

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2017, Number 11

November 2017

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

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

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 9,800 from October 2017 to November 2017. BLS estimates the private sector gained 13,100 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 3,300 jobs.

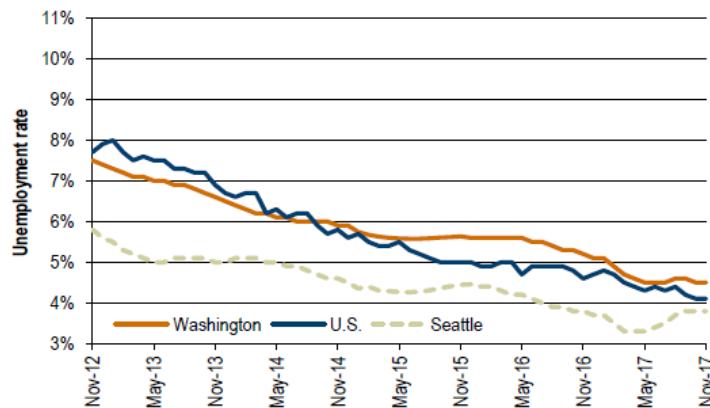
On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for November 2016 through November 2017 indicate an increase in employment of 97,900 for the state. The private sector added 87,100 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 10,800 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November 2017 is 4.5 percent. The revised estimated October 2017 unemployment rate was at 4.5 percent. The November 2016 unemployment rate was 5.2 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

| Area | (Prelim.) Nov-17 | Oct-17 | Nov-16 | Year-to- Year Change |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|----------------------------|
| USA | 3.9% | 3.9% | 4.4% | -0.5% |
| Washington state | 4.5% | 4.2% | 5.1% | -0.6% |
| Northwest Workforce Development Area | 4.5% | 4.3% | 5.7% | -1.2% |
| Whatcom County | 4.3% | 4.1% | 5.5% | -1.2% |
| Skagit County | 4.8% | 4.5% | 6.4% | -1.6% |
| Island County | 4.8% | 4.7% | 5.6% | -0.8% |
| San Juan County | 3.7% | 3.4% | 4.6% | -0.9% |

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



BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. October's preliminary estimated gain of 6,900 jobs was revised to a gain of 6,300 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.3 percent in November 2017 (preliminary), up from 4.1 percent reported in October (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.5 percent.

- Compared to November 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 5,580 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 1,086, resulting in a 4.1 percent increase in the size of the labor force and a drop in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 113,407 in November.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 660 in October to 805. Altogether, 1,372 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November; up from 1,297 in October.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

| NAICS Industry Title | Prelim Nov-17 | Revised Oct-17 | Revised Nov-16 | Change | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | | Oct-17 Nov-17 | Nov-16 Nov-17 | Nov-16 Nov-17 |
| Total Nonfarm | 95,100 | 95,100 | 92,300 | 0 | 2,800 | 3.0% |
| Total Private | 76,100 | 76,200 | 74,000 | -100 | 2,100 | 2.8% |
| Goods Producing | 18,700 | 18,800 | 17,300 | -100 | 1,400 | 8.1% |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction | 8,200 | 8,500 | 7,200 | -300 | 1,000 | 13.9% |
| Manufacturing | 10,500 | 10,300 | 10,100 | 200 | 400 | 4.0% |
| Service Providing | 76,400 | 76,300 | 75,000 | 100 | 1,400 | 1.9% |
| Private Services Providing | 57,400 | 57,400 | 56,700 | 0 | 700 | 1.2% |
| Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities | 17,000 | 16,700 | 16,800 | 300 | 200 | 1.2% |
| Retail Trade | 11,400 | 11,200 | 11,600 | 200 | -200 | -1.7% |
| Financial Activities | 3,500 | 3,500 | 3,300 | 0 | 200 | 6.1% |
| Professional and Business Services | 8,600 | 8,600 | 8,100 | 0 | 500 | 6.2% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 10,200 | 10,400 | 10,700 | -200 | -500 | -4.7% |
| Government | 19,000 | 18,900 | 18,300 | 100 | 700 | 3.8% |
| Federal Government | 1,400 | 1,400 | 1,400 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total State Government | 7,000 | 7,200 | 6,800 | -200 | 200 | 2.9% |
| Total Local Government | 10,600 | 10,300 | 10,100 | 300 | 500 | 5.0% |
| Workers in Labor/Management Disputes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County was unchanged from October to November 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2,800 or 3.0 percent.

