

Northwest Washington Labor Area Summary

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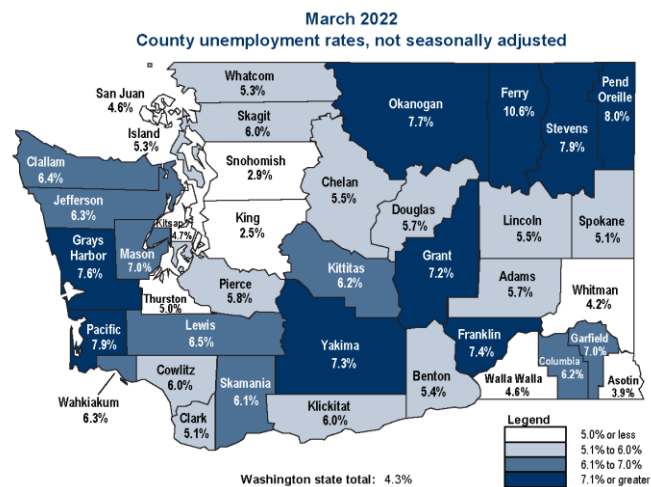
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This report marks the twelfth report whereby the year-over-year narrative shifts from pandemic-related losses to recovery since the start of the economic crisis. Pandemic-related employment effects began to show up in March 2020, and swiftly led to unprecedented levels of unemployment in April 2020. Many jobs have recovered in the meantime, with significant variation by location and industry. This report describes 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 8,800 in March 2022. BLS estimates the private sector gained 9,200 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 400 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for March 2021 through March 2022 indicate an increase in employment of 173,000 for the state. The private sector gained 159,600 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 13,400 jobs over the year.

Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March 2022 is 4.2 percent. The revised estimated February 2022 unemployment rate is at 4.3 percent. The March 2021 unemployment rate was 5.8 percent.



Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) Mar-22	Feb-22	Mar-21	Year-to-Year Change
USA	3.8%	4.1%	6.2%	-2.4%
Washington state	4.3%	4.6%	6.2%	-1.9%
Northwest Workforce Development Area	5.5%	5.6%	7.1%	-1.6%
Whatcom County	5.3%	5.4%	7.1%	-1.8%
Skagit County	6.0%	6.0%	7.4%	-1.4%
Island County	5.3%	5.3%	6.7%	-1.4%
San Juan County	4.6%	4.6%	6.9%	-2.3%

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The February 2022 preliminary estimated gain of 31,700 jobs was revised to a gain of 28,000 jobs.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 5.3 percent in March 2022 (preliminary), down slightly from 5.4 percent reported in February (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 7.1 percent.

- Compared to March 2021, the labor force expanded by 7,265 workers. Within that estimate, the number of employed workers expanded by 8,845 (8.5 percent) and the number of unemployed workers contracted by 1,580 (19.9 percent). Whatcom County's estimated labor force was estimated at 119,439 in March 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 ²	Prelim Mar-22	Revised Feb-22	Revised Mar-21	Change		
				Feb-22 Mar-22	Mar-21 Mar-22	Mar-21 Mar-22
Total Nonfarm 3	94,200	93,800	88,300	400	5,900	6.7%
Total Private	76,000	75,600	71,300	400	4,700	6.6%
Goods Producing	17,500	17,200	16,700	300	800	4.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,100	7,800	7,800	300	300	3.8%
Manufacturing	9,400	9,400	8,900	0	500	5.6%
Service Providing	76,700	76,600	71,600	100	5,100	7.1%
Private Services Providing	58,500	58,400	54,600	100	3,900	7.1%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,700	16,500	16,000	200	700	4.4%
Retail Trade	11,000	11,000	10,800	0	200	1.9%
Financial Activities	4,100	4,000	4,000	100	100	2.5%
Professional and Business Services	8,600	8,600	8,000	0	600	7.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,200	10,100	8,100	100	2,100	25.9%
Government	18,200	18,200	17,000	0	1,200	7.1%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,400	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,200	6,100	5,900	100	300	5.1%
Total Local Government	10,600	10,700	9,700	-100	900	9.3%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 400 from February to March 2022. Over the year, nonfarm employment increased by 5,900 (6.7 percent).

- In March, employment expansions were observed in most sectors. The largest one-month changes were attributable to construction (+300) and trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+200)
- All major sectors included in this report added jobs over the year. Leisure and hospitality and government added the largest number of jobs over the year (+2,100 and +1,200 jobs respectively).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 6.0 percent (preliminary) in March 2022—unchanged over the month. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 7.4 percent.

