

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2016, Number 10

October 2016

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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 10,600 from September 2016 to October 2016.<sup>1</sup> BLS estimates the private sector gained 12,200 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 1,600 jobs.

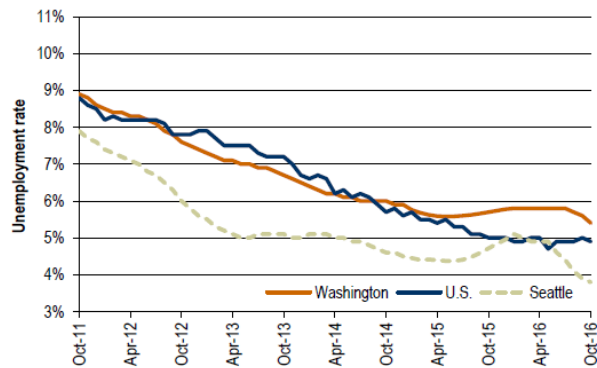
On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for October 2015 through October 2016 indicate an increase in employment of 102,000 for the state. The private sector added 86,600 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 15,400 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for October 2016 is 5.4 percent. The revised estimated September 2016 unemployment rate was at 5.6 percent. The October 2015 unemployment rate was 5.7 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Oct-16	Sep-16	Oct-15	Year-to- Year Change
USA	4.7%	4.8%	4.8%	-0.1%
Washington state	5.0%	5.1%	5.3%	-0.3%
Whatcom	5.9%	5.8%	5.5%	0.4%
Skagit	6.4%	6.3%	6.0%	0.4%
Island	6.0%	6.0%	5.7%	0.3%
San Juan	4.6%	4.2%	4.5%	0.1%

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



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 gain of 20,000 jobs was revised to a gain of 23,900 jobs.

## Whatcom County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.9 percent in October 2016 (preliminary), up from 5.8 percent in September (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate in October 2015 was 5.5 percent.

- Compared to October 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,225 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 624, resulting in a 2.8 percent increase in the size of the labor force and an increase in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 105,389 in October 2016.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 681 in September to 861. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,437 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in October; up from 1,346 in September.

### 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 Oct-16	Revised Sep-16	Revised Oct-15	Change		
				Sep-16 Oct-16	Oct-15 Oct-16	Oct-15 Oct-16
Total Nonfarm	90,200	89,200	89,400	1,000	800	0.9%
Total Private	72,300	72,300	71,400	0	900	1.3%
Goods Producing	16,800	17,000	15,800	-200	1,000	6.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	6,800	6,900	6,500	-100	300	4.6%
Manufacturing	10,000	10,100	9,300	-100	700	7.5%
Service Providing	73,400	72,200	73,600	1,200	-200	-0.3%
Private Services Providing	55,500	55,300	55,600	200	-100	-0.2%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,200	16,300	16,300	-100	-100	-0.6%
Retail Trade	11,000	10,900	11,200	100	-200	-1.8%
Financial Activities	3,200	3,200	3,200	0	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	8,200	8,100	8,300	100	-100	-1.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,500	10,700	10,400	-200	100	1.0%
Government	17,900	16,900	18,000	1,000	-100	-0.6%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,700	6,300	6,700	400	0	0.0%
Total Local Government	9,800	9,200	9,900	600	-100	-1.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 1,000 from September to October 2016. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 0.9 percent or 800.

- In October 2016, goods producing industries shed 200 jobs and private sector service providers added 200. Government employment expanded by 1,000 over the month; increases were mostly anticipated and are in sync with the academic calendar. The only one-month private sector increases in this report were attributed to hiring in retail and professional and business services. Leisure and hospitality, trade transportation, warehousing and utilities (excluding retail), construction and manufacturing shed jobs in October.
- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 800 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in manufacturing (+700) and construction (+300). Private sector service providers collectively shed 100 jobs, with the largest losses observed in retail (-200). Government employment was down 100.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 6.4 percent in October 2016 (preliminary), up from 6.3 percent in September (revised). The unemployment rate last October was 6.0 percent.

