

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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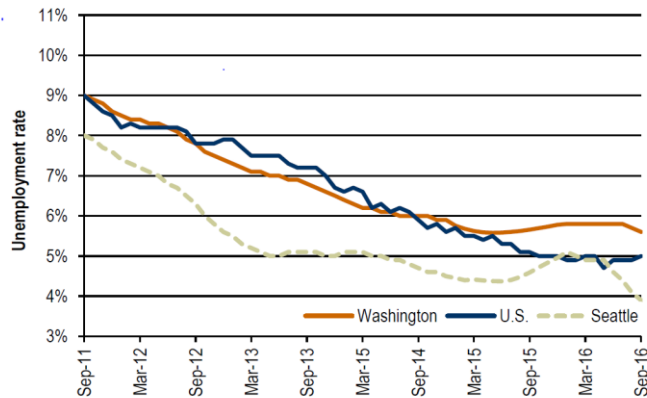
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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 20,000 from August 2016 to September 2016. BLS estimates the private sector gained 14,300 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 5,700 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for September 2015 through September 2016 indicate an increase in employment of 92,600 for the state. The private sector added 81,800 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 10,800 jobs over the year.

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

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



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Sep-16	Aug-16	Sep-15	Year-to- Year Change
USA	4.8%	5.0%	4.9%	-0.1%
Washington state	5.1%	5.4%	5.2%	-0.1%
Whatcom	5.9%	6.3%	5.6%	0.3%
Skagit	6.3%	6.7%	6.0%	0.3%
Island	6.0%	6.0%	5.5%	0.5%
San Juan	4.1%	3.9%	3.9%	0.2%

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 2,600 jobs was revised to a loss of 600 jobs.

# Whatcom County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.9 percent in September 2016 (preliminary), down from 6.3 percent in August (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate in September 2015 was 5.6 percent.

- Compared to September 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,865 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 446, resulting in a 2.3 percent increase in the size of the labor force and an increase in the unemployment rate. Whatcom County’s labor force was about 102,835 in September 2016.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 738 in August to 681. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 1,346 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in September; down from 1,411 in August.

## Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-16	Revised Aug-16	Revised Sep-15	Change		
				Aug-16 Sep-16	Sep-15 Sep-16	Sep-15 Sep-16
Total Nonfarm	89,500	87,700	86,400	1,800	3,100	3.6%
Total Private	73,200	73,300	69,500	-100	3,700	5.3%
Goods Producing	17,200	17,100	15,700	100	1,500	9.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	6,900	6,800	6,200	100	700	11.3%
Manufacturing	10,300	10,300	9,500	0	800	8.4%
Service Providing	72,300	70,600	70,700	1,700	1,600	2.3%
Private Services Providing	56,000	56,200	53,800	-200	2,200	4.1%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,400	17,600	16,100	-200	1,300	8.1%
Retail Trade	11,900	12,000	11,100	-100	800	7.2%
Financial Activities	3,200	3,200	3,400	0	-200	-5.9%
Professional and Business Services	8,300	8,300	8,000	0	300	3.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,700	10,900	9,900	-200	800	8.1%
Government	16,300	14,400	16,900	1,900	-600	-3.6%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	5,600	4,100	6,200	1,500	-600	-9.7%
Total Local Government	9,300	8,900	9,300	400	0	0.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Whatcom County expanded by 1,800 from August to September 2016. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs is up 3.6 percent or 3,100.

- In September 2016, goods producing industries created 100 jobs and private sector service providers shed 200. Government employment expanded by 1,900 over the month; increases were mostly anticipated as the academic calendar resumed. The only private sector increases addressed in this report were attributed to hiring in construction. Trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (including retail) and leisure and hospitality shed jobs in September.
- Altogether, Whatcom County employers added 3,100 jobs over the past 12 months. The largest private sector gains were attributed to hiring in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+1,300) including retail (+800). Manufacturing and leisure and hospitality each added 800. Year over year, government employment dropped by 600.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 6.3 percent in September 2016 (preliminary), down from 6.7 percent in August (revised). The unemployment rate last September was 6.0 percent.

