

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2020, Number 7

July 2020

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

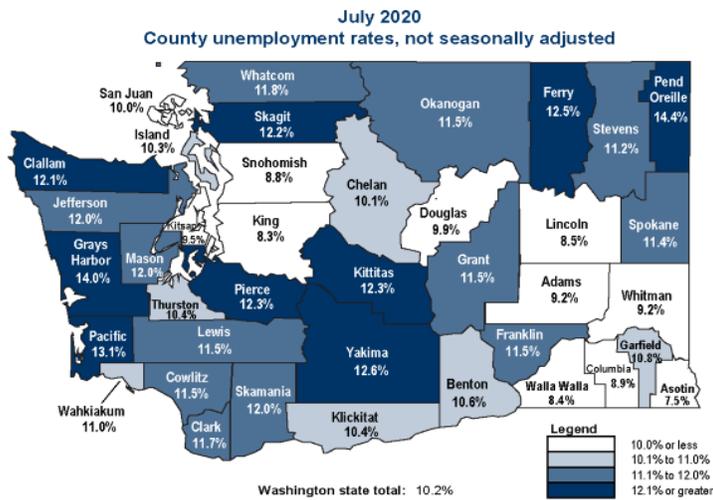
Phone: (425)258-6315 avancesherman@esd.wa.gov

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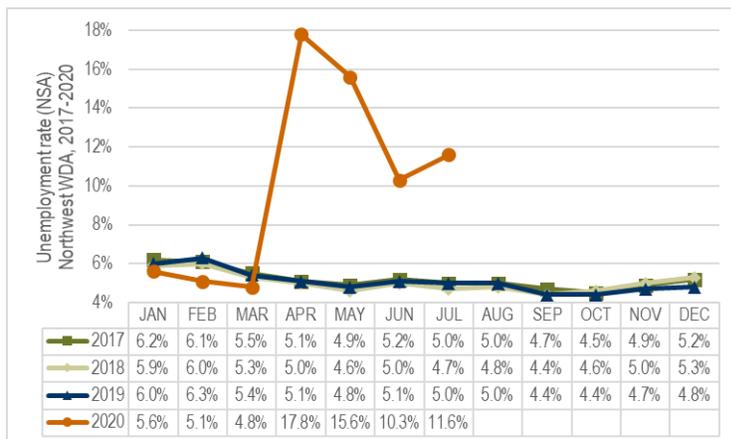
For all intents and purposes, this is the fourth report to record the effects of the Covid-19 economic situation in Northwest Washington.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 44,500 in July 2020.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 37,000 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 7,500 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for July 2019 through July 2020 indicate a decrease in employment of 245,000 for the state. The private sector lost 212,600 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 32,400 jobs over the year.



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for July 2020 is 10.3 percent. The



revised estimated June 2020 unemployment rate is at 10.0 percent. The July 2019 unemployment rate was 4.2 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. June’s preliminary estimated gain of 71,000 jobs was revised to a gain of 140,600 jobs

The unemployment rate for the Northwest Workforce Development Area jumped to 17.8 percent in April. In July, the four-county area had an unemployment rate of 11.6 percent.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 11.8 percent in July 2020 (preliminary), up from 10.3 percent reported in June (revised). The unemployment rate in July 2019 was 5.0 percent.

- Compared to 12 months ago, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 2,962 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 8,542. The labor force as a whole expanded by 4.8 percent. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated at 121,221 in July 2020.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)
 Data benchmarked through March 2020

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jul-20	Revised Jun-20	Revised Jul-19	Change		
				Jun-20 Jul-20	Jul-19 Jul-20	Jul-19 Jul-20
Total Nonfarm	90,600	90,800	95,000	-200	-4,400	-4.6%
Total Private	76,100	74,600	78,200	1,500	-2,100	-2.7%
Goods Producing	17,700	17,800	18,900	-100	-1,200	-6.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,300	7,300	8,000	0	-700	-8.8%
Manufacturing	10,400	10,500	10,900	-100	-500	-4.6%
Service Providing	72,900	73,000	76,100	-100	-3,200	-4.2%
Private Services Providing	58,400	56,800	59,300	1,600	-900	-1.5%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,300	17,500	16,700	-200	600	3.6%
Retail Trade	13,500	12,900	11,100	600	2,400	21.6%
Financial Activities	4,100	4,000	4,000	100	100	2.5%
Professional and Business Services	8,400	8,200	8,700	200	-300	-3.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	8,100	7,300	11,000	800	-2,900	-26.4%
Government	14,500	16,200	16,800	-1,700	-2,300	-13.7%
Federal Government	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	3,600	5,300	4,800	-1,700	-1,200	-25.0%
Total Local Government	9,400	9,400	10,500	0	-1,100	-10.5%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by 200 from June to July 2020. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs decreased by 4,400 (4.6 percent).