- Compared to March 2021, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 4,036 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ contracted by 690, bringing the unemployment rate down. Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 64,186, increasing by 5.5 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 September 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Mar-22	Revised Feb-22	Revised Mar-21	Change		
				Feb-22 Mar-22	Mar-21 Mar-22	Mar-21 Mar-22
Total Nonfarm	50,400	50,000	47,900	400	2,500	5.2%
Total Private	38,700	38,400	36,700	300	2,000	5.4%
Goods Producing	10,400	10,300	10,000	100	400	4.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,300	4,200	4,000	100	300	7.5%
Manufacturing	6,100	6,100	6,000	0	100	1.7%
Service Providing	40,000	39,700	37,900	300	2,100	5.5%
Private Services Providing	28,300	28,100	26,700	200	1,600	6.0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,600	9,700	9,500	-100	100	1.1%
Retail Trade	6,700	6,700	6,800	0	-100	-1.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,800	4,800	4,000	0	800	20.0%
Government	11,700	11,600	11,200	100	500	4.5%
Federal Government	300	300	400	0	-100	-25.0%
State Government	1,300	1,200	1,200	100	100	8.3%
Local Government	10,100	10,100	9,600	0	500	5.2%

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County increased by 400 jobs over the month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 2,500 or 5.2 percent.

- Over the month, construction and government each expanded employment (+100 each) and employment in trade transportation, warehousing, and utilities contracted. Employment tallies in all other sectors detailed in this report remained unchanged
- Each major industry sector detailed in this report expanded employment over the year. The largest 12-month increases detailed in this report were attributable to leisure and hospitality (+800), government (+500), and construction (+300). Retail trade, an industry that is attributed to trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities, shed 100 jobs over the year.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.3 percent (preliminary) in March 2022, unchanged relative to the previous month. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 6.7 percent.

- Compared to March 2021, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,538 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work contracted by 465. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 37,366 up 3.0 percent.

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 Mar-22	Revised Feb-22	Revised Mar-21	Change		
				Feb-22 Mar-22	Mar-21 Mar-22	Mar-21 Mar-22
Total Nonfarm	17,010	16,870	16,750	140	260	1.6%
Total Private	12,550	12,410	12,290	140	260	2.1%
Goods Producing	1,920	1,870	1,890	50	30	1.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,270	1,230	1,240	40	30	2.4%
Manufacturing	650	640	650	10	0	0.0%
Service Providing	15,090	15,000	14,860	90	230	1.5%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,630	2,610	2,800	20	-170	-6.1%
Retail Trade	2,160	2,140	2,240	20	-80	-3.6%
Information and Financial Activities	910	900	870	10	40	4.6%
Professional and Business Services	1,520	1,510	1,520	10	0	0.0%
Education and Health Services	2,250	2,280	2,380	-30	-130	-5.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,470	2,410	2,020	60	450	22.3%
Government	4,460	4,460	4,460	0	0	0.0%
Federal Government	1,250	1,250	1,280	0	-30	-2.3%
State and Local Government	3,210	3,210	3,180	0	30	0.9%
State and Local Government Education	1,450	1,440	1,340	10	110	8.2%

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 140 from February to March 2022. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 260 or 1.6 percent.

- From February to March, most industry sectors detailed in this report expanded employment. The largest increases were attributable to leisure and hospitality and construction. Government employment was unchanged, and education and health services shed 30 jobs.
- Year-over-year, the largest employment gains were attributable to leisure and hospitality (+450). Trade transportation and utilities (including retail) 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 4.6 percent in March 2022 (preliminary), unchanged over the month. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 6.9 percent.

- Compared to March 2021, the number of residents counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,107 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work decreased by 138. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,863 resident workers and expanded by 12.3 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 Mar-22	Revised Feb-22	Revised Mar-21	Change		
				Feb-22 Mar-22	Mar-21 Mar-22	Mar-21 Mar-22
Total Nonfarm	5,790	5,670	5,020	120	770	15.3%
Total Private	5,000	4,870	4,220	130	780	18.5%
Goods Producing	1,140	1,130	950	10	190	20.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	840	830	750	10	90	12.0%
Manufacturing	300	300	200	0	100	50.0%
Service Providing	4,650	4,540	4,070	110	580	14.3%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,050	1,010	960	40	90	9.4%
Information and Financial Activities	430	420	340	10	90	26.5%
Professional and Business Services	550	540	460	10	90	19.6%
Education and Health Services	480	490	540	-10	-60	-11.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,140	1,070	800	70	340	42.5%
Government	790	800	800	-10	-10	-1.3%

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County expanded by 120 over the month. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 770 or 15.3 percent. Employment in San Juan County is highly seasonal. Compared against March 2020 (pre-pandemic), total nonfarm employment appears to have recovered, albeit with net losses in some key sectors such as education and health services.

- From February to March 2022, most industries detailed in this report expanded or maintained employment. Leisure and hospitality added the largest number of jobs (+70). Education and health services and government were each down over the month.
- Over the year, the employment situation in San Juan County is showing substantial improvements in general. All but two sectors detailed in this report expanded employment over the year, with the largest employment gains attributable to leisure and hospitality (+340). Education and health services and government were the only two sectors that reported 12-month job losses.

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.