

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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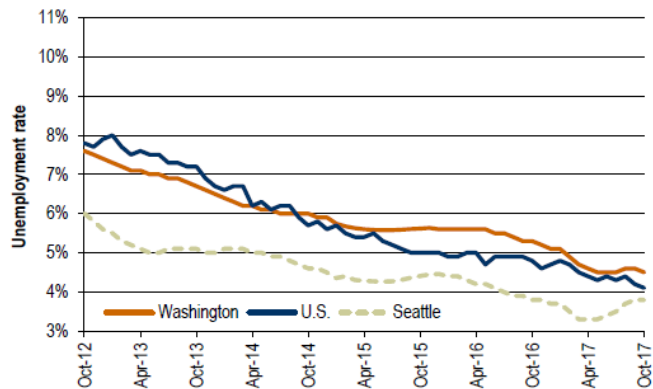
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 6,900 from September 2017 to October 2017.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 6,000 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 900 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for October 2016 through October 2017 indicate an increase in employment of 105,800 for the state. The private sector added 91,000 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 14,800 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for October 2017 is 4.5 percent. The revised estimated September 2017 unemployment rate was at 4.6 percent. The October 2016 unemployment rate was 5.3 percent.

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



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Oct-17	Sep-17	Oct-16	Year-to- Year Change
USA	3.9%	4.1%	4.7%	-0.8%
Washington state	4.2%	4.4%	5.0%	-0.8%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	4.3%	4.6%	5.8%	-1.5%
Whatcom County	4.2%	4.5%	5.6%	-1.4%
Skagit County	4.5%	4.7%	6.3%	-1.8%
Island County	4.7%	4.9%	5.8%	-1.1%
San Juan County	3.5%	3.4%	4.5%	-1.0%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. September's preliminary estimated gain of 13,800 jobs was revised to a gain of 11,300 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.2 percent in October 2017 (preliminary), down from 4.5 percent reported in September (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.6 percent.

- Compared to October 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 5,906 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 1,423, 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 113,257 in October.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 558 in September to 660. Altogether, 1,297 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in October; down from 1,357 in September.

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 Oct-17	Revised Sep-17	Revised Oct-16	Change		
				Sep-17 Oct-17	Oct-16 Oct-17	Oct-16 Oct-17
Total Nonfarm	95,300	93,300	91,900	2,000	3,400	3.7%
Total Private	76,200	75,900	73,600	300	2,600	3.5%
Goods Producing	18,600	18,700	17,200	-100	1,400	8.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,300	8,300	7,200	0	1,100	15.3%
Manufacturing	10,300	10,400	10,000	-100	300	3.0%
Service Providing	76,700	74,600	74,700	2,100	2,000	2.7%
Private Services Providing	57,600	57,200	56,400	400	1,200	2.1%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,800	16,500	16,600	300	200	1.2%
Retail Trade	11,200	11,000	11,400	200	-200	-1.8%
Financial Activities	3,500	3,500	3,300	0	200	6.1%
Professional and Business Services	8,600	8,600	8,300	0	300	3.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,400	10,500	10,500	-100	-100	-1.0%
Government	19,100	17,400	18,300	1,700	800	4.4%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	7,400	6,400	6,900	1,000	500	7.2%
Total Local Government	10,300	9,600	10,000	700	300	3.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 2,000 from September to October 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 3,400 or 3.7 percent.

- In October, goods producing industries collectively shed 100 jobs. Private services providers added 400 jobs and government employers added 1,700. Trade transportation and utilities added 300 jobs; 200 of which were attributable to retail trade. Manufacturing and leisure and hospitality each shed 100. The large increase in local and state government employment is reflective of the academic calendar.
- Year over year, the largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+1,100) and manufacturing and professional and business services (+300 each). 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 (-100).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 4.5 percent in October 2017 (preliminary), down from 4.7 reported in September (revised). The unemployment rate in October 2016 was 6.3 percent.

- Compared to October 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,921 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ decreased by 942. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated as 60,744, having increased by 3.4 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 368 in September to 462. Altogether, 881 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in October. This is up from 822 in September.

