

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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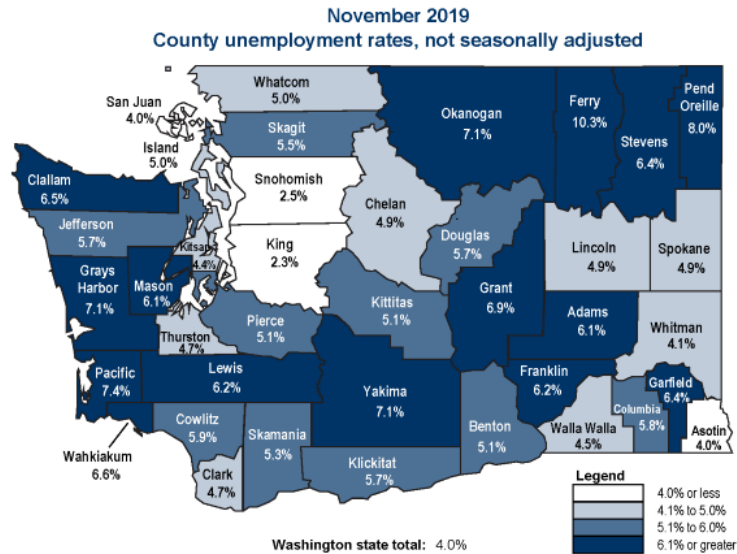
On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 12,200 in November 2019.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 11,000 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 1,200 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for November 2018 through November 2019 indicate an increase in employment of 66,600 for the state. The private sector added 59,100 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 7,500 jobs over the year.

Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for November 2019 is 4.4 percent. The revised estimated October 2019 unemployment rate is at 4.5 percent. The November 2018 unemployment rate was 4.5 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Nov-19	Oct-19	Nov-18	Year-to- Year Change
USA	3.3%	3.3%	3.5%	-0.2%
Washington state	4.0%	4.0%	4.4%	-0.4%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	5.1%	5.0%	4.7%	0.4%
Whatcom County	5.0%	4.9%	4.6%	0.4%
Skagit County	5.5%	5.2%	5.0%	0.5%
Island County	5.0%	5.1%	5.0%	0.0%
San Juan County	4.0%	3.8%	4.0%	0.0%



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 loss of 1,600 jobs was revised to a loss of 800 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.0 percent in November 2019 (preliminary), up slightly from 4.9 percent reported in October (revised). The unemployment rate in November 2018 was 4.6 percent.

- Compared to 12 months ago, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,490 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 659, nudging the unemployment rate up over the year. The labor force increased by 3.6 percent. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated at 118,627 in November 2019.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Whatcom County decreased from 841 in October to 836. Altogether, 1,592 Whatcom County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November; up from 1,511 in October.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)

Data benchmarked through June 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-19	Revised Oct-19	Revised Nov-18	Change		
				Oct-19 Nov-19	Nov-18 Nov-19	Nov-18 Nov-19
Total Nonfarm	96,900	97,400	96,300	-500	600	0.6%
Total Private	77,300	77,800	77,400	-500	-100	-0.1%
Goods Producing	18,400	18,800	18,800	-400	-400	-2.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,700	8,000	8,200	-300	-500	-6.1%
Manufacturing	10,700	10,800	10,600	-100	100	0.9%
Service Providing	78,500	78,600	77,500	-100	1,000	1.3%
Private Services Providing	58,900	59,000	58,600	-100	300	0.5%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,800	16,400	17,100	400	-300	-1.8%
Retail Trade	11,600	11,300	11,600	300	0	0.0%
Financial Activities	3,900	3,900	3,700	0	200	5.4%
Professional and Business Services	8,700	8,700	8,300	0	400	4.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,700	10,700	10,700	0	0	0.0%
Government	19,600	19,600	18,900	0	700	3.7%
Federal Government	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	7,200	7,500	7,000	-300	200	2.9%
Total Local Government	10,900	10,600	10,400	300	500	4.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by 500 from October to November 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs was up 600 or 0.6 percent.

- In November, aggregate private sector employment declined; the only industry adding jobs was trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+400); a majority of job creation in this

sector was attributable to seasonal hiring by the retail industry. The deepest one-month losses were observed in construction (-300).

- Over the year, the largest increases detailed in this report were observed in government (+700) and professional and business services (+400); the deepest losses came from construction (-500).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.5 percent in November 2019 (preliminary), up from 5.2 percent in October (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.0 percent.

