

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 rose by 13,400 in July 2019. BLS estimates the private sector gained 10,900 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 2,500 jobs.

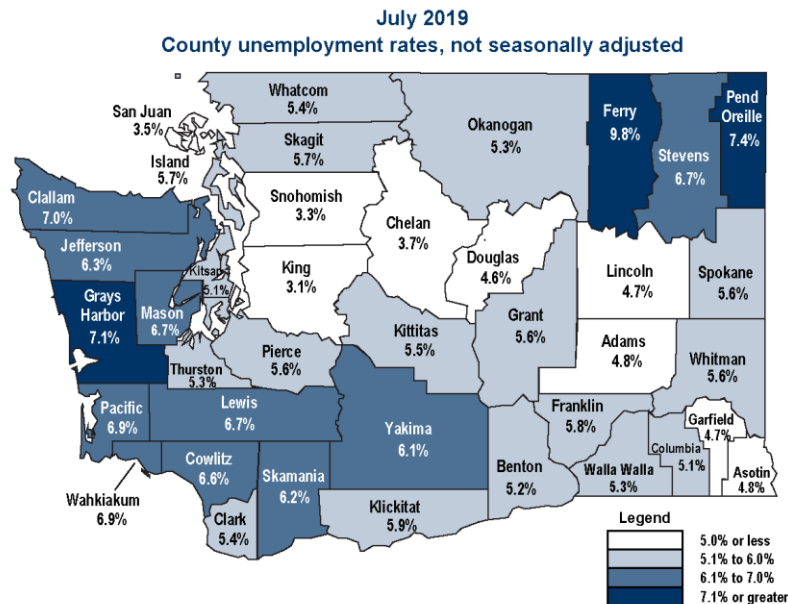
On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for July 2018 through July 2019 indicate an increase in employment of 86,400 for the state. The private sector added 82,100 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 4,300 jobs over the year.

Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for July 2019 is 4.6 percent. The revised estimated June 2019 unemployment rate is at 4.6 percent. The July 2018 unemployment rate was 4.4 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Jul-19	Jun-19	Jul-18	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.0%	3.8%	4.1%	-0.1%
Washington state	4.5%	4.4%	4.3%	0.2%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	5.5%	5.4%	4.6%	0.9%
Whatcom County	5.4%	5.3%	4.5%	0.9%
Skagit County	5.7%	5.8%	4.8%	0.9%
Island County	5.7%	5.6%	4.8%	0.9%
San Juan County	3.5%	3.7%	3.1%	0.4%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. June’s preliminary estimated gain of 6,000 jobs was revised to a gain of 7,600 jobs.



Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.4 percent in July 2019 (preliminary), up from 5.3 percent reported in June (revised). The unemployment rate in July 2018 was 4.5 percent.

- Compared to 12 months ago, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,928 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 1,304, nudging the unemployment rate up over the year. The labor force increased by 4.7 percent. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated at 116,509 in July 2019.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 705 in June to 710. Altogether, 1,552 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in July; down from 1,587 in June.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through March 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jul-19	Revised Jun-19	Revised Jul-18	Change		
				Jun-19 Jul-19	Jul-18 Jul-19	Jul-18 Jul-19
Total Nonfarm	94,600	96,900	93,800	-2,300	800	0.9%
Total Private	78,200	78,200	77,400	0	800	1.0%
Goods Producing	19,000	18,900	18,800	100	200	1.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,200	8,200	8,300	0	-100	-1.2%
Manufacturing	10,800	10,700	10,500	100	300	2.9%
Service Providing	75,600	78,000	75,000	-2,400	600	0.8%
Private Services Providing	59,200	59,300	58,600	-100	600	1.0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,100	17,000	16,700	100	400	2.4%
Retail Trade	11,200	11,200	11,200	0	0	0.0%
Financial Activities	3,800	3,800	3,900	0	-100	-2.6%
Professional and Business Services	8,600	8,500	8,400	100	200	2.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	11,200	11,200	11,300	0	-100	-0.9%
Government	16,400	18,700	16,400	-2,300	0	0.0%
Federal Government	1,500	1,400	1,500	100	0	0.0%
Total State Government	4,500	6,500	4,700	-2,000	-200	-4.3%
Total Local Government	10,400	10,800	10,200	-400	200	2.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County decreased by 2,300 from June to July 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 800 or 0.9 percent.

- In July, private sector employers collectively neither expanded nor contracted. The large one-month losses were a result of summer vacation for state and local education institutions.

- Over the year, three major industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+400) and manufacturing (+300). Construction, financial activities and leisure and hospitality each shed jobs.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.7 percent in July 2019 (preliminary), down from 5.8 percent in June (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.8 percent.