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 Oct-17	Revised Sep-17	Revised Oct-16	Change		
				Sep-17 Oct-17	Oct-16 Oct-17	Oct-16 Oct-17
Total Nonfarm	50,800	51,200	49,500	-400	1,300	2.6%
Total Private	38,900	39,700	38,000	-800	900	2.4%
Goods Producing	10,500	10,600	9,600	-100	900	9.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,400	4,500	3,900	-100	500	12.8%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,100	5,700	0	400	7.0%
Service Providing	40,300	40,600	39,900	-300	400	1.0%
Private Services Providing	28,400	29,100	28,400	-700	0	0.0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	10,100	10,200	-100	-200	-2.0%
Retail Trade	7,000	7,200	7,200	-200	-200	-2.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,300	5,500	5,100	-200	200	3.9%
Government	11,900	11,500	11,500	400	400	3.5%
Federal Government	400	500	400	-100	0	0.0%
State Government	1,700	1,600	1,500	100	200	13.3%
Local Government	9,800	9,400	9,600	400	200	2.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In October 2017, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls fell by 400 compared to September. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,300 or 2.6 percent.

- Over the month, government added 400 jobs; all other industries detailed in this report shed jobs. Government gains were largely attributable to hiring in the public education system.
- Over the year, the largest employment gains were observed in construction (+500) and manufacturing and government (+400 each). Trade transportation warehousing and utilities shed jobs (-200); losses were concentrated in retail trade.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 4.7 percent (preliminary) in October 2017. This is down from 4.9 percent in September (revised). The unemployment rate in October 2016 was 5.8 percent.

- Compared to October 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,056 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work fell by 266. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 34,972, increasing by 5.4 percent over the year.

- There were 215 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County, up from 174 in September. Altogether, 426 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in October. This is up from 385 in September.

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 Oct-17	Revised Sep-17	Revised Oct-16	Change		
				Sep-17 Oct-17	Oct-16 Oct-17	Otc-16 Oct-17
Total Nonfarm	16,960	16,960	16,240	0	720	4.4%
Total Private	12,180	12,360	11,590	-180	590	5.1%
Goods Producing	1,820	1,850	1,710	-30	110	6.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,000	1,020	910	-20	90	9.9%
Manufacturing	820	830	800	-10	20	2.5%
Service Providing	15,140	15,110	14,530	30	610	4.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,640	2,660	2,560	-20	80	3.1%
Retail Trade	2,120	2,140	2,110	-20	10	0.5%
Information and Financial Activities	850	860	830	-10	20	2.4%
Professional and Business Services	1,380	1,370	1,280	10	100	7.8%
Education and Health Services	2,250	2,220	2,140	30	110	5.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,440	2,560	2,290	-120	150	6.6%
Government	4,780	4,600	4,650	180	130	2.8%
Federal Government	1,350	1,360	1,340	-10	10	0.7%
State and Local Government	3,430	3,240	3,310	190	120	3.6%
State and Local Government Education	1,540	1,330	1,470	210	70	4.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County remained unchanged from September to October 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 720 or 4.4 percent.

- From September to October, the largest job gains were observed in government (+180) as public schools started for the 2017-2018 year, and the deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-120).
- Year-over-year, all industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+150), government (+130) and education and health services (+110).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 3.4 percent in September (revised) to 3.5 percent (preliminary) in October. The unemployment rate in October 2016 was 4.5 percent.

- Compared to October 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 608 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 61. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,234 people and increased by 7.1 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 15 in September to 41. Altogether, 48 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in October. This is up from 31 in September.

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 Oct-17	Revised Sep-17	Revised Oct-16	Change		
				Sep-17 Oct-17	Oct-16 Oct-17	Oct-16 Oct-17
Total Nonfarm	5,660	6,240	5,450	-580	210	3.9%
Total Private	4,860	5,450	4,600	-590	260	5.7%
Goods Producing	920	950	830	-30	90	10.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	750	760	660	-10	90	13.6%
Manufacturing	170	190	170	-20	0	0.0%
Service Providing	4,740	5,290	4,620	-550	120	2.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,000	1,080	920	-80	80	8.7%
Information and Financial Activities	340	350	320	-10	20	6.3%
Professional and Business Services	370	370	420	0	-50	-11.9%
Education and Health Services	620	610	610	10	10	1.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,430	1,900	1,320	-470	110	8.3%
Government	800	790	850	10	-50	-5.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County dropped by 580 from September to October. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 210 jobs or 3.9 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 October, most industries shed jobs. The largest drop came from the largest sector: leisure and hospitality (-470).
- Most industries added jobs over the year; the largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+110) and construction (+90). Professional and business services shed 50.