

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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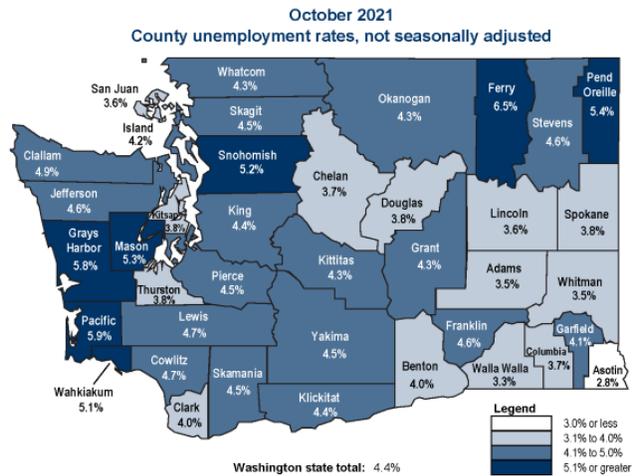
October 2021

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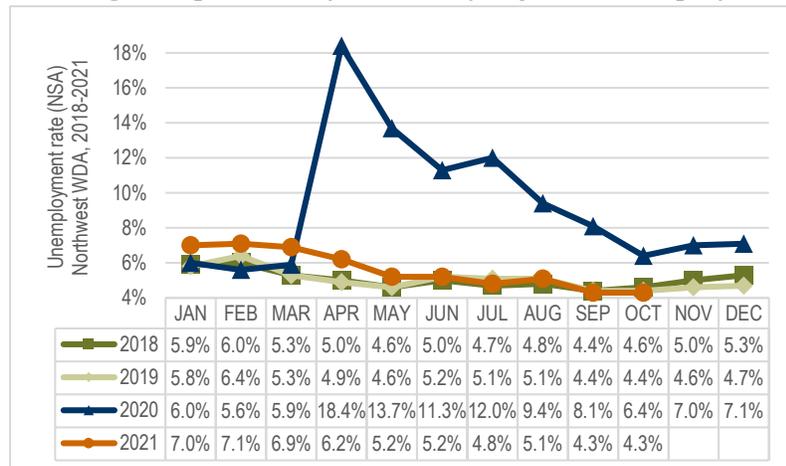
This report marks the seventh report whereby the year-over-year narrative shifts from pandemic-related losses to recovery since the start of the economic crisis. Pandemic-related employment effects began to show up in March last year, and swiftly led to unprecedented levels of unemployment in April 2020. 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 6,300 in October 2021. BLS estimates the private sector gained 15,600 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 9,300 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for October 2020 through October 2021 indicate an increase in employment of 156,600 for the state. The private sector gained 138,000 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 18,600 jobs over the year.



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for October 2021 is 5.0



percent. The revised estimated September 2021 unemployment rate is at 5.1 percent. The October 2020 unemployment rate was 7.0 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The September 2021 preliminary estimated gain of 17,600 jobs

was revised to a gain of 18,800 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.3 percent in October 2021 (preliminary), unchanged from the estimated rate in September (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 6.6 percent.

- Compared to October 2020, the labor force contracted by 3,234 workers. Within that estimate, the number of employed workers contracted by 349 (0.3 percent) and the number of unemployed workers contracted by 2,885 (36.9 percent). Whatcom County's estimated labor force was 115,492 in October 2021.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

| NAICS Industry Title | Prelim Oct-21 | Revised Sep-21 | Revised Oct-20 | Change | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | | Sep-21 Oct-21 | Oct-20 Oct-21 | Oct-20 Oct-21 |
| Total Nonfarm | 93,400 | 92,000 | 87,500 | 1,400 | 5,900 | 6.7% |
| Total Private | 75,600 | 75,100 | 71,500 | 500 | 4,100 | 5.7% |
| Goods Producing | 17,400 | 17,400 | 17,100 | 0 | 300 | 1.8% |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction | 8,200 | 8,200 | 8,100 | 0 | 100 | 1.2% |
| Manufacturing | 9,200 | 9,200 | 9,000 | 0 | 200 | 2.2% |
| Service Providing | 76,000 | 74,600 | 70,400 | 1,400 | 5,600 | 8.0% |
| Private Services Providing | 58,200 | 57,700 | 54,400 | 500 | 3,800 | 7.0% |
| Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities | 16,200 | 16,100 | 15,900 | 100 | 300 | 1.9% |
| Retail Trade | 10,900 | 10,800 | 10,800 | 100 | 100 | 0.9% |
| Financial Activities | 3,900 | 3,900 | 3,900 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Professional and Business Services | 8,500 | 8,400 | 8,000 | 100 | 500 | 6.3% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 9,500 | 9,700 | 8,200 | -200 | 1,300 | 15.9% |
| Government | 17,800 | 16,900 | 16,000 | 900 | 1,800 | 11.3% |
| Federal Government | 1,500 | 1,500 | 1,500 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total State Government | 6,200 | 6,000 | 5,600 | 200 | 600 | 10.7% |
| Total Local Government | 10,100 | 9,400 | 8,900 | 700 | 1,200 | 13.5% |

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 1,400 from September to October 2021. Over the year, nonfarm employment increased by 5,900 (6.7 percent).

