

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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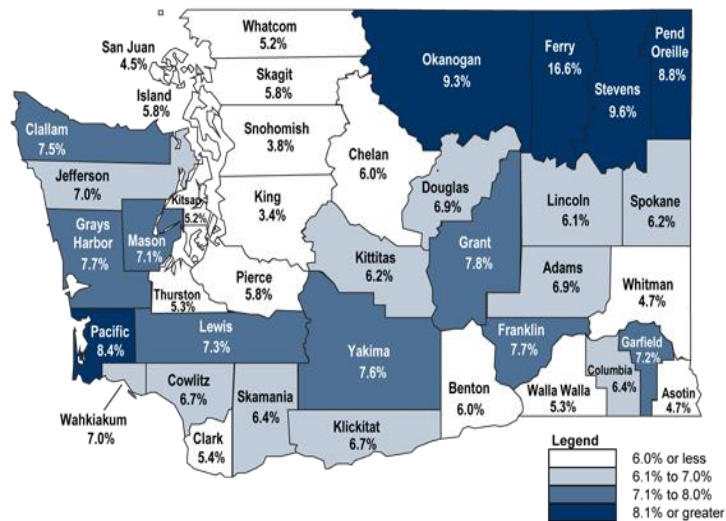
www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 3,900 from February 2018 to March 2018.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 3,400 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 500 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for March 2017 through March 2018 indicate an increase in employment of 93,500 for the state. The private sector added 83,700 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 9,800 jobs over the year.

Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March 2018 is 4.8 percent. The revised estimated February 2018 unemployment rate was at 4.7 percent. The March 2017 unemployment rate was 4.8 percent.

March 2018
County unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Mar-18	Feb-18	Mar-17	Year-to- Year Change
USA	4.1%	4.4%	4.6%	-0.5%
Washington state	4.9%	5.3%	4.9%	0.0%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	5.5%	5.9%	5.3%	0.2%
Whatcom County	5.2%	5.6%	5.2%	0.0%
Skagit County	5.8%	6.3%	5.8%	0.0%
Island County	5.8%	6.1%	5.1%	0.7%
San Juan County	4.5%	5.0%	4.3%	0.2%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. February’s preliminary estimated gain of 8,700 jobs was revised to a gain of 8,500 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.2 percent in March 2018 (preliminary), down from 5.6 percent reported in February (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was also 5.2 percent.

- Compared to March 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,136 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 132, resulting in a 1.2 percent increase in the size of the labor force but no change in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 110,687 in March.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 565 in February to 598. Altogether, 1,554 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in March; down from 1,681 in February.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through September 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Mar-18	Revised Feb-18	Revised Mar-17	Revised Feb-17	Change		
					Feb-18 Mar-18	Mar-17 Mar-18	Mar-17 Mar-18
Total Nonfarm	94,400	93,800	91,900	90,800	600	2,500	2.7%
Total Private	75,300	74,900	73,400	72,400	400	1,900	2.6%
Goods Producing	18,600	18,300	17,700	17,200	300	900	5.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,500	8,300	7,500	7,000	200	1,000	13.3%
Manufacturing	10,100	10,000	10,200	10,200	100	-100	-1.0%
Service Providing	75,800	75,500	74,200	73,600	300	1,600	2.2%
Private Services Providing	56,700	56,600	55,700	55,200	100	1,000	1.8%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,100	16,000	16,100	16,000	100	0	0.0%
Retail Trade	11,400	11,300	11,000	10,900	100	400	3.6%
Financial Activities	3,600	3,500	3,400	3,400	100	200	5.9%
Professional and Business Services	8,300	8,300	7,900	7,800	0	400	5.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	9,700	9,600	10,100	10,100	100	-400	-4.0%
Government	19,100	18,900	18,500	18,400	200	600	3.2%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,900	7,000	7,000	6,900	-100	-100	-1.4%
Total Local Government	10,800	10,500	10,100	10,100	300	700	6.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County increased by 600 from February to March 2018. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2,500 or 2.7 percent.

- In March, goods producing industries collectively added 300 jobs. Private services providers added 100 and government added 200 jobs over the month. Most industries in this report

reported employment gains over the month. Construction and government added the largest number of jobs (+200 each).

- Over the year, all but one of the major industries covered by this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in construction (+1,000) and government (+600). Leisure and hospitality and manufacturing each shed jobs over the year (-400 and -100 respectively).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.8 percent in March 2018 (preliminary), down from 6.3 reported in February (revised). The unemployment rate in March 2017 was 5.8 percent.

