

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

Volume 2020, Number 10

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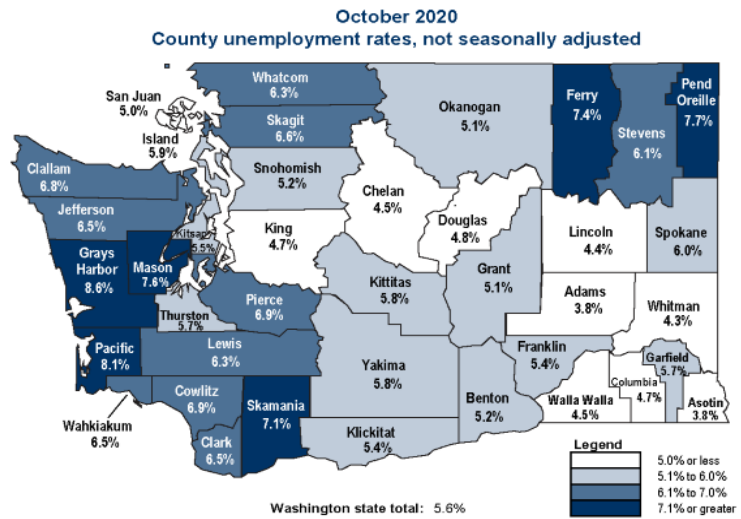
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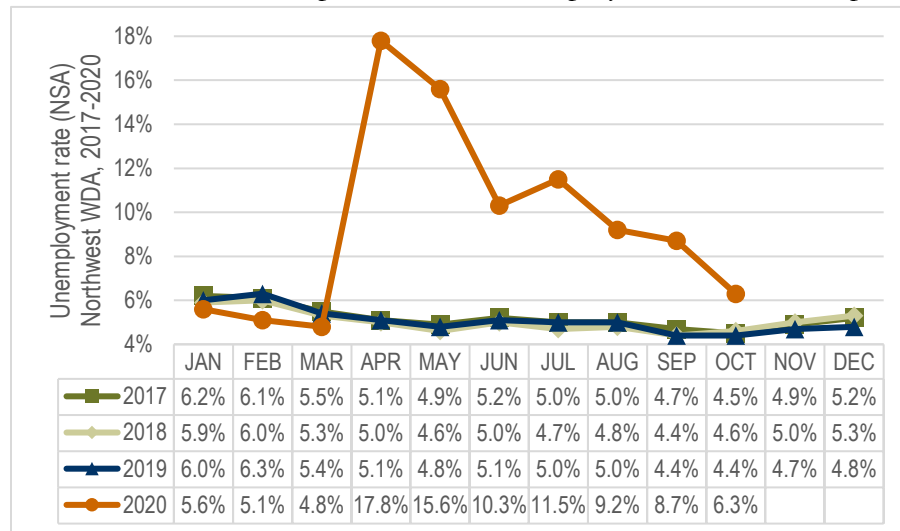
For all intents and purposes, this is the seventh report to record the effects of the Covid-19 economic situation in Northwest Washington.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 1,000 in October 2020.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 14,100 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 13,100 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for October 2019 through October 2020 indicate a decrease in employment of 173,200 for the state. The private sector lost 132,000 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 41,200 jobs over the year.



Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for October 2020 is 6.0 percent. The revised estimated September 2020 unemployment rate is at 8.3 percent. The October 2019 unemployment rate was 4.0 percent.



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 2,400 jobs was revised to a gain of 23,800 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 6.3 percent in October 2020 (preliminary), down from 8.8 percent reported in September (revised). The unemployment rate in October 2019 was 4.3 percent.

