

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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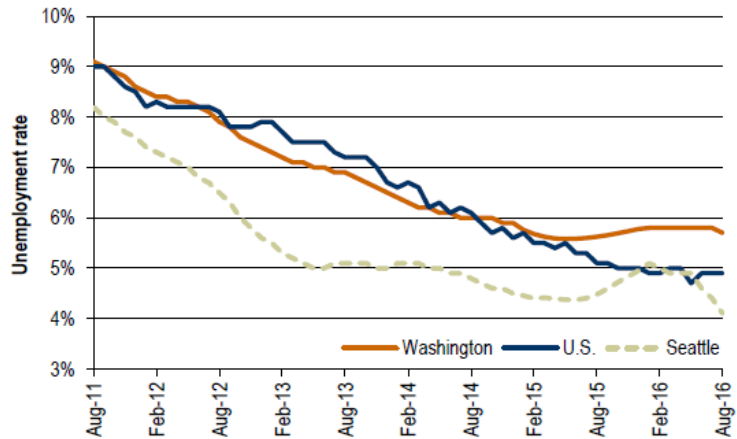
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 2,600 from July 2016 to August 2016.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 1,800 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 800 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for August 2015 through July 2016 indicate an increase in employment of 95,300 for the state. The private sector added 81,500 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 13,800 jobs over the year.

Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted
U.S., Washington and Seattle, August 2011 through August 2016
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August 2016 is 5.7 percent. The revised estimated July 2016 unemployment rate was at 5.8 percent. The August 2015 unemployment rate was 5.6 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Aug-16	Jul-16	Aug-15	Year-to-Year Change
USA	5.0%	5.1%	5.2%	-0.2%
Washington state	5.4%	5.7%	5.4%	0.0%
Whatcom	6.3%	6.5%	5.8%	0.5%
Skagit	6.7%	6.8%	6.3%	0.4%
Island	6.0%	6.5%	5.5%	0.5%
San Juan	3.9%	4.5%	3.6%	0.3%

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 2,600 jobs was revised to a gain of 1,900 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 6.3 percent in August 2016 (preliminary), down from 6.5 percent in July (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate in August 2015 was 5.8 percent.

- Compared to August 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,482 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 656, resulting in a 2.1 percent increase in both the labor force and 0.5% increase in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 103,161 in August 2016.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 728 in July to 738. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,411 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in August; down from 1,531 in July.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)
 Data benchmarked through March 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-16	Revised Jul-16	Revised Aug-15	Change		
				Jul-16 Aug-16	Aug-15 Aug-16	Aug-15 Aug-16
Total Nonfarm	87,400	88,900	84,900	-1,500	2,500	2.9%
Total Private	73,300	73,400	70,100	-100	3,200	4.6%
Goods Producing	17,100	17,000	15,800	100	1,300	8.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	6,800	6,700	6,300	100	500	7.9%
Manufacturing	10,300	10,300	9,500	0	800	8.4%
Service Providing	70,300	71,900	69,100	-1,600	1,200	1.7%
Private Services Providing	56,200	56,400	54,300	-200	1,900	3.5%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,600	17,200	16,300	400	1,300	8.0%
Retail Trade	12,100	11,700	11,200	400	900	8.0%
Financial Activities	3,200	3,200	3,400	0	-200	-5.9%
Professional and Business Services	8,300	8,300	8,200	0	100	1.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,900	10,900	10,300	0	600	5.8%
Government	14,100	15,500	14,800	-1,400	-700	-4.7%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	3,800	4,300	4,300	-500	-500	-11.6%
Total Local Government	8,900	9,800	9,100	-900	-200	-2.2%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County contracted by 1,500 from July to August 2016. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 2.9 percent or 2,500.

- In August 2016, goods producing industries created 100 jobs and private sector service providers shed 200. Government employment dropped by 1,400 over the month. In August, the largest payroll increases were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities -specifically in retail trade (+400). The deepest losses were observed in government. Government losses were linked to the academic calendar.

- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 2,500 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+1,300) and manufacturing (+800).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 6.7 percent in August 2016 (preliminary), down from 6.8 percent in July (revised). The unemployment rate last August was 6.3 percent.

