

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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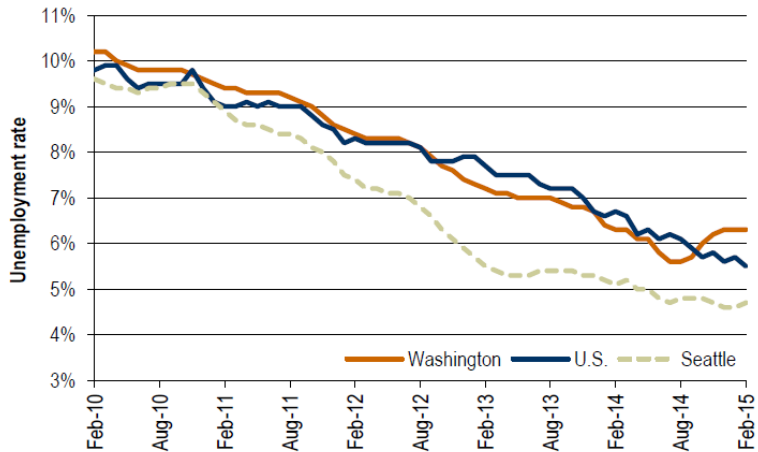
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington fell by 600 from January 2015 to February 2015.¹ BLS estimates the private sector lost 200 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 400 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for February 2014 through February 2015 indicate an increase in employment of 94,700 for the state. The private sector added 83,400 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 11,300 jobs over the year.

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



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for February 2015 is 6.3 percent.

The revised estimated January 2015 unemployment rate was at 6.3 percent. The February 2014 unemployment rate was 6.3 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)				
Area	(Prelim.) Feb-15	Jan-15	Feb-14	Year-to-Year Change
USA	5.8%	6.1%	7.0%	-1.2%
Washington state	6.8%	7.0%	7.2%	-0.4%
Whatcom	7.2%	7.2%	7.8%	-0.6%
Skagit	8.3%	8.4%	8.6%	-0.3%
Island	7.4%	7.8%	7.7%	-0.3%
San Juan	6.5%	7.3%	6.8%	-0.3%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. January’s preliminary estimated gain of 18,300 jobs was revised to a gain of 16,600 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County remained unchanged at 7.2 percent January (revised) and February (preliminary). The unemployment rate in February 2014 was 7.8 percent.

- Compared to February 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 4,040 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 350. Whatcom County’s labor force expanded by 3,690 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 1,159 in January to 1,061. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 2,151 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in February; down from 2,425 the previous month.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)
 Data benchmarked through September 2014¹

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Feb-15	Revised Jan-15	Revised Feb-14	Change		
				Jan-15 Feb-15	Feb-14 Feb-15	Feb-14 Feb-15
Total Nonfarm	88,300	88,000	84,200	300	4,100	4.9%
Total Private	70,300	70,100	67,300	200	3,000	4.5%
Goods Producing	15,200	15,100	14,400	100	800	5.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	5,900	5,800	5,400	100	500	9.3%
Manufacturing	9,300	9,300	9,000	0	300	3.3%
Service Providing	73,100	72,900	69,800	200	3,300	4.7%
Private Services Providing	55,100	55,000	52,900	100	2,200	4.2%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,700	17,000	15,800	-300	900	5.7%
Retail Trade	11,100	11,600	10,900	-500	200	1.8%
Financial Activities	3,600	3,600	3,400	0	200	5.9%
Professional and Business Services	7,700	7,700	7,200	0	500	6.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	9,300	9,200	9,600	100	-300	-3.1%
Government	18,000	17,900	16,900	100	1,100	6.5%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,300	0	100	7.7%
Total State Government	6,500	6,600	5,900	-100	600	10.2%
Total Local Government	10,100	9,900	9,700	200	400	4.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 300 from January to February 2015. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 4.9 percent or 4,100.

- February is not typically a time of month-to-month employment growth, although employment in several sectors did expand. Construction, leisure and hospitality and government each grew in February. Retail trade shed 500 jobs over the month.

- Private sector employers collectively reported a gain of 4,100 jobs over the year. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+900) and professional and business services (+500). The only major industry group reporting losses over the year was leisure and hospitality (-300).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County declined from 8.4 percent in January (revised) to 8.3 percent (preliminary) in February 2015. The unemployment rate last February was 8.6 percent.

- Compared to February 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 770 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 120. Skagit County’s labor force expanded by 650 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 803 in February to 748. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,451 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in February. This is down from 1,676 the previous month.

