

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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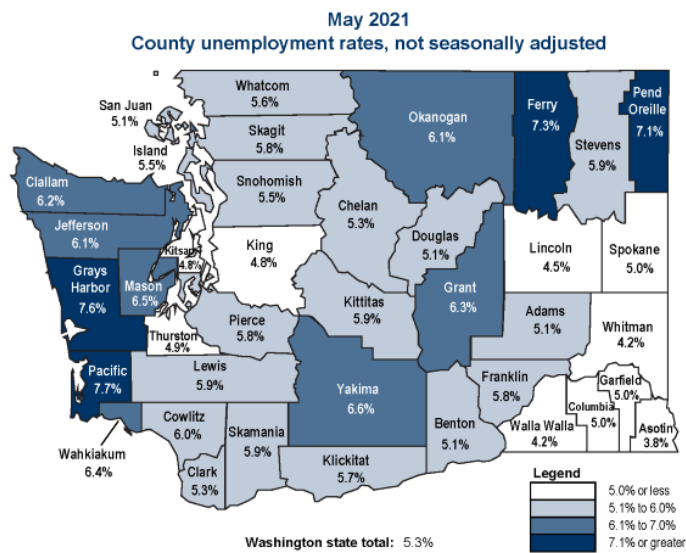
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This report marks the second report whereby the year-over-year narrative shifts from pandemic-related losses to recovery since the start of the economic crisis. Pandemic-related employment effects began to show up in March last year, and swiftly led to unprecedented levels of unemployment in April 2020. Many jobs have recovered in the meantime, with significant variation by location and industry. This report tracks a moment in that recovery.

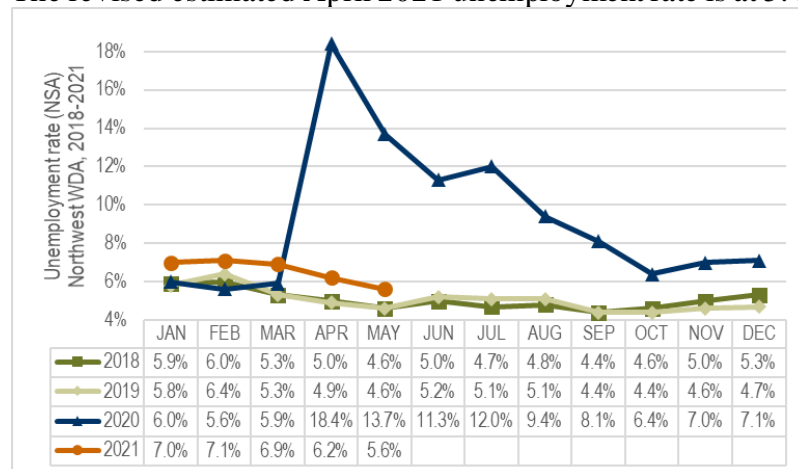
On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose 8,300 in May 2021. BLS estimates the private sector gained 7,000 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 1,300 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for May 2020 through May 2021 indicate an increase in employment of 248,900 for the state. The private sector gained 229,500 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 19,400 jobs over the year.



by

Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2021 is 5.3 percent. The revised estimated April 2021 unemployment rate is at 5.4 percent. The May 2020



unemployment rate was 12.5 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The April 2021 preliminary estimated gain of 11,200 jobs was revised to a gain of 13,200 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.6 percent in May 2021 (preliminary), below the April estimate of 6.2 percent (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 13.9 percent.

- Compared to May 2020, the labor force dropped by 81 workers. Within that estimate, the number of employed workers expanded by 9,393 (9.5 percent) and the number of unemployed workers contracted by 9,474 (59.6 percent). Whatcom County's estimated labor force was 114,397 in May 2021.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)
 Data benchmarked through December 2020

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-21	Revised Apr-21	Revised May-20	Change		
				Apr-21 May-21	May-20 May-21	May-20 May-21
Total Nonfarm	90,000	89,600	83,700	400	6,300	7.5%
Total Private	72,900	72,700	67,100	200	5,800	8.6%
Goods Producing	17,400	17,500	16,800	-100	600	3.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,200	8,200	7,200	0	1,000	13.9%
Manufacturing	9,200	9,300	9,600	-100	-400	-4.2%
Service Providing	72,600	72,100	66,900	500	5,700	8.5%
Private Services Providing	55,500	55,200	50,300	300	5,200	10.3%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,100	16,000	14,400	100	1,700	11.8%
Retail Trade	11,100	11,100	9,600	0	1,500	15.6%
Financial Activities	3,900	3,900	3,800	0	100	2.6%
Professional and Business Services	8,200	8,200	7,700	0	500	6.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	9,300	8,900	6,800	400	2,500	36.8%
Government	17,100	16,900	16,600	200	500	3.0%
Federal Government	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	5,700	5,800	5,800	-100	-100	-1.7%
Total Local Government	9,900	9,600	9,300	300	600	6.5%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 400 from April to May 2021. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs increased by 6,300 (7.5 percent).

