

Northwest Washington Labor Area Summary

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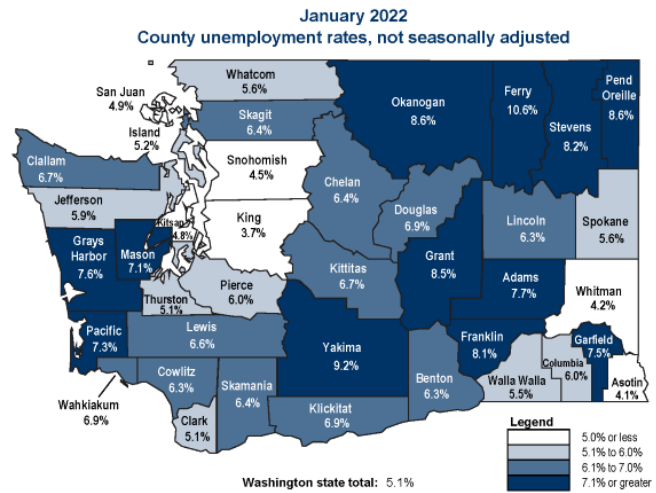
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Compiled by **Anneliese Vance-Sherman, Ph.D., Regional Labor Economist**
Phone: (425)258-6315 (Mobile: 360-630-1232) anneliese.vance-sherman@esd.wa.gov
www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo

This report marks the tenth 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 5,700 in January 2022. BLS estimates the private sector gained 4,500 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 1,200 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for January 2021 through January 2022 indicate an increase in employment of 186,700 for the state. The private sector gained 164,200 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 22,500 jobs over the year.



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for January 2022 is 4.4 percent. The revised estimated December 2021 unemployment rate is at 4.5 percent. The January 2021 unemployment rate was 6.0 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Jan-22	Dec-21	Jan-21	Year-to-Year Change
USA	4.4%	3.7%	6.8%	-2.4%
Washington state	5.1%	4.0%	7.0%	-1.9%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	5.7%	4.4%	7.8%	-2.1%
Whatcom County	5.6%	4.4%	7.9%	-2.3%
Skagit County	6.4%	4.8%	8.2%	-1.8%
Island County	5.2%	4.0%	6.9%	-1.7%
San Juan County	4.9%	3.6%	7.5%	-2.6%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The December 2021 preliminary estimated gain of 14,000 jobs was revised to a gain of 13,600 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.6 percent in January 2022 (preliminary), up from 4.4 percent in December 2021 (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 7.9 percent.

- Compared to January 2021, the labor force expanded by 5,684 workers. Within that estimate, the number of employed workers expanded by 7,869 (7.6 percent) and the number of unemployed workers contracted by 2,185 (24.7 percent). Whatcom County's estimated labor force was 117,832 in January 2022.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jan-22	Revised Dec-21	Revised Jan-21	Change		
				Dec-21 Jan-22	Jan-21 Jan-22	Jan-21 Jan-22
Total Nonfarm	92,700	93,300	85,800	-600	6,900	8.0%
Total Private	74,800	75,500	69,500	-700	5,300	7.6%
Goods Producing	16,800	16,900	16,500	-100	300	1.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,600	7,700	7,600	-100	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	9,200	9,200	8,900	0	300	3.4%
Service Providing	75,900	76,400	69,300	-500	6,600	9.5%
Private Services Providing	58,000	58,600	53,000	-600	5,000	9.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,600	16,500	15,900	100	700	4.4%
Retail Trade	11,000	11,300	10,800	-300	200	1.9%
Financial Activities	4,000	4,000	3,900	0	100	2.6%
Professional and Business Services	8,500	8,500	7,900	0	600	7.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,100	10,200	6,900	-100	3,200	46.4%
Government	17,900	17,800	16,300	100	1,600	9.8%
Federal Government	1,500	1,400	1,400	100	100	7.1%
Total State Government	6,200	6,000	5,600	200	600	10.7%
Total Local Government	10,200	10,400	9,300	-200	900	9.7%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by 600 from December 2021 to January 2022. Over the year, nonfarm employment increased by 6,900 (8.0 percent).

- In January, employment decreased in seasonally-sensitive sectors including retail, construction and leisure and hospitality. Trade transportation warehousing and utilities and government were both up over the month.
- Most sectors added jobs over the year. Leisure and hospitality and government added the largest number of jobs over the year (+3,200 and 1,600 jobs respectively). Employment in construction remained unchanged over the year.

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 6.4 percent (preliminary) in January 2022—up from 4.8 percent (revised) in December. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 8.2 percent.