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 Feb-15	Revised Jan-15	Revised Feb-14	Change		
				Jan-15 Feb-15	Feb-14 Feb-15	Feb-14 Feb-15
Total Nonfarm	47,000	47,000	46,300	0	700	1.5%
Total Private	35,900	35,900	35,100	0	800	2.3%
Goods Producing	9,500	9,500	8,800	0	700	8.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,500	3,500	3,100	0	400	12.9%
Manufacturing	6,000	6,000	5,700	0	300	5.3%
Service Providing	37,500	37,500	37,500	0	0	0.0%
Private Services Providing	26,400	26,400	26,300	0	100	0.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	9,800	9,300	200	700	7.5%
Retail Trade	7,000	7,000	6,600	0	400	6.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,800	4,700	4,400	100	400	9.1%
Government	11,100	11,100	11,200	0	-100	-0.9%
Federal Government	300	300	300	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0.0%
Local Government	9,300	9,300	9,400	0	-100	-1.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In February, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls remained unchanged compared to January. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 1.5 percent or 700 jobs.

- Month-to-month, all private sector industries except trade transportation warehousing and utilities and leisure and hospitality remained unchanged from January levels.
- Over the year, all major private sector industries included in this survey reported employment gains relative to last year. The largest year-over-year gains were observed in trade transportation and utilities (700), which includes retail trade. Government employment declined by 100 over the year.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County decreased from 7.8 percent (revised) in January to 7.4 percent in February (preliminary). The unemployment rate in February 2014 was 7.7 percent.

- Compared to February 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 450 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 50. Island County’s civilian labor force increased by 400 residents over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County decreased from 249 in January to 182. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 501 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in February. This is down from 584 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 Feb-15	Revised Jan-15	Revised Feb-14	Change		
				Jan-15 Feb-15	Feb-14 Feb-15	Feb-14 Feb-15
Total Nonfarm	15,460	15,390	15,220	70	240	1.6%
Total Private	10,880	10,840	10,700	40	180	1.7%
Goods Producing	1,270	1,270	1,300	0	-30	-2.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	630	620	650	10	-20	-3.1%
Manufacturing	640	650	650	-10	-10	-1.5%
Service Providing	14,190	14,120	13,920	70	270	1.9%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,440	2,450	2,420	-10	20	0.8%
Retail Trade	1,980	1,990	2,000	-10	-20	-1.0%
Information and Financial Activities	780	780	790	0	-10	-1.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,140	1,140	1,240	0	-100	-8.1%
Education and Health Services	2,310	2,290	2,260	20	50	2.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,270	2,240	2,040	30	230	11.3%
Government	4,580	4,550	4,520	30	60	1.3%
Federal Government	1,320	1,320	1,360	0	-40	-2.9%
State and Local Government	3,260	3,230	3,160	30	100	3.2%
State and Local Government Education	1,530	1,500	1,440	30	90	6.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 70 in February. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 1.6 percent or 240.

- From January to February, the largest employment gains were observed in leisure and hospitality and government (30 each) and education and health services (20). Manufacturing and retail trade each shed 10 jobs.
- Year-over-year, Island County added 240 jobs. The largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (230), government (60) and education and health services (50). The deepest losses were from professional and business services (-100).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 7.3 percent (revised) in January to 6.5 percent (preliminary) in February. The unemployment rate observed in February 2014 was 6.8 percent.

- Compared to February 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 230 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 10. All together, the San Juan County labor force increased by 220 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County decreased from 82 in January to 36. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in food preparation and serving related occupations. Altogether, 145 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in February. This is down from 171 the previous month.

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 Feb-15	Revised Jan-15	Revised Feb-14	Change		
				Jan-15 Feb-15	Feb-14 Feb-15	Feb-14 Feb-15
Total Nonfarm	5,010	4,910	4,720	100	290	6.1%
Total Private	4,140	4,050	3,920	90	220	5.6%
Goods Producing	710	700	720	10	-10	-1.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	520	520	560	0	-40	-7.1%
Manufacturing	190	180	160	10	30	18.8%
Service Providing	4,300	4,210	4,000	90	300	7.5%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	820	820	780	0	40	5.1%
Information and Financial Activities	330	330	300	0	30	10.0%
Professional and Business Services	360	350	350	10	10	2.9%
Education and Health Services	620	620	590	0	30	5.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,090	1,020	970	70	120	12.4%
Government	870	860	800	10	70	8.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County in February expanded by 100. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 290 jobs or 6.1 percent.

- San Juan County has a highly-seasonal economy, due to its orientation toward tourism. Large downward shifts in employment are characteristic of autumn and winter months, with growth during the spring and summer months. The largest month-to-month shift in January was a gain of 70 jobs in leisure and hospitality.
- Over the year, San Juan County added 290 jobs. Leisure and hospitality was up 120 over the year (12.4 percent over last year). All major industries added jobs over the year, except for construction which shed 40.