

# 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 5,100 in November 2018.1 BLS estimates the private sector gained 6,400 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 1,300 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for November 2017 through November 2018 indicate an increase in

employment of 103,500 for the state. The private sector added 104,400 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 900 jobs over the year.

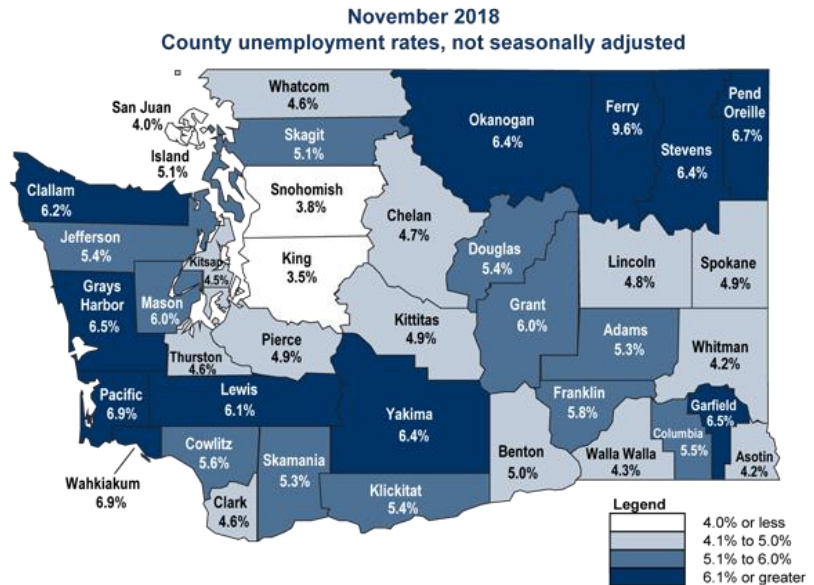
Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November 2018 is 4.3 percent. The revised estimated October 2018 unemployment rate is at 4.3 percent. The November 2017 unemployment rate was 4.7 percent.

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

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Nov-18	Oct-18	Nov-17	Year-to- Year Change
USA	3.5%	3.5%	3.9%	-0.4%
Washington state	4.4%	4.0%	4.6%	-0.2%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	4.4%	4.1%	4.6%	-0.2%
Whatcom County	4.6%	4.2%	4.6%	0.0%
Skagit County	5.1%	4.7%	5.1%	0.0%
Island County	5.1%	4.8%	5.0%	0.1%
San Juan County	4.0%	3.5%	3.9%	0.1%

estimates are subject to revision. October’s preliminary estimated gain of 12,400 jobs was revised to a gain of 7,700 jobs.



# Whatcom County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.6 percent in November 2018 (preliminary), up relative to 4.2 percent reported in October (revised). The unemployment rate in November 2017 was 4.6 percent.

- Compared to November 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,103 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 118, resulting in a 2.0 percent increase in the size of the labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 114,242 in November.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 730 in October to 831. Altogether, 1,365 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November; up from 1,122 in October.

## Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted  
**Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)**  
 Data benchmarked through June 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-18	Revised Oct-18	Revised Nov-17	Revised Oct-17	Change		
					Oct-18 Nov-18	Nov-17 Nov-18	Nov-17 Nov-18
Total Nonfarm	96,400	96,700	94,800	94,400	-300	1,600	1.7%
Total Private	77,600	77,900	76,200	75,800	-300	1,400	1.8%
Goods Producing	18,700	19,200	18,700	18,800	-500	0	0.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,300	8,800	8,400	8,600	-500	-100	-1.2%
Manufacturing	10,400	10,400	10,300	10,200	0	100	1.0%
Service Providing	77,700	77,500	76,100	75,600	200	1,600	2.1%
Private Services Providing	58,900	58,700	57,500	57,000	200	1,400	2.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,600	17,000	16,800	16,500	600	800	4.8%
Retail Trade	11,700	11,500	11,600	11,200	200	100	0.9%
Financial Activities	3,800	3,900	3,500	3,500	-100	300	8.6%
Professional and Business Services	8,300	8,300	8,300	8,300	0	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,900	11,000	10,500	10,400	-100	400	3.8%
Government	18,800	18,800	18,600	18,600	0	200	1.1%
Federal Government	1,500	1,500	1,400	1,400	0	100	7.1%
Total State Government	6,800	7,000	6,900	7,100	-200	-100	-1.4%
Total Local Government	10,500	10,300	10,300	10,100	200	200	1.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County decreased by 300 from October to November 2018. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 1,600 or 1.7 percent.

- In November, private employers collectively shed 300 jobs. The deepest losses came from the highly-seasonal construction industry (-500). The largest gains were attributable to hiring in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities sector (+600), which includes retail trade.
- Over the year, most industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+800) and leisure and hospitality (+400). Construction employment was down 100 over the year.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.1 percent in November 2018 (preliminary), up from 4.7 percent in October (revised). The unemployment rate in November 2017 was 5.1 percent.