- In May, most industries added jobs. The largest one-month gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+400). Employment in manufacturing was down (-100) over the month.
- Most major industries added jobs over the year. Leisure and hospitality added the largest number of jobs over the year (+2,500). Manufacturing is the only sector detailed in this report to have shed jobs over the year.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.8 percent (preliminary) in May—this is down from April, as the unemployment rate in recent months indicates that job seekers are connecting with work. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 14.5 percent.

- Compared to May 2020, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 5,303 (9.9 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ contracted by 5,428 (60.0 percent). Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 62,331, decreasing by 0.2 percent over the year.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)

Data benchmarked through December 2020

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-21	Revised Apr-21	Revised May-20	Change		
				Apr-21 May-21	May-20 May-21	May-20 May-21
Total Nonfarm	49,400	48,800	45,400	600	4,000	8.8%
Total Private	38,100	37,600	35,000	500	3,100	8.9%
Goods Producing	10,400	10,300	9,900	100	500	5.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,300	4,200	4,000	100	300	7.5%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,100	5,900	0	200	3.4%
Service Providing	39,000	38,500	35,500	500	3,500	9.9%
Private Services Providing	27,700	27,300	25,100	400	2,600	10.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,300	9,300	8,700	0	600	6.9%
Retail Trade	6,800	6,800	6,100	0	700	11.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,300	4,100	3,700	200	600	16.2%
Government	11,300	11,200	10,400	100	900	8.7%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,200	1,200	1,400	0	-200	-14.3%
Local Government	9,700	9,600	8,600	100	1,100	12.8%

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County increased by 600 from April to May 2021. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 4,000 or 8.8 percent.

- Over the month, all industries included in this report added jobs or maintained employment levels. The largest increases were observed in leisure and hospitality (+200).
- All major industries have recovered jobs over the year. The largest 12-month increases were attributable to government (+900) and retail trade (+700), within trade, transportation warehousing and utilities, and leisure and hospitality (+600).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.5 percent (preliminary) in May 2021, below the (revised) unemployment rate (6.0 percent) reported in April. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 11.8 percent.

- Compared to May 2020, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,040 (6.4 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work contracted by 2,301 (54.1 percent). Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 35,725 in May 2021 – 0.7 percent below the estimate from 12 months ago.

Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)

Data benchmarked through December 2020

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-21	Revised Apr-21	Revised May-20	Change		
				Apr-21 May-21	May-20 May-21	May-20 May-21
Total Nonfarm	16,550	16,510	15,640	40	910	5.8%
Total Private	11,980	12,020	11,120	-40	860	7.7%
Goods Producing	1,880	1,890	1,840	-10	40	2.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,170	1,170	1,060	0	110	10.4%
Manufacturing	710	720	780	-10	-70	-9.0%
Service Providing	14,670	14,620	13,800	50	870	6.3%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,720	2,720	2,480	0	240	9.7%
Retail Trade	2,150	2,140	1,950	10	200	10.3%
Information and Financial Activities	820	830	790	-10	30	3.8%
Professional and Business Services	1,440	1,440	1,360	0	80	5.9%
Education and Health Services	2,420	2,420	2,140	0	280	13.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,840	1,870	1,700	-30	140	8.2%
Government	4,570	4,490	4,520	80	50	1.1%
Federal Government	1,300	1,290	1,340	10	-40	-3.0%
State and Local Government	3,270	3,200	3,180	70	90	2.8%
State and Local Government Education	1,400	1,370	1,420	30	-20	-1.4%

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 40 from April to May 2021. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 910 or 5.8 percent.

- From April to May, 3 major industries included in this report saw declining employment levels, with the deepest drops observed in leisure and hospitality (-30). Two industries added jobs, with the largest increases attributable to government (+80).
- Year-over-year, the largest employment gains were attributable to educational and health services (+280) and trade transportation and utilities (+240).

Employment statistics for Island County do not include military employment.