- Compared to July 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,980 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ increased by 712. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 63,739, increasing by 4.4 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 422 in June to 487 in July. Altogether, 1,009 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in July; down from 1,077 in June.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)
 Data benchmarked through March 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jul-19	Revised Jun-19	Revised Jul-18	Change		
				Jun-19 Jul-19	Jul-18 Jul-19	Jul-18 Jul-19
Total Nonfarm	53,600	53,600	51,900	0	1,700	3.3%
Total Private	41,800	41,400	40,500	400	1,300	3.2%
Goods Producing	11,700	11,500	10,900	200	800	7.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	5,300	5,200	4,500	100	800	17.8%
Manufacturing	6,400	6,300	6,400	100	0	0.0%
Service Providing	41,900	42,100	41,000	-200	900	2.2%
Private Services Providing	30,100	29,900	29,600	200	500	1.7%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	9,900	10,200	100	-200	-2.0%
Retail Trade	7,000	7,000	7,300	0	-300	-4.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,400	5,400	5,500	0	-100	-1.8%
Government	11,800	12,200	11,400	-400	400	3.5%
Federal Government	500	500	400	0	100	25.0%
State Government	1,200	1,500	1,200	-300	0	0.0%
Local Government	10,100	10,200	9,800	-100	300	3.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In July 2019, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls neither increased nor decreased from the previous month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,700 or 3.3 percent.

- Over the month, most private industries expanded. Government was the only industry showing one-month declines.

- Two major industries in this report added jobs over the year; construction (+800) and government (+400). Retail trade (within trade transportation warehousing and utilities) reported the largest 12-month loss (-300).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.7 percent (preliminary) in July 2019. This is up from 5.6 percent in June (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.8 percent.

- Compared to July 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 242 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 348. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 35,302, an increase of 1.7 percent over the year.
- There were 174 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in July, down from 193 in June. Altogether, 372 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in July. This is down from 392 in June.

Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)

Data benchmarked through December 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jul-19	Revised Jun-19	Revised Jul-18	Change		
				Jun-19 Jul-19	Jul-18 Jul-19	Jul-18 Jul-19
Total Nonfarm	17,020	17,040	17,230	-20	-210	-1.2%
Total Private	12,400	12,360	12,650	40	-250	-2.0%
Goods Producing	1,890	1,860	1,900	30	-10	-0.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,130	1,100	1,100	30	30	2.7%
Manufacturing	760	760	800	0	-40	-5.0%
Service Providing	15,130	15,180	15,330	-50	-200	-1.3%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,740	2,740	2,720	0	20	0.7%
Retail Trade	2,160	2,150	2,150	10	10	0.5%
Information and Financial Activities	760	770	820	-10	-60	-7.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,260	1,260	1,270	0	-10	-0.8%
Education and Health Services	2,180	2,220	2,350	-40	-170	-7.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,680	2,630	2,710	50	-30	-1.1%
Government	4,620	4,680	4,580	-60	40	0.9%
Federal Government	1,310	1,310	1,320	0	-10	-0.8%
State and Local Government	3,310	3,370	3,260	-60	50	1.5%
State and Local Government Education	1,530	1,570	1,420	-40	110	7.7%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County contracted by 20 from June to July 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs contracted by 210 or 1.2 percent.

- From June to July, three industries expanded and three contracted. The deepest drops were attributable to government and education and health services, and were likely related to the annual rhythm of the school calendar.
- Year-over-year, 5 major industries shed jobs and 3 added jobs. The deepest losses were observed in the education and health services industries (-170). Government posted the largest year-over-year gains (+40).

Note that employment statistics for Island County do not include military employment.

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 3.7 percent in June (revised) to 3.5 percent (preliminary) in July. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 3.1 percent.

- Compared to July 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 424 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 48. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 9,565 workers and increased by 5.2 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County totaled 13 in July, up from 9 initial claims filed in June. Altogether, 28 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in July. This is up from 38 in June.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through December 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jul-19	Revised Jun-19	Revised Jul-18	Change		
				Jun-19 Jul-19	Jul-18 Jul-19	Jul-18 Jul-19
Total Nonfarm	6,940	6,440	6,700	500	240	3.6%
Total Private	6,220	5,680	5,920	540	300	5.1%
Goods Producing	1,050	1,010	1,010	40	40	4.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	780	760	730	20	50	6.8%
Manufacturing	270	250	280	20	-10	-3.6%
Service Providing	5,890	5,430	5,690	460	200	3.5%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,180	1,110	1,190	70	-10	-0.8%
Information and Financial Activities	400	380	440	20	-40	-9.1%
Professional and Business Services	410	400	390	10	20	5.1%
Education and Health Services	640	640	620	0	20	3.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,350	1,940	2,090	410	260	12.4%
Government	720	760	780	-40	-60	-7.7%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County increased by 500 from June to July. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 240 jobs or 3.6 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 July, the largest one-month gains were reported from leisure and hospitality (+410).
- Over the year, there was a net gain of employment. The largest one-year gains were attributable to hiring in leisure and hospitality (+260). Construction, professional and business services and education and health services also made a strong showing, each increasing over the year employment. Three industries reported 12-month losses, with the deepest losses observed in information and financial activities (-40).

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 June and updated in August. Forecast information is available at www.erfc.wa.gov.

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.