- In November, goods producing industries collectively shed 100 jobs. Private services providers remained unchanged and government employers added 100. The largest month to month gains were attributable to hiring in trade transportation warehousing and utilities (+300), specifically within retail trade (+200) and manufacturing (+200). Over the month, construction and leisure and hospitality each shed jobs (-300 and -200 respectively).
- Year over year, the largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+1,000) and professional and business services (+500). Most industries either added jobs over the year or remained unchanged. The two industries shedding jobs over the year were retail trade (-200) and leisure and hospitality (-500).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 4.8 percent in November 2017 (preliminary), up from 4.5 reported in October (revised). The unemployment rate in November 2016 was 6.4 percent.

- Compared to November 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,810 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ decreased by 864. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated as 60,408, having increased by 3.3 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 462 in October to 674. Altogether, 997 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 881 in October.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through June 2017

| NAICS Industry Title | Prelim Nov-17 | Revised Oct-17 | Revised Nov-16 | Change | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | | Oct-17 Nov-17 | Nov-16 Nov-17 | Nov-16 Nov-17 |
| Total Nonfarm | 50,900 | 51,000 | 49,400 | -100 | 1,500 | 3.0% |
| Total Private | 38,900 | 39,200 | 37,800 | -300 | 1,100 | 2.9% |
| Goods Producing | 10,400 | 10,600 | 9,600 | -200 | 800 | 8.3% |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction | 4,300 | 4,400 | 3,800 | -100 | 500 | 13.2% |
| Manufacturing | 6,100 | 6,200 | 5,800 | -100 | 300 | 5.2% |
| Service Providing | 40,500 | 40,400 | 39,800 | 100 | 700 | 1.8% |
| Private Services Providing | 28,500 | 28,600 | 28,200 | -100 | 300 | 1.1% |
| Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities | 10,400 | 10,100 | 10,200 | 300 | 200 | 2.0% |
| Retail Trade | 7,200 | 7,000 | 7,300 | 200 | -100 | -1.4% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 5,200 | 5,300 | 5,000 | -100 | 200 | 4.0% |
| Government | 12,000 | 11,800 | 11,600 | 200 | 400 | 3.4% |
| Federal Government | 400 | 400 | 400 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| State Government | 1,600 | 1,600 | 1,500 | 0 | 100 | 6.7% |
| Local Government | 10,000 | 9,800 | 9,700 | 200 | 300 | 3.1% |
| Workers in Labor/Management Disputes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

In November 2017, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls fell by 100 compared to October. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,500 or 3.0 percent.

- Over the month, trade transportation warehousing and utilities added 300 jobs; 200 of which were attributable to hiring in retail. Government also added jobs (+200). Job losses were observed in construction, manufacturing and leisure and hospitality (-100 each).
- Over the year, the largest employment gains were observed in construction (+500), government (+400) and manufacturing (+300). Most sectors added jobs. The only industry reporting employment losses over the year was retail trade (-100).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 4.8 percent (preliminary) in November 2017. This is up from 4.7 percent in October (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.6 percent.

- Compared to November 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,693 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work fell by 204. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 35,128, increasing by 4.4 percent over the year.

- There were 194 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in November, down from 215 in October. Altogether, 440 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 426 in October.

