

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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

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

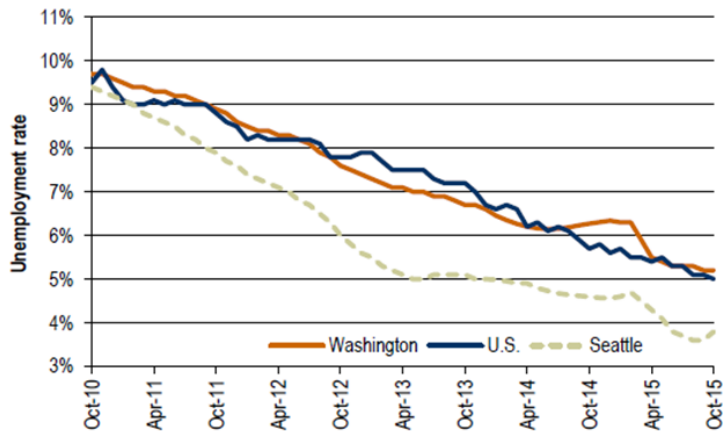
www.esd.wa.gov/employmentdata

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 6,900 from September 2015 to October 2015.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 9,800 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 2,900 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for October 2014 through October 2015 indicate an increase in employment of 85,800 for the state. The private sector added 72,800 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 13,000 jobs over the year.

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

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



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)				
Area	(Prelim.) Oct-15	Sep-15	Oct-14	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.8%	4.9%	5.5%	-0.7%
Washington state	5.0%	4.8%	5.8%	-0.8%
Whatcom	5.2%	5.4%	6.3%	-1.1%
Skagit	5.9%	6.0%	6.9%	-1.0%
Island	5.5%	5.5%	6.8%	-1.3%
San Juan	4.5%	3.8%	4.9%	-0.4%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. September’s preliminary estimated loss of 2,200 jobs was revised to a loss of 1,400 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County decreased from 5.4 percent in September (revised) to 5.2 percent in October (preliminary). The unemployment rate in October 2014 was 6.3 percent.

- Compared to October 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,240 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 1,095, resulting in an overall increase in the total labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated as 102,655 in October 2015.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 886 in September to 1,069. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,573 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in October; down from 1,603 in September.
- The following Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs) 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

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 Oct-15	Revised Sep-15	Revised Oct-14	Revised Sep-14	Change		
					Sep-15 Oct-15	Oct-14 Oct-15	Oct-14 Oct-15
Total Nonfarm	90,300	88,400	86,500	84,100	1,900	3,800	4.4%
Total Private	71,800	71,600	68,700	68,500	200	3,100	4.5%
Goods Producing	16,500	16,300	15,300	15,400	200	1,200	7.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,100	6,900	6,100	6,200	200	1,000	16.4%
Manufacturing	9,400	9,400	9,200	9,200	0	200	2.2%
Service Providing	73,800	72,100	71,200	68,700	1,700	2,600	3.7%
Private Services Providing	55,300	55,300	53,400	53,100	0	1,900	3.6%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,100	16,000	16,400	16,200	100	-300	-1.8%
Retail Trade	11,200	10,900	11,200	11,000	300	0	0.0%
Financial Activities	3,200	3,200	3,500	3,500	0	-300	-8.6%
Professional and Business Services	8,100	8,100	8,000	7,900	0	100	1.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,000	10,300	9,800	9,700	-300	200	2.0%
Government	18,500	16,800	17,800	15,600	1,700	700	3.9%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	7,100	6,000	6,600	5,000	1,100	500	7.6%
Total Local Government	10,000	9,400	9,800	9,200	600	200	2.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 1,900 from September to October 2015. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 5.3 percent or 3,800.

- In October 2015, goods producing industries added a net 200 jobs and private sector service providers remained unchanged. Government employment increased by 1,700 over the month as public K-12 and post-secondary institutions started the new school year.

- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 3,800 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+1,000) and leisure and hospitality (+200). Trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (including retail trade) and financial activities reported losses over the year. Public sector employment expanded by 700.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County dropped from 6.0 percent in September (revised) to 5.9 percent in October (preliminary). The unemployment rate last October was 6.9 percent.

- Compared to October 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 1,157 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 698. Skagit County’s labor force decreased by an estimated 1,855 workers over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 645 in September to 792. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,124 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in October. This is the same number of active claims in September.

