Feb-19	Feb-18 Feb-19	Feb-18 Feb-19
Total Nonfarm	16,980	16,900	16,660	80	320	1.9%
Total Private	12,200	12,160	11,960	40	240	2.0%
Goods Producing	1,850	1,840	1,850	10	0	0.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,050	1,040	1,030	10	20	1.9%
Manufacturing	800	800	820	0	-20	-2.4%
Service Providing	15,130	15,060	14,810	70	320	2.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,600	2,610	2,630	-10	-30	-1.1%
Retail Trade	2,050	2,060	2,090	-10	-40	-1.9%
Information and Financial Activities	780	780	800	0	-20	-2.5%
Professional and Business Services	1,350	1,350	1,230	0	120	9.8%
Education and Health Services	2,450	2,430	2,350	20	100	4.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,320	2,310	2,300	10	20	0.9%
Government	4,780	4,740	4,700	40	80	1.7%
Federal Government	1,300	1,300	1,330	0	-30	-2.3%
State and Local Government	3,480	3,440	3,370	40	110	3.3%
State and Local Government Education	1,640	1,600	1,540	40	100	6.5%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 80 from January to February 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 320 or 1.9 percent.

- From January to February, trade transportation and utilities (including retail trade) was the only set of industries reporting one month losses. The largest one month gains were attributable to hiring in government (+40) and education and health services (+20).
- Year-over-year, the industries adding the largest number of jobs were professional and business services and education and health services (120 and 100 respectively). The deepest loss was attributable to retail trade (-40).

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 5.3 percent in January (revised) to 4.8 percent (preliminary) in February. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.2 percent.

- Compared to February 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 274 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 13. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,757 workers and increased by 3.5 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County totaled 29 in February, down from 46 the previous month. Altogether, 87 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in February. This is up from 83 in January.

### San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

#### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through September 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Feb-19	Revised Jan-19	Revised Feb-18	Change		
				Jan-19 Feb-19	Feb-18 Feb-19	Feb-18 Feb-19
Total Nonfarm	5,160	5,080	5,060	80	100	2.0%
Total Private	4,320	4,260	4,300	60	20	0.5%
Goods Producing	860	840	850	20	10	1.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	660	650	660	10	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	200	190	190	10	10	5.3%
Service Providing	4,300	4,240	4,210	60	90	2.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	980	990	920	-10	60	6.5%
Information and Financial Activities	380	390	320	-10	60	18.8%
Professional and Business Services	330	320	350	10	-20	-5.7%
Education and Health Services	630	620	580	10	50	8.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	970	940	1,100	30	-130	-11.8%
Government	840	820	760	20	80	10.5%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County increased by 80 from January to February. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 100 jobs or 2.0 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 February, two industry groupings reported losses (trade, transportation and utilities and information and financial activities each shed 10 jobs); all others reported one-month gains, including leisure and hospitality (+30).

- Over the year, there was a net gain of employment. The largest one-year gains were attributable to hiring in the trade, transportation and utilities industries (+90). The deepest 12 month losses were attributable to the leisure and hospitality industry (-130).

### **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 March. Forecast information is available at [www.erfc.wa.gov](http://www.erfc.wa.gov).

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