

Northwest Washington Labor Area Summary

Volume 2022, Number 2

February 2022

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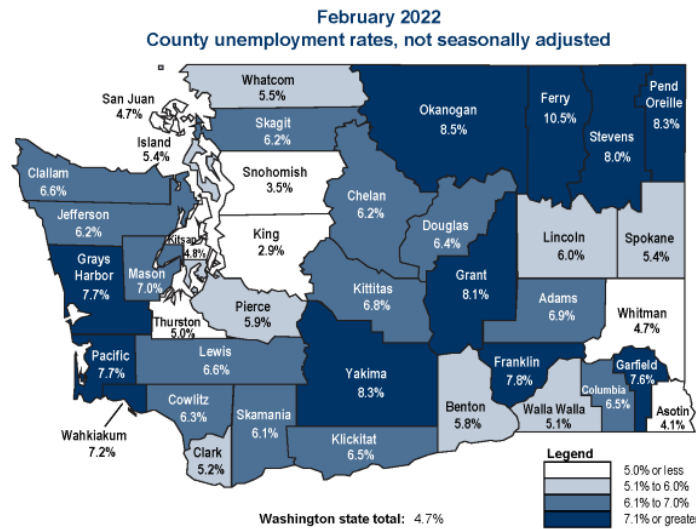
This report marks the eleventh report whereby the year-over-year narrative shifts from pandemic-related losses to recovery since the start of the economic crisis. Pandemic-related employment effects began to show up in March last year, and swiftly led to unprecedented levels of unemployment in April 2020. Many jobs have recovered in the meantime, with significant variation by location and industry. This report tracks a moment in that recovery.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 31,700 in February 2022.1 BLS estimates the private sector gained 24,400 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 7,300 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for February 2021 through February 2022 indicate an increase in employment of 191,900 for the state.

The private sector gained 172,700 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 19,200 jobs over the year.

Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for February 2022 is 4.3 percent. The revised estimated January 2022 unemployment rate is at 4.4 percent. The February 2021 unemployment rate was 6.1 percent.



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Feb-22	Jan-22	Feb-21	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.1%	4.4%	6.6%	-2.5%
Washington state	4.7%	5.1%	6.7%	-2.0%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	5.7%	5.7%	7.9%	-2.2%
Whatcom County	5.5%	5.5%	7.9%	-2.4%
Skagit County	6.2%	6.3%	8.3%	-2.1%
Island County	5.4%	5.3%	7.1%	-1.7%
San Juan County	4.7%	4.7%	7.3%	-2.6%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The January 2022 preliminary estimated gain of 5,700 jobs was revised to a gain of 3,000 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.5 percent in February 2022 (preliminary), unchanged over the month (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 7.9 percent.

- Compared to February 2021, the labor force expanded by 6,675 workers. Within that estimate, the number of employed workers expanded by 8,940 (8.7 percent) and the number of unemployed workers contracted by 2,265 (25.7 percent). Whatcom County's estimated labor force was 118,801 in February 2022.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)
 Data benchmarked through September 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Feb-22	Revised Jan-22	Revised Feb-21	Change		
				Jan-22 Feb-22	Feb-21 Feb-22	Feb-21 Feb-22
Total Nonfarm	93,700	93,000	86,900	700	6,800	7.8%
Total Private	75,600	75,100	70,200	500	5,400	7.7%
Goods Producing	17,200	16,800	16,600	400	600	3.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,800	7,600	7,700	200	100	1.3%
Manufacturing	9,400	9,200	8,900	200	500	5.6%
Service Providing	76,500	76,200	70,300	300	6,200	8.8%
Private Services Providing	58,400	58,300	53,600	100	4,800	9.0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,500	16,700	15,800	-200	700	4.4%
Retail Trade	11,000	11,000	10,700	0	300	2.8%
Financial Activities	4,000	4,000	3,900	0	100	2.6%
Professional and Business Services	8,700	8,500	8,000	200	700	8.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,100	10,100	7,500	0	2,600	34.7%
Government	18,100	17,900	16,700	200	1,400	8.4%
Federal Government	1,400	1,500	1,500	-100	-100	-6.7%
Total State Government	6,100	6,100	5,700	0	400	7.0%
Total Local Government	10,600	10,300	9,500	300	1,100	11.6%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 700 from January to February 2022. Over the year, nonfarm employment increased by 6,800 (7.8 percent).

- In February, employment expansions were observed in most sectors. Goods providers (construction and manufacturing) added 400 jobs and service providers collectively added 300 jobs.
- All major sectors included in this report added jobs over the year. Leisure and hospitality and government added the largest number of jobs over the year (2,600 and 1,400 jobs respectively).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 6.2 percent (preliminary) in February 2022—down from 6.3 percent (revised) in January. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 8.3 percent.

