

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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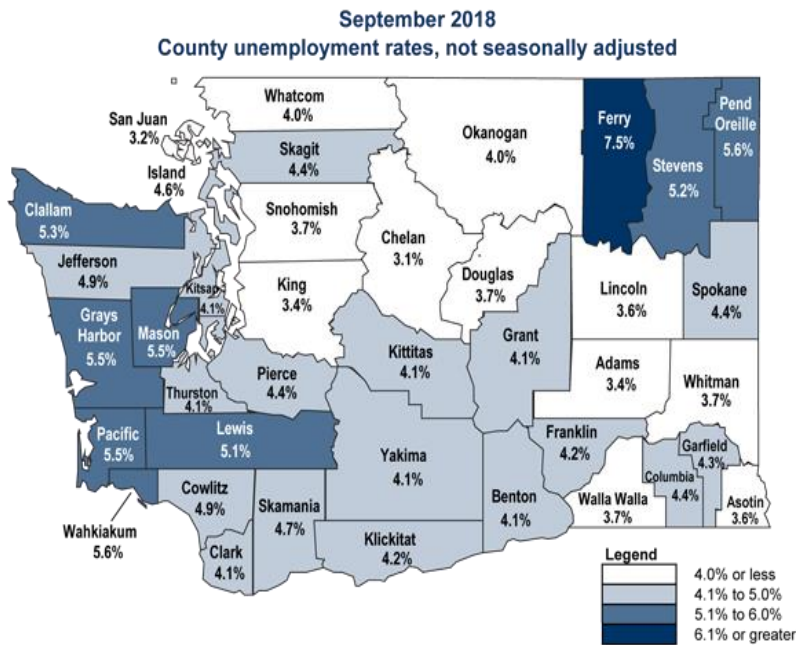
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 4,500 in September 2018. BLS estimates the private sector gained 3,900 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 600 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for September 2017 through September 2018 indicate an increase in employment of 99,700 for the state. The private sector added 97,100 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 2,600 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September 2018 is 4.4 percent. The revised estimated August 2018 unemployment rate is at 4.5 percent. The September 2017 unemployment rate was 4.7 percent.



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Sep-18	Aug-18	Sep-17	Year-to- Year Change
USA	3.6%	3.9%	4.1%	-0.5%
Washington state	3.9%	4.1%	4.5%	-0.6%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	4.2%	4.5%	4.8%	-0.6%
Whatcom County	4.0%	4.4%	4.7%	-0.7%
Skagit County	4.4%	4.7%	4.9%	-0.5%
Island County	4.6%	4.9%	5.2%	-0.6%
San Juan County	3.2%	2.9%	3.5%	-0.3%

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 9,100 jobs was revised to a gain of 9,400 jobs.

## Whatcom County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.0 percent in September 2018 (preliminary), down relative to 4.4 percent reported in August (revised). The unemployment rate in September 2017 was 4.7 percent.

- Compared to September 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,472 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 790, resulting in a 0.6 percent increase in the size of the labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 110,125 in September.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 639 in August to 492. Altogether, 1,184 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in September; down from 1,215 in August.

### Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-18	Revised Aug-18	Revised Sep-17	Change		
				Aug-18 Sep-18	Sep-17 Sep-18	Sep-17 Sep-18
Total Nonfarm	95,400	93,600	92,400	1,800	3,000	3.2%
Total Private	78,400	78,900	74,900	-500	3,500	4.7%
Goods Producing	19,800	19,700	18,400	100	1,400	7.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,900	8,900	8,200	0	700	8.5%
Manufacturing	10,900	10,800	10,200	100	700	6.9%
Service Providing	75,600	73,900	74,000	1,700	1,600	2.2%
Private Services Providing	58,600	59,200	56,500	-600	2,100	3.7%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,100	17,600	16,600	-500	500	3.0%
Retail Trade	11,000	11,100	11,300	-100	-300	-2.7%
Financial Activities	3,700	3,700	3,600	0	100	2.8%
Professional and Business Services	8,600	8,700	8,400	-100	200	2.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	11,000	11,300	9,900	-300	1,100	11.1%
Government	17,000	14,700	17,500	2,300	-500	-2.9%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,200	4,400	6,400	1,800	-200	-3.1%
Total Local Government	9,400	8,900	9,700	500	-300	-3.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County increased by 1,800 from August to September 2018. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 3,000 or 3.2 percent.

- In September, private employers collectively shed 500 jobs. Beneath the surface, manufacturing (+100) is the only industry detailed in this report that added jobs. The deepest losses were observed in trade, transportation warehousing and utilities (-500) and leisure and hospitality (-300). Government employment expanded by 2,300 over the month, and was related to the start of the school year.
- Over the year, all but two of the major industries covered by this report added jobs. The largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+1,100) and in manufacturing and construction (+700 each). Government and retail trade each shed jobs over the year.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 4.4 percent in September 2018 (preliminary), lower than 4.7 reported in August (revised). The unemployment rate in September 2017 was 4.9 percent.

