

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2019, Number 10

October 2019

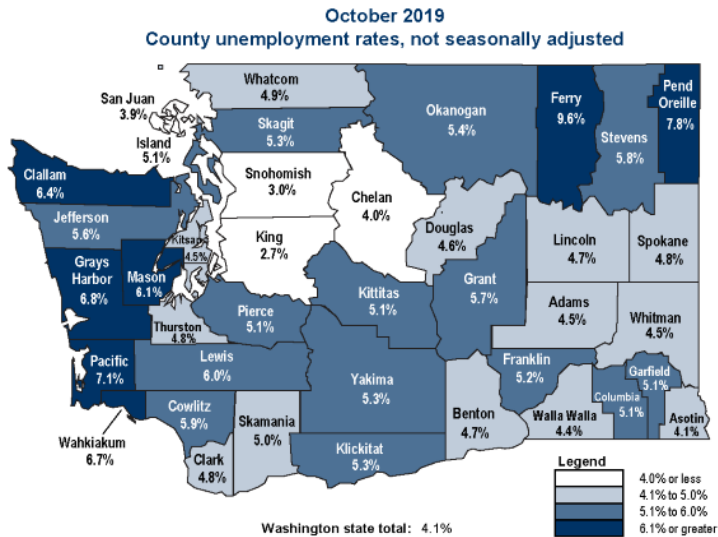
Compiled by **Anneliese Vance-Sherman, Ph.D., Regional Labor Economist**

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 fell by 1,600 in October 2019. BLS estimates the private sector lost 1,500 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 100 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for October 2018 through October 2019 indicate an increase in employment of 67,600 for the state. The private sector added 61,400 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 6,200 jobs over the year.



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for October 2019 is 4.5 percent. The revised estimated September 2019 unemployment rate is at 4.6 percent. The October 2018 unemployment rate was 4.4 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

| Area                                 | (Prelim.)<br>Oct-19 | Sep-19 | Oct-18 | Year-to-<br>Year<br>Change |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|----------------------------|
| USA                                  | 3.3%                | 3.3%   | 3.5%   | -0.2%                      |
| Washington state                     | 4.1%                | 4.1%   | 4.1%   | 0.0%                       |
| Northwest Workforce Development Area | 5.0%                | 4.9%   | 4.4%   | 0.6%                       |
| Whatcom County                       | 4.9%                | 4.8%   | 4.3%   | 0.6%                       |
| Skagit County                        | 5.3%                | 5.1%   | 4.7%   | 0.6%                       |
| Island County                        | 5.1%                | 5.1%   | 4.8%   | 0.3%                       |
| San Juan County                      | 3.9%                | 3.5%   | 3.6%   | 0.3%                       |

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 loss of 3,100 jobs was revised to a loss of 5,400 jobs.

## Whatcom County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.9 percent in October 2019 (preliminary), up slightly from 4.8 percent reported in September (revised). The unemployment rate in October 2018 was 4.3 percent.

- Compared to 12 months ago, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,793 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 935, nudging the unemployment rate up over the year. The labor force increased by 4.2 percent. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated at 117,985 in October 2019.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 694 in September to 841. Altogether, 1,511 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in October; down from 1,566 in September.

### Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted  
**Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)**

Data benchmarked through June 2019

| NAICS Industry Title                              | Prelim<br>Oct-19 | Revised<br>Sep-19 | Revised<br>Oct-18 | Change           |                  |                  |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|   |                  |                   |                   | Sep-19<br>Oct-19 | Oct-18<br>Oct-19 | Oct-18<br>Oct-19 |
| Total Nonfarm                                     | 97,100           | 96,200            | 96,200            | 900              | 900              | 0.9%             |
| Total Private                                     | 77,800           | 77,800            | 77,400            | 0                | 400              | 0.5%             |
| Goods Producing                                   | 18,700           | 19,100            | 19,200            | -400             | -500             | -2.6%            |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction                 | 7,900            | 8,200             | 8,500             | -300             | -600             | -7.1%            |
| Manufacturing                                     | 10,800           | 10,900            | 10,700            | -100             | 100              | 0.9%             |
| Service Providing                                 | 78,400           | 77,100            | 77,000            | 1,300            | 1,400            | 1.8%             |
| Private Services Providing                        | 59,100           | 58,700            | 58,200            | 400              | 900              | 1.5%             |
| Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities | 16,500           | 16,400            | 16,800            | 100              | -300             | -1.8%            |
| Retail Trade                                      | 11,400           | 11,100            | 11,200            | 300              | 200              | 1.8%             |
| Financial Activities                              | 3,900            | 3,900             | 3,700             | 0                | 200              | 5.4%             |
| Professional and Business Services                | 8,700            | 8,700             | 8,400             | 0                | 300              | 3.6%             |
| Leisure and Hospitality                           | 10,700           | 10,900            | 10,700            | -200             | 0                | 0.0%             |
| Government  | 19,300           | 18,400            | 18,800            | 900              | 500              | 2.7%             |
| Federal Government                                | 1,500            | 1,600             | 1,500             | -100             | 0                | 0.0%             |
| Total State Government                            | 7,200            | 7,000             | 7,000             | 200              | 200              | 2.9%             |
| Total Local Government                            | 10,600           | 9,800             | 10,300            | 800              | 300              | 2.9%             |
| Workers in Labor/Management Disputes              | 0                | 0                 | 0                 | 0                | 0                |                  |

