

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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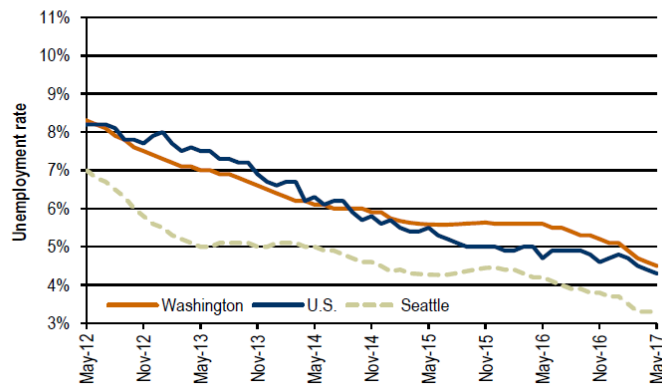
On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 2,000 from April 2017 to May 2017.<sup>1</sup> BLS estimates the private sector gained 2,600 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 600 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for May 2016 through May 2017 indicate an

increase in employment of 80,500 for the state. The private sector added 66,400 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 14,100 jobs over the year.

Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2017 is 4.5 percent. The revised estimated April 2017 unemployment rate was at 4.6 percent. The May 2016 unemployment rate was 5.6 percent.

Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted  
U.S., Washington and Seattle, May 2012 through May 2017  
Source: Employment Security Department/WITS; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) May-17	Apr-17	May-16	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.1%	4.1%	4.5%	-0.4%
Washington state	4.3%	4.3%	5.2%	-0.9%
Whatcom	4.7%	4.7%	5.8%	-1.1%
Skagit	5.2%	5.3%	6.6%	-1.4%
Island	5.0%	4.9%	5.9%	-0.9%
San Juan	3.7%	4.0%	4.7%	-1.0%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses.

Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. April’s preliminary estimated gain of 1,200 jobs was revised to a gain of 2,600 jobs.

## Whatcom County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.7 percent in May 2017 (preliminary), unchanged from April (revised). The unemployment rate in May 2016 was 5.8 percent.

- Compared to May 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,835 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 1,074, resulting in a 1.7 percent increase in the size of the labor force and a drop in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 108,463 in May 2017.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 603 in April to 733. Altogether, 1,400 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in May; down from 1,583 in April.

### Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through December 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-17	Revised Apr-17	Revised May-16	Change		
				Apr-17 May-17	May-16 May-17	May-16 May-17
Total Nonfarm	93,700	93,200	91,500	500	2,200	2.4%
Total Private	75,700	74,700	73,000	1,000	2,700	3.7%
Goods Producing	18,900	18,400	16,500	500	2,400	14.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,400	8,100	6,600	300	1,800	27.3%
Manufacturing	10,500	10,300	9,900	200	600	6.1%
Service Providing	74,800	74,800	75,000	0	-200	-0.3%
Private Services Providing	56,800	56,300	56,500	500	300	0.5%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,200	16,900	16,500	300	700	4.2%
Retail Trade	11,500	11,400	11,300	100	200	1.8%
Financial Activities	3,300	3,300	3,300	0	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	8,200	8,200	8,100	0	100	1.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	11,000	10,800	10,700	200	300	2.8%
Government	18,000	18,500	18,500	-500	-500	-2.7%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,500	6,900	7,100	-400	-600	-8.5%
Total Local Government	10,100	10,200	10,000	-100	100	1.0%

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 500 from April to May 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 2,200 or 2.4 percent.

- In May, goods producing industries collectively added 500 jobs. Private service providers added 500 jobs and government employers shed 500. All private sector industries detailed in this report added jobs over the month, with the exception of financial activities and professional and businesses, which remained unchanged.

- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 2,200 jobs over the past 12 months, marking a 2.4 percent increase in employment. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+1,800). Jobs were added by employers in all industries detailed in this report, except for government which shed 500 and financial activities which remained unchanged.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.2 percent in May 2017 (preliminary), down from 5.3 percent in April (revised). The unemployment rate in May 2016 was 6.6 percent.

- Compared to May 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,063 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ decreased by 723. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated as 58,761, having increased by 2.3 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 437 in April to 499. Altogether, 967 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 1,088 in April.

