

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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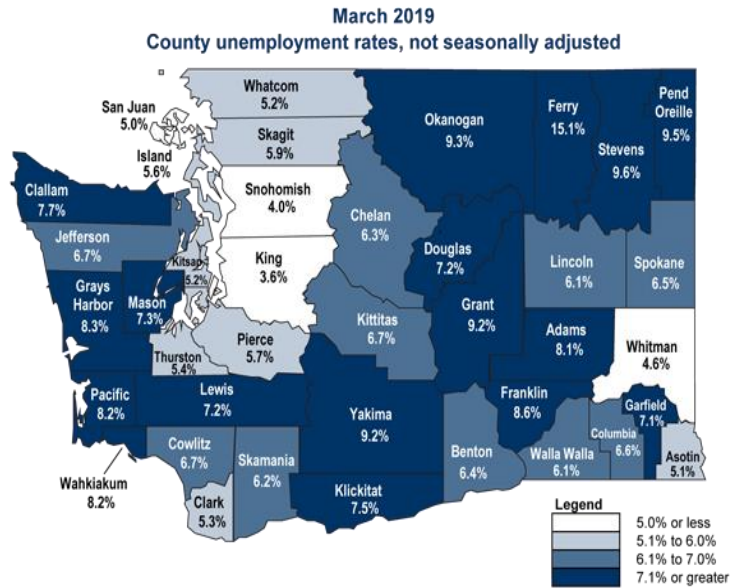
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 27,900 in March 2019.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 28,400 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 500 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for March 2018 through March 2019 indicate an increase in employment of 81,600 for the state. The private sector added 88,100 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 6,500 jobs over the year.

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



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Mar-19	Feb-19	Mar-18	Year-to- Year Change
USA	3.9%	4.1%	4.1%	-0.2%
Washington state	5.2%	5.2%	4.8%	0.4%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	5.5%	6.1%	5.3%	0.2%
Whatcom County	5.2%	5.9%	5.1%	0.1%
Skagit County	5.9%	6.8%	5.6%	0.3%
Island County	5.6%	5.8%	5.6%	0.0%
San Juan County	5.0%	4.8%	4.5%	0.5%

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 loss of 8,700 jobs was revised to a loss of 14,400 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.2 percent in March 2019 (preliminary), down relative to 5.9 percent reported in February (revised). The unemployment rate in March 2018 was 5.1 percent.

- Compared to 12 months ago, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,822 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 425, resulting in a 3.8 percent increase in the size of the labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 115,560 in March 2019.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 1,209 in February to 568. Altogether, 1,738 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in March; down from 2,213 in February.

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 Mar-19	Revised Feb-19	Revised Mar-18	Revised Feb-18	Change		
					Feb-19 Mar-19	Mar-18 Mar-19	Mar-18 Mar-19
Total Nonfarm	97,400	96,600	95,100	93,800	800	2,300	2.4%
Total Private	78,700	77,500	76,300	75,100	1,200	2,400	3.1%
Goods Producing	19,500	18,500	18,800	18,200	1,000	700	3.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	9,000	7,900	8,300	8,000	1,100	700	8.4%
Manufacturing	10,500	10,600	10,500	10,200	-100	0	0.0%
Service Providing	77,900	78,100	76,300	75,600	-200	1,600	2.1%
Private Services Providing	59,200	59,000	57,500	56,900	200	1,700	3.0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,500	16,600	16,400	16,300	-100	100	0.6%
Retail Trade	11,300	11,400	11,100	11,100	-100	200	1.8%
Financial Activities	3,900	3,900	3,700	3,600	0	200	5.4%
Professional and Business Services	8,400	8,300	8,200	8,100	100	200	2.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	11,000	10,800	10,800	10,700	200	200	1.9%
Government	18,700	19,100	18,800	18,700	-400	-100	-0.5%
Federal Government	1,400	1,500	1,400	1,400	-100	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,700	7,000	7,100	7,000	-300	-400	-5.6%
Total Local Government	10,600	10,600	10,300	10,300	0	300	2.9%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County increased by 800 from February to March 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2,300 or 2.4 percent.

- In March, private sector employers collectively added 1,200 jobs and government employers shed 400. The largest one month gains were attributable to construction (+1,100).
- Over the year, all but two of the major industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in construction (+700) and the only sector shedding jobs was government (-100).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.9 percent in March 2019 (preliminary), down from 6.8 percent in February (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.6 percent.

