

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2017, Number 9

September 2017

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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 13,800 from August 2017 to September 2017.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 6,000 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 7,800 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for September 2016 through September 2017 indicate an increase in employment of 76,100 for the state. The private sector added 61,400 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 14,700 jobs over the year.

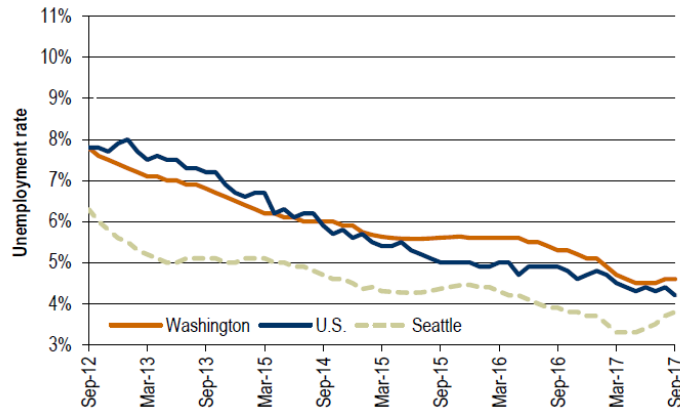
Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September 2017 is 4.6 percent. The revised estimated August 2017 unemployment rate was at 4.6 percent. The September 2016 unemployment rate was 5.3 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Sep-17	Aug-17	Sep-16	Year-to- Year Change
USA	4.1%	4.5%	4.8%	-0.7%
Washington state	4.4%	4.5%	5.1%	-0.7%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	4.6%	4.6%	5.8%	-1.2%
Whatcom County	4.5%	4.6%	5.7%	-1.2%
Skagit County	4.7%	4.8%	6.3%	-1.6%
Island County	5.0%	4.8%	5.9%	-0.9%
San Juan County	3.5%	2.9%	4.1%	-0.6%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. August’s preliminary estimated gain of 2,000 jobs was revised to a gain of 3,100 jobs.

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



Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.5 percent in September 2017 (preliminary), down from 4.6 percent reported in August (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.7 percent.

- Compared to September 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 5,862 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 1,027, resulting in a 4.6 percent increase in the size of the labor force and a drop in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 111,060 in September 2017.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 582 in August to 558. Altogether, 1,357 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in September; down from 1,450 in August.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-17	Revised Aug-17	Revised Sep-16	Change		
				Aug-17 Sep-17	Sep-16 Sep-17	Sep-16 Sep-17
Total Nonfarm	93,300	91,000	91,300	2,300	2,000	2.2%
Total Private	76,000	76,100	74,000	-100	2,000	2.7%
Goods Producing	18,500	18,400	17,300	100	1,200	6.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,700	7,600	7,300	100	400	5.5%
Manufacturing	10,800	10,800	10,000	0	800	8.0%
Service Providing	74,800	72,600	74,000	2,200	800	1.1%
Private Services Providing	57,500	57,700	56,700	-200	800	1.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,500	16,600	16,600	-100	-100	-0.6%
Retail Trade	11,100	11,400	11,400	-300	-300	-2.6%
Financial Activities	3,400	3,400	3,400	0	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	8,400	8,300	8,100	100	300	3.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,900	11,100	10,800	-200	100	0.9%
Government	17,300	14,900	17,300	2,400	0	0.0%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,500	4,300	6,500	2,200	0	0.0%
Total Local Government	9,400	9,200	9,400	200	0	0.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 2,300 from August to September 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 2,000 or 2.2 percent.

- In September, goods producing industries collectively added 100 jobs. Private services providers shed 200 jobs and government employers added 2,400. Construction added 100 jobs but trade, transportation and utilities shed 100, including 300 in retail trade. 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 manufacturing (+800) and construction (+400). Most industries either added jobs over the year or remained unchanged. Trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (including retail trade) is the exception. Retailers shed 300 jobs resulting in a net loss of 100 jobs from the broader sector.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 4.7 percent in September 2017 (preliminary), down from 4.8 reported in August (revised). The unemployment rate in September 2016 was 6.3 percent.