### Skagit County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through December 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-17	Revised Apr-17	Revised May-16	Change		
				Apr-17 May-17	May-16 May-17	May-16 May-17
Total Nonfarm	50,600	50,200	49,400	400	1,200	2.4%
Total Private	38,900	38,400	37,700	500	1,200	3.2%
Goods Producing	10,200	9,900	9,400	300	800	8.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,200	4,000	3,700	200	500	13.5%
Manufacturing	6,000	5,900	5,700	100	300	5.3%
Service Providing	40,400	40,300	40,000	100	400	1.0%
Private Services Providing	28,700	28,500	28,300	200	400	1.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,600	9,800	9,900	-200	-300	-3.0%
Retail Trade	7,100	7,300	7,100	-200	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,100	5,000	5,300	100	-200	-3.8%
Government	11,700	11,800	11,700	-100	0	0.0%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,600	1,600	1,600	0	0	0.0%
Local Government	9,700	9,800	9,700	-100	0	0.0%

In May 2017, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls expanded by 400. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,200 or 2.4 percent.

- Over the month, the largest employment gains were attributable to hiring in construction (+200), and the deepest losses came from retail trade, which falls under trade transportation warehousing and utilities (-200).
- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 1,200 or 2.4 percent, with most industries adding jobs. The largest employment gains were observed in construction (+500). Trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities and leisure and hospitality each shed jobs.

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.0 percent (preliminary) in May 2017. This is up from 4.9 percent (revised) in April. The unemployment rate in May 2016 was 5.9 percent.

- Compared to May 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 949 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work fell by 243. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 33,155, increasing by 2.2 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County decreased from 203 in April to 173. Altogether, 378 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 400 in April.

### Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

**Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)**

Data benchmarked through December 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-17	Revised Apr-17	Revised May-16	Change		
				Apr-17 May-17	May-16 May-17	May-16 May-17
Total Nonfarm	16,530	16,340	16,080	190	450	2.8%
Total Private	11,770	11,610	11,420	160	350	3.1%
Goods Producing	1,780	1,740	1,650	40	130	7.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	950	910	870	40	80	9.2%
Manufacturing	830	830	780	0	50	6.4%
Service Providing	14,750	14,600	14,430	150	320	2.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,590	2,560	2,630	30	-40	-1.5%
Retail Trade	2,130	2,100	2,170	30	-40	-1.8%
Information and Financial Activities	840	840	780	0	60	7.7%
Professional and Business Services	1,230	1,230	1,220	0	10	0.8%
Education and Health Services	2,280	2,280	2,140	0	140	6.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,250	2,160	2,250	90	0	0.0%
Government	4,760	4,730	4,660	30	100	2.1%
Federal Government	1,350	1,330	1,330	20	20	1.5%
State and Local Government	3,410	3,400	3,330	10	80	2.4%
State and Local Government Education	1,520	1,530	1,470	-10	50	3.4%

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 190 in May 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2.8 percent or 450.

- From April to May, the largest job gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+90).
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 450, with growth observed in most industry sectors detailed in this report. The largest gains were attributable to hiring in education and health services (+140). Losses were observed in retail trade (within trade transportation and utilities).

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County fell from 4.0 percent in April (revised) to 3.7 percent (preliminary) in May. The unemployment rate in May 2016 was 4.7 percent.

- Compared to May 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 79 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 76. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force increased by 3 people over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County decreased from 9 in April to 8. Altogether, 41 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 57 in April.

### San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

#### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through December 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-17	Revised Apr-17	Revised May-16	Change		
				Apr-17 May-17	May-16 May-17	May-16 May-17
Total Nonfarm	5,640	5,320	5,650	320	-10	-0.2%
Total Private	4,770	4,460	4,770	310	0	0.0%
Goods Producing	820	790	810	30	10	1.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	660	640	650	20	10	1.5%
Manufacturing	160	150	160	10	0	0.0%
Service Providing	4,820	4,530	4,840	290	-20	-0.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	980	940	950	40	30	3.2%
Information and Financial Activities	290	290	310	0	-20	-6.5%
Professional and Business Services	420	410	410	10	10	2.4%
Education and Health Services	640	640	600	0	40	6.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,430	1,210	1,500	220	-70	-4.7%
Government	870	860	880	10	-10	-1.1%

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County expanded by 320 in May. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 10 jobs or 0.2 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 May, goods producing employment increased by 30 jobs, with employment gains coming from construction and manufacturing. The largest month to month changes were attributable to hiring in leisure and hospitality (+220).
- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively shed 10 jobs. The largest gains were observed in education and health services (+40). The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-70).