

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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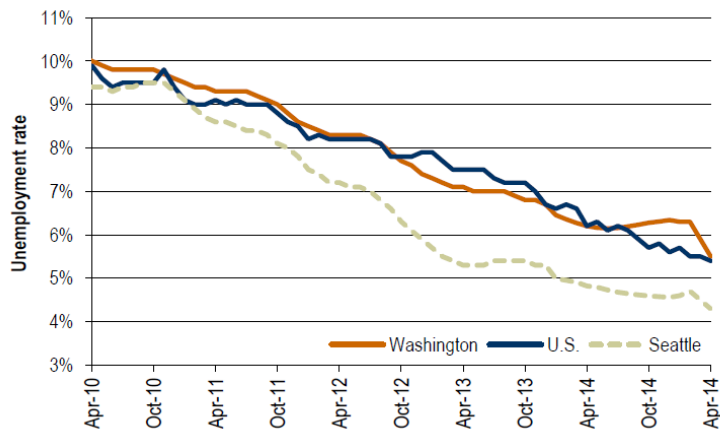
www.esd.wa.gov/employmentdata

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 8,200 from March 2015 to April 2015.1 BLS estimates the private sector gained 8,200 jobs during the month and public sector employment was unchanged.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for April 2014 through April 2015 indicate an increase in employment of 110,700 for the state.

The private sector added 98,300 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 12,400 jobs over the year.

Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted
U.S., Washington and Seattle, April 2010 through April 2015
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2015 is 5.5 percent. The revised estimated March 2015 unemployment rate was at 5.9 percent. The April 2014 unemployment rate was 6.2 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)				
Area	(Prelim.) Apr-15	Mar-15	Apr-14	Year-to- Year Change
USA	5.1%	5.6%	5.9%	-0.8%
Washington state	5.0%	5.7%	5.8%	-0.8%
Whatcom	5.4%	5.9%	6.3%	-0.9%
Skagit	6.2%	7.0%	7.0%	-0.8%
Island	5.8%	6.2%	6.4%	-0.6%
San Juan	4.5%	5.3%	4.9%	-0.4%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses.

Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. March’s preliminary estimated gain of 10,500 jobs was revised to a gain of 12,000 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County dropped from 5.9 percent in March (revised) to 5.4 percent in April (preliminary). The unemployment rate in April 2014 was 6.3 percent.

- Compared to April 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,290 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 850. Whatcom County’s labor force expanded by 2,440 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 966 in March to 868. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,690 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in April; down from 1,997 in March.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through September 2014

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Apr-15	Revised Mar-15	Revised Apr-14	Change		
				Mar-15 Apr-15	Apr-14 Apr-15	Apr-14 Apr-15
Total Nonfarm	89,600	89,200	85,900	400	3,700	4.3%
Total Private	71,300	70,900	68,700	400	2,600	3.8%
Goods Producing	16,100	15,800	14,800	300	1,300	8.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	6,700	6,400	5,800	300	900	15.5%
Manufacturing	9,400	9,400	9,000	0	400	4.4%
Service Providing	73,500	73,400	71,100	100	2,400	3.4%
Private Services Providing	55,200	55,100	53,900	100	1,300	2.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,900	16,600	15,900	300	1,000	6.3%
Retail Trade	11,600	11,300	11,000	300	600	5.5%
Financial Activities	3,600	3,600	3,500	0	100	2.9%
Professional and Business Services	8,000	7,900	7,500	100	500	6.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	9,600	9,400	10,000	200	-400	-4.0%
Government	18,300	18,300	17,200	0	1,100	6.4%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,300	0	100	7.7%
Total State Government	6,600	6,800	6,000	-200	600	10.0%
Total Local Government	10,300	10,100	9,900	200	400	4.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 400 from March to April 2015. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 4.3 percent or 3,700.

- In April 2015, all major sectors in this report either expanded employment or remained at March levels. Construction and retail trade each added 300 jobs over the month.
- Private sector employers collectively reported a gain of 2,600 jobs over the year. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+1,000) and construction (+900). The only major industry group reporting losses

over the year was leisure and hospitality (-400). Public sector employment expanded by 1,100 over the year.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County declined from 7.0 percent in March (revised) to 6.2 percent (preliminary) in April 2015. The unemployment rate last April was 7.0 percent.

