

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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Compiled by Anneliese Vance-Sherman, Ph.D., Regional Labor Economist

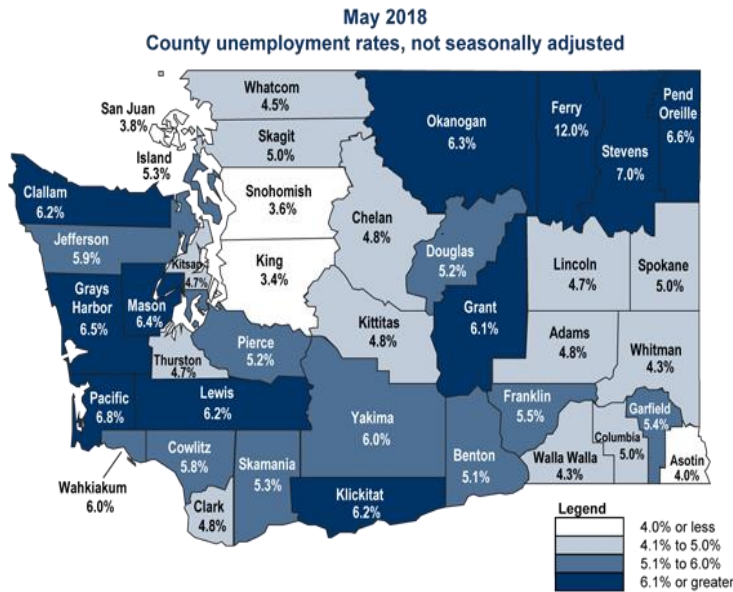
Phone: (425)258-6315 [avancesherman@esd.wa.gov](mailto:avancesherman@esd.wa.gov)

[www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo](http://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 8,500 from April 2018 to May 2018.<sup>1</sup> BLS estimates the private sector gained 7,800 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 700 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for May 2017 through May 2018 indicate an increase in employment of 90,100 for the state. The private sector added 85,100 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 5,000 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2018 is 4.7 percent. The revised estimated April 2018 unemployment rate is at 4.8 percent. The May 2017 unemployment rate was 4.8 percent.



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) May-18	Apr-18	May-17	Year-to- Year Change
USA	3.6%	3.7%	4.1%	-0.5%
Washington state	4.4%	4.4%	4.5%	-0.1%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	4.8%	5.0%	4.9%	0.1%
Whatcom County	4.5%	4.8%	4.7%	-0.2%
Skagit County	5.0%	5.4%	5.2%	-0.2%
Island County	5.3%	5.5%	5.0%	0.3%
San Juan County	3.8%	4.2%	3.6%	0.2%

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 7,100 jobs was revised to a gain of 8,200 jobs.

## Whatcom County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.5 percent in May 2018 (preliminary), down from 4.8 percent reported in April (revised). The unemployment rate in May 2017 was 4.7 percent.

- Compared to May 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,585 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 164, resulting in a 1.3 percent increase in the size of the labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 110,759 in May.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 549 in April to 613. Altogether, 1,187 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in May; down from 1,394 in April.

### Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted  
**Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)**  
 Data benchmarked through December 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-18	Revised Apr-18	Revised May-17	Change		
				Apr-18 May-18	May-17 May-18	May-17 May-18
Total Nonfarm	95,600	94,800	93,600	800	2,000	2.1%
Total Private	77,300	76,600	75,000	700	2,300	3.1%
Goods Producing	19,400	19,100	18,200	300	1,200	6.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,800	8,600	8,000	200	800	10.0%
Manufacturing	10,600	10,500	10,200	100	400	3.9%
Service Providing	76,200	75,700	75,400	500	800	1.1%
Private Services Providing	57,900	57,500	56,800	400	1,100	1.9%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,500	16,600	16,400	-100	100	0.6%
Retail Trade	11,000	11,000	11,300	0	-300	-2.7%
Financial Activities	3,500	3,500	3,500	0	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	8,500	8,400	8,300	100	200	2.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	11,000	10,900	10,200	100	800	7.8%
Government	18,300	18,200	18,600	100	-300	-1.6%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,500	6,400	7,000	100	-500	-7.1%
Total Local Government	10,400	10,400	10,200	0	200	2.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County increased by 800 from April to May 2018. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2,000 or 2.1 percent.

- In May, goods producing industries collectively added 300 jobs. Private services providers added 400 and government added 100 jobs. The largest one-month gain was observed in construction (+200) and the only industry reporting a loss was trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (-100).

- Over the year, all but two of the major industries covered by this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in construction and leisure and hospitality (+800 each). Government and retail trade each shed jobs over the year (-300 each).

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.0 percent in May 2018 (preliminary), down from 5.4 reported in April (revised). The unemployment rate in May 2017 was 5.2 percent.

