

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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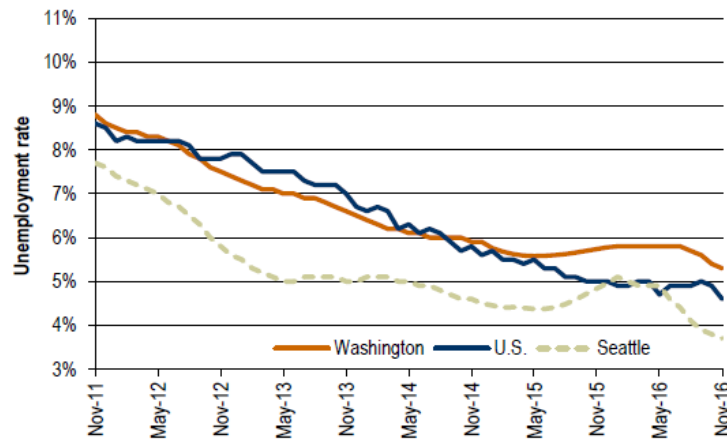
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 3,600 from October 2016 to November 2016.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 4,700 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 1,100 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for November 2015 through November 2016 indicate an increase in employment of 95,100 for the state. The private sector added 81,500 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 13,600 jobs over the year.

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



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November 2016 is 5.3 percent. The revised estimated October 2016 unemployment rate was at 5.4 percent. The November 2015 unemployment rate was 5.7 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Nov-16	Oct-16	Nov-15	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.4%	4.7%	4.8%	-0.4%
Washington state	5.2%	5.0%	5.7%	-0.5%
Whatcom	5.7%	5.9%	5.6%	0.1%
Skagit	6.5%	6.4%	6.4%	0.1%
Island	5.8%	6.0%	5.6%	0.2%
San Juan	4.7%	4.6%	4.8%	-0.1%

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 10,600 jobs was revised to a gain of 9,500 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.7 percent in November 2016 (preliminary), down from 5.9 percent in October (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate in November 2015 was 5.6 percent.

- Compared to November 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,084 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 262, resulting in a 3.2 percent increase in the size of the labor force and an increase in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 106,871 in November 2016.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 861 in October to 934. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,467 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November; up from 1,437 in October.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-16	Revised Oct-16	Revised Nov-15	Change		
				Oct-16 Nov-16	Nov-15 Nov-16	Nov-15 Nov-16
Total Nonfarm	90,900	91,200	89,200	-300	1,700	1.9%
Total Private	72,000	72,500	71,100	-500	900	1.3%
Goods Producing	16,600	16,900	15,700	-300	900	5.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	6,600	6,900	6,300	-300	300	4.8%
Manufacturing	10,000	10,000	9,400	0	600	6.4%
Service Providing	74,300	74,300	73,500	0	800	1.1%
Private Services Providing	55,400	55,600	55,400	-200	0	0.0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,100	16,100	16,400	0	-300	-1.8%
Retail Trade	11,000	11,000	11,400	0	-400	-3.5%
Financial Activities	3,100	3,200	3,200	-100	-100	-3.1%
Professional and Business Services	8,100	8,200	8,100	-100	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,500	10,600	10,300	-100	200	1.9%
Government	18,900	18,700	18,100	200	800	4.4%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	7,400	7,400	6,700	0	700	10.4%
Total Local Government	10,100	9,900	10,000	200	100	1.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County contracted by 300 from October to November 2016. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 1.9 percent or 1,700.

- In November 2016, goods producing industries shed 300 jobs and private sector service providers shed 200. Government employment expanded by 200 over the month. The deepest job losses in November were observed in the seasonally-sensitive construction industry (-300); other losses were observed in financial activities, professional and business services and leisure and hospitality (-100 each).
- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 1,700 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in manufacturing (+600) and construction (+300). Private sector service providers collectively remained unchanged, with gains observed in leisure and hospitality (+200) and losses observed in trade transportation warehousing and utilities (-300 including retail) and financial activities (-100). Government employment was up 800.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 6.5 percent in November 2016 (preliminary), up from 6.4 percent in October (revised). The unemployment rate last November was 6.4 percent.