- Compared to March 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,333 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ increased by 317. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 61,819, increasing by 4.5 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 918 in February to 403 in March. Altogether, 1,177 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in March. This is down from 1,481 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 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Mar-19	Revised Feb-19	Revised Mar-18	Change		
				Feb-19 Mar-19	Mar-18 Mar-19	Mar-18 Mar-19
Total Nonfarm	51,900	50,900	50,300	1,000	1,600	3.2%
Total Private	39,500	38,800	38,500	700	1,000	2.6%
Goods Producing	10,600	10,200	10,100	400	500	5.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,700	4,200	4,200	500	500	11.9%
Manufacturing	5,900	6,000	5,900	-100	0	0.0%
Service Providing	41,300	40,700	40,200	600	1,100	2.7%
Private Services Providing	28,900	28,600	28,400	300	500	1.8%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,300	10,200	9,900	100	400	4.0%
Retail Trade	7,300	7,200	7,200	100	100	1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,300	5,100	4,900	200	400	8.2%
Government	12,400	12,100	11,800	300	600	5.1%
Federal Government	400	300	400	100	0	0.0%
State Government	1,600	1,500	1,500	100	100	6.7%
Local Government	10,400	10,300	9,900	100	500	5.1%

In March 2019, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls increased by 1,000. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,600 or 3.2 percent.

- Over the month, most industries detailed in this report expanded employment. The only industry not adding jobs in March was manufacturing.
- All major industries in this report added jobs or remained unchanged over the year. The industries reporting the largest gains were government (+600) and construction (+500).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.6 percent (preliminary) in March 2019. This is down from 5.8 percent in February (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.6 percent.

- Compared to March 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 990 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 70. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 35,462, an increase of 3.1 percent over the year.
- There were 129 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in March, down from 275 in February. Altogether, 418 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in March. This is down from 497 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 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Mar-19	Revised Feb-19	Revised Mar-18	Change		
				Feb-19 Mar-19	Mar-18 Mar-19	Mar-18 Mar-19
Total Nonfarm	17,140	16,960	16,900	180	240	1.4%
Total Private	12,350	12,180	12,180	170	170	1.4%
Goods Producing	1,860	1,850	1,880	10	-20	-1.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,060	1,050	1,050	10	10	1.0%
Manufacturing	800	800	830	0	-30	-3.6%
Service Providing	15,280	15,110	15,020	170	260	1.7%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,640	2,600	2,670	40	-30	-1.1%
Retail Trade	2,080	2,050	2,130	30	-50	-2.3%
Information and Financial Activities	800	780	800	20	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	1,360	1,350	1,260	10	100	7.9%
Education and Health Services	2,480	2,450	2,400	30	80	3.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,360	2,310	2,350	50	10	0.4%
Government	4,790	4,780	4,720	10	70	1.5%
Federal Government	1,290	1,300	1,320	-10	-30	-2.3%
State and Local Government	3,500	3,480	3,400	20	100	2.9%
State and Local Government Education	1,640	1,630	1,560	10	80	5.1%

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 180 from February to March 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 240 or 1.4 percent.

- From February to March, most industries reported employment gains. The largest one month gains were attributable to hiring in leisure and hospitality (+50).
- Year-over-year, the industries adding the largest number of jobs were professional and business services and education and health services (100 and 80 respectively). The deepest loss was attributable to retail trade (-50).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 4.8 percent in February (revised) to 5.0 percent (preliminary) in March. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.5 percent.

- Compared to March 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 162 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 47. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,780 workers and increased by 2.8 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County totaled 26 in March, down from 29 the previous month. Altogether, 91 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in March. This is up from 87 in February.

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 Mar-19	Revised Feb-19	Revised Mar-18	Change		
				Feb-19 Mar-19	Mar-18 Mar-19	Mar-18 Mar-19
Total Nonfarm	5,270	5,150	5,210	120	60	1.2%
Total Private	4,430	4,320	4,440	110	-10	-0.2%
Goods Producing	870	860	850	10	20	2.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	660	660	660	0	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	210	200	190	10	20	10.5%
Service Providing	4,400	4,290	4,360	110	40	0.9%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,000	980	940	20	60	6.4%
Information and Financial Activities	380	380	330	0	50	15.2%
Professional and Business Services	330	330	350	0	-20	-5.7%
Education and Health Services	630	630	600	0	30	5.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,060	970	1,180	90	-120	-10.2%
Government	840	830	770	10	70	9.1%

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County increased by 120 from February to March. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 60 jobs or 1.2 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, the largest one-month gains were reported from leisure and hospitality (+90).
- 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 (+60). The deepest 12 month losses were attributable to the leisure and hospitality industry (-120).

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 and updated in April. 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.