- Compared to April 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 910 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 390. Skagit County’s labor force increased by an estimated 520 workers over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 689 in March to 618. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,181 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in April. This is down from 1,418 in March.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)
 Data benchmarked through September 2014

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Apr-15	Revised Mar-15	Revised Apr-14	Change		
				Mar-15 Apr-15	Apr-14 Apr-15	Apr-14 Apr-15
Total Nonfarm	48,300	47,000	47,500	1,300	800	1.7%
Total Private	36,900	35,800	36,300	1,100	600	1.7%
Goods Producing	9,700	9,500	9,200	200	500	5.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,600	3,500	3,400	100	200	5.9%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,000	5,800	100	300	5.2%
Service Providing	38,600	37,500	38,300	1,100	300	0.8%
Private Services Providing	27,200	26,300	27,100	900	100	0.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,100	9,700	9,500	400	600	6.3%
Retail Trade	7,200	6,900	6,800	300	400	5.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,100	4,900	4,700	200	400	8.5%
Government	11,400	11,200	11,200	200	200	1.8%
Federal Government	400	300	300	100	100	33.3%
State Government	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0.0%
Local Government	9,500	9,400	9,400	100	100	1.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In April, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls expanded by 1,300. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs also expanded by 800 or 1.7 percent.

- Month-to-month, all major sectors detailed in this report expanded employment. The sector that created the largest number of jobs over the month was trade transportation (which includes retail), which added 400 jobs.

- Over the year, total nonfarm employment increased by 800 or 1.7 percent, with each major industry detailed in the table reporting employment gains. The largest gains were attributed to trade transportation warehousing and utilities (+600) Four hundred of these jobs were in retail. Leisure and hospitality also added 400 jobs over the past 12 months.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County decreased from 6.2 percent (revised) in March to 5.8 percent in April (preliminary). The unemployment rate in April 2014 was 6.4 percent.

- Compared to April 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 360 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 160. Island County’s civilian labor force increased by 200 residents over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County increased from 178 in March to 201. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 404 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in April. This is down from 463 the previous month.

Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)
 Data benchmarked through September 2014

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Apr-15	Revised Mar-15	Revised Apr-14	Change		
				Mar-15 Apr-15	Apr-14 Apr-15	Apr-14 Apr-15
Total Nonfarm	15,820	15,580	15,430	240	390	2.5%
Total Private	11,170	10,980	10,870	190	300	2.8%
Goods Producing	1,390	1,300	1,340	90	50	3.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	730	650	660	80	70	10.6%
Manufacturing	660	650	680	10	-20	-2.9%
Service Providing	14,430	14,280	14,090	150	340	2.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,500	2,470	2,490	30	10	0.4%
Retail Trade	2,030	2,010	2,070	20	-40	-1.9%
Information and Financial Activities	770	780	780	-10	-10	-1.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,150	1,140	1,220	10	-70	-5.7%
Education and Health Services	2,340	2,330	2,280	10	60	2.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,320	2,280	2,070	40	250	12.1%
Government	4,650	4,600	4,560	50	90	2.0%
Federal Government	1,320	1,310	1,350	10	-30	-2.2%
State and Local Government	3,330	3,290	3,210	40	120	3.7%
State and Local Government Education	1,530	1,540	1,450	-10	80	5.5%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 240 in April. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2.5 percent or 390.

- From March to April, most major industries detailed in this report either added jobs or maintained levels of employment. The only exception is information and financial activities which shed 10 jobs.
- Year-over-year, Island County added 390 jobs. The largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (250), government (90) and construction (70). The deepest losses were from professional and business services (-70) and retail trade (-40).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 5.3 percent (revised) in March to 4.5 percent (preliminary) in April. The unemployment rate observed in April 2014 was 4.9 percent.

- Compared to April 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 230 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 30. All together, the San Juan County labor force increased by 200 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County decreased from 45 in March to 28. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in food preparation and serving related occupations. Altogether, 92 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in April. This is down from 92 in March.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through September 2014

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Apr-15	Revised Mar-15	Revised Apr-14	Change		
				Mar-15 Apr-15	Apr-14 Apr-15	Apr-14 Apr-15
Total Nonfarm	5,150	5,080	5,040	70	110	2.2%
Total Private	4,320	4,220	4,230	100	90	2.1%
Goods Producing	750	710	750	40	0	0.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	550	520	570	30	-20	-3.5%
Manufacturing	200	190	180	10	20	11.1%
Service Providing	4,400	4,370	4,290	30	110	2.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	910	830	810	80	100	12.3%
Information and Financial Activities	330	330	320	0	10	3.1%
Professional and Business Services	340	370	350	-30	-10	-2.9%
Education and Health Services	640	620	600	20	40	6.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,140	1,140	1,190	0	-50	-4.2%
Government	830	860	810	-30	20	2.5%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County in April expanded by 70. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 110 jobs or 2.2 percent.

- San Juan County has a highly-seasonal economy, due to its orientation toward tourism. As summer approaches, we are now in the time of year where we can expect to see month-to-month growth in employment. The largest one-month shift in April was a gain of 80 jobs in retail trade.
- Over the year, San Juan County added 110 jobs. The largest number of jobs was added in trade transportation and utilities (which includes retail trade). Despite a warm spring, employment in leisure and hospitality was down over the year (-50) along with construction and professional and business services (down 20 and 10 jobs respectively).