

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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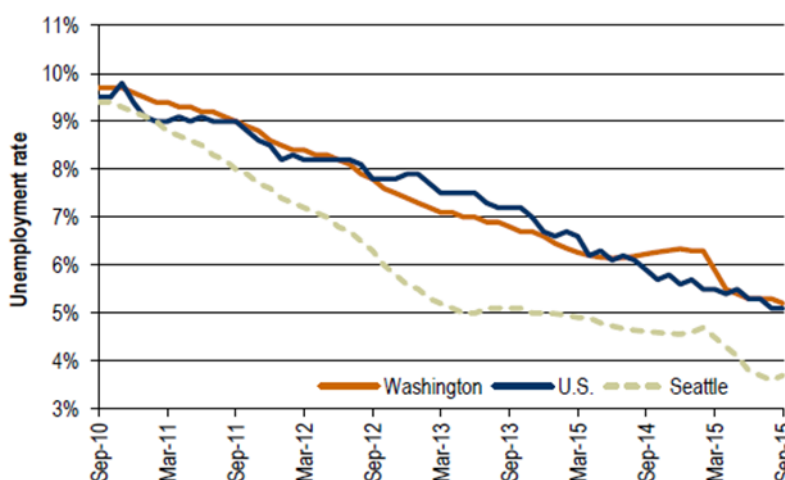
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington fell by 2,200 from August 2015 to September 2015. BLS estimates the private sector lost 2,200 jobs during the month and public sector employment remained unchanged.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for September 2014 through September 2015 indicate an increase in employment of 81,700 for the state. The private sector added 71,900 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 9,800 jobs over the year.

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



Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September 2015 is 5.2 percent. The revised estimated August 2015 unemployment rate was at 5.3 percent. The September 2014

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)				
Area	(Prelim.) Sep-15	Aug-15	Sep-14	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.9%	5.2%	5.7%	-0.8%
Washington state	4.8%	5.0%	5.8%	-1.0%
Whatcom	5.4%	5.7%	6.3%	-0.9%
Skagit	6.0%	6.3%	6.8%	-0.8%
Island	5.5%	5.6%	6.6%	-1.1%
San Juan	3.8%	3.6%	4.6%	-0.8%

unemployment rate was 6.2 percent. BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. August's preliminary estimated gain of 1,600 jobs was revised to a gain of 5,200 jobs.

# Whatcom County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County decreased from 5.7 percent in August (revised) to 5.4 percent in September (preliminary). The unemployment rate in September 2014 was 6.3 percent.

- Compared to September 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,385 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 867, resulting in an overall increase in the total labor force. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated as 100,047 in September 2015.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County increased from 851 in August to 886. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,603 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in September; down from 1,669 in August.

## Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-15	Revised Aug-15	Revised Sep-14	Change		
				Aug-15 Sep-15	Sep-14 Sep-15	Sep-14 Sep-15
Total Nonfarm	87,600	85,500	84,100	2,100	3,500	4.2%
Total Private	71,400	70,800	68,500	600	2,900	4.2%
Goods Producing	16,200	15,900	15,400	300	800	5.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,000	6,900	6,200	100	800	12.9%
Manufacturing	9,200	9,000	9,200	200	0	0.0%
Service Providing	71,400	69,600	68,700	1,800	2,700	3.9%
Private Services Providing	55,200	54,900	53,100	300	2,100	4.0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	15,600	15,800	16,200	-200	-600	-3.7%
Retail Trade	10,800	11,100	11,000	-300	-200	-1.8%
Financial Activities	3,000	3,000	3,500	0	-500	-14.3%
Professional and Business Services	8,200	8,300	7,900	-100	300	3.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,400	10,600	9,700	-200	700	7.2%
Government	16,200	14,700	15,600	1,500	600	3.8%
Federal Government	1,300	1,300	1,400	0	-100	-7.1%
Total State Government	5,700	4,300	5,000	1,400	700	14.0%
Total Local Government	9,200	9,100	9,200	100	0	0.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 2,100 from August to September 2015. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 4.2 percent or 3,500.

- In September 2015, goods producing industries added a net 300 jobs and private sector service providers added a net 300 jobs. Government employment was up 1,500 over the month as public K-12 and post-secondary institutions geared up for the school year.
- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 3,500 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in construction (+800) and leisure and hospitality (+700). 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 dropped from 6.3 percent in August (revised) to 6.0 percent in September (preliminary). The unemployment rate last September was 6.8 percent.

- Compared to September 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 1,054 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 580. Skagit County’s labor force decreased by an estimated 1,634 workers over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 607 in August to 645. 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 September. This is down from 1,174 in August.

