

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2015, Number 5

May 2015

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

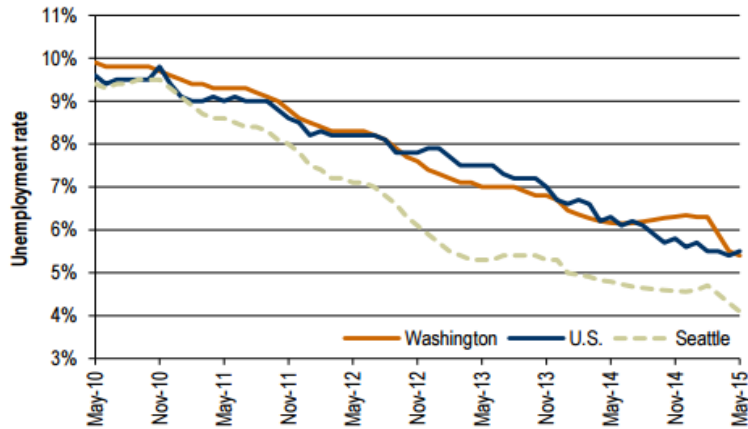
Phone: (425)258-6315 avancesherman@esd.wa.gov

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 7,700 from April 2015 to May 2015.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 8,400 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 700 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for May 2014 through May 2015 indicate an increase in employment of 111,500 for the state. The private sector added 100,000 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 11,500 jobs over the year.

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



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2015 is 5.4 percent. The revised estimated April 2015 unemployment rate was at 5.5 percent. The May 2014 unemployment rate was 6.2 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)				
Area	(Prelim.) May-15	Apr-15	May-14	Year-to-Year Change
USA	5.3%	5.1%	6.1%	-0.8%
Washington state	5.3%	5.0%	6.0%	-0.7%
Whatcom	5.8%	5.4%	6.6%	-0.8%
Skagit	6.6%	6.2%	7.3%	-0.7%
Island	6.1%	5.8%	6.8%	-0.7%
San Juan	4.4%	4.6%	4.8%	-0.4%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. April’s preliminary estimated gain of 8,200 jobs was revised to a gain of 7,800 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County increased from 5.4 percent in April (revised) to 5.8 percent in May (preliminary). The unemployment rate in May 2014 was 6.6 percent.

- Compared to May 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,920 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 710. Whatcom County’s labor force expanded by 3,210 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 868 in April to 1,032. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,626 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in May; down from 1,690 in April.

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 May-15	Revised Apr-15	Revised May-14	Change		
				Apr-15 May-15	May-14 May-15	Apr-14 May-14
Total Nonfarm	90,200	89,500	86,300	700	3,900	4.5%
Total Private	72,100	71,100	69,000	1,000	3,100	4.5%
Goods Producing	16,300	16,000	14,700	300	1,600	10.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	6,900	6,600	5,600	300	1,300	23.2%
Manufacturing	9,400	9,400	9,100	0	300	3.3%
Service Providing	73,900	73,500	71,600	400	2,300	3.2%
Private Services Providing	55,800	55,100	54,300	700	1,500	2.8%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,600	16,500	16,000	100	600	3.8%
Retail Trade	11,600	11,600	11,100	0	500	4.5%
Financial Activities	3,600	3,600	3,500	0	100	2.9%
Professional and Business Services	8,000	8,000	7,700	0	300	3.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	9,800	9,600	10,100	200	-300	-3.0%
Government	18,100	18,400	17,300	-300	800	4.6%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,500	6,700	6,000	-200	500	8.3%
Total Local Government	10,200	10,300	9,900	-100	300	3.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 700 from April to May 2015. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 4.5 percent or 3,900.

- In May 2015, all major private sector employment sectors detailed in this report either expanded employment or remained at April levels.
- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 3,900 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+1,300) and trade

transportation and utilities (+600). The only major industry group reporting losses over the year was leisure and hospitality (-300). Public sector employment expanded by 800.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County increased from 6.2 percent in April (revised) to 6.6 percent (preliminary) in May 2015. The unemployment rate last May was 7.3 percent.

- Compared to May 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 700 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 350. Skagit County’s labor force increased by an estimated 350 workers over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 618 in April to 727. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,176 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 1,181 in April.