- Compared to March 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 130 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ decreased by 19. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 58,999, having decreased by 0.3 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 432 in February to 405. Altogether, 1,051 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in March. This is down from 1,149 in February.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through September 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Mar-18	Revised Feb-18	Revised Mar-17	Change		
				Feb-18 Mar-18	Mar-17 Mar-18	Mar-17 Mar-18
Total Nonfarm	50,200	49,300	49,700	900	500	1.0%
Total Private	38,000	37,400	38,100	600	-100	-0.3%
Goods Producing	10,000	9,800	10,000	200	0	0.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,200	4,100	4,300	100	-100	-2.3%
Manufacturing	5,800	5,700	5,700	100	100	1.8%
Service Providing	40,200	39,500	39,700	700	500	1.3%
Private Services Providing	28,000	27,600	28,100	400	-100	-0.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	9,800	9,800	200	200	2.0%
Retail Trade	6,800	6,600	7,100	200	-300	-4.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,200	5,100	5,000	100	200	4.0%
Government	12,200	11,900	11,600	300	600	5.2%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,700	1,500	1,500	200	200	13.3%
Local Government	10,100	10,000	9,700	100	400	4.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In March 2018, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls increased by 900. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 500 or 1.0 percent.

- Over the month, all major industry sectors detailed in this report added jobs. The largest increases were attributable to hiring by government (+300) and Trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities – specifically within retail trade (+200).
- Over the year, most industries added jobs, with the largest gains attributable to hiring by government (+600). Construction and retail trade each shed jobs over the year (-100 and -300 respectively).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.8 percent (preliminary) in March 2018. This is down from 6.1 percent in February (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.1 percent.

- Compared to March 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 497 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work expanded by 269, pushing the unemployment rate up over the year. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 34,511, an increase of 2.3 percent over the year.

- There were 183 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in March up from 148 in February. Altogether, 464 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in March. This is up from 454 in February.

Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)

Data benchmarked through September 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Mar-18	Revised Feb-18	Revised Mar-17	Change		
				Feb-18 Mar-18	Mar-17 Mar-18	Mar-17 Mar-18
Total Nonfarm	16,960	16,780	16,440	180	520	3.2%
Total Private	12,190	12,040	11,730	150	460	3.9%
Goods Producing	1,830	1,790	1,750	40	80	4.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	970	940	930	30	40	4.3%
Manufacturing	860	850	820	10	40	4.9%
Service Providing	15,130	14,990	14,690	140	440	3.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,690	2,660	2,600	30	90	3.5%
Retail Trade	2,170	2,140	2,110	30	60	2.8%
Information and Financial Activities	810	800	800	10	10	1.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,370	1,360	1,300	10	70	5.4%
Education and Health Services	2,340	2,320	2,240	20	100	4.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,350	2,320	2,250	30	100	4.4%
Government	4,770	4,740	4,710	30	60	1.3%
Federal Government	1,340	1,350	1,320	-10	20	1.5%
State and Local Government	3,430	3,390	3,390	40	40	1.2%
State and Local Government Education	1,540	1,510	1,540	30	0	0.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 180 from February to March 2018 Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 520 or 3.2 percent.

- From February to March, all major industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest month-to-month increases were observed in construction, trade, transportation and utilities (specifically retail trade), leisure and hospitality and government (each added 30).
- Year-over-year, all major industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in education and health services and leisure and hospitality (+100 each).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 5.0 percent in February (revised) to 4.5 percent (preliminary) in March 2018. The unemployment rate in March 2017 was 4.3 percent.

Northwest Washington labor market review for March 2018
Report available at <http://nwboard.org/impact/laborareasummarries.html>

- Compared to March 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 188 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 21. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,778 people and increased by 2.8 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County decreased from 21 in February to 14. Altogether, 78 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in March. This is down from 95 in February.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through September 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Mar-18	Revised Feb-18	Revised Mar-17	Change		
				Feb-18 Mar-18	Mar-17 Mar-18	Mar-17 Mar-18
Total Nonfarm	5,390	5,290	5,190	100	200	3.9%
Total Private	4,600	4,520	4,350	80	250	5.7%
Goods Producing	820	800	840	20	-20	-2.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	660	650	680	10	-20	-2.9%
Manufacturing	160	150	160	10	0	0.0%
Service Providing	4,570	4,490	4,350	80	220	5.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	940	930	900	10	40	4.4%
Information and Financial Activities	350	340	300	10	50	16.7%
Professional and Business Services	370	360	350	10	20	5.7%
Education and Health Services	610	620	600	-10	10	1.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,340	1,290	1,180	50	160	13.6%
Government	790	770	840	20	-50	-6.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County increased by 100 from February to March 2018. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 200 jobs or 3.9 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 March, most industries added jobs. The largest increase was attributable to the county’s largest industry: leisure and hospitality (+50). Education and health services shed jobs in March.
- Most industries added jobs over the year; the largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+160) and information and financial activities (+50). Government and construction were the only industry detailed in this report that shed jobs over the year (-50 and -20 respectively).