- In July, net employment contracted, with a mix of industries reporting increases and decreases. The largest increases were observed in leisure and hospitality (up 800). Government reported the largest one-month decrease (down 1,700).
- Most major industries detailed in this report shed jobs over the year. The largest decreases came from leisure and hospitality (down 2,900). Retail trade was up 2,400 jobs over the year.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 12.2 percent in July 2020 (preliminary); this is up from 11.1 percent in June (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.2 percent.

- Compared to July 2019, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ dropped by 2,468 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ expanded by 4,713. Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 65,887 increasing by 3.5 percent over the year.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)

Data benchmarked through March 2020

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jul-20	Revised Jun-20	Revised Jul-19	Change		
				Jun-20 Jul-20	Jul-19 Jul-20	Jul-19 Jul-20
Total Nonfarm	48,600	48,000	52,900	600	-4,300	-8.1%
Total Private	37,500	37,000	41,000	500	-3,500	-8.5%
Goods Producing	10,000	10,000	11,000	0	-1,000	-9.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,100	4,100	4,900	0	-800	-16.3%
Manufacturing	5,900	5,900	6,100	0	-200	-3.3%
Service Providing	38,600	38,000	41,900	600	-3,300	-7.9%
Private Services Providing	27,500	27,000	30,000	500	-2,500	-8.3%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,300	10,100	10,000	200	300	3.0%
Retail Trade	8,000	7,800	7,200	200	800	11.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	3,700	3,400	5,700	300	-2,000	-35.1%
Government	11,100	11,000	11,900	100	-800	-6.7%
Federal Government	400	400	500	0	-100	-20.0%
State Government	1,100	1,300	1,200	-200	-100	-8.3%
Local Government	9,600	9,300	10,200	300	-600	-5.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County increased by 600 from June to July 2020. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs contracted by 4,300 or 8.1 percent.

- Over the month, all major industries in this report added jobs or remained unchanged. Leisure and hospitality added the most jobs over the month (up 300).
- Covid-19 related losses reverberated throughout the economy, showing up in the year over year estimates for all industries. The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (down 2,000). Retail trade, a subset of trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities was up over the year.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 10.3 percent (preliminary) in July 2020. This is up from 9.0 (revised) reported in June. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.1 percent.

- Compared to July 2019, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 942 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work expanded by 2,004. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 37,284 in July 2020.

Island County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through March 2020

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jul-20	Revised Jun-20	Revised Jul-19	Change		
				Jun-20 Jul-20	Jul-19 Jul-20	Jul-19 Jul-20
Total Nonfarm	16,380	15,690	17,630	690	-1,250	-7.1%
Total Private	11,870	11,140	12,960	730	-1,090	-8.4%
Goods Producing	1,440	1,410	1,990	30	-550	-27.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	580	580	1,200	0	-620	-51.7%
Manufacturing	860	830	790	30	70	8.9%
Service Providing	14,940	14,280	15,640	660	-700	-4.5%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,540	2,560	2,780	-20	-240	-8.6%
Retail Trade	2,040	2,010	2,140	30	-100	-4.7%
Information and Financial Activities	810	810	850	0	-40	-4.7%
Professional and Business Services	1,380	1,340	1,310	40	70	5.3%
Education and Health Services	2,380	2,430	2,420	-50	-40	-1.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,420	1,690	2,740	730	-320	-11.7%
Government	4,510	4,550	4,670	-40	-160	-3.4%
Federal Government	1,270	1,290	1,320	-20	-50	-3.8%
State and Local Government	3,240	3,260	3,350	-20	-110	-3.3%
State and Local Government Education	1,280	1,370	1,480	-90	-200	-13.5%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 690 from June to July 2020. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs plunged by 1,250 or 7.1 percent.

