

# Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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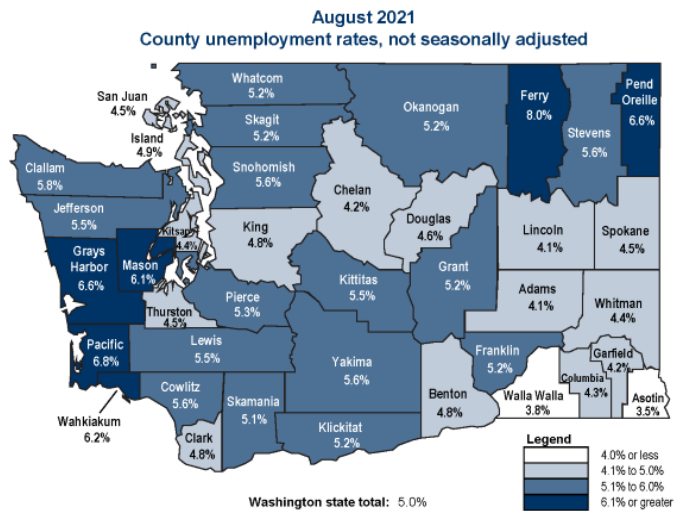
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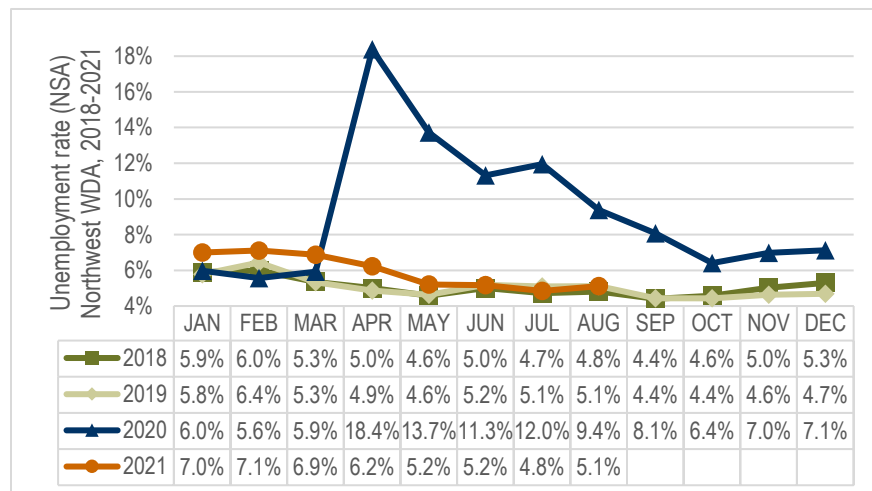
This report marks the fifth report whereby the year-over-year narrative shifts from pandemic-related losses to recovery since the start of the economic crisis. Pandemic-related employment effects began to show up in March last year, and swiftly led to unprecedented levels of unemployment in April 2020. Many jobs have recovered in the meantime, with significant variation by location and industry. This report tracks a moment in that recovery.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 16,800 in August 2021. BLS estimates the private sector gained 13,000 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 3,800 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for August 2020 through August 2021 indicate an increase in employment of 174,600 for the state. The private sector gained 175,100 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 500 jobs over the year.



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August 2021 is 5.1 percent. The revised estimated July 2021 unemployment rate is at 5.1 percent. The August 2020 unemployment rate was 9.1 percent.



BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The July 2021 preliminary estimated gain of 22,700 jobs was revised to a gain of 24,300 jobs.

# Whatcom County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.2 percent in August 2021 (preliminary), above the July estimate of 4.9 percent (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 9.7 percent.

- Compared to August 2020, the labor force expanded by 2,890 workers. Within that estimate, the number of employed workers expanded by 7,812 (7.8 percent) and the number of unemployed workers contracted by 4,922 (45.5 percent). Whatcom County's estimated labor force was 113,977 in August 2021.

## Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted  
**Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)**  
 Data benchmarked through March 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-21	Revised Jul-21	Revised Aug-20	Change		
				Jul-21 Aug-21	Aug-20 Aug-21	Aug-20 Aug-21
Total Nonfarm	88,700	89,600	85,900	-900	2,800	3.3%
Total Private	74,300	73,800	70,900	500	3,400	4.8%
Goods Producing	17,700	17,400	16,900	300	800	4.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,300	8,100	7,700	200	600	7.8%
Manufacturing	9,400	9,300	9,200	100	200	2.2%
Service Providing	71,000	72,200	69,000	-1,200	2,000	2.9%
Private Services Providing	56,600	56,400	54,000	200	2,600	4.8%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	15,900	16,300	15,500	-400	400	2.6%
Retail Trade	10,700	11,000	10,500	-300	200	1.9%
Financial Activities	4,000	4,000	4,200	0	-200	-4.8%
Professional and Business Services	8,500	8,400	8,100	100	400	4.9%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,000	9,800	8,000	200	2,000	25.0%
Government	14,400	15,800	15,000	-1,400	-600	-4.0%
Federal Government	1,500	1,500	1,900	0	-400	-21.1%
Total State Government	3,600	4,100	3,900	-500	-300	-7.7%
Total Local Government	9,300	10,200	9,200	-900	100	1.1%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by 900 from July to August 2021. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs increased by 2,800 (3.3 percent).

- In August, four major industries detailed in this report added jobs and two shed jobs. The largest one-month gains were observed in construction and leisure and hospitality (+200 each). Government and trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (including retail) shed jobs over the month. Government losses are largely attributable to the academic calendar.
- Most major industries added jobs over the year. Leisure and hospitality added the largest number of jobs over the year (+2,000). Employment in government and financial activities were down over the year.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.2 percent (preliminary) in August—this is up from 5.0 percent in July (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 9.7 percent.

- Compared to August 2020, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 4,145 (7.4 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ contracted by 2,684 (44.9 percent). Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 63,268, increasing by 2.4 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 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-21	Revised Jul-21	Revised Aug-20	Change		
				Jul-21 Aug-21	Aug-20 Aug-21	Aug-20 Aug-21
Total Nonfarm	50,100	50,300	48,600	-200	1,500	3.1%
Total Private	38,900	38,600	37,800	300	1,100	2.9%
Goods Producing	10,500	10,500	10,600	0	-100	-0.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,200	4,200	4,300	0	-100	-2.3%
Manufacturing	6,300	6,300	6,300	0	0	0.0%
Service Providing	39,600	39,800	38,000	-200	1,600	4.2%
Private Services Providing	28,400	28,100	27,200	300	1,200	4.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	9,900	9,700	100	300	3.1%
Retail Trade	7,400	7,400	6,800	0	600	8.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,000	4,900	4,300	100	700	16.3%
Government	11,200	11,700	10,800	-500	400	3.7%
Federal Government	400	500	500	-100	-100	-20.0%
State Government	1,100	1,200	1,200	-100	-100	-8.3%
Local Government	9,700	10,000	9,100	-300	600	6.6%

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County decreased by 200 jobs over the month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,500 or 3.1 percent.

- Over the month, two industries (trade, transportation and utilities and leisure and hospitality) added jobs, three industries maintained employment levels and one industry (government) shed jobs. Government losses were seasonally expected and are likely related to education.
- Most major industries have recovered jobs over the year. The largest 12-month increases were attributable to leisure and hospitality (+700). Construction employment was down over the year (-100).

# Island County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 4.9 percent (preliminary) in August 2021, above the (revised) unemployment rate (4.6 percent) reported in July. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 8.2 percent.

- Compared to August 2020, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,289 (3.9 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work contracted by 1,215 (40.9 percent). Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 36,183 in August 2021, up 0.2 percent over the year.

## Island County local area payroll jobs

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

Data benchmarked through March 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-21	Revised Jul-21	Revised Aug-20	Change		
				Jul-21 Aug-21	Aug-20 Aug-21	Aug-20 Aug-21
Total Nonfarm	17,030	17,200	16,730	-170	300	1.8%
Total Private	12,610	12,700	12,240	-90	370	3.0%
Goods Producing	1,910	1,920	1,960	-10	-50	-2.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,210	1,210	1,180	0	30	2.5%
Manufacturing	700	710	780	-10	-80	-10.3%
Service Providing	15,120	15,280	14,770	-160	350	2.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,790	2,800	2,700	-10	90	3.3%
Retail Trade	2,230	2,240	2,140	-10	90	4.2%
Information and Financial Activities	870	880	830	-10	40	4.8%
Professional and Business Services	1,590	1,550	1,460	40	130	8.9%
Education and Health Services	2,390	2,430	2,250	-40	140	6.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,160	2,210	2,160	-50	0	0.0%
Government	4,420	4,500	4,490	-80	-70	-1.6%
Federal Government	1,260	1,270	1,370	-10	-110	-8.0%
State and Local Government	3,160	3,230	3,120	-70	40	1.3%
State and Local Government Education	1,290	1,360	1,250	-70	40	3.2%

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County contracted by 170 from July to August 2021. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 300 or 1.8 percent.