- Compared to November 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,078 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ increased by 70. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 60,744, increasing by 1.9 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 518 in October to 697. Altogether, 1,049 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 868 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 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-18	Revised Oct-18	Revised Nov-17	Change		
				Oct-18 Nov-18	Nov-17 Nov-18	Nov-17 Nov-18
Total Nonfarm	51,800	51,800	50,300	0	1,500	3.0%
Total Private	39,500	39,900	38,600	-400	900	2.3%
Goods Producing	10,700	10,800	10,200	-100	500	4.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,600	4,700	4,400	-100	200	4.5%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,100	5,800	0	300	5.2%
Service Providing	41,100	41,000	40,100	100	1,000	2.5%
Private Services Providing	28,800	29,100	28,400	-300	400	1.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	9,900	10,200	100	-200	-2.0%
Retail Trade	7,300	7,300	7,300	0	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,200	5,300	4,900	-100	300	6.1%
Government	12,300	11,900	11,700	400	600	5.1%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,600	1,500	1,500	100	100	6.7%
Local Government	10,300	10,000	9,800	300	500	5.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In November 2018, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls neither expanded nor contracted compared to October. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs increased by 1,500 or 3.0 percent.

- Over the month, the seasonally-sensitive leisure and hospitality and construction industries shed jobs (100 each). Government employment expanded by 400 jobs in November.
- The industries reporting the largest annual gains were government (+600) and manufacturing and leisure and hospitality (+300 each). Trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities shed 200 jobs over the year.

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.1 percent (preliminary) in November 2018. This is up from 4.8 percent in October (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.0 percent.

- Compared to November 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 21 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 42. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 35,110, an increase of 0.2 percent over the year.
- There were 192 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in November, up from 174 in October. Altogether, 366 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 366 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 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-18	Revised Oct-18	Revised Nov-17	Change		
				Oct-18 Nov-18	Nov-17 Nov-18	Nov-17 Nov-18
Total Nonfarm	16,850	16,890	16,650	-40	200	1.2%
Total Private	12,120	12,210	11,920	-90	200	1.7%
Goods Producing	1,860	1,880	1,830	-20	30	1.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,080	1,100	1,010	-20	70	6.9%
Manufacturing	780	780	820	0	-40	-4.9%
Service Providing	14,990	15,010	14,820	-20	170	1.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,630	2,620	2,670	10	-40	-1.5%
Retail Trade	2,070	2,050	2,140	20	-70	-3.3%
Information and Financial Activities	780	780	810	0	-30	-3.7%
Professional and Business Services	1,250	1,290	1,120	-40	130	11.6%
Education and Health Services	2,330	2,320	2,380	10	-50	-2.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,420	2,480	2,300	-60	120	5.2%
Government	4,730	4,680	4,730	50	0	0.0%
Federal Government	1,310	1,300	1,340	10	-30	-2.2%
State and Local Government	3,420	3,380	3,390	40	30	0.9%
State and Local Government Education	1,580	1,530	1,520	50	60	3.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County contracted by 40 in November. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 200 or 1.2 percent.

- From October to November, three major industries added jobs and three shed jobs. The largest month-to-month increase was observed in government (+50) and the deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-60).
- Year-over-year, the industries adding the largest number of jobs were professional and business services and leisure and hospitality (130 and 120 respectively). The deepest loss was attributable to retail trade (-70).

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 3.5 percent in October (revised) to 4.0 percent (preliminary) in November 2018. The unemployment rate 12 months earlier was 3.9 percent.

- Compared to November 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 130 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 7. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,969 workers and decreased by 1.5 percent over the year.

- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County totaled 42 in November, up from 21 the previous month. Altogether, 50 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 40 in October.

## San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-18	Revised Oct-18	Revised Nov-17	Change		
				Oct-18 Nov-18	Nov-17 Nov-18	Nov-17 Nov-18
Total Nonfarm	5,420	5,700	5,330	-280	90	1.7%
Total Private	4,640	4,920	4,560	-280	80	1.8%
Goods Producing	960	980	920	-20	40	4.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	710	720	710	-10	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	250	260	210	-10	40	19.0%
Service Providing	4,460	4,720	4,410	-260	50	1.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	960	1,000	970	-40	-10	-1.0%
Information and Financial Activities	390	400	330	-10	60	18.2%
Professional and Business Services	350	360	350	-10	0	0.0%
Education and Health Services	600	620	580	-20	20	3.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,180	1,370	1,230	-190	-50	-4.1%
Government	780	780	770	0	10	1.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County decreased by 280 from October to November 2018. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 90 jobs or 1.7 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, all private sector industries detailed in this report shed jobs. Leisure and hospitality, the county's largest industry, shed 190 jobs. Government employment levels did not change.
- Over the year, there was a net gain of employment. The largest one-year gains were attributable to hiring in the information and financial services industries (+60). The deepest 12 month losses were attributable to the leisure and hospitality industry (-50).

## 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 November and updated in December. Forecast information is available at [www.erfc.wa.gov](http://www.erfc.wa.gov).

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