- From June to July, there was a mix of expanding and contracting employment. The largest increases were attributable to leisure and hospitality (up 730). Education and health services recorded the deepest one-month losses (down 50).
- Year-over-year, the deepest losses were observed in construction (down 620) and leisure and hospitality (down 320). Professional and business services and manufacturing are the only two industries that expanded employment over the year (up 70 each).

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 remained unchanged at 10.0 percent over the month. For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 3.1 percent.

- Compared to July 2019, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 2,468 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 483. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,855 resident workers and contracted by 20.2 percent over the year.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through March 2020

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jul-20	Revised Jun-20	Revised Jul-19	Change		
				Jun-20 Jul-20	Jul-19 Jul-20	Jul-19 Jul-20
Total Nonfarm	4,680	4,580	7,080	100	-2,400	-33.9%
Total Private	3,920	3,800	6,220	120	-2,300	-37.0%
Goods Producing	890	900	1,060	-10	-170	-16.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	700	710	760	-10	-60	-7.9%
Manufacturing	190	190	300	0	-110	-36.7%
Service Providing	3,790	3,680	6,020	110	-2,230	-37.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,010	930	1,250	80	-240	-19.2%
Information and Financial Activities	320	310	420	10	-100	-23.8%
Professional and Business Services	420	410	470	10	-50	-10.6%
Education and Health Services	480	510	610	-30	-130	-21.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	620	550	2,210	70	-1,590	-71.9%
Government	760	780	860	-20	-100	-11.6%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County expanded over the month (up 100), but not the usual summer employment gains San Juan businesses are accustomed to. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 2,450 or 33.9 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. There was little movement over the month, but there were some gains in July. Trade transportation and utilities added 80 jobs and leisure and hospitality employment expanded by 70. Given the timing of Covid-19, the tourism-reliant San Juan Islands have essentially lost their summer-oriented economy.
- Over the year, there was a net employment loss, with all industries reporting 12-month losses. The largest one-year losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (down 1,590 or 71.9 percent).

Weekly Unemployment Insurance Claims information:

In March, the Employment Security Department began publishing weekly counts of initial claims for Unemployment Insurance. Initial claims provide an indicator of layoffs. Because they are entered weekly, they are a bit more nimble than our survey-based datasets.

Northwest weekly initial claims from March 1 to August 15, 2020:

Claim week	Whatcom	Skagit	Island	San Juan
Week 9 (March 1-7)	198	127	63	8
Week 10 (March 8-14)	238	163	66	17
Week 11 (March 15-21)	4,428	1,966	949	279
Week 12 (March 22-28)	6,268	3,425	1,520	465
Week 13 (March 29-April 4)	5,885	3,230	1,584	443
Week 14 (April 5-11)	3,968	2,731	1,577	271
Week 15 (April 12-18)	2,612	1,445	713	191
Week 16 (April 19-25)	4,343	2,164	1,297	503
Week 17 (April 26-May 2)	3,170	1,609	882	336
Week 18 (May 3-9)	2,914	1,529	755	195
Week 19 (May 10-16)	3,768	1,902	1,037	233
Week 20 (May 17-23)	1,418	753	386	104
Week 21 (May 24-30)	959	590	238	64
Week 22 (May 31-June 6)	801	487	215	47
Week 23 (June 7-13)*	955	468	192	37
Week 24 (June 14-20)	952	502	208	43
Week 25 (June 21-27)	1,091	573	201	39
Week 26 (June 28-July 4)	982	449	188	43
Week 27 (July 5-11)	1,361	616	304	75
Week 28 (July 12-18)*	870	460	201	59
Week 29 (July 19-25)	891	443	204	58
Week 30 (July 26-August 1)	702	431	191	46
Week 31 (August 2-8)	550	336	180	36
Week 32 (August 9-15)	579	320	159	35

*Labor force and payroll reporting reflects employment during week 28 (July 12-18)

Weekly initial claims information is updated every Thursday, and is published at www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo

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 June and updated in July. 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.