- From July to August, professional and business services added jobs and construction did not change. All other industries shed jobs, with the deepest losses observed in government, related to the academic calendar.
- Year-over-year, the largest employment gains were attributable to educational and health services (+140) and professional and business services (+130). Manufacturing and government shed jobs over the year.

*Employment statistics for Island County do not include military employment.*

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County was 4.5 percent in August 2021 (preliminary), up from 4.2 percent (revised) over the month. For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 7.5 percent.

- Compared to August 2020, the number of residents counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 174 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 256. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,542 resident workers and contracted by 5.4 percent over the year.

### San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

#### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through March 2021

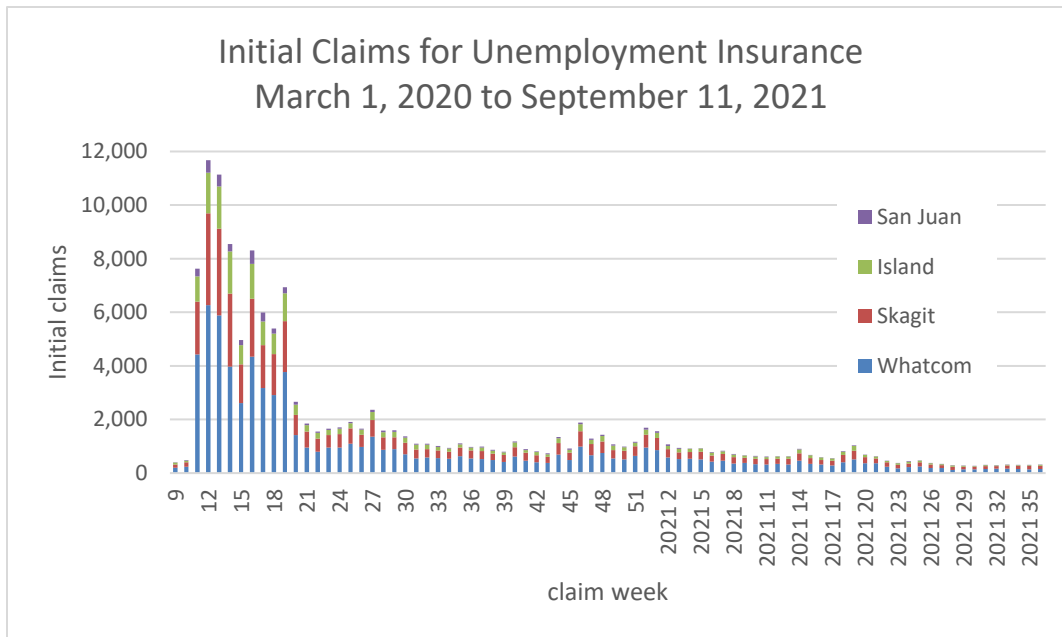
NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-21	Revised Jul-21	Revised Aug-20	Change		
				Jul-21 Aug-21	Aug-20 Aug-21	Aug-20 Aug-21
Total Nonfarm	4,830	4,820	5,690	10	-860	-15.1%
Total Private	4,020	4,000	4,890	20	-870	-17.8%
Goods Producing	870	890	1,000	-20	-130	-13.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	710	730	760	-20	-50	-6.6%
Manufacturing	160	160	240	0	-80	-33.3%
Service Providing	3,960	3,930	4,690	30	-730	-15.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,080	1,080	1,060	0	20	1.9%
Information and Financial Activities	340	330	400	10	-60	-15.0%
Professional and Business Services	450	450	440	0	10	2.3%
Education and Health Services	530	540	560	-10	-30	-5.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	560	540	1,240	20	-680	-54.8%
Government	810	820	800	-10	10	1.3%

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County expanded over the month (+10). Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 860 or 15.1 percent.

- From July to August, two industries in this report (leisure and hospitality and information and financial services) expanded employment and 3 remained unchanged. Employment losses were documented in construction, education and health services, and government.
- According to preliminary estimates, most industries continued to shed jobs late into the pandemic. the deepest 12-month losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (-680). Some small gains were observed in trade, transportation and utilities, professional and business services and government.

## Weekly Unemployment Insurance Claims information:

In March 2020, 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.



New claims for unemployment insurance have finally reached pre-pandemic levels. There were 309 new claims for unemployment insurance filed in the Northwest WDA during the week of September 5-11, 2021.

*\*Labor force and payroll reporting reflects employment during 2021 the week of August 8-14.*

### Forecast information for Washington state:

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. The June forecast is currently online at [www.erfc.wa.gov](http://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.*