- Compared to January 2021, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 3,323 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ contracted by 952, bringing the unemployment rate down. Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 63,259, increasing by 3.9 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 September 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jan-22	Revised Dec-21	Revised Jan-21	Change		
				Dec-21 Jan-22	Jan-21 Jan-22	Jan-21 Jan-22
Total Nonfarm	49,700	50,400	46,600	-700	3,100	6.7%
Total Private	38,000	38,700	35,800	-700	2,200	6.1%
Goods Producing	10,100	10,200	9,900	-100	200	2.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,100	4,200	3,900	-100	200	5.1%
Manufacturing	6,000	6,000	6,000	0	0	0.0%
Service Providing	39,600	40,200	36,700	-600	2,900	7.9%
Private Services Providing	27,900	28,500	25,900	-600	2,000	7.7%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,700	10,300	9,500	-600	200	2.1%
Retail Trade	6,800	7,100	6,800	-300	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,700	4,800	3,400	-100	1,300	38.2%
Government	11,700	11,700	10,800	0	900	8.3%
Federal Government	300	400	400	-100	-100	-25.0%
State Government	1,400	1,300	1,100	100	300	27.3%
Local Government	10,000	10,000	9,300	0	700	7.5%

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County decreased by 700 jobs over the month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 3,100 or 6.7 percent.

- Over the month, all major sectors detailed in this report either shed jobs or remained unchanged. The deepest losses were attributable to the seasonal rhythm of holiday hiring and subsequent layoffs.
- Most major industry sectors recovered jobs over the year. The largest 12-month increases detailed in this report were attributable to leisure and hospitality (+1,300) and government. Increases in government employment were largely attributable to local hiring by public school districts.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.2 percent (preliminary) in January 2022, above the (revised) unemployment rate (4.0 percent) reported in December 2021. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 6.9 percent.

- Compared to January 2021, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 2,413 (7.1 percent) and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work contracted by 525 (20.8 percent). Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 38,183 in January 2022, up 5.2 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 Jan-22	Revised Dec-21	Revised Jan-21	Change		
				Dec-21 Jan-22	Jan-21 Jan-22	Jan-21 Jan-22
Total Nonfarm	17,600	17,620	16,240	-20	1,360	8.4%
Total Private	13,150	13,110	11,830	40	1,320	11.2%
Goods Producing	2,020	1,990	1,870	30	150	8.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,370	1,340	1,210	30	160	13.2%
Manufacturing	650	650	660	0	-10	-1.5%
Service Providing	15,580	15,630	14,370	-50	1,210	8.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,710	2,710	2,720	0	-10	-0.4%
Retail Trade	2,240	2,220	2,160	20	80	3.7%
Information and Financial Activities	890	890	840	0	50	6.0%
Professional and Business Services	1,580	1,580	1,510	0	70	4.6%
Education and Health Services	2,330	2,350	2,340	-20	-10	-0.4%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,710	2,680	1,770	30	940	53.1%
Government	4,450	4,510	4,410	-60	40	0.9%
Federal Government	1,240	1,240	1,280	0	-40	-3.1%
State and Local Government	3,210	3,270	3,130	-60	80	2.6%
State and Local Government Education	1,430	1,480	1,270	-50	160	12.6%

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County dipped by 20 from December 2021 to January 2022. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 1,360 or 8.4 percent.

- From December to January, most industry sectors detailed in this report either expanded or maintained employment levels. The largest increases were attributable to leisure and hospitality and construction. Government and education and health services each shed jobs.
- Year-over-year, the largest employment gains were attributable to leisure and hospitality (+940). Construction and public education also saw large employment increases. Manufacturing and education and health services each 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 4.9 percent in January 2022 (preliminary), up from 3.6 percent (revised) over the month. For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 7.5 percent.

- Compared to January 2021, the number of residents counted as ‘employed’ increased by 947 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 173. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,739 resident workers and expanded by 9.7 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 Jan-22	Revised Dec-21	Revised Jan-21	Change		
				Dec-21 Jan-22	Jan-21 Jan-22	Jan-21 Jan-22
Total Nonfarm	5,540	5,550	4,750	-10	790	16.6%
Total Private	4,740	4,730	3,970	10	770	19.4%
Goods Producing	1,150	1,130	910	20	240	26.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	820	810	730	10	90	12.3%
Manufacturing	330	320	180	10	150	83.3%
Service Providing	4,390	4,420	3,840	-30	550	14.3%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,190	1,170	960	20	230	24.0%
Information and Financial Activities	440	430	340	10	100	29.4%
Professional and Business Services	520	520	440	0	80	18.2%
Education and Health Services	470	470	520	0	-50	-9.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	760	800	630	-40	130	20.6%
Government	800	820	780	-20	20	2.6%

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County contracted by 10 over the month. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 790 or 16.6 percent. Employment in San Juan County is highly seasonal. Compared against January 2020 (pre-pandemic), total nonfarm employment appears to have recovered, albeit with losses in some key sectors such as leisure and hospitality.

- From December 2021 to January 2022, most industries detailed in this report expanded or maintained employment. Only leisure and hospitality and government shed jobs over the month. The largest one-month expansion was trade transportation and utilities.
- Over the year, the employment situation in San Juan County is showing substantial improvements in general. All but one industry sector detailed in this report expanded employment over the year, with the largest employment gains attributable to trade, transportation and utilities (+230). Education and health services was the only sector that was down over the year.

Forecast information for Washington state:

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (ERFC) issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. The February forecast by Washington's Economic and Revenue Forecast Council estimates that the statewide unemployment rate averaged 6.7 percent in 2021. The unemployment rate is expected to average about 4.5 percent in 2022, (down from the November forecast) and drop to 4.0 percent in 2023. Employment is expected to recover to pre-recession levels in 2022. See www.erfc.wa.gov for more information.

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.