### Skagit County local area payroll jobs

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

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-15	Revised Aug-15	Revised Sep-14	Change		
				Aug-15 Sep-15	Sep-14 Sep-15	Sep-14 Sep-15
Total Nonfarm	48,200	48,100	47,600	100	600	1.3%
Total Private	37,500	37,600	37,100	-100	400	1.1%
Goods Producing	9,100	9,200	9,600	-100	-500	-5.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,600	3,600	3,500	0	100	2.9%
Manufacturing	5,500	5,600	6,100	-100	-600	-9.8%
Service Providing	39,100	38,900	38,000	200	1,100	2.9%
Private Services Providing	28,400	28,400	27,500	0	900	3.3%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	10,000	9,900	0	100	1.0%
Retail Trade	7,100	7,100	7,000	0	100	1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,100	5,200	5,000	-100	100	2.0%
Government	10,700	10,500	10,500	200	200	1.9%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,500	1,200	1,400	300	100	7.1%
Local Government	8,800	8,900	8,700	-100	100	1.1%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In September, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls increased by 100. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 600 or 1.3 percent.

- Month-to-month, industry-specific gains were attributable to hiring in state government; losses were observed in manufacturing and leisure and hospitality.
- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 600 or 1.3 percent. All major industries detailed in this report posted gains with the exception of manufacturing, which dropped by 600.

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County declined from 5.6 percent in August (revised) to 5.5 percent in September (preliminary). The unemployment rate in September 2014 was 6.6 percent.

- Compared to September 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 482 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 402. Island County’s civilian labor force decreased by 884 resident civilians over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County increased from 169 in August to 200. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 336 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is down from 355 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 March 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-15	Revised Aug-15	Revised Sep-14	Change		
				Aug-15 Sep-15	Sep-14 Sep-15	Sep-14 Sep-15
Total Nonfarm	15,810	15,760	15,610	50	200	1.3%
Total Private	11,370	11,420	11,270	-50	100	0.9%
Goods Producing	1,710	1,710	1,450	0	260	17.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	980	980	780	0	200	25.6%
Manufacturing	730	730	670	0	60	9.0%
Service Providing	14,100	14,050	14,160	50	-60	-0.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,490	2,510	2,530	-20	-40	-1.6%
Retail Trade	2,080	2,100	2,110	-20	-30	-1.4%
Information and Financial Activities	740	740	750	0	-10	-1.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,160	1,160	1,220	0	-60	-4.9%
Education and Health Services	2,240	2,180	2,230	60	10	0.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,250	2,330	2,380	-80	-130	-5.5%
Government	4,440	4,340	4,340	100	100	2.3%
Federal Government	1,330	1,330	1,370	0	-40	-2.9%
State and Local Government	3,110	3,010	2,970	100	140	4.7%
State and Local Government Education	1,300	1,190	1,200	110	100	8.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 50 in September. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 1.3 percent or 200.

- From August to September, gains were observed in government and education and health services. The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality.
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 200. The largest gains were observed in construction (+200) and government (+100). The deepest losses came from leisure and hospitality (-130).

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 3.6 percent (revised) in August to 3.8 percent (preliminary) in September. The unemployment rate observed in September 2014 was 4.6 percent.

- Compared to September 2014, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 112 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 67. All together, the San Juan County labor force decreased by 179 over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County decreased from 30 in August to 18. 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 September. This is up from 33 in August.

### San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

#### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through March 2015

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-15	Revised Aug-15	Revised Sep-14	Change		
				Aug-15 Sep-15	Sep-14 Sep-15	Sep-14 Sep-15
Total Nonfarm	6,000	6,310	5,900	-310	100	1.7%
Total Private	5,210	5,540	5,070	-330	140	2.8%
Goods Producing	830	850	830	-20	0	0.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	650	660	620	-10	30	4.8%
Manufacturing	180	190	210	-10	-30	-14.3%
Service Providing	5,170	5,460	5,070	-290	100	2.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,090	1,160	990	-70	100	10.1%
Information and Financial Activities	350	350	340	0	10	2.9%
Professional and Business Services	310	330	370	-20	-60	-16.2%
Education and Health Services	620	600	600	20	20	3.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,840	2,060	1,720	-220	120	7.0%
Government	790	770	830	20	-40	-4.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County contracted by 310 in September. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 100 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. This year, the peak appears to have occurred in July. Most industries shed jobs from August to September, with the deepest losses in leisure and hospitality (-220). Gains were observed in government and education and health services (20 each).
- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively added 100 jobs. The largest employment gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+120) and the deepest losses were observed in professional and business services (-60).