Island County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through June 2017

| NAICS Industry Title | Prelim Nov-17 | Revised Oct-17 | Revised Nov-16 | Change | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | | Oct-17 Nov-17 | Nov-16 Nov-17 | Nov-16 Nov-17 |
| Total Nonfarm | 16,960 | 16,950 | 16,400 | 10 | 560 | 3.4% |
| Total Private | 12,160 | 12,200 | 11,650 | -40 | 510 | 4.4% |
| Goods Producing | 1,810 | 1,820 | 1,750 | -10 | 60 | 3.4% |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction | 980 | 1,000 | 930 | -20 | 50 | 5.4% |
| Manufacturing | 830 | 820 | 820 | 10 | 10 | 1.2% |
| Service Providing | 15,150 | 15,130 | 14,650 | 20 | 500 | 3.4% |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 2,680 | 2,640 | 2,620 | 40 | 60 | 2.3% |
| Retail Trade | 2,160 | 2,120 | 2,170 | 40 | -10 | -0.5% |
| Information and Financial Activities | 850 | 850 | 840 | 0 | 10 | 1.2% |
| Professional and Business Services | 1,350 | 1,380 | 1,240 | -30 | 110 | 8.9% |
| Education and Health Services | 2,270 | 2,250 | 2,170 | 20 | 100 | 4.6% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 2,390 | 2,450 | 2,260 | -60 | 130 | 5.8% |
| Government | 4,800 | 4,750 | 4,750 | 50 | 50 | 1.1% |
| Federal Government | 1,360 | 1,350 | 1,340 | 10 | 20 | 1.5% |
| State and Local Government | 3,440 | 3,400 | 3,410 | 40 | 30 | 0.9% |
| State and Local Government Education | 1,540 | 1,520 | 1,550 | 20 | -10 | -0.6% |
| Workers in Labor/Management Disputes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 10 from October to November 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 560 or 3.4 percent.

- From October to November, the largest job gains were observed in government (+50) and retail trade (+40). The deepest losses over the month came from leisure and hospitality (-60).
- Year-over-year, most industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+130), professional and business services (+110) and education and health services (+100). Retailers shed 10 jobs over the year.

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 3.4 percent in October (revised) to 3.7 percent (preliminary) in November. The unemployment rate in November 2016 was 4.6 percent.

- Compared to November 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 566 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 49. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,093 people and increased by 6.8 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County decreased from 41 in October to 39. Altogether, 58 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 48 in October.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2017

| NAICS Industry Title | Prelim Nov-17 | Revised Oct-17 | Revised Nov-16 | Change | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | | Oct-17 Nov-17 | Nov-16 Nov-17 | Nov-16 Nov-17 |
| Total Nonfarm | 5,450 | 5,690 | 5,300 | -240 | 150 | 2.8% |
| Total Private | 4,650 | 4,890 | 4,460 | -240 | 190 | 4.3% |
| Goods Producing | 900 | 920 | 840 | -20 | 60 | 7.1% |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction | 730 | 750 | 670 | -20 | 60 | 9.0% |
| Manufacturing | 170 | 170 | 170 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Service Providing | 4,550 | 4,770 | 4,460 | -220 | 90 | 2.0% |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 1,000 | 1,040 | 910 | -40 | 90 | 9.9% |
| Information and Financial Activities | 330 | 340 | 310 | -10 | 20 | 6.5% |
| Professional and Business Services | 360 | 370 | 410 | -10 | -50 | -12.2% |
| Education and Health Services | 610 | 620 | 600 | -10 | 10 | 1.7% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 1,270 | 1,430 | 1,210 | -160 | 60 | 5.0% |
| Government | 800 | 800 | 840 | 0 | -40 | -4.8% |
| Workers in Labor/Management Disputes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County dropped by 240 from October to November 2017. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 150 jobs or 2.8 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 November, most industries shed jobs. The largest drop came from the largest sector: leisure and hospitality (-160).
- Most industries added jobs over the year; the largest gains were observed in construction and leisure and hospitality (+60 each). Professional and business services shed 50.