

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2015, Number 8

August 2015

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

Phone: (425)258-6315 avancesherman@esd.wa.gov

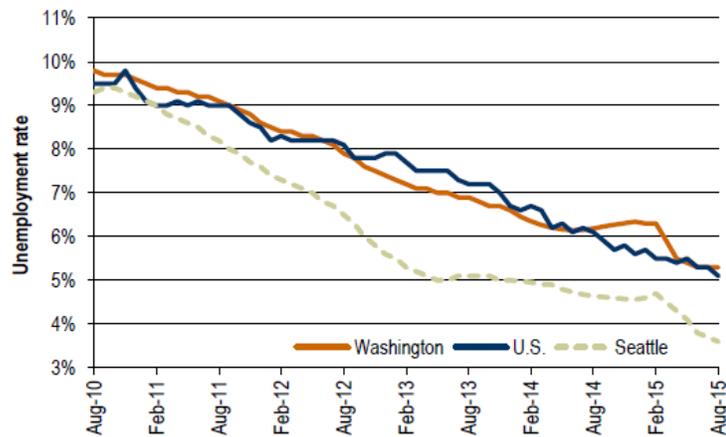
www.esd.wa.gov/employmentdata

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in

Washington rose by 1,600 from July 2015 to August 2015. BLS estimates the private sector gained 900 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 700 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for August 2014 through August 2015 indicate an increase in employment of 92,200 for the state. The private sector added 84,800 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 7,400 jobs over the year.

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



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August 2015 is 5.3 percent. The revised estimated July 2015 unemployment rate was also at 5.3 percent. The August 2014

unemployment rate was 6.2 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)				
Area	(Prelim.) Aug-15	Jul-15	Aug-14	Year-to- Year Change
USA	5.2%	5.6%	6.3%	-1.1%
Washington state	5.0%	5.3%	6.1%	-1.1%
Whatcom	5.7%	6.0%	6.6%	-0.9%
Skagit	6.3%	6.6%	7.1%	-0.8%
Island	5.6%	6.1%	6.8%	-1.2%
San Juan	3.6%	3.9%	4.2%	-0.6%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. July’s preliminary estimated gain of 5,900 jobs was revised to a gain of 10,900 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County decreased from 6.0 percent in July (revised) to 5.7 percent in August (preliminary). The unemployment rate in August 2014 was 6.6 percent.

- Compared to August 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 732 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 937, resulting in an overall decline in the total labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated as 101,576 in August 2015.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 1,015 in July to 851. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,669 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in August; down from 1,688 in July.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Total nonfarm employment, not seasonally adjusted, in Whatcom County (Bellingham MSA)						
NAICS industry title (place of work)	Preliminary Aug-15	Revised Jul- 15	Revised Aug-14	Change		
				Jul-15 Aug- 15	Aug-14 Aug-15	Aug-14 Aug- 15 %
Total Nonfarm	85,500	86,700	83,100	-1,200	2,400	2.9%
Total Private	70,900	70,800	68,900	100	2,000	2.9%
Goods Producing	15,900	15,700	15,500	200	400	2.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	6,900	6,700	6,200	200	700	11.3%
Manufacturing	9,000	9,000	9,300	0	-300	-3.2%
Service-Providing	69,600	71,000	67,600	-1,400	2,000	3.0%
Private Service Providing	55,000	55,100	53,400	-100	1,600	3.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	15,600	15,800	16,300	-200	-700	-4.3%
Retail Trade	11,100	11,100	11,100	0	0	
Financial Activities	3,000	3,000	3,500	0	-500	-14.3%
Professional and Business Services	8,500	8,400	7,900	100	600	7.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,500	10,500	9,900	0	600	6.1%
Government	14,600	15,900	14,200	-1,300	400	2.8%
Federal	1,300	1,300	1,400	0	-100	-7.1%
State government	4,300	4,800	3,800	-500	500	13.2%
Local government	9,000	9,800	9,000	-800	0	
Workers in Labor Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, Labor Market and Performance Analysis Branch

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County contracted by 1,200 from July to August 2015. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 2.9 percent or 2,400.

- In August 2015, goods producing industries added a net 200 jobs and private sector service providers shed a net 100 jobs. Government employment was down 1,300 over the month.
- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 2,400 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+700), professional and business services and leisure and hospitality (+600 each). Non-retail trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities, manufacturing and financial activities reported losses over the year. Public sector employment expanded by 400.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County dropped from 6.6 percent in July (revised) to 6.3 percent in August (preliminary). The unemployment rate last August was 7.1 percent.