- Compared to October 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,447 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 355. Skagit County’s labor force increased by an estimated 1,802 or 3.2 percent over the year, resulting in an increased unemployment rate.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 529 in September to 736. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,085 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in October. This is up from 982 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 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Oct-16	Revised Sep-16	Revised Oct-15	Change		
				Sep-16 Oct-16	Oct-15 Oct-16	Oct-15 Oct-16
Total Nonfarm	49,200	49,000	48,000	200	1,200	2.5%
Total Private	37,400	37,700	36,700	-300	700	1.9%
Goods Producing	9,500	9,500	9,300	0	200	2.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,900	3,800	3,400	100	500	14.7%
Manufacturing	5,600	5,700	5,900	-100	-300	-5.1%
Service Providing	39,700	39,500	38,700	200	1,000	2.6%
Private Services Providing	27,900	28,200	27,400	-300	500	1.8%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,600	9,600	9,900	0	-300	-3.0%
Retail Trade	6,800	6,800	7,000	0	-200	-2.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,300	5,400	4,800	-100	500	10.4%
Government	11,800	11,300	11,300	500	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	9,900	9,400	9,400	500	500	5.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In October, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls expanded by 200. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,200 or 2.5 percent.

- One month employment gains were observed in government (500) and construction (100). Manufacturing and leisure and hospitality each shed jobs in October (100 each).
- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 1,200 or 2.5 percent. Employment gains were observed in most industries, with the largest gains attributable to hiring in construction, leisure and hospitality and government (500 each). Year over year losses were observed in manufacturing and trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (including retail trade) each was down 300.

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County remained at 6.0 percent for the third month in a row. The unemployment rate in October 2015 was 5.7 percent.

- Compared to October 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 766 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 159. Island County’s civilian labor force increased by 925 resident civilians or 2.9 percent over the year, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate.

- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County increased from 166 in September to 202. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 336 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in October. This is up from 322 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 Oct-16	Revised Sep-16	Revised Oct-15	Change		
				Sep-16 Oct-16	Oct-15 Oct-16	Oct-15 Oct-16
Total Nonfarm	16,140	16,110	15,600	30	540	3.5%
Total Private	11,530	11,650	11,020	-120	510	4.6%
Goods Producing	1,690	1,700	1,580	-10	110	7.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	920	930	830	-10	90	10.8%
Manufacturing	770	770	750	0	20	2.7%
Service Providing	14,450	14,410	14,020	40	430	3.1%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,630	2,660	2,580	-30	50	1.9%
Retail Trade	2,170	2,200	2,130	-30	40	1.9%
Information and Financial Activities	810	810	680	0	130	19.1%
Professional and Business Services	1,190	1,190	1,180	0	10	0.8%
Education and Health Services	2,140	2,110	2,070	30	70	3.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,310	2,390	2,220	-80	90	4.1%
Government	4,610	4,460	4,580	150	30	0.7%
Federal Government	1,340	1,340	1,300	0	40	3.1%
State and Local Government	3,270	3,120	3,280	150	-10	-0.3%
State and Local Government Education	1,430	1,250	1,470	180	-40	-2.7%
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 3.5 percent or 540.

- From September to October, the largest gains were observed in government (150) and education and health services (30). The deepest losses were from leisure and hospitality (-80).
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 540. The largest gains were attributable to hiring in information and financial activities (130), construction and leisure and hospitality (90 each). 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 4.2 percent in September (revised) to 4.6 percent (preliminary). The unemployment rate observed in October 2015 was 4.5 percent.

- Compared to October 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 329 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 23. All together, the San Juan County labor force increased by 352 over the year, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 20 in September to 35. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in food preparation and serving related occupations. Altogether, 38 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in October. This is up from 29 in September.

### 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 Oct-16	Revised Sep-16	Revised Oct-15	Change		
				Sep-16 Oct-16	Oct-15 Oct-16	Oct-15 Oct-16
Total Nonfarm	5,490	6,010	5,400	-520	90	1.7%
Total Private	4,610	5,150	4,580	-540	30	0.7%
Goods Producing	830	860	780	-30	50	6.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	650	660	600	-10	50	8.3%
Manufacturing	180	200	180	-20	0	0.0%
Service Providing	4,660	5,150	4,620	-490	40	0.9%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	920	1,000	900	-80	20	2.2%
Information and Financial Activities	330	340	330	-10	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	410	420	390	-10	20	5.1%
Education and Health Services	610	600	610	10	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,330	1,740	1,380	-410	-50	-3.6%
Government	880	860	820	20	60	7.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County contracted by 520 in October. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 90 jobs or 1.7 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 only industry detailed in this report that experienced gains in October was education and health services. Leisure and hospitality logged the deepest losses (-410).

- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively added 90 jobs. The largest gains were observed in government (60) and construction (50). The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-50).