- Compared to May 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 517 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ decreased by 97. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 59,359, increasing by 0.7 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 418 in April to 438. Altogether, 787 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 994 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 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-18	Revised Apr-18	Revised May-17	Change		
				Apr-18 May-18	May-17 May-18	May-17 May-18
Total Nonfarm	51,800	50,800	50,300	1,000	1,500	3.0%
Total Private	39,800	38,900	38,600	900	1,200	3.1%
Goods Producing	10,700	10,400	10,000	300	700	7.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,800	4,500	4,300	300	500	11.6%
Manufacturing	5,900	5,900	5,700	0	200	3.5%
Service Providing	41,100	40,400	40,300	700	800	2.0%
Private Services Providing	29,100	28,500	28,600	600	500	1.7%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,800	9,700	10,000	100	-200	-2.0%
Retail Trade	7,000	6,900	7,300	100	-300	-4.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,200	5,100	5,300	100	-100	-1.9%
Government	12,000	11,900	11,700	100	300	2.6%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,600	1,500	1,600	100	0	0.0%
Local Government	10,000	10,000	9,700	0	300	3.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In May 2018, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls increased by 1,000. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,500 or 3.0 percent.

- Over the month, most major industry sectors detailed in this report added jobs. The largest increase was attributable to hiring in construction (+300). No industries reported one month losses.

- Over the year, most industries added jobs, with the largest gains attributable to hiring by construction and government (+500 and +300 respectively). Trade transportation warehousing and utilities shed 200 jobs, specifically losing 300 jobs from retail trade.

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.3 percent (preliminary) in May 2018. This is down from 5.5 percent in April (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.0 percent.

- Compared to May 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 69 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work expanded by 120, pushing the unemployment rate up over the year. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 34,175, an increase of 0.6 percent over the year.
- There were 129 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in May down from 150 in April. Altogether, 392 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 437 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 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-18	Revised Apr-18	Revised May-17	Change		
				Apr-18 May-18	May-17 May-18	May-17 May-18
Total Nonfarm	16,970	16,840	16,830	130	140	0.8%
Total Private	12,180	12,040	12,110	140	70	0.6%
Goods Producing	1,860	1,840	1,800	20	60	3.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,040	1,020	960	20	80	8.3%
Manufacturing	820	820	840	0	-20	-2.4%
Service Providing	15,110	15,000	15,030	110	80	0.5%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,720	2,710	2,630	10	90	3.4%
Retail Trade	2,180	2,180	2,140	0	40	1.9%
Information and Financial Activities	790	790	820	0	-30	-3.7%
Professional and Business Services	1,150	1,140	1,370	10	-220	-16.1%
Education and Health Services	2,420	2,410	2,240	10	180	8.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,380	2,300	2,420	80	-40	-1.7%
Government	4,790	4,800	4,720	-10	70	1.5%
Federal Government	1,340	1,340	1,320	0	20	1.5%
State and Local Government	3,450	3,460	3,400	-10	50	1.5%
State and Local Government Education	1,550	1,560	1,520	-10	30	2.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 130 from April to May 2018. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 140 or 0.8 percent.

- From April to May, most major industries added jobs. The largest month-to-month increase was observed in leisure and hospitality (+80). Government shed 10 jobs in May.
- Year-over-year, most major industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gain was observed in education and health services (+180). The deepest loss was attributable to professional and business services (-220).

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 4.2 percent in April (revised) to 3.8 percent (preliminary) in May 2018. The unemployment rate in May 2017 was 3.6 percent.

- Compared to May 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 28 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 18, pushing the unemployment rate up over the year. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,214 people and increased by 0.6 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 9 in April to 13. Altogether, 52 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 62 in April.

### San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

#### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through December 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-18	Revised Apr-18	Revised May-17	Change		
				Apr-18 May-18	May-17 May-18	May-17 May-18
Total Nonfarm	5,860	5,480	5,790	380	70	1.2%
Total Private	5,070	4,680	4,920	390	150	3.0%
Goods Producing	950	930	870	20	80	9.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	730	720	700	10	30	4.3%
Manufacturing	220	210	170	10	50	29.4%
Service Providing	4,910	4,550	4,920	360	-10	-0.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,100	1,030	990	70	110	11.1%
Information and Financial Activities	340	330	330	10	10	3.0%
Professional and Business Services	350	330	380	20	-30	-7.9%
Education and Health Services	580	580	590	0	-10	-1.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,580	1,300	1,580	280	0	0.0%
Government	790	800	870	-10	-80	-9.2%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County increased by 380 from April to May 2018. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 70 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 May, most industries added jobs. The largest increase was attributable to the county's largest industry: leisure and hospitality (+280). Education and health services is the only industry broken out in this report that did not expand employment in May.
- Over the year, there was a net gain, with a mix of industry-specific gains and losses; the largest gains were observed in manufacturing and construction (+50 and +30 respectively). The deepest loss was observed in government (-80).

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