

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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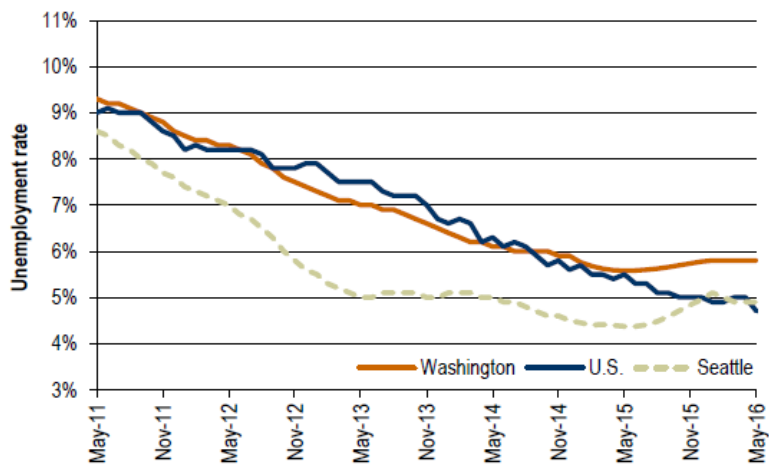
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 8,700 from April 2016 to May 2016.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 7,100 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 1,600 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for May 2015 through May 2016 indicate an increase in employment of 101,700 for the state. The private sector added 89,700 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 12,000 jobs over the year.

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



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2016 is 5.8 percent. The revised estimated April 2016 unemployment rate was also at 5.8 percent. The May 2015 unemployment rate was 5.6 percent. BLS

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) May-16	Apr-16	May-15	Year-to- Year Change
USA	4.5%	4.7%	5.3%	-0.8%
Washington state	5.5%	5.6%	5.6%	-0.1%
Whatcom	5.8%	6.1%	6.0%	-0.2%
Skagit	6.4%	6.7%	6.8%	-0.4%
Island	5.8%	6.2%	6.2%	-0.4%
San Juan	4.6%	5.1%	4.7%	-0.1%

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 11,200 jobs was revised to a gain of 6,900 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.8 percent in May 2016 (preliminary), down from 6.1 percent in April (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate in May 2015 was 6.0 percent.

- Compared to May 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,788 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 156, resulting in an overall increase in the total labor force and in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated at 104,869 in May 2016.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 813 in April to 798. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,618 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in May; down from 1,749 in April.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through December 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-16	Revised Apr-16	Revised May-15	Change		
				Apr-16 May-16	May-15 May-16	May-15 May-16
Total Nonfarm	90,700	90,500	88,100	200	2,600	3.0%
Total Private	72,700	72,100	69,900	600	2,800	4.0%
Goods Producing	16,300	16,300	15,900	0	400	2.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	6,700	6,800	6,800	-100	-100	-1.5%
Manufacturing	9,600	9,500	9,100	100	500	5.5%
Service Providing	74,400	74,200	72,200	200	2,200	3.0%
Private Services Providing	56,400	55,800	54,000	600	2,400	4.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,200	16,400	16,200	-200	0	0.0%
Retail Trade	10,800	11,100	11,200	-300	-400	-3.6%
Financial Activities	3,200	3,200	3,300	0	-100	-3.0%
Professional and Business Services	8,200	8,100	8,000	100	200	2.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,600	10,500	10,200	100	400	3.9%
Government	18,000	18,400	18,200	-400	-200	-1.1%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,500	6,800	6,800	-300	-300	-4.4%
Total Local Government	10,100	10,200	10,000	-100	100	1.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 200 from April to May 2016. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 3.0 percent or 2,600.

- In May 2016, goods producing industries maintained levels observed in April and private sector service providers added 600. Government employment dropped by 400 over the month. In May, payroll increased for manufacturing, professional and business services and leisure and hospitality.

- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 2,600 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in manufacturing (+500) and leisure and hospitality (+400). Retail trade and government reported the deepest losses over the year.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County decreased from 6.7 percent in April (revised) to 6.4 percent in May (preliminary). The unemployment rate last May was 6.8 percent.

