

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2015, Number 11

November 2015

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

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

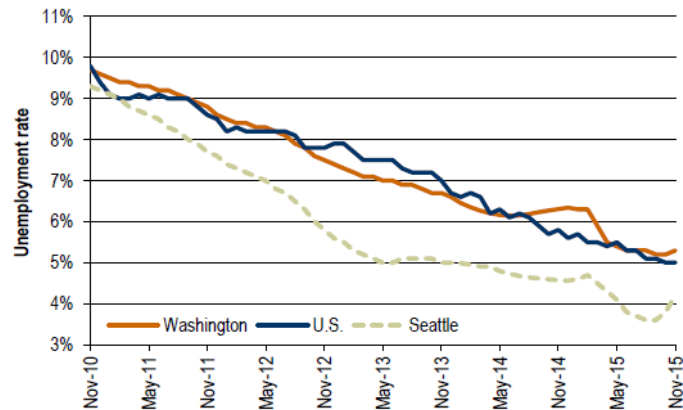
[www.esd.wa.gov/employmentdata](http://www.esd.wa.gov/employmentdata)

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 10,100 from October 2015 to November 2015. BLS estimates the private sector gained 8,800 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 1,300 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for November 2014 through November 2015 indicate an increase in employment of 77,500 for the state. The private sector added 67,900 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 9,600 jobs over the year.

Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November 2015 is 5.3 percent. The revised estimated October 2015 unemployment rate was at 5.2 percent. The November 2014 unemployment rate was 6.3 percent.

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



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)				
Area	(Prelim.) Nov-15	Oct-15	Nov-14	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.8%	4.8%	5.5%	-0.7%
Washington state	5.4%	5.0%	6.2%	-0.8%
Whatcom	5.3%	5.3%	6.4%	-1.1%
Skagit	6.3%	5.9%	7.3%	-1.0%
Island	5.4%	5.6%	7.0%	-1.6%
San Juan	4.7%	4.5%	5.7%	-1.0%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. October’s preliminary estimated gain of 6,900 jobs was revised to a gain of 1,700 jobs.

# Whatcom County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County remained unchanged from October (revised) to November (preliminary) at 5.3 percent. The unemployment rate in November 2014 was 6.4 percent.

- Compared to November 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,083 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 1,120, resulting in an overall increase in the total labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated as 104,549 in November 2015.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 1,069 in October to 1,168. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,835 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November; up from 1,573 in October.
- The following Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARN) were recently filed for locations in Whatcom County:
  - CH2M (Bellingham), 128 affected workers starting 12/7/15
  - Alcoa Intalco Works (Ferndale), 465 affected workers starting 1/18/16
  - Haggen Food & Pharmacy (statewide), 1,073 affected workers starting 11/24/15
- Additionally, the Nooksack Casino was closed on 12/11/2015, affecting roughly 125 employees according to the Bellingham Herald.

## Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted  
**Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)**  
 Data benchmarked through June 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-15	Revised Oct-15	Revised Nov-14	Change		
				Oct-15 Nov-15	Nov-14 Nov-15	Nov-14 Nov-15
Total Nonfarm	89,800	89,900	86,600	-100	3,200	3.7%
Total Private	71,300	71,700	68,700	-400	2,600	3.8%
Goods Producing	16,100	16,400	15,200	-300	900	5.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	6,700	7,000	6,100	-300	600	9.8%
Manufacturing	9,400	9,400	9,100	0	300	3.3%
Service Providing	73,700	73,500	71,400	200	2,300	3.2%
Private Services Providing	55,200	55,300	53,500	-100	1,700	3.2%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,500	16,000	16,800	500	-300	-1.8%
Retail Trade	11,500	11,100	11,600	400	-100	-0.9%
Financial Activities	3,200	3,200	3,400	0	-200	-5.9%
Professional and Business Services	8,000	8,100	7,900	-100	100	1.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	9,900	10,000	9,700	-100	200	2.1%
Government	18,500	18,200	17,900	300	600	3.4%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,900	6,800	6,600	100	300	4.5%
Total Local Government	10,200	10,000	9,900	200	300	3.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County contracted by 100 from October to November 2015. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 3.7 percent or 3,200.

- In November 2015, goods producing industries shed a net 300 jobs and private sector service providers shed 100. Government employment expanded by 300 over the month. November tends to be a slow month. While many sectors were losing jobs, retail trade expanded by 400 as a result of holiday hiring.
- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 3,200 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+600) and manufacturing (+300). Trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (including retail trade) and financial activities reported losses over the year. Public sector employment expanded by 600.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County increased from 5.9 percent in October (revised) to 6.3 percent in November (preliminary). The unemployment rate last November was 7.3 percent.