- Compared to September 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 153 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ decreased by 308. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 59,535, decreasing by 0.3 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 506 in August to 404. Altogether, 869 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is up from 832 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 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-18	Revised Aug-18	Revised Sep-17	Change		
				Aug-18 Sep-18	Sep-17 Sep-18	Sep-17 Sep-18
Total Nonfarm	51,500	51,900	50,300	-400	1,200	2.4%
Total Private	40,300	40,900	39,100	-600	1,200	3.1%
Goods Producing	10,900	11,200	10,200	-300	700	6.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,700	4,700	4,300	0	400	9.3%
Manufacturing	6,200	6,500	5,900	-300	300	5.1%
Service Providing	40,600	40,700	40,100	-100	500	1.2%
Private Services Providing	29,400	29,700	28,900	-300	500	1.7%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,900	9,900	10,300	0	-400	-3.9%
Retail Trade	7,300	7,300	7,200	0	100	1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,100	5,300	5,400	-200	-300	-5.6%
Government	11,200	11,000	11,200	200	0	0.0%
Federal Government	400	500	500	-100	-100	-20.0%
State Government	1,500	1,200	1,500	300	0	0.0%
Local Government	9,300	9,300	9,200	0	100	1.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In September 2018, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls decreased by 400. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,200 or 2.4 percent.

- Over the month, most industries shed jobs. The deepest one-month losses were attributable to manufacturing (-300). Government added 200 jobs over the month.
- The industries reporting the largest annual gains were construction and manufacturing (+400 and 300 respectively). The deepest losses came from trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (-400).

# Island County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 4.6 percent (preliminary) in September 2018. This is down from 4.9 percent in August (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.2 percent.

- Compared to September 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 262 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work contracted by 211. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 33,943, a decline of 1.4 percent over the year.
- There were 161 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in September, down from 177 in August. Altogether, 348 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is down from 360 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 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-18	Revised Aug-18	Revised Sep-17	Change		
				Aug-18 Sep-18	Sep-17 Sep-18	Sep-17 Sep-18
Total Nonfarm	16,910	16,890	16,910	20	0	0.0%
Total Private	12,390	12,450	12,330	-60	60	0.5%
Goods Producing	1,920	1,920	1,870	0	50	2.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,140	1,140	1,020	0	120	11.8%
Manufacturing	780	780	850	0	-70	-8.2%
Service Providing	14,990	14,970	15,040	20	-50	-0.3%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,670	2,700	2,690	-30	-20	-0.7%
Retail Trade	2,140	2,160	2,170	-20	-30	-1.4%
Information and Financial Activities	800	810	820	-10	-20	-2.4%
Professional and Business Services	1,240	1,260	1,280	-20	-40	-3.1%
Education and Health Services	2,370	2,310	2,280	60	90	3.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,530	2,600	2,550	-70	-20	-0.8%
Government	4,520	4,440	4,580	80	-60	-1.3%
Federal Government	1,340	1,340	1,330	0	10	0.8%
State and Local Government	3,180	3,100	3,250	80	-70	-2.2%
State and Local Government Education	1,370	1,280	1,350	90	20	1.5%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 20 from August to September 2018. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs remained unchanged.

- From August to September, two major industries added jobs and four lost jobs. The largest month-to-month increase was observed in government (+80) and the deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality. Both of these changes are seasonal in nature.

- Year-over-year, the industries adding the largest number of jobs were construction and education and health services (+120 and +90). The deepest loss was attributable to manufacturing (-70).

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 2.9 percent in August (revised) to 3.2 percent (preliminary) in September 2018. The unemployment rate 12 months earlier was 3.5 percent.

- Compared to September 2017, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 287 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 39. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,430 workers and decreased by 3.7 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County were 13 in both August and September. Altogether, 35 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is up from 31 in August.

### San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

#### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through March 2018

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-18	Revised Aug-18	Revised Sep-17	Change		
				Aug-18 Sep-18	Sep-17 Sep-18	Sep-17 Sep-18
Total Nonfarm	6,180	6,740	6,310	-560	-130	-2.1%
Total Private	5,430	5,970	5,530	-540	-100	-1.8%
Goods Producing	950	970	970	-20	-20	-2.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	710	720	720	-10	-10	-1.4%
Manufacturing	240	250	250	-10	-10	-4.0%
Service Providing	5,230	5,770	5,340	-540	-110	-2.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,080	1,150	1,070	-70	10	0.9%
Information and Financial Activities	350	370	380	-20	-30	-7.9%
Professional and Business Services	380	400	390	-20	-10	-2.6%
Education and Health Services	590	580	590	10	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,890	2,310	1,940	-420	-50	-2.6%
Government	750	770	780	-20	-30	-3.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County decreased by 560 from August to September 2018. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 130 jobs or -2.1 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. Leisure and hospitality, the county's largest industry, shed 420 jobs over the month. Education and health services is the only industry that added jobs in September.

- Over the year, there was a net loss of employment, with most industries reporting losses. The deepest losses came from leisure and hospitality (-50). The only sector reporting year over year gains was trade transportation and utilities (+10).

### **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 October. Forecast information is available at [www.erfc.wa.gov](http://www.erfc.wa.gov).

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