- Compared to September 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,613 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ decreased by 789. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated as 61,021, having increased by 4.9 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 412 in August to 368. Altogether, 822 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is down from 855 in August.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through March 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-17	Revised Aug-17	Revised Sep-16	Change		
				Aug-17 Sep-17	Sep-16 Sep-17	Sep-16 Sep-17
Total Nonfarm	52,000	52,000	49,800	0	2,200	4.4%
Total Private	40,600	40,800	38,700	-200	1,900	4.9%
Goods Producing	11,200	11,200	9,700	0	1,500	15.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,900	4,800	4,000	100	900	22.5%
Manufacturing	6,300	6,400	5,700	-100	600	10.5%
Service Providing	40,800	40,800	40,100	0	700	1.7%
Private Services Providing	29,400	29,600	29,000	-200	400	1.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,100	9,900	10,300	200	-200	-1.9%
Retail Trade	7,400	7,300	7,200	100	200	2.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,300	5,400	5,400	-100	-100	-1.9%
Government	11,400	11,200	11,100	200	300	2.7%
Federal Government	500	500	500	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,600	1,400	1,400	200	200	14.3%
Local Government	9,300	9,300	9,200	0	100	1.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In September 2017, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls remained unchanged from August. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 2,200 or 4.4 percent.

- Over the month, trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities and government each added 200 jobs and leisure and hospitality and manufacturing each shed 100. Most month to month movements were relatively small.
- Over the year, the largest employment gains were observed in construction (+900) and manufacturing (+600). Trade transportation warehousing and utilities shed jobs (-200) as did leisure and hospitality (-100).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.0 percent (preliminary) in September 2017. This is up from 4.8 percent in August (revised). The unemployment rate in September 2016 was 5.9 percent.

- Compared to September 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,826 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work fell by 194. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 34,315, increasing by 5.0 percent over the year.

- There were 174 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County, up from 166 in August. Altogether, 385 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is up from 364 in August.

Island County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through March 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-17	Revised Aug-17	Revised Sep-16	Change		
				Aug-17 Sep-17	Sep-16 Sep-17	Sep-16 Sep-17
Total Nonfarm	16,660	16,590	16,360	70	300	1.8%
Total Private	12,050	12,080	11,830	-30	220	1.9%
Goods Producing	1,870	1,880	1,730	-10	140	8.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,050	1,060	940	-10	110	11.7%
Manufacturing	820	820	790	0	30	3.8%
Service Providing	14,790	14,710	14,630	80	160	1.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,670	2,690	2,600	-20	70	2.7%
Retail Trade	2,180	2,200	2,160	-20	20	0.9%
Information and Financial Activities	810	810	840	0	-30	-3.6%
Professional and Business Services	1,230	1,230	1,250	0	-20	-1.6%
Education and Health Services	2,200	2,130	2,140	70	60	2.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,440	2,490	2,480	-50	-40	-1.6%
Government	4,610	4,510	4,530	100	80	1.8%
Federal Government	1,350	1,340	1,350	10	0	0.0%
State and Local Government	3,260	3,170	3,180	90	80	2.5%
State and Local Government Education	1,340	1,260	1,300	80	40	3.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 70 in September 2017. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 300 or 1.8 percent.

- From August to September, the largest job gains were observed in government (+100) as public schools started for the 2017-2018 year, and the deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-50).
- Year-over-year, the largest payroll gains were observed in construction (+110) and government (+80). The deepest losses came from leisure and hospitality (-40).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 2.9 percent in August (revised) to 3.5 percent (preliminary) in September. The unemployment rate in September 2016 was 4.1 percent.

- Compared to September 2016, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 590 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 35. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,713 people and increased by 6.8 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 7 in August to 15. Altogether, 31 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is up from 26 in August.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through March 2017

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-17	Revised Aug-17	Revised Sep-16	Change		
				Aug-17 Sep-17	Sep-16 Sep-17	Sep-16 Sep-17
Total Nonfarm	6,160	6,660	6,110	-500	50	0.8%
Total Private	5,360	5,870	5,270	-510	90	1.7%
Goods Producing	910	920	880	-10	30	3.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	720	720	680	0	40	5.9%
Manufacturing	190	200	200	-10	-10	-5.0%
Service Providing	5,250	5,740	5,230	-490	20	0.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	970	1,030	1,010	-60	-40	-4.0%
Information and Financial Activities	320	330	330	-10	-10	-3.0%
Professional and Business Services	380	400	430	-20	-50	-11.6%
Education and Health Services	600	590	580	10	20	3.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,980	2,400	1,840	-420	140	7.6%
Government	800	790	840	10	-40	-4.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County dropped by 500 from August to September. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 50 jobs or 0.8 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 September, most industries shed jobs. The largest drop came from the largest sector: leisure and hospitality (-420).
- Over the year, the largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+140) and construction (+40). The deepest losses were observed in professional and business services (-50).