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 900 from September to October 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 900 or 0.9 percent.

- In October, aggregate private sector employment did not change; the gain was attributable to seasonal hiring, largely by local public education, and reflective of the academic calendar.

The largest private one-month changes were also seasonal in nature and were attributable to construction and leisure and hospitality (both shed jobs) and retail trade (added jobs).

- Over the year, the largest increases detailed in this report were observed in government (+500) and professional and business services (+300); the deepest losses came from construction (-600).

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.3 percent in October 2019 (preliminary), up from 5.1 percent in September (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.7 percent.

- Compared to October 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,718 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ increased by 470. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 63,783, increasing by 3.6 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 480 in September to 562 in October. Altogether, 973 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in October; down from 1,013 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 2019

| NAICS Industry Title                              | Prelim<br>Oct-19 | Revised<br>Sep-19 | Revised<br>Oct-18 | Change           |                  |                  |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|   |                  |                   |                   | Sep-19<br>Oct-19 | Oct-18<br>Oct-19 | Oct-18<br>Oct-19 |
| Total Nonfarm                                     | 51,900           | 51,600            | 52,100            | 300              | -200             | -0.4%            |
| Total Private                                     | 40,300           | 40,500            | 40,300            | -200             | 0                | 0.0%             |
| Goods Producing                                   | 10,800           | 10,800            | 11,100            | 0                | -300             | -2.7%            |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction                 | 5,100            | 5,000             | 4,800             | 100              | 300              | 6.3%             |
| Manufacturing                                     | 5,700            | 5,800             | 6,300             | -100             | -600             | -9.5%            |
| Service Providing                                 | 41,100           | 40,800            | 41,000            | 300              | 100              | 0.2%             |
| Private Services Providing                        | 29,500           | 29,700            | 29,200            | -200             | 300              | 1.0%             |
| Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities | 9,800            | 9,800             | 10,200            | 0                | -400             | -3.9%            |
| Retail Trade                                      | 7,200            | 7,100             | 7,300             | 100              | -100             | -1.4%            |
| Leisure and Hospitality                           | 5,400            | 5,600             | 5,100             | -200             | 300              | 5.9%             |
| Government  | 11,600           | 11,100            | 11,800            | 500              | -200             | -1.7%            |
| Federal Government                                | 300              | 400               | 400               | -100             | -100             | -25.0%           |
| State Government                                  | 1,400            | 1,400             | 1,400             | 0                | 0                | 0.0%             |
| Local Government                                  | 9,900            | 9,300             | 10,000            | 600              | -100             | -1.0%            |
| Workers in Labor/Management Disputes              | 0                | 0                 | 0                 | 0                | 0                |                  |

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 300 from September to October 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs contracted by 200 or 0.4 percent.

- Over the month, private industry shed an estimated 200 jobs in aggregate. The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-200). Government employment expanded by 500, with growth observed in local government and reflective of the school year.
- Over the year, two major industries detailed in this report added jobs: construction and leisure and hospitality each expanded employment by 300. The deepest one-year losses were observed in manufacturing (-600).

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.1 percent (preliminary) in October 2019. This is the same rate observed in September (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.8 percent.