- Compared to May 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,192 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 162. Skagit County’s labor force increased by an estimated 1,030 workers over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 580 in April to 693. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,258 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is up from 1,251 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 December 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-16	Revised Apr-16	Revised May-15	Change		
				Apr-16 May-16	May-15 May-16	May-15 May-16
Total Nonfarm	49,100	49,000	48,500	100	600	1.2%
Total Private	37,500	37,400	37,200	100	300	0.8%
Goods Producing	9,500	9,400	9,600	100	-100	-1.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,500	3,500	3,800	0	-300	-7.9%
Manufacturing	6,000	5,900	5,800	100	200	3.4%
Service Providing	39,600	39,600	38,900	0	700	1.8%
Private Services Providing	28,000	28,000	27,600	0	400	1.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,900	9,900	9,700	0	200	2.1%
Retail Trade	6,900	6,800	6,900	100	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,000	4,800	5,000	200	0	0.0%
Government	11,600	11,600	11,300	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	9,700	9,700	9,400	0	300	3.2%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In May, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls rose by 100. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 600 or 1.2 percent.

- Month-to-month, the largest industry-specific gains were attributable to hiring in leisure and hospitality (+200). Manufacturing and retail trade also added jobs in May (+100 each).

- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 600 or 1.2 percent. Employment gains were observed in government, manufacturing and trade transportation and utilities. Losses were observed in construction.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County dropped from 6.2 percent in April (revised) to 5.8 percent in May (preliminary). The unemployment rate in May 2015 was 6.2 percent.

- Compared to April 2015, the number of people counted as 'employed' increased by 191 and the number of people counted as 'unemployed' or actively seeking work decreased by 130. Island County's civilian labor force increased by 61 resident civilians over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County increased from 190 in April to 227. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in production-related occupations. Altogether, 387 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 379 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 December 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-16	Revised Apr-16	Revised May-15	Change		
				Apr-16 May-16	May-15 May-16	May-15 May-16
Total Nonfarm	15,800	15,590	15,840	210	-40	-0.3%
Total Private	11,100	10,910	11,210	190	-110	-1.0%
Goods Producing	1,620	1,580	1,520	40	100	6.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	820	780	780	40	40	5.1%
Manufacturing	800	800	740	0	60	8.1%
Service Providing	14,180	14,010	14,320	170	-140	-1.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,570	2,540	2,590	30	-20	-0.8%
Retail Trade	2,110	2,080	2,140	30	-30	-1.4%
Information and Financial Activities	640	640	680	0	-40	-5.9%
Professional and Business Services	1,260	1,260	1,140	0	120	10.5%
Education and Health Services	2,150	2,140	2,260	10	-110	-4.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,190	2,100	2,290	90	-100	-4.4%
Government	4,700	4,680	4,630	20	70	1.5%
Federal Government	1,390	1,370	1,330	20	60	4.5%
State and Local Government	3,310	3,310	3,300	0	10	0.3%
State and Local Government Education	1,470	1,490	1,500	-20	-30	-2.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 210 in May. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was down 0.3 percent or 40.

- From April to May, the largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+90) and construction (40); all major sectors either added jobs or remained unchanged in May.
- Year-over-year, Island County employment contracted by 40. The largest gains were attributable to hiring in professional and businesses services (+120); the deepest losses came from education and health services (-110) and leisure and hospitality (-100).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 5.1 percent (revised) in April to 4.6 percent (preliminary) in May. The unemployment rate observed in May 2015 was 4.7 percent.

- Compared to May 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 56 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 2. All together, the San Juan County labor force increased by 54 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County decreased from 24 in April to 20. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction, management and office and administrative support occupations. Altogether, 55 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in May. This is down from 77 in April.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through December 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim May-16	Revised Apr-16	Revised May-15	Change		
				Apr-16 May-16	May-15 May-16	May-15 May-16
Total Nonfarm	5,550	5,180	5,480	370	70	1.3%
Total Private	4,700	4,340	4,670	360	30	0.6%
Goods Producing	790	750	760	40	30	3.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	580	560	580	20	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	210	190	180	20	30	16.7%
Service Providing	4,760	4,430	4,720	330	40	0.8%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	850	790	930	60	-80	-8.6%
Information and Financial Activities	310	300	330	10	-20	-6.1%
Professional and Business Services	390	380	380	10	10	2.6%
Education and Health Services	580	580	580	0	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,610	1,360	1,490	250	120	8.1%
Government	850	840	810	10	40	4.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County expanded by 370 in May. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 70 jobs or 1.3 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 gains in May

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Report available at <http://nwboard.org/impact/laborareasummaries.html>

were observed in leisure and hospitality (up 250). All major sectors either added jobs or remained unchanged in May.

- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively created 70 new 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 (-80).