

# Northwest Washington Labor Area Summary

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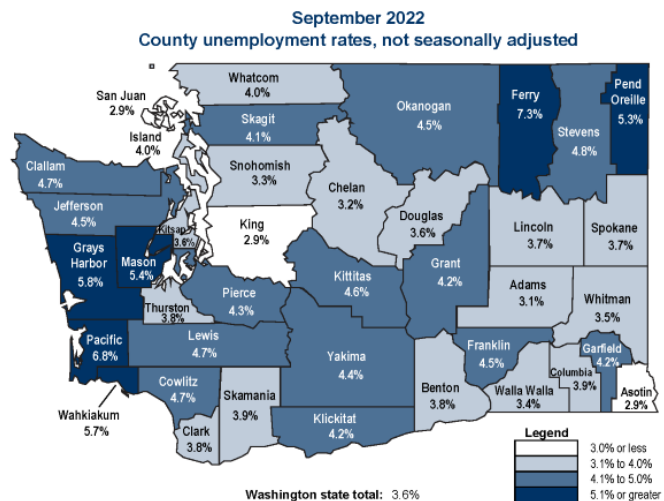
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This report marks the seventeenth report whereby the year-over-year narrative shifts from pandemic-related losses to recovery since the start of the economic crisis. Pandemic-related employment effects began to show up in March 2020, and swiftly led to unprecedented levels of unemployment in April 2020. Many jobs have recovered in the meantime, with significant variation by location and industry. This report describes a moment in that recovery.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 1,500 in September 2022.<sup>1</sup> BLS estimates the private sector gained 9,200 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 7,700 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for September 2021 through September 2022 indicate an increase in employment of 149,100 for the state. The private sector gained 151,100 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 2,000 jobs over the year.



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September 2022 is 3.7 percent. The revised estimated August 2022 unemployment rate is at 3.7 percent. The September 2021 unemployment rate was 4.8 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Sep-22	Aug-22	Sep-21	Year-to-Year Change
USA	3.3%	3.8%	4.6%	-1.3%
Washington state	3.6%	4.0%	4.6%	-1.0%
<b>Northwest Workforce Development Area</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>
Whatcom County	4.0%	4.7%	5.2%	-1.2%
Skagit County	4.1%	4.8%	5.4%	-1.3%
Island County	4.0%	4.6%	4.9%	-0.9%
San Juan County	2.9%	3.5%	3.9%	-1.0%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The August 2022 preliminary estimated gain of 16,100 jobs was revised to a gain of 21,700 jobs.

# Whatcom County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.0 percent in September 2022 (preliminary), below 4.7 percent reported in August (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.2 percent. The unemployment rate reached 17.4 percent in April 2020.

- Compared to September 2021, the labor force expanded by 254 workers (0.2 percent). Within that estimate, the number of employed workers expanded by 1,646 and the number of unemployed workers contracted by 1,392. Whatcom County's estimated labor force was 113,906 in September 2022.

## Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted  
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)  
Data benchmarked through December 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-22	Revised Aug-22	Revised Sep-21	Change		
				Aug-22 Sep-22	Sep-21 Sep-22	Sep-21 Sep-22
Total Nonfarm	94,100	93,400	91,600	700	2,500	2.7%
Total Private	78,300	78,500	74,600	-200	3,700	5.0%
Goods Producing	18,200	18,300	17,200	-100	1,000	5.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,400	8,500	8,100	-100	300	3.7%
Manufacturing	9,800	9,800	9,100	0	700	7.7%
Service Providing	75,900	75,100	74,400	800	1,500	2.0%
Private Services Providing	60,100	60,200	57,400	-100	2,700	4.7%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,500	16,700	16,200	-200	300	1.9%
Retail Trade	10,500	10,700	10,900	-200	-400	-3.7%
Financial Activities	3,900	4,000	4,000	-100	-100	-2.5%
Professional and Business Services	9,100	9,200	8,400	-100	700	8.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,700	10,800	10,000	-100	700	7.0%
Government	15,800	14,900	17,000	900	-1,200	-7.1%
Federal Government	1,400	1,500	1,500	-100	-100	-6.7%
Total State Government	4,600	3,900	5,900	700	-1,300	-22.0%
Total Local Government	9,800	9,500	9,600	300	200	2.1%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 700 from August to September 2022. Over the year, nonfarm employment increased by 2,500 (2.7 percent).

- In September, government was the only sector reporting one-month gains, related to the start of the school year (+900). The deepest one-month losses were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing, and utilities; specifically attributable to retail trade (-200).
- Employment in most major sectors included in this report expanded employment over the year, with the largest increases attributable to manufacturing, professional and business services, and leisure and hospitality (700 each). Government employment dropped over the year.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 4.1 percent (preliminary) in September 2022—down over the month from 4.8 percent (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.4 percent. The unemployment rate in April 2020 reached a record 18.8 percent.