- Compared to 12 months ago, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 6,545 (5.9 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 2,881 (57.3 percent). The labor force as a whole expanded by 8.1 percent. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated at 125,783 in October 2020.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Oct-20	Revised Sep-20	Revised Oct-19	Change		
				Sep- 20 Oct-20	Oct-19 Oct-20	Oct-19 Oct-20
Total Nonfarm	90,400	88,900	96,300	1,500	-5,900	-6.1%
Total Private	74,100	73,000	77,200	1,100	-3,100	-4.0%
Goods Producing	17,400	17,100	18,600	300	-1,200	-6.5%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,700	7,500	8,000	200	-300	-3.8%
Manufacturing	9,700	9,600	10,600	100	-900	-8.5%
Service Providing	73,000	71,800	77,700	1,200	-4,700	-6.0%
Private Services Providing	56,700	55,900	58,600	800	-1,900	-3.2%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	15,700	15,600	16,600	100	-900	-5.4%
Retail Trade	11,000	11,200	11,200	-200	-200	-1.8%
Financial Activities	4,200	4,200	3,800	0	400	10.5%
Professional and Business Services	8,200	8,200	8,500	0	-300	-3.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	9,100	9,100	10,700	0	-1,600	-15.0%
Government	16,300	15,900	19,100	400	-2,800	-14.7%
Federal Government	1,500	1,700	1,500	-200	0	0.0%
Total State Government	5,500	4,900	7,100	600	-1,600	-22.5%
Total Local Government	9,300	9,300	10,500	0	-1,200	-11.4%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 1,500 from September to October 2020. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs decreased by 5,900 (6.1 percent).

- In October, net employment expanded, with a mix of increases and decreases by industry, with one-month gains observed among goods producing and service providing industries. Government posted the highest increases, with gains concentrated in state government, and

likely related to the academic year at local colleges and the university. Employment in retail trade dipped by 200.

- Most major industries detailed in this report shed jobs over the year. The largest decreases came from government (down 2,800) and leisure and hospitality (down 1,600). Employment in financial activities was up 400 over the year.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 6.6 percent in October 2020 (preliminary); this is down from 9.0 percent in September (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.6 percent.

- Compared to October 2019, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 103 (0.2 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ expanded by 1,357 (46.2 percent). Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 65,261 increasing by 2.3 percent.

Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)

Data benchmarked through June 2020

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Oct-20	Revised Sep-20	Revised Oct-19	Change		
				Sep-20 Oct-20	Oct-19 Oct-20	Oct-19 Oct-20
Total Nonfarm	48,200	48,600	52,200	-400	-4,000	-7.7%
Total Private	37,600	37,800	40,300	-200	-2,700	-6.7%
Goods Producing	10,200	10,300	11,000	-100	-800	-7.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,200	4,200	5,000	0	-800	-16.0%
Manufacturing	6,000	6,100	6,000	-100	0	0.0%
Service Providing	38,000	38,300	41,200	-300	-3,200	-7.8%
Private Services Providing	27,400	27,500	29,300	-100	-1,900	-6.5%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,800	9,700	10,000	100	-200	-2.0%
Retail Trade	6,900	6,900	7,200	0	-300	-4.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,400	4,500	5,200	-100	-800	-15.4%
Government	10,600	10,800	11,900	-200	-1,300	-10.9%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,300	1,400	1,400	-100	-100	-7.1%
Local Government	8,900	9,000	10,100	-100	-1,200	-11.9%

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County decreased by 400 from September to October 2020. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs contracted by 4,000 or 7.7 percent.

- Over the month, losses were observed in government, leisure and hospitality and manufacturing. Trade transportation warehousing and utilities was the only industry reporting one-month employment gains.
- Covid-19 related losses reverberated throughout the economy, showing up in the year over year estimates for most industries. The deepest losses were observed in government, construction, and leisure and hospitality. No Skagit County industries detailed in this report experienced employment gains over the year.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.9 percent (preliminary) in October 2020, down from 8.0 (revised) reported in September. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.3 percent.

- Compared to October 2019, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 478 (1.4 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work expanded by 672 (42.2 percent). Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 38,101 in October 2020.

Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)

Data benchmarked through June 2020

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Oct-20	Revised Sep-20	Revised Oct-19	Change		
				Sep-20 Oct-20	Oct-19 Oct-20	Oct-19 Oct-20
Total Nonfarm	16,880	16,940	17,330	-60	-450	-2.6%
Total Private	12,450	12,420	12,590	30	-140	-1.1%
Goods Producing	2,080	2,160	1,970	-80	110	5.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,230	1,340	1,180	-110	50	4.2%
Manufacturing	850	820	790	30	60	7.6%
Service Providing	14,800	14,780	15,360	20	-560	-3.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,540	2,530	2,680	10	-140	-5.2%
Retail Trade	2,050	2,030	2,060	20	-10	-0.5%
Information and Financial Activities	800	800	820	0	-20	-2.4%
Professional and Business Services	1,530	1,440	1,310	90	220	16.8%
Education and Health Services	2,180	2,220	2,420	-40	-240	-9.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,470	2,450	2,490	20	-20	-0.8%
Government	4,430	4,520	4,740	-90	-310	-6.5%
Federal Government	1,350	1,420	1,310	-70	40	3.1%
State and Local Government	3,080	3,100	3,430	-20	-350	-10.2%
State and Local Government Education	1,340	1,340	1,580	0	-240	-15.2%

Northwest Washington labor market review for October 2020
Report available at <http://nwboard.org/impact/laborareasummarries.html>

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County contracted by 60 from September to October 2020. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs dropped by 450 or 2.6 percent.