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 Oct-15	Revised Sep-15	Revised Oct-14	Change		
				Sep-15 Oct-15	Oct-14 Oct-15	Oct-14 Oct-15
Total Nonfarm	48,700	48,400	47,300	300	1,400	3.0%
Total Private	37,500	37,700	36,300	-200	1,200	3.3%
Goods Producing	9,900	9,700	9,400	200	500	5.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,000	4,000	3,500	0	500	14.3%
Manufacturing	5,900	5,700	5,900	200	0	0.0%
Service Providing	38,800	38,700	37,900	100	900	2.4%
Private Services Providing	27,600	28,000	26,900	-400	700	2.6%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,900	9,800	9,800	100	100	1.0%
Retail Trade	7,000	6,900	7,000	100	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,900	5,100	4,700	-200	200	4.3%
Government	11,200	10,700	11,000	500	200	1.8%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,500	1,500	1,400	0	100	7.1%
Local Government	9,300	8,800	9,200	500	100	1.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In October, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls increased by 300. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,400 or 3.0 percent.

- Month-to-month, industry-specific gains were attributable to hiring in local government, manufacturing and retail trade; losses were observed in leisure and hospitality.

- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 1,400 or 3.0 percent. All major industries detailed in this report posted gains with the exception of manufacturing, which was unchanged. Goods producers added 500 jobs over the year and private service providers added 900 jobs.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County held steady at 5.5 percent in September (revised) and October (preliminary). The unemployment rate in October 2014 was 6.8 percent.

- Compared to October 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 191 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 439. Island County’s civilian labor force decreased by 630 resident civilians over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County increased from 200 in September to 243. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 353 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in October. 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 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Oct-15	Revised Sep-15	Revised Oct-14	Change		
				Sep-15 Oct-15	Oct-14 Oct-15	Oct-14 Oct-15
Total Nonfarm	16,040	16,010	15,680	30	360	2.3%
Total Private	11,440	11,550	11,140	-110	300	2.7%
Goods Producing	1,700	1,700	1,420	0	280	19.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	980	980	760	0	220	28.9%
Manufacturing	720	720	660	0	60	9.1%
Service Providing	14,340	14,310	14,260	30	80	0.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,640	2,670	2,490	-30	150	6.0%
Retail Trade	2,210	2,240	2,060	-30	150	7.3%
Information and Financial Activities	750	750	760	0	-10	-1.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,160	1,160	1,240	0	-80	-6.5%
Education and Health Services	2,240	2,210	2,260	30	-20	-0.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,190	2,290	2,260	-100	-70	-3.1%
Government	4,600	4,460	4,540	140	60	1.3%
Federal Government	1,340	1,340	1,340	0	0	0.0%
State and Local Government	3,260	3,120	3,200	140	60	1.9%
State and Local Government Education	1,460	1,290	1,440	170	20	1.4%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 30 in October. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 2.3 percent or 360.

- From September to October, 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 360. The largest gains were observed in construction (+220) and retail trade (+150). The deepest losses came from professional and business services (-80).

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 3.8 percent (revised) in September to 4.5 percent (preliminary) in October. The unemployment rate observed in October 2014 was 4.9 percent.

- Compared to October 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 551 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 62. All together, the San Juan County labor force decreased by 613 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 18 in September to 58. 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 October. This is up from 38 in September.

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 Oct-15	Revised Sep-15	Revised Oct-14	Change		
				Sep-15 Oct-15	Oct-14 Oct-15	Oct-14 Oct-15
Total Nonfarm	5,190	5,940	5,450	-750	-260	-4.8%
Total Private	4,360	5,130	4,610	-770	-250	-5.4%
Goods Producing	770	790	790	-20	-20	-2.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	610	620	610	-10	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	160	170	180	-10	-20	-11.1%
Service Providing	4,420	5,150	4,660	-730	-240	-5.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,010	1,080	910	-70	100	11.0%
Information and Financial Activities	370	380	340	-10	30	8.8%
Professional and Business Services	350	360	380	-10	-30	-7.9%
Education and Health Services	570	560	610	10	-40	-6.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,120	1,780	1,380	-660	-260	-18.8%
Government	830	810	840	20	-10	-1.2%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County contracted by 750 in October. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 260 jobs or 4.8 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 (-660 in October). Gains were observed in government and education and health services (20 and 10 respectively).

- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively subtracted 260 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 (-260).