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County was 5.1 percent in May 2021 (preliminary), down from 6.0 percent (revised) in April. For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 14.0 percent.

- Compared to May 2020, the number of residents counted as ‘employed’ increased by 257 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 725. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,437 resident workers and contracted by 5.9 percent over the year.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through December 2020

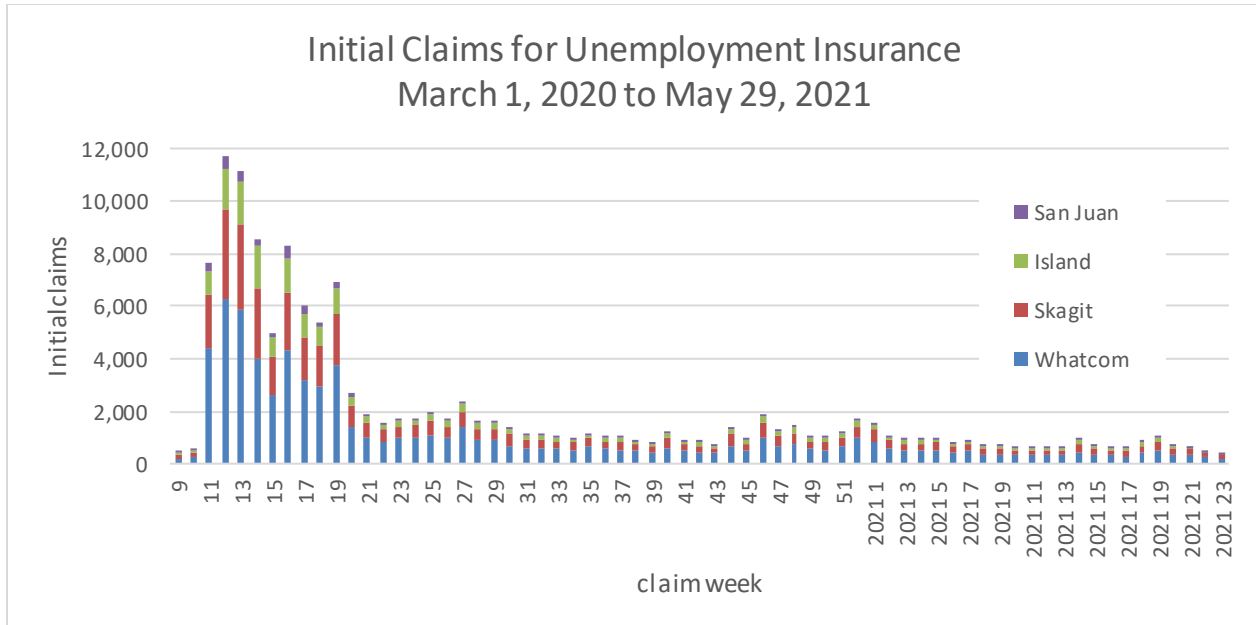
NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-21	Revised Apr-21	Revised May-20	Change		
				Apr-21 May-21	May-20 May-21	May-20 May-21
Total Nonfarm	4,600	4,640	4,560	-40	40	0.9%
Total Private	3,750	3,800	3,800	-50	-50	-1.3%
Goods Producing	900	910	820	-10	80	9.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	720	720	650	0	70	10.8%
Manufacturing	180	190	170	-10	10	5.9%
Service Providing	3,700	3,730	3,740	-30	-40	-1.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	880	880	920	0	-40	-4.3%
Information and Financial Activities	360	360	300	0	60	20.0%
Professional and Business Services	430	430	390	0	40	10.3%
Education and Health Services	520	520	520	0	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	490	520	660	-30	-170	-25.8%
Government	850	840	760	10	90	11.8%

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County contracted over the month (-40). Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 40 or 0.9 percent.

- From April to May, most industries detailed in this report shed jobs. The largest drop was observed in leisure and hospitality (-30).
- According to preliminary estimates, the deepest 12-month losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-170) and the largest gains were observed in government (+90).

Weekly Unemployment Insurance Claims information:

In March 2020, the Employment Security Department began publishing weekly counts of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance. Initial claims provide an indicator of layoffs. Because they are entered weekly, they are a bit more nimble than our survey-based datasets.



New claims for unemployment insurance have stabilized but are still higher than pre-pandemic levels.

**Labor force and payroll reporting reflects employment during 2021 the week of May 9-15.*

Forecast information for Washington state:

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. The June forecast is currently online 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.