- Compared to September 2021, the labor force expanded by 160 (0.3 percent). Within that, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 966 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ contracted by 806, bringing the unemployment rate down. Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 62,595 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 December 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-22	Revised Aug-22	Revised Sep-21	Change		
				Aug-22 Sep-22	Sep-21 Sep-22	Sep-21 Sep-22
Total Nonfarm	50,800	50,900	50,000	-100	800	1.6%
Total Private	39,500	39,600	38,600	-100	900	2.3%
Goods Producing	10,700	10,700	10,400	0	300	2.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,300	4,300	4,400	0	-100	-2.3%
Manufacturing	6,400	6,400	6,000	0	400	6.7%
Service Providing	40,100	40,200	39,600	-100	500	1.3%
Private Services Providing	28,800	28,900	28,200	-100	600	2.1%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,600	9,600	9,900	0	-300	-3.0%
Retail Trade	6,500	6,600	6,900	-100	-400	-5.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,100	5,200	5,000	-100	100	2.0%
Government	11,300	11,300	11,400	0	-100	-0.9%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,200	1,100	1,300	100	-100	-7.7%
Local Government	9,700	9,800	9,700	-100	0	0.0%

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County decreased by 100 jobs over the month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 800 or 1.6 percent.

- In September 2022, each major sector covered in this report either shed jobs or remained unchanged over the month.
- Over the year, manufacturing and leisure and hospitality added jobs (+400 and +100 respectively). The deepest 12-month losses were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (-300), and were attributed to retail trade (-400)

# Island County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 4.0 percent (preliminary) in September 2022, down from 4.6 percent (revised) over the month. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.9 percent. In April 2020, the unemployment rate for Island County was a record 16.5 percent.

- Compared to September 2021, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 163 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work expanded by 189. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 36,427, down 0.4 percent over the year.

## Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

**Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)**

Data benchmarked through December 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-22	Revised Aug-22	Revised Sep-21	Change		
				Aug-22 Sep-22	Sep-21 Sep-22	Sep-21 Sep-22
Total Nonfarm	17,290	17,450	17,240	-160	50	0.3%
Total Private	12,980	13,130	12,820	-150	160	1.2%
Goods Producing	2,010	2,050	1,900	-40	110	5.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,400	1,420	1,270	-20	130	10.2%
Manufacturing	610	630	630	-20	-20	-3.2%
Service Providing	15,280	15,400	15,340	-120	-60	-0.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,690	2,730	2,630	-40	60	2.3%
Retail Trade	2,190	2,230	2,150	-40	40	1.9%
Information and Financial Activities	880	880	880	0	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	1,570	1,560	1,550	10	20	1.3%
Education and Health Services	2,460	2,470	2,430	-10	30	1.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,580	2,630	2,540	-50	40	1.6%
Government	4,310	4,320	4,420	-10	-110	-2.5%
Federal Government	1,240	1,250	1,250	-10	-10	-0.8%
State and Local Government	3,070	3,070	3,170	0	-100	-3.2%
State and Local Government Education	1,260	1,260	1,380	0	-120	-8.7%

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County contracted by 160 from August to September 2022.

Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 50 or 0.3 percent.

- From August to September, all sectors captured in this report shed jobs, with the exception of professional and business services (+10) and information and financial services (no change). The deepest one-month losses were observed in leisure and hospitality.
- Year-over-year, the largest observed employment gains were attributable to the construction sector (+130). The deepest losses were attributable to government (-110), specifically in state and local public education.

*Employment statistics for Island County do not include direct military employment.*

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County was 2.9 percent in September 2022 (preliminary), down from 3.5 percent (revised) in August. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 3.9 percent. San Juan's unemployment rate in April 2020 (the height of the pandemic recession) was 19.2 percent.

- Compared to September 2021, the number of residents counted as 'employed' increased by 243 and the number counted as 'unemployed' or actively seeking work decreased by 81. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,727 resident workers and expanded by 1.9 percent over the year.

### San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

#### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through December 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-22	Revised Aug-22	Revised Sep-21	Change		
				Aug-22 Sep-22	Sep-21 Sep-22	Sep-21 Sep-22
Total Nonfarm	5,960	5,740	6,160	220	-200	-3.2%
Total Private	5,140	4,950	5,330	190	-190	-3.6%
Goods Producing	1,040	1,050	1,050	-10	-10	-1.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	770	790	780	-20	-10	-1.3%
Manufacturing	270	260	270	10	0	0.0%
Service Providing	4,920	4,690	5,110	230	-190	-3.7%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,000	1,040	1,110	-40	-110	-9.9%
Information and Financial Activities	400	400	420	0	-20	-4.8%
Professional and Business Services	510	520	490	-10	20	4.1%
Education and Health Services	540	490	550	50	-10	-1.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,440	1,250	1,500	190	-60	-4.0%
Government	820	790	830	30	-10	-1.2%

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County expanded by 220 in August. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 200 or 3.2 percent. Employment in San Juan County is highly seasonal. The small sampling size for this small county also means that routine revisions can be substantial.

- From August to September 2022, the largest one-month gains were observed in the county's largest sector; leisure and hospitality employment increased by 190. The deepest one-month losses were attributable to trade, transportation, and utilities (-40).
- Over the year, the payroll tally in San Juan County contracted by 200. The only sector reporting annual gains was professional and business services (+20). All other sectors either expanded employment or remained unchanged. The deepest one-year losses were observed in trade, transportation and utilities (-110).

### **Forecast information for Washington state:**

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. ERFC estimates indicate that Washington state employment will have expanded by 5.5 percent from 2021 to 2022, and will expand by 3.0 percent in 2023. The September forecast and October revised forecast are published online at [www.erfc.wa.gov](http://www.erfc.wa.gov).

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