- Compared to November 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 494 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 674. Skagit County’s labor force decreased by an estimated 1,168 workers over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 792 in October to 935. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,437 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 1,124 in October.
- Management & Training Corporation (Job Corps) filed a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN). Up to 90 workers could be affected beginning 1/31/2016

## Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted  
**Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)**  
 Data benchmarked through June 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-15	Revised Oct-15	Revised Nov-14	Change		
				Oct-15 Nov-15	Nov-14 Nov-15	Nov-14 Nov-15
Total Nonfarm	48,600	48,900	47,300	-300	1,300	2.7%
Total Private	37,200	37,700	36,200	-500	1,000	2.8%
Goods Producing	9,700	9,900	9,400	-200	300	3.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,900	4,000	3,500	-100	400	11.4%
Manufacturing	5,800	5,900	5,900	-100	-100	-1.7%
Service Providing	38,900	39,000	37,900	-100	1,000	2.6%
Private Services Providing	27,500	27,800	26,800	-300	700	2.6%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	9,700	9,900	300	100	1.0%
Retail Trade	7,200	6,900	7,100	300	100	1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,800	4,900	4,600	-100	200	4.3%
Government	11,400	11,200	11,100	200	300	2.7%
Federal Government	400	400	300	0	100	33.3%
State Government	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0.0%
Local Government	9,500	9,300	9,300	200	200	2.2%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In November, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls decreased by 300. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,300 or 2.7 percent.

- Month-to-month, industry-specific gains were attributable to hiring in retail trade and government; losses were observed in construction, manufacturing and leisure and hospitality.
- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 1,300 or 3.0 percent. All major industries detailed in this report posted gains with the exception of manufacturing, which shed 100 jobs. Goods producers added 300 jobs over the year and private service providers added 700 jobs.

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County dropped from 5.6 percent in October (revised) to 5.4 percent in November (preliminary). The unemployment rate in November 2014 was 7.0 percent.

- Compared to November 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 352 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 522. Island County’s civilian labor force decreased by 170 resident civilians over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County increased from 243 in October to 260. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 415 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 353 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 June 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-15	Revised Oct-15	Revised Nov-14	Change		
				Oct-15 Nov-15	Nov-14 Nov-15	Nov-14 Nov-15
Total Nonfarm	16,070	16,020	15,670	50	400	2.6%
Total Private	11,370	11,410	11,050	-40	320	2.9%
Goods Producing	1,680	1,700	1,450	-20	230	15.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	950	980	770	-30	180	23.4%
Manufacturing	730	720	680	10	50	7.4%
Service Providing	14,390	14,320	14,220	70	170	1.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,640	2,640	2,480	0	160	6.5%
Retail Trade	2,200	2,200	2,050	0	150	7.3%
Information and Financial Activities	750	750	750	0	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	1,160	1,160	1,180	0	-20	-1.7%
Education and Health Services	2,250	2,230	2,270	20	-20	-0.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,140	2,180	2,210	-40	-70	-3.2%
Government	4,700	4,610	4,620	90	80	1.7%
Federal Government	1,340	1,340	1,340	0	0	0.0%
State and Local Government	3,360	3,270	3,280	90	80	2.4%
State and Local Government Education	1,540	1,460	1,510	80	30	2.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 50 in November. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2.6 percent or 400.

- From October to November, the largest gains were observed in government—in particular within state and local education—. The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality.
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 400. The largest gains were observed in construction (+180) and retail trade (+150). The deepest losses came from leisure and hospitality (-70).

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 4.5 percent (revised) in October to 4.7 percent (preliminary) in November. The unemployment rate observed in November 2014 was 5.7 percent.

- Compared to November 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 367 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 94. All together, the San Juan County labor force decreased by 461 over the year.

- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 58 in October to 69. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in food preparation and serving related occupations. Altogether, 100 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 56 in October.

## San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-15	Revised Oct-15	Revised Nov-14	Change		
				Oct-15 Nov-15	Nov-14 Nov-15	Nov-14 Nov-15
Total Nonfarm	4,960	5,190	5,130	-230	-170	-3.3%
Total Private	4,140	4,370	4,310	-230	-170	-3.9%
Goods Producing	750	770	780	-20	-30	-3.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	600	610	600	-10	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	150	160	180	-10	-30	-16.7%
Service Providing	4,210	4,420	4,350	-210	-140	-3.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	970	1,010	880	-40	90	10.2%
Information and Financial Activities	360	370	320	-10	40	12.5%
Professional and Business Services	340	350	370	-10	-30	-8.1%
Education and Health Services	580	580	610	0	-30	-4.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	970	1,120	1,150	-150	-180	-15.7%
Government	820	820	820	0	0	0.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County contracted by 230 in November. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 170 jobs or 3.3 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 as the days get shorter and colder, with the deepest losses typically observed in leisure and hospitality (-150 in November).
- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively subtracted 170 jobs. Year over year gains were observed in trade, transportation and utilities (which includes retail trade). The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-180).