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 May-15	Revised Apr-15	Revised May-14	Change		
				Apr-15 May-15	May-14 May-15	Apr-14 May-14
Total Nonfarm	48,200	48,100	47,800	100	400	0.8%
Total Private	36,800	36,700	36,700	100	100	0.3%
Goods Producing	9,800	9,700	9,100	100	700	7.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,700	3,600	3,300	100	400	12.1%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,100	5,800	0	300	5.2%
Service Providing	38,400	38,400	38,700	0	-300	-0.8%
Private Services Providing	27,000	27,000	27,600	0	-600	-2.2%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,100	10,100	9,600	0	500	5.2%
Retail Trade	7,200	7,200	6,900	0	300	4.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,200	5,100	4,900	100	300	6.1%
Government	11,400	11,400	11,100	0	300	2.7%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0.0%
Local Government	9,500	9,500	9,200	0	300	3.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In May, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls expanded by 100. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs also expanded by 400 or 0.8 percent.

- Month-to-month, all major sectors detailed in this report expanded employment or maintained previous levels. Construction and leisure and hospitality each added 100 jobs.

- Over the year, total nonfarm employment increased by 400 or 0.8 percent, with each major industry reporting employment gains. The largest gains were attributed to trade transportation warehousing and utilities (+500) Three hundred of these jobs were in retail. Construction added 400 jobs over the past 12 months.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County increased from 5.8 percent (revised) in April to 6.1 percent in May (preliminary). The unemployment rate in May 2014 was 6.8 percent.

- Compared to May 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 710 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 200. Island County’s civilian labor force increased by 510 residents over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County decreased from 201 in April to 164. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 388 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 404 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 May-15	Revised Apr-15	Revised May-14	Change		
				Apr-15 May-15	May-14 May-15	Apr-14 May-14
Total Nonfarm	15,980	15,810	15,620	170	360	2.3%
Total Private	11,330	11,160	11,020	170	310	2.8%
Goods Producing	1,430	1,390	1,360	40	70	5.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	770	730	680	40	90	13.2%
Manufacturing	660	660	680	0	-20	-2.9%
Service Providing	14,550	14,420	14,260	130	290	2.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,520	2,500	2,500	20	20	0.8%
Retail Trade	2,050	2,030	2,070	20	-20	-1.0%
Information and Financial Activities	770	770	760	0	10	1.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,160	1,150	1,230	10	-70	-5.7%
Education and Health Services	2,350	2,340	2,290	10	60	2.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,400	2,320	2,200	80	200	9.1%
Government	4,650	4,650	4,600	0	50	1.1%
Federal Government	1,330	1,320	1,380	10	-50	-3.6%
State and Local Government	3,320	3,330	3,220	-10	100	3.1%
State and Local Government Education	1,530	1,530	1,450	0	80	5.5%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 170 in May. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2.3 percent or 360.

- From April to May, most major industries detailed in this report either added jobs or maintained previous levels of employment. Leisure and hospitality added the largest number of jobs (+80).
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 360. The largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+200) and construction (+90). The deepest losses were from professional and business services (-70).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 4.6 percent (revised) in April to 4.4 percent (preliminary) in May. The unemployment rate observed in May 2014 was 4.8 percent.

- Compared to May 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 250 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 20. All together, the San Juan County labor force increased by 230 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 28 in April to 33. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in office and administrative support occupations. Altogether, 71 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 92 in April.

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 May-15	Revised Apr-15	Revised May-14	Change		
				Apr-15 May-15	May-14 May-15	Apr-14 May-14
Total Nonfarm	5,700	5,190	5,520	510	180	3.3%
Total Private	4,820	4,320	4,690	500	130	2.8%
Goods Producing	780	750	790	30	-10	-1.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	570	550	590	20	-20	-3.4%
Manufacturing	210	200	200	10	10	5.0%
Service Providing	4,920	4,440	4,730	480	190	4.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	980	910	900	70	80	8.9%
Information and Financial Activities	340	330	320	10	20	6.3%
Professional and Business Services	360	340	380	20	-20	-5.3%
Education and Health Services	640	640	610	0	30	4.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,530	1,140	1,470	390	60	4.1%
Government	880	870	830	10	50	6.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County in May expanded by 510. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 180 jobs or 3.3 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 May was a gain of 390 jobs in leisure and hospitality.

- Over the year, San Juan County added 180 jobs. The largest gains were in trade transportation and utilities (which includes retail trade). Employment in leisure and hospitality was up 60 jobs over the year. Construction and professional and business services were each down 20 jobs.