- Compared to February 2021, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 4,073 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ contracted by 1,140, bringing the unemployment rate down. Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 63,699, increasing by 4.8 percent over the year.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)

Data benchmarked through September 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Feb-22	Revised Jan-22	Revised Feb-21	Change		
				Jan-22 Feb-22	Feb-21 Feb-22	Feb-21 Feb-22
Total Nonfarm	50,000	49,500	46,900	500	3,100	6.6%
Total Private	38,400	38,000	36,100	400	2,300	6.4%
Goods Producing	10,300	10,100	9,900	200	400	4.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,200	4,100	3,900	100	300	7.7%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,000	6,000	100	100	1.7%
Service Providing	39,700	39,400	37,000	300	2,700	7.3%
Private Services Providing	28,100	27,900	26,200	200	1,900	7.3%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,700	9,700	9,400	0	300	3.2%
Retail Trade	6,700	6,800	6,700	-100	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,800	4,700	3,600	100	1,200	33.3%
Government	11,600	11,500	10,800	100	800	7.4%
Federal Government	300	300	300	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,200	1,200	1,100	0	100	9.1%
Local Government	10,100	10,000	9,400	100	700	7.4%

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County increased by 500 jobs over the month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 3,100 or 6.6 percent.

- Over the month, all major sectors detailed in this report either shed jobs or remained unchanged. Retail trade (a subset of trade transportation warehousing and utilities) dipped by 100.
- Each major industry sector detailed in this report expanded employment over the year. The largest 12-month increases detailed in this report were attributable to leisure and hospitality (+1,200) and government (+800). Increases in government employment were largely attributable to local hiring by public school districts.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.4 percent (preliminary) in February 2022, above 5.3 percent (revised) reported in January. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 7.1 percent.

- Compared to February 2021, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,870 (5.6 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work contracted by 535 (20.9 percent). Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 37,391 in February 2022, up 3.7 percent over the year.

Island County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through March 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Feb-22	Revised Jan-22	Revised Feb-21	Change		
				Jan-22 Feb-22	Feb-21 Feb-22	Feb-21 Feb-22
Total Nonfarm	16,980	16,940	16,370	40	610	3.7%
Total Private	12,520	12,480	11,990	40	530	4.4%
Goods Producing	1,870	1,850	1,860	20	10	0.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,230	1,210	1,200	20	30	2.5%
Manufacturing	640	640	660	0	-20	-3.0%
Service Providing	15,110	15,090	14,510	20	600	4.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,610	2,620	2,740	-10	-130	-4.7%
Retail Trade	2,150	2,150	2,200	0	-50	-2.3%
Information and Financial Activities	900	880	860	20	40	4.7%
Professional and Business Services	1,510	1,500	1,510	10	0	0.0%
Education and Health Services	2,280	2,280	2,350	0	-70	-3.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,470	2,470	1,870	0	600	32.1%
Government	4,460	4,460	4,380	0	80	1.8%
Federal Government	1,250	1,240	1,280	10	-30	-2.3%
State and Local Government	3,210	3,220	3,100	-10	110	3.5%
State and Local Government Education	1,440	1,480	1,270	-40	170	13.4%

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 40 from January to February 2022. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 610 or 3.7 percent.

- From January to February, most industry sectors detailed in this report either expanded or maintained employment levels. The largest increases were attributable to construction and information and financial services. Government employment as a whole was unchanged.
- Year-over-year, the largest employment gains were attributable to leisure and hospitality (+600). Trade transportation and utilities (including retail) and education and health services each shed jobs over the year.

Employment statistics for Island County do not include military employment.

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County was 4.7 percent in February 2022 (preliminary), unchanged over the month. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 7.3 percent.

- Compared to February 2021, the number of residents counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,143 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 160. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,826 resident workers and expanded by 12.5 percent over the year.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Feb-22	Revised Jan-22	Revised Feb-21	Change		
				Jan-22 Feb-22	Feb-21 Feb-22	Feb-21 Feb-22
Total Nonfarm	5,690	5,570	4,870	120	820	16.8%
Total Private	4,890	4,780	4,080	110	810	19.9%
Goods Producing	1,130	1,090	930	40	200	21.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	830	810	740	20	90	12.2%
Manufacturing	300	280	190	20	110	57.9%
Service Providing	4,560	4,480	3,940	80	620	15.7%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,010	1,010	950	0	60	6.3%
Information and Financial Activities	420	420	340	0	80	23.5%
Professional and Business Services	540	520	440	20	100	22.7%
Education and Health Services	490	480	530	10	-40	-7.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,080	1,040	720	40	360	50.0%
Government	800	790	790	10	10	1.3%

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County expanded by 120 over the month. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 820 or 16.8 percent. Employment in San Juan County is highly seasonal. Compared against February 2020 (pre-pandemic), total nonfarm employment appears to have recovered, albeit with net losses in some key sectors such as education and health services.

- From January to February 2022, all industries detailed in this report expanded or maintained employment. Leisure and hospitality added the largest number of jobs (40).
- Over the year, the employment situation in San Juan County is showing substantial improvements in general. All but one industry sector detailed in this report expanded employment over the year, with the largest employment gains attributable to leisure and hospitality (+360). Education and health services was the only sector that was down over the year.

Forecast information for Washington state:

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (ERFC) issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. The February forecast by Washington's Economic and Revenue Forecast Council estimates that the statewide unemployment rate averaged 6.7 percent in 2021. The unemployment rate is expected to average about 4.5 percent in 2022, (down from the November forecast) and drop to 4.0 percent in 2023. Employment is expected to recover to pre-recession levels in 2022. See www.erfc.wa.gov for more information.

The Employment Security Department is an equal-opportunity employer and provider of programs and services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to people with disabilities. Washington Relay Service 711.