- In October, 4 major industries detailed in this report added jobs and 1 shed jobs. The largest one-month gains were observed in government and were attributable to the start of the academic year. Leisure and hospitality shed jobs over the month.
- Most major industries added jobs over the year. Government and leisure and hospitality added the largest number of jobs over the year (+1,800 and 1,300 jobs respectively). Employment in financial activities neither expanded nor contracted over the year.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 4.5 percent (preliminary) in October—this is unchanged over the month. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 6.6 percent.

- Compared to October 2020, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 15 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ contracted by 1,377 (32.6 percent). Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 62,667, decreasing by 2.1 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 June 2021

| NAICS Industry Title | Prelim Oct-21 | Revised Sep-21 | Revised Oct-20 | Change | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | | Sep-21 Oct-21 | Oct-20 Oct-21 | Oct-20 Oct-21 |
| Total Nonfarm | 49,800 | 49,300 | 48,100 | 500 | 1,700 | 3.5% |
| Total Private | 38,300 | 38,300 | 37,400 | 0 | 900 | 2.4% |
| Goods Producing | 10,300 | 10,300 | 10,400 | 0 | -100 | -1.0% |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction | 4,400 | 4,400 | 4,200 | 0 | 200 | 4.8% |
| Manufacturing | 5,900 | 5,900 | 6,200 | 0 | -300 | -4.8% |
| Service Providing | 39,500 | 39,000 | 37,700 | 500 | 1,800 | 4.8% |
| Private Services Providing | 28,000 | 28,000 | 27,000 | 0 | 1,000 | 3.7% |
| Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities | 9,800 | 9,800 | 9,600 | 0 | 200 | 2.1% |
| Retail Trade | 6,900 | 6,900 | 6,800 | 0 | 100 | 1.5% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 4,800 | 5,000 | 4,100 | -200 | 700 | 17.1% |
| Government | 11,500 | 11,000 | 10,700 | 500 | 800 | 7.5% |
| Federal Government | 400 | 400 | 400 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| State Government | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,200 | 0 | 100 | 8.3% |
| Local Government | 9,800 | 9,300 | 9,100 | 500 | 700 | 7.7% |

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County increased by 500 jobs over the month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,700 or 3.5 percent.

- Over the month, most industries remained steady. The only industries with changing employment tallies captured in this report were leisure and hospitality (-200) and government (+500). Government increases were related to the academic calendar.
- Most major industries have recovered jobs over the year. The largest 12-month increases were attributable to government and leisure and hospitality (+800 and 700 respectively). Manufacturing employment dropped by 300 over the year.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 4.2 percent (preliminary) in October 2021, barely above the (revised) unemployment rate or 4.1 percent reported in September. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.8 percent.

- Compared to October 2020, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 1,379 (3.8 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work contracted by 722 (32.3 percent). Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 36,206 in October 2021, down 5.5 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 Oct-21 | Revised Sep-21 | Revised Oct-20 | Change | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | | Sep-21 Oct-21 | Oct-20 Oct-21 | Oct-20 Oct-21 |
| Total Nonfarm | 16,960 | 17,040 | 16,650 | -80 | 310 | 1.9% |
| Total Private | 12,730 | 12,750 | 12,240 | -20 | 490 | 4.0% |
| Goods Producing | 1,960 | 1,920 | 1,940 | 40 | 20 | 1.0% |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction | 1,320 | 1,290 | 1,190 | 30 | 130 | 10.9% |
| Manufacturing | 640 | 630 | 750 | 10 | -110 | -14.7% |
| Service Providing | 15,000 | 15,120 | 14,710 | -120 | 290 | 2.0% |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 2,580 | 2,550 | 2,690 | 30 | -110 | -4.1% |
| Retail Trade | 2,240 | 2,210 | 2,140 | 30 | 100 | 4.7% |
| Information and Financial Activities | 910 | 910 | 870 | 0 | 40 | 4.6% |
| Professional and Business Services | 1,680 | 1,670 | 1,460 | 10 | 220 | 15.1% |
| Education and Health Services | 2,400 | 2,440 | 2,350 | -40 | 50 | 2.1% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 2,290 | 2,350 | 2,060 | -60 | 230 | 11.2% |
| Government | 4,230 | 4,290 | 4,410 | -60 | -180 | -4.1% |
| Federal Government | 1,240 | 1,240 | 1,290 | 0 | -50 | -3.9% |
| State and Local Government | 2,990 | 3,050 | 3,120 | -60 | -130 | -4.2% |
| State and Local Government Education | 1,270 | 1,310 | 1,290 | -40 | -20 | -1.6% |

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County contracted by 80 from September to October 2021. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 310 or 1.9 percent.