- From September to October, there was a mix of industries reporting growth and decline. The largest increases were observed in professional and business services (up 90) and the deepest losses came from construction (down 110).
- Year-over-year, the deepest losses were observed in government (down 310) and education and health services (down 240). Professional and business services gained the most ground over the year, adding 220 jobs.

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 dropped from 7.1 percent (revised) in September to 5.0 percent (preliminary) in October 2020. For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 3.2 percent.

- Compared to October 2019, the number of residents counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 619 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 137. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,269 resident workers and contracted by 5.5 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 Oct-20	Revised Sep-20	Revised Oct-19	Change		
				Sep-20 Oct-20	Oct-19 Oct-20	Oct-19 Oct-20
Total Nonfarm	4,870	5,010	5,860	-140	-990	-16.9%
Total Private	4,170	4,260	5,040	-90	-870	-17.3%
Goods Producing	910	930	980	-20	-70	-7.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	710	720	740	-10	-30	-4.1%
Manufacturing	200	210	240	-10	-40	-16.7%
Service Providing	3,960	4,080	4,880	-120	-920	-18.9%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,020	1,000	1,030	20	-10	-1.0%
Information and Financial Activities	320	320	360	0	-40	-11.1%
Professional and Business Services	440	430	430	10	10	2.3%
Education and Health Services	510	510	640	0	-130	-20.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	790	900	1,410	-110	-620	-44.0%
Government	700	750	820	-50	-120	-14.6%

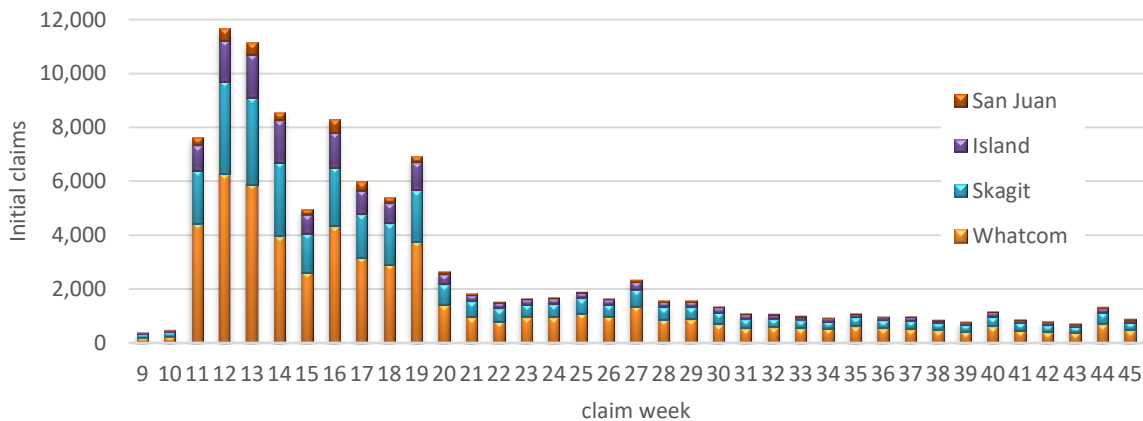
Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County contracted over the month (down 140). Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 990 or 16.9 percent.

- 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. Economically speaking, summer never arrived at the San Juan Islands this year, but seasonal declines continue to affect the local labor market. The deepest one-month declines were observed in leisure and hospitality (down 110 jobs).
- Over the year, there was a large net employment loss, with most industries reporting 12-month losses. The largest one-year losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (down 620 or 44.0 percent). The only industry reporting employment gains over the year was professional and business services (up 10).

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.

**Initial Claims for Unemployment Insurance
March 1 to November 14, 2020**



**Labor force and payroll reporting reflects employment during week 41 (October 11-17)*

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 September and revised in November. 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.