- Compared to August 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 1,362 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 617. Skagit County’s labor force decreased by an estimated 1,979 workers over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 813 in July to 607. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,174 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in August. This is up from 1,137 in July.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Total nonfarm employment, not seasonally adjusted, in Skagit County (Mt. Vernon-Anacortes MSA)				Change		
NAICS industry title (place of work)	Preliminary Aug-15	Revised Jul- 15	Revised Aug-14	Jul-15 Aug -15	Aug-14 Aug-15	Aug-14 Aug -15 %
Total Nonfarm	48,300	48,900	47,600	-600	700	1.5%
Total Private	37,800	38,000	37,200	-200	600	1.6%
Goods Producing	9,200	9,200	9,600	0	-400	-4.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,600	3,500	3,500	100	100	2.9%
Manufacturing	5,600	5,700	6,100	-100	-500	-8.2%
Service-Providing	39,100	39,700	38,000	-600	1,100	2.9%
Private Service Providing	28,600	28,800	27,600	-200	1,000	3.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	10,000	10,200	9,800	-200	200	2.0%
Retail Trade	7,100	7,300	7,000	-200	100	1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,200	5,100	5,100	100	100	2.0%
Government	10,500	10,900	10,400	-400	100	1.0%
Federal	400	500	400	-100	0	
State government	1,200	1,200	1,200	0	0	
Local government	8,900	9,200	8,800	-300	100	1.1%
Workers in Labor Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, Labor Market and Performance Analysis Branch

In August, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls declined by 600 from July to August, 2015. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 700 or 1.5 percent.

- Month-to-month, gains were reported in construction and leisure and hospitality; losses were observed in most industries.
- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 700 or 1.5 percent. All major industries detailed in this report posted gains with the exception of manufacturing, which dropped by 500.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County declined from 6.1 percent in July (revised) to 5.6 percent in August (preliminary). The unemployment rate in August 2014 was 6.8 percent.

- Compared to August 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 638 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 432. Island County’s civilian labor force decreased by 1,070 resident civilians over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County increased from 166 in July to 169. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 355 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in August. This is up from 343 the previous month.

Island County local area payroll jobs

Total nonfarm employment, not seasonally adjusted, in Island County (Oak Harbor MSA)						
NAICS industry title (place of work)	Preliminary Aug-15	Revised Jul- 15	Revised Aug-14	Change		
				Jul-15 Aug- -15	Aug-14 Aug-15	Aug-14 -15 %
Total Nonfarm	15,750	15,890	15,630	-140	120	0.8%
Total Private	11,410	11,370	11,390	40	20	0.2%
Goods Producing	1,710	1,690	1,450	20	260	17.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	980	950	790	30	190	24.1%
Manufacturing	730	740	660	-10	70	10.6%
Service-Providing	14,040	14,200	14,180	-160	-140	-1.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,510	2,510	2,560	0	-50	-2.0%
Retail Trade	2,100	2,100	2,140	0	-40	-1.9%
Information and Financial Activities	740	740	760	0	-20	-2.6%
Professional and Business Services	1,160	1,160	1,250	0	-90	-7.2%
Education and Health Services	2,180	2,180	2,180	0	0	
Leisure and Hospitality	2,310	2,290	2,450	20	-140	-5.7%
Government	4,340	4,520	4,240	-180	100	2.4%
Federal	1,330	1,330	1,370	0	-40	-2.9%
State and Local Government	3,010	3,190	2,870	-180	140	4.9%
State and Local Government Education	1,190	1,370	1,080	-180	110	10.2%
Workers in Labor Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, Labor Market and Performance Analysis Branch

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County decreased by 140 in August. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 0.8 percent or 120.

- From July to August, gains were observed in construction and leisure and hospitality. The deepest losses were observed in government. Most industries remained unchanged over the month.
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 120. The largest gains were observed in construction (+190) and government (+100). The deepest losses came from leisure and hospitality (-140).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 3.9 percent (revised) in July to 3.6 percent (preliminary) in August. The unemployment rate observed in August 2014 was 4.2 percent.

- Compared to August 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 331 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 62. All together, the San Juan County labor force decreased by 393 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 21 in July to 30. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 33 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in August. This is down from 35 in July.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Total nonfarm employment, not seasonally adjusted, in San Juan County							
NAICS industry title (place of work)	Preliminary Aug-15	Revised Jul 15	Revised Aug-14	Change			
				Jul 15 Aug -15	Aug 14 Aug-15	Aug 14 -15 %	
Total Nonfarm	6,320	6,410	6,380	-90	-60	-0.9%	
Total Private	5,550	5,610	5,520	-60	30	0.5%	
Goods Producing	850	850	840	10	20	2.4%	
Mining, Logging, and Construction	650	650	610	10	50	8.2%	
Manufacturing	200	200	230	0	-30	-13.0%	
Service-Providing	5,460	5,560	5,540	-100	-80	-1.4%	
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,160	1,140	1,040	20	120	11.5%	
Information and Financial Activities	350	350	370	0	-20	-5.4%	
Professional and Business Services	330	330	410	0	-80	-19.5%	
Education and Health Services	600	620	580	20	20	3.4%	
Leisure and Hospitality	2,050	2,130	2,080	-70	-20	-1.0%	
Government	770	800	860	-30	-90	-10.5%	
Workers in Labor Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0		

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, Labor Market and Performance Analysis Branch

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County contracted by 90 in July. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 60 jobs or 0.9 percent.

- San Juan County has a highly-seasonal economy, due to its orientation toward tourism. July and August tend to be the months with the highest levels of employment for the year. This year, the peak appears to have occurred in July, as overall losses were observed in August.
- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively shed 60 jobs. The largest employment gains were observed in trade transportation and utilities (+120) and the deepest losses were observed in government (-90).