- Compared to August 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,375 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 361. Skagit County’s labor force increased by an estimated 2,123 or 3.0 percent over the year, resulting in an increased unemployment rate.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 549 in July to 700. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,008 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in August. This is down from 1,082 in July.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
 Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)
 Data benchmarked through March 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-16	Revised Jul-16	Revised Aug-15	Change		
				Jul-16 Aug-16	Aug-15 Aug-16	Aug-15 Aug-16
Total Nonfarm	49,900	50,800	48,400	-900	1,500	3.1%
Total Private	38,500	38,800	37,800	-300	700	1.9%
Goods Producing	9,700	10,000	9,700	-300	0	0.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,600	3,600	3,700	0	-100	-2.7%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,400	6,000	-300	100	1.7%
Service Providing	40,200	40,800	38,700	-600	1,500	3.9%
Private Services Providing	28,800	28,800	28,100	0	700	2.5%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,800	10,200	10,000	-400	-200	-2.0%
Retail Trade	7,000	7,400	7,100	-400	-100	-1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,300	5,200	5,300	100	0	0.0%
Government	11,400	12,000	10,600	-600	800	7.5%
Federal Government	500	600	400	-100	100	25.0%
State Government	1,200	1,200	1,200	0	0	0.0%
Local Government	9,700	10,200	9,000	-500	700	7.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In August, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls dropped by 900. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,500 or 3.1 percent.

- Month-to-month, the only industry reporting net employment gains was leisure and hospitality (+100). Most industries shed jobs in August. The deepest losses were observed in

government. These losses were tied to the academic calendar. The deepest private sector losses were in retail trade (-400).

- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 1,500 or 3.1 percent. Employment gains were observed in most industries, with the largest gains attributable to hiring in government (+800) and manufacturing (+100). Year over year losses were observed in construction and trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (including retail trade).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County decreased from 6.5 percent in July (revised) to 6.0 percent in August (preliminary). The unemployment rate in August 2015 was 5.5 percent.

- Compared to August 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 189 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 175. Island County’s civilian labor force increased by 364 resident civilians over the year, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County decreased from 189 in July to 188. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in production-related occupations. Altogether, 305 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in August. This is down from 321 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 March 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-16	Revised Jul-16	Revised Aug-15	Change		
				Jul-16 Aug-16	Aug-15 Aug-16	Aug-15 Aug-16
Total Nonfarm	15,890	15,980	15,720	-90	170	1.1%
Total Private	11,480	11,430	11,350	50	130	1.1%
Goods Producing	1,750	1,730	1,550	20	200	12.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	960	940	790	20	170	21.5%
Manufacturing	790	790	760	0	30	3.9%
Service Providing	14,140	14,250	14,170	-110	-30	-0.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,620	2,620	2,680	0	-60	-2.2%
Retail Trade	2,160	2,160	2,230	0	-70	-3.1%
Information and Financial Activities	730	740	670	-10	60	9.0%
Professional and Business Services	1,250	1,250	1,160	0	90	7.8%
Education and Health Services	2,050	2,060	2,110	-10	-60	-2.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,360	2,320	2,420	40	-60	-2.5%
Government	4,410	4,550	4,370	-140	40	0.9%
Federal Government	1,390	1,390	1,320	0	70	5.3%
State and Local Government	3,020	3,160	3,050	-140	-30	-1.0%
State and Local Government Education	1,210	1,360	1,200	-150	10	0.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County decreased by 90 in August. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 1.1 percent or 170.

- From July to August, the largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+40); Government, education and health services and information and financial activities shed jobs over the month.
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 170. The largest gains were attributable to hiring in construction (+170) and professional and business services (+90); the deepest losses came from retail trade (-70). Leisure and hospitality and education and health services were also down over the year.

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County dipped from 4.5 percent in July (revised) to 3.9 percent in August (preliminary). The unemployment rate observed in August 2015 was 3.6 percent.

- Compared to August 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 27 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 26. All together, the San Juan County labor force decreased by 1 over the year, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 12 in July to 13. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in management occupations. Altogether, 31 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in August. This is down from 32 in July.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through March 2016

NAICS Industry Title2	Prelim Aug-16	Revised Jul-16	Revised Aug-15	Change		
				Jul-16 Aug-16	Aug-15 Aug-16	Aug-15 Aug-16
Total Nonfarm 3	6,540	6,500	6,520	40	20	0.3%
Total Private	5,730	5,680	5,700	50	30	0.5%
Goods Producing	940	940	840	0	100	11.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	700	700	630	0	70	11.1%
Manufacturing	240	240	210	0	30	14.3%
Service Providing	5,600	5,560	5,680	40	-80	-1.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	960	950	1,070	10	-110	-10.3%
Information and Financial Activities	290	290	370	0	-80	-21.6%
Professional and Business Services	420	430	410	-10	10	2.4%
Education and Health Services	560	560	550	0	10	1.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,380	2,330	2,260	50	120	5.3%
Government	810	820	820	-10	-10	-1.2%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County expanded by 40 in August. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 20 jobs or 0.3 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. Most industries shed jobs in the winter and begin to return with the sun. The largest month-to-month gains in August were observed in leisure and hospitality (+50). Government and professional and business services each shed jobs over the month.
- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively added 20 jobs. The largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+120). The deepest losses were observed in trade transportation and utilities – a collection of industries that includes retail and wholesale trade in addition to transportation warehousing and utilities (-110).