- Compared to November 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,056 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ increased by 441. Skagit County’s labor force was estimated at 63,905, increasing by 4.1 percent over the year.
- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in Skagit County increased from 562 in October to 623 in November. Altogether, 1,090 Skagit County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November; up from 973 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 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-19	Revised Oct-19	Revised Nov-18	Change		
				Oct-19 Nov-19	Nov-18 Nov-19	Nov-18 Nov-19
Total Nonfarm	52,100	52,000	52,000	100	100	0.2%
Total Private	40,300	40,400	40,100	-100	200	0.5%
Goods Producing	10,800	10,900	11,000	-100	-200	-1.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	5,000	5,100	4,800	-100	200	4.2%
Manufacturing	5,800	5,800	6,200	0	-400	-6.5%
Service Providing	41,300	41,100	41,000	200	300	0.7%
Private Services Providing	29,500	29,500	29,100	0	400	1.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,200	9,800	10,200	400	0	0.0%
Retail Trade	7,400	7,200	7,400	200	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,300	5,400	5,000	-100	300	6.0%
Government	11,800	11,600	11,900	200	-100	-0.8%
Federal Government	300	300	400	0	-100	-25.0%
State Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Local Government	10,100	9,900	10,100	200	0	0.0%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County increased by 100 from October to November 2019. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 100 or 0.2 percent.

- Over the month, private industry shed an estimated 100 jobs in aggregate. The largest gains were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+400); within this, retail trade accounted for half of the new jobs. Construction and leisure and hospitality each shed jobs.
- Over the year, two major industries detailed in this report added jobs: construction and leisure and hospitality each expanded employment. The deepest one-year losses were observed in manufacturing (-400).

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.0 percent (preliminary) in November 2019. This is down from 5.1 percent observed in October (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.0 percent.

- Compared to November 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,197 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 44. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 36,952, an increase of 3.5 percent over the year.
- There were 197 initial claims for unemployment benefits in Island County in November, down from 202 in October. Altogether, 365 Island County residents collected unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is down from 366 in October.

Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)

Data benchmarked through June 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-19	Revised Oct-19	Revised Nov-18	Change		
				Oct-19 Nov-19	Nov-18 Nov-19	Nov-18 Nov-19
Total Nonfarm	17,200	17,050	16,960	150	240	1.4%
Total Private	12,430	12,350	12,240	80	190	1.6%
Goods Producing	2,010	1,970	1,860	40	150	8.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,200	1,170	1,080	30	120	11.1%
Manufacturing	810	800	780	10	30	3.8%
Service Providing	15,190	15,080	15,100	110	90	0.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,760	2,730	2,720	30	40	1.5%
Retail Trade	2,140	2,110	2,140	30	0	0.0%
Information and Financial Activities	790	790	790	0	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	1,330	1,330	1,220	0	110	9.0%
Education and Health Services	2,420	2,410	2,400	10	20	0.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,250	2,270	2,400	-20	-150	-6.3%
Government	4,770	4,700	4,720	70	50	1.1%
Federal Government	1,320	1,300	1,320	20	0	0.0%
State and Local Government	3,450	3,400	3,400	50	50	1.5%
State and Local Government Education	1,600	1,570	1,580	30	20	1.3%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 150 from October to November 2019 on a not seasonally adjusted basis. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 240.

- From October to November, most major industries detailed in this report expanded and one contracted. The largest increases were attributable to hiring by government (+70). The only industry reporting losses was leisure and hospitality.
- Year-over-year, six major industries added jobs and one shed jobs. The largest gains were attributable to hiring by employers in construction; leisure and hospitality was down 150 over the year.

Note that employment statistics for Island County do not include military employment.

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County increased from 3.8 percent in October (revised) to 4.0 percent in November (preliminary). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.0 percent.

- Compared to November 2018, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 247 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 8.

Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,258 resident workers and expanded by 3.2 percent over the year.

- Initial claims for unemployment benefits in San Juan County totaled 36 in November, down from 39 initial claims filed in October. Altogether, 61 San Juan County residents received unemployment insurance benefits in November. This is up from 49 in October.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-19	Revised Oct-19	Revised Nov-18	Change		
				Oct-19 Nov-19	Nov-18 Nov-19	Nov-18 Nov-19
Total Nonfarm	5,380	5,520	5,490	-140	-110	-2.0%
Total Private	4,620	4,750	4,710	-130	-90	-1.9%
Goods Producing	980	960	930	20	50	5.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	770	750	710	20	60	8.5%
Manufacturing	210	210	220	0	-10	-4.5%
Service Providing	4,400	4,560	4,560	-160	-160	-3.5%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,010	990	990	20	20	2.0%
Information and Financial Activities	390	380	360	10	30	8.3%
Professional and Business Services	370	360	370	10	0	0.0%
Education and Health Services	630	630	630	0	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,050	1,240	1,250	-190	-200	-16.0%
Government	760	770	780	-10	-20	-2.6%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County decreased by 140 from October to November on a not seasonally adjusted basis. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 110 or 2.0 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, the largest increases were observed in construction and trade, transportation and utilities (+20 each). The deepest one-month losses were observed in the county's largest sector; leisure and hospitality (-190).
- Over the year, there was a net loss of employment, with a mix of gains and losses by industry. The largest one-year gains were observed in construction (+60) and the deepest losses were attributable to leisure and hospitality (-200)

Forecast information for Washington state:

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. The most recent forecast was issued in November and updated in December. Forecast information is available at www.erfc.wa.gov.

The Employment Security Department is an equal-opportunity employer and provider of programs and services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to people with disabilities. Washington Relay Service 711.