- Compared to September 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,716 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 253. Skagit County’s labor force increased by an estimated 1,969 or 3.5 percent over the year, resulting in an increased unemployment rate.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County decreased from 700 in August to 529. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related occupations. Altogether, 982 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is down from 1,008 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 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-16	Revised Aug-16	Revised Sep-15	Change		
				Aug-16 Sep-16	Sep-15 Sep-16	Sep-15 Sep-16
Total Nonfarm	49,900	50,200	48,500	-300	1,400	2.9%
Total Private	38,200	38,500	37,600	-300	600	1.6%
Goods Producing	9,600	9,700	9,600	-100	0	0.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	3,600	3,600	3,700	0	-100	-2.7%
Manufacturing	6,000	6,100	5,900	-100	100	1.7%
Service Providing	40,300	40,500	38,900	-200	1,400	3.6%
Private Services Providing	28,600	28,800	28,000	-200	600	2.1%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,700	9,800	10,100	-100	-400	-4.0%
Retail Trade	7,000	7,100	7,100	-100	-100	-1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,100	5,300	5,100	-200	0	0.0%
Government	11,700	11,700	10,900	0	800	7.3%
Federal Government	500	500	400	0	100	25.0%
State Government	1,400	1,300	1,500	100	-100	-6.7%
Local Government	9,800	9,900	9,000	-100	800	8.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

In September, Skagit County nonfarm payrolls dropped by 300. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,400 or 2.9 percent.

- Most industries shed jobs in September. The deepest losses over the month were observed in leisure and hospitality (-200).
- Over the year, total nonfarm employment expanded by 1,400 or 2.9 percent. Employment gains were observed in most industries, with the largest gains attributable to hiring in government (+800) and manufacturing (+100). Year over year losses were observed in construction and trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (including retail trade).

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County remained at 6.0 percent in August (revised) and September (preliminary). The unemployment rate in September 2015 was 5.5 percent.

- Compared to September 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 481 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 188. Island County’s civilian labor force increased by 669 resident civilians or 2.1 percent over the year, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County decreased from 188 in August to 166. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in construction-related

occupations. Altogether, 322 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is up from 305 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 2016

NAICS Industry Title2	Prelim Sep-16	Revised Aug-16	Revised Sep-15	Change		
				Aug-16 Sep-16	Sep-15 Sep-16	Sep-15 Sep-16
Total Nonfarm 3	15,960	15,930	15,680	30	280	1.8%
Total Private	11,500	11,530	11,250	-30	250	2.2%
Goods Producing	1,760	1,760	1,590	0	170	10.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	960	960	830	0	130	15.7%
Manufacturing	800	800	760	0	40	5.3%
Service Providing	14,200	14,170	14,090	30	110	0.8%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,600	2,620	2,620	-20	-20	-0.8%
Retail Trade	2,140	2,160	2,170	-20	-30	-1.4%
Information and Financial Activities	740	740	660	0	80	12.1%
Professional and Business Services	1,250	1,250	1,130	0	120	10.6%
Education and Health Services	2,120	2,050	2,150	70	-30	-1.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,320	2,390	2,360	-70	-40	-1.7%
Government	4,460	4,400	4,430	60	30	0.7%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,330	0	70	5.3%
State and Local Government	3,060	3,000	3,100	60	-40	-1.3%
State and Local Government Education	1,280	1,200	1,270	80	10	0.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County increased by 30 in September. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 1.8 percent or 280.

- From August to September, the largest gains were observed in education and health services (+70) and government (+60). The deepest losses were from leisure and hospitality.
- Year-over-year, Island County employment expanded by 280. The largest gains were attributable to hiring in construction (+130) and professional and business services (+120); the deepest losses came from retail trade (-30).

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County rose from 3.9 percent in August (revised) to 4.1 percent in September (preliminary). The unemployment rate observed in September 2015 was 3.9 percent.

- Compared to September 2015, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 144 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 27. All together, the San Juan County labor force increased by 171 over the year, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County increased from 13 in August to 20. The largest number of new claims was filed by persons in food preparation and serving related occupations. Altogether, 29 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in September. This is down from 31 in August.

## San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through March 2016

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Sep-16	Revised Aug-16	Revised Sep-15	Change		
				Aug-16 Sep-16	Sep-15 Sep-16	Sep-15 Sep-16
Total Nonfarm	6,100	6,560	5,980	-460	120	2.0%
Total Private	5,250	5,760	5,170	-510	80	1.5%
Goods Producing	910	940	830	-30	80	9.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	690	700	620	-10	70	11.3%
Manufacturing	220	240	210	-20	10	4.8%
Service Providing	5,190	5,620	5,150	-430	40	0.8%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	900	960	1,010	-60	-110	-10.9%
Information and Financial Activities	290	290	360	0	-70	-19.4%
Professional and Business Services	400	420	390	-20	10	2.6%
Education and Health Services	580	580	580	0	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,990	2,380	1,820	-390	170	9.3%
Government	850	800	810	50	40	4.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Nonfarm payroll jobs in San Juan County contracted by 460 in September. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 120 jobs or 2.0 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 September was government. Leisure and hospitality logged the deepest losses (-390).
- Over the year, employers in San Juan County collectively added 120 jobs. The largest gains were observed in leisure and hospitality (+170). The deepest losses were observed in trade transportation and utilities – a collection of industries that includes retail and wholesale trade in addition to transportation warehousing and utilities (-110).