- Compared to October 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 909 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 156, pushing the unemployment rate up over the year. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 36,226, an increase of 3.0 percent over the year.
- There were 202 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in October, up from 161 in September. Altogether, 366 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in October. This is down from 391 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 2019

| NAICS Industry Title                 | Prelim<br>Oct-19 | Revised<br>Sep-19 | Revised<br>Oct-18 | Change           |                  |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                      |                  |                   |                   | Sep-19<br>Oct-19 | Oct-18<br>Oct-19 | Oct-18<br>Oct-19 |
| Total Nonfarm                        | 17,110           | 16,910            | 16,990            | 200              | 120              | 0.7%             |
| Total Private                        | 12,390           | 12,350            | 12,350            | 40               | 40               | 0.3%             |
| Goods Producing                      | 1,960            | 1,940             | 1,900             | 20               | 60               | 3.2%             |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction    | 1,170            | 1,150             | 1,100             | 20               | 70               | 6.4%             |
| Manufacturing                        | 790              | 790               | 800               | 0                | -10              | -1.3%            |
| Service Providing                    | 15,150           | 14,970            | 15,090            | 180              | 60               | 0.4%             |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 2,780            | 2,770             | 2,710             | 10               | 70               | 2.6%             |
| Retail Trade                         | 2,160            | 2,150             | 2,130             | 10               | 30               | 1.4%             |
| Information and Financial Activities | 790              | 790               | 790               | 0                | 0                | 0.0%             |
| Professional and Business Services   | 1,330            | 1,300             | 1,240             | 30               | 90               | 7.3%             |
| Education and Health Services        | 2,410            | 2,420             | 2,400             | -10              | 10               | 0.4%             |
| Leisure and Hospitality              | 2,270            | 2,260             | 2,470             | 10               | -200             | -8.1%            |
| Government                           | 4,720            | 4,560             | 4,640             | 160              | 80               | 1.7%             |
| Federal Government                   | 1,310            | 1,320             | 1,290             | -10              | 20               | 1.6%             |
| State and Local Government           | 3,410            | 3,240             | 3,350             | 170              | 60               | 1.8%             |
| State and Local Government Education | 1,570            | 1,360             | 1,550             | 210              | 20               | 1.3%             |
| Workers in Labor/Management Disputes | 0                | 0                 | 0                 | 0                | 0                |                  |

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 200 from September to October 2019 on a not seasonally adjusted basis. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 120.

- From September to October, five major industries detailed in this report expanded and one contracted. The largest increases were attributable to hiring by government, and were reflective of the school year. The only industry reporting losses was from education and health services.
- Year-over-year, five major industries added jobs and two shed jobs. The largest gains were attributable to hiring by employers in professional and business services and government; the deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality.

*Note that employment statistics for Island County do not include military employment.*

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 3.5 percent in September (revised) to 3.9 percent in October (preliminary). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 3.6 percent.

- Compared to October 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 25. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,218 resident workers and expanded by 0.3 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County totaled 39 in October, up from 19 initial claims filed in September. Altogether, 49 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in October. This is up from 36 in September.

## San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2019

| NAICS Industry Title                 | Prelim<br>Oct-19 | Revised<br>Sep-19 | Revised<br>Oct-18 | Change           |                  |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                                      |                  |                   |                   | Sep-19<br>Oct-19 | Oct-18<br>Oct-19 | Oct-18<br>Oct-19 |
| Total Nonfarm                        | 5,460            | 6,060             | 5,760             | -600             | -300             | -5.2%            |
| Total Private                        | 4,720            | 5,300             | 4,960             | -580             | -240             | -4.8%            |
| Goods Producing                      | 960              | 940               | 960               | 20               | 0                | 0.0%             |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction    | 750              | 740               | 730               | 10               | 20               | 2.7%             |
| Manufacturing                        | 210              | 200               | 230               | 10               | -20              | -8.7%            |
| Service Providing                    | 4,500            | 5,120             | 4,800             | -620             | -300             | -6.3%            |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 990              | 1,050             | 1,030             | -60              | -40              | -3.9%            |
| Information and Financial Activities | 340              | 390               | 370               | -50              | -30              | -8.1%            |
| Professional and Business Services   | 360              | 360               | 370               | 0                | -10              | -2.7%            |
| Education and Health Services        | 630              | 630               | 630               | 0                | 0                | 0.0%             |
| Leisure and Hospitality              | 1,250            | 1,750             | 1,410             | -500             | -160             | -11.3%           |
| Government                           | 740              | 760               | 800               | -20              | -60              | -7.5%            |
| Workers in Labor/Management Disputes | 0                | 0                 | 0                 | 0                | 0                |                  |

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County decreased by 600 from September to October on a not seasonally adjusted basis. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 300 or 5.2 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 October, jobs were added in the goods providing industries. The deepest one-month losses were observed in the county’s largest sector; leisure and hospitality (-500).
- Over the year, there was a net loss of employment. Only one industry detailed in this report added jobs over the year; construction added 200 jobs. All other industries either maintained employment or shed jobs over the year. The deepest one-year losses were observed in the leisure and hospitality industries (-160).

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