- Compared to November 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,373 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 130. Skagit County’s labor force increased by an estimated 1,503 or 2.6 percent over the year, resulting in an increased unemployment rate.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 736 in October to 768. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,202 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 1,085 in October.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)

Data benchmarked through June 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-16	Revised Oct-16	Revised Nov-15	Change		
				Oct-16 Nov-16	Nov-15 Nov-16	Nov-15 Nov-16
Total Nonfarm	48,900	49,300	48,100	-400	800	1.7%
Total Private	37,000	37,500	36,700	-500	300	0.8%
Goods Producing	9,300	9,600	9,200	-300	100	1.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,800	3,900	3,400	-100	400	11.8%
Manufacturing	5,500	5,700	5,800	-200	-300	-5.2%
Service Providing	39,600	39,700	38,900	-100	700	1.8%
Private Services Providing	27,700	27,900	27,500	-200	200	0.7%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	9,600	10,100	400	-100	-1.0%
Retail Trade	7,000	6,800	7,200	200	-200	-2.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,200	5,300	4,800	-100	400	8.3%
Government	11,900	11,800	11,400	100	500	4.4%
Federal Government	500	500	400	0	100	25.0%
State Government	1,400	1,400	1,500	0	-100	-6.7%
Local Government	10,000	9,900	9,500	100	500	5.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In November, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls contracted by 400. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 800 or 1.7 percent.

- One month employment gains were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+400), including retail trade and government (+100). Losses were observed in all other major industries detailed in this report.
- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 800 or 1.7 percent. Employment gains were observed in most industries, with the largest gains attributable to hiring in government (+500), construction and leisure and hospitality (+400 each). Year over year losses were observed in manufacturing (-300) and trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (including retail trade) down 100.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.8 percent (preliminary) in November. This is down from 6.0 percent (revised) in October. The unemployment rate in November 2015 was 5.6 percent.

- Compared to November 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 784 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased

by 101. Island County’s civilian labor force increased by 885 resident civilians or 2.7 percent over the year, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate.

- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County increased from 202 in October to 225. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 339 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 336 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 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-16	Revised Oct-16	Revised Nov-15	Change		
				Oct-16 Nov-16	Nov-15 Nov-16	Nov-15 Nov-16
Total Nonfarm	16,180	16,150	15,540	30	640	4.1%
Total Private	11,480	11,540	10,860	-60	620	5.7%
Goods Producing	1,700	1,690	1,570	10	130	8.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	900	920	810	-20	90	11.1%
Manufacturing	800	770	760	30	40	5.3%
Service Providing	14,480	14,460	13,970	20	510	3.7%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,630	2,630	2,600	0	30	1.2%
Retail Trade	2,180	2,170	2,150	10	30	1.4%
Information and Financial Activities	810	810	680	0	130	19.1%
Professional and Business Services	1,190	1,190	1,110	0	80	7.2%
Education and Health Services	2,150	2,140	2,080	10	70	3.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,250	2,310	2,130	-60	120	5.6%
Government	4,700	4,610	4,680	90	20	0.4%
Federal Government	1,350	1,340	1,330	10	20	1.5%
State and Local Government	3,350	3,270	3,350	80	0	0.0%
State and Local Government Education	1,500	1,430	1,530	70	-30	-2.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 30 in November. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 4.1 percent or 640.

- From October to November, the largest gains were observed in government (+90) and manufacturing (+30). The deepest losses were from leisure and hospitality (-60).
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 640. The largest gains were attributable to hiring in information and financial activities (+130), and leisure and hospitality (+120). No major sector in this report shed jobs over the year, however losses were observed in state and local public education.

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County rose from 4.6 percent in October (revised) to 4.7 percent (preliminary) in November. The unemployment rate 12 months earlier was 4.8 percent.

- Compared to November 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 317 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 7. All together, the San Juan County labor force increased by 324 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 35 in October to 53. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in food preparation and serving related occupations. Altogether, 56 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 38 in October.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-16	Revised Oct-16	Revised Nov-15	Change		
				Oct-16 Nov-16	Nov-15 Nov-16	Nov-15 Nov-16
Total Nonfarm	5,260	5,490	5,230	-230	30	0.6%
Total Private	4,380	4,610	4,400	-230	-20	-0.5%
Goods Producing	810	830	790	-20	20	2.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	630	650	610	-20	20	3.3%
Manufacturing	180	180	180	0	0	0.0%
Service Providing	4,450	4,660	4,440	-210	10	0.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	890	920	880	-30	10	1.1%
Information and Financial Activities	320	330	320	-10	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	400	410	390	-10	10	2.6%
Education and Health Services	610	610	600	0	10	1.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,170	1,330	1,240	-160	-70	-5.6%
Government	880	880	830	0	50	6.0%
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 up 30 jobs or 0.6 percent.

- San Juan County has a highly-seasonal economy, due to its orientation toward tourism. Most industries shed jobs in the winter and return with the sun. In November, employment losses were observed in most industries. Leisure and hospitality logged the deepest losses (-160).
- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively added 30 jobs. The largest gains were observed in government (+50) and construction (+20). The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-70).