- From September to October, goods producing industries expanded employment, but service providers collectively shed jobs. The deepest losses were observed in government and leisure and hospitality (down 60 each).
- Year-over-year, the largest employment gains were attributable to leisure and hospitality and professional and business services. Government shed the largest number of jobs.

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 3.6 percent in October 2021 (preliminary), up from 3.3 percent (revised) over the month. For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.0 percent.

- Compared to October 2020, the number of residents counted as ‘employed’ increased by 214 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 110. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,534 resident workers and expanded by 1.2 percent over the year.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through June 2021

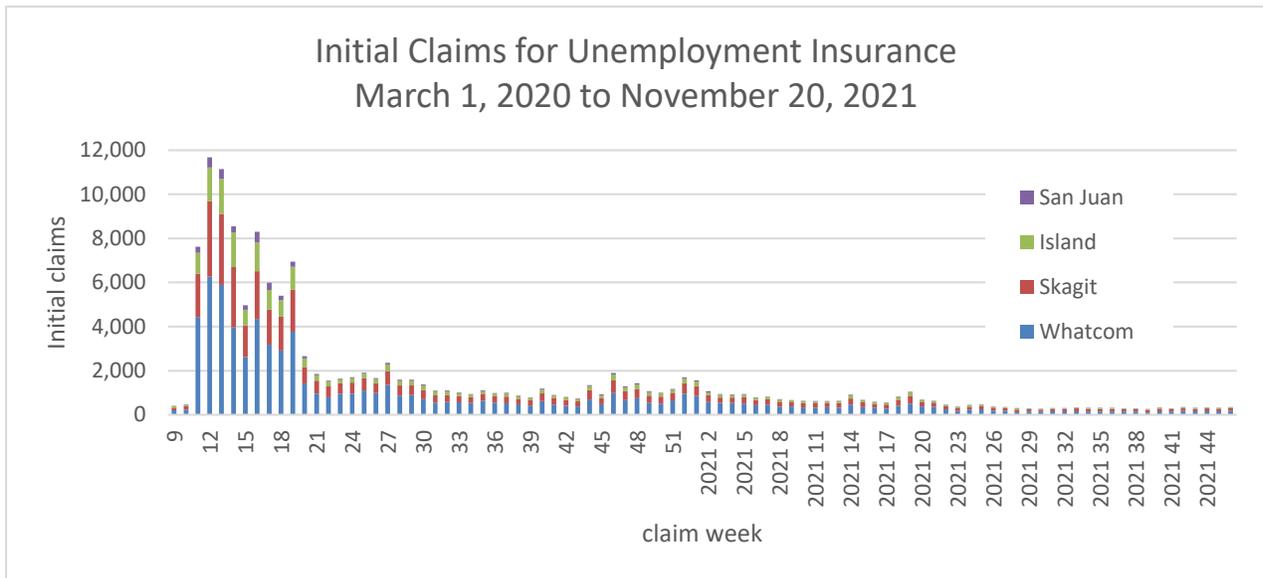
| NAICS Industry Title | Prelim Oct-21 | Revised Sep-21 | Revised Oct-20 | Change | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | | | Sep-21 Oct-21 | Oct-20 Oct-21 | Oct-20 Oct-21 |
| Total Nonfarm | 5,500 | 5,500 | 5,280 | 0 | 220 | 4.2% |
| Total Private | 4,640 | 4,640 | 4,520 | 0 | 120 | 2.7% |
| Goods Producing | 970 | 990 | 970 | -20 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction | 750 | 770 | 750 | -20 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Manufacturing | 220 | 220 | 220 | 0 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Service Providing | 4,530 | 4,510 | 4,310 | 20 | 220 | 5.1% |
| Trade, Transportation, and Utilities | 1,070 | 1,080 | 980 | -10 | 90 | 9.2% |
| Information and Financial Activities | 390 | 380 | 380 | 10 | 10 | 2.6% |
| Professional and Business Services | 480 | 480 | 460 | 0 | 20 | 4.3% |
| Education and Health Services | 540 | 550 | 540 | -10 | 0 | 0.0% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 980 | 950 | 1,000 | 30 | -20 | -2.0% |
| Government | 860 | 860 | 760 | 0 | 100 | 13.2% |

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County contracted by neither expanded nor contracted over the month. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 220 or 4.2 percent.

- From September to October 2021, 2 industries detailed in this report expanded employment and 3 shed jobs. The largest one month change was documented in leisure and hospitality (+30).
- Over the year, the employment situation in San Juan County is showing substantial improvements in the service sector. The largest increases were observed in government and trade, transportation and utilities. Leisure and hospitality – San Juan County’s largest sector – was down 20 jobs over the year.

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 349 new claims for unemployment insurance filed in the Northwest WDA during the week of November 14-20, 2021.

**Labor force and payroll reporting reflects employment during the week of October 10-16.*

Forecast information for Washington state:

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. The September forecast is currently online 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.