

# Northwest Washington Labor Area Summary

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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](mailto:anneliese.vance-sherman@esd.wa.gov)  
[www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo](http://www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo)

This report marks the seventeenth 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.

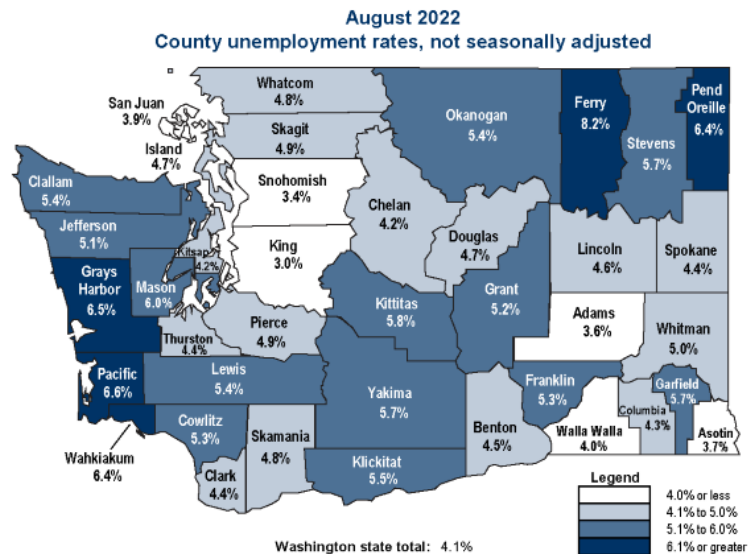
On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 16,100 in August 2022. BLS estimates the private sector gained 9,400 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 6,700 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for August 2021 through August 2022 indicate an increase in employment of 161,600 for the state. The private sector gained 158,900 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 2,700 jobs over the year.

Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August 2022 is 3.7 percent. The revised estimated July 2022 unemployment rate is at 3.7 percent. The August 2021 unemployment rate was 5.0 percent.

Unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	(Prelim.) July-22	Jun-22	Jul-21	Year-to-Year Change
USA	3.8%	3.8%	5.7%	-1.9%
Washington state	4.1%	3.5%	5.1%	-1.0%
<b>Northwest Workforce Development Area</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>
Whatcom County	4.8%	3.9%	6.1%	-1.3%
Skagit County	4.9%	4.2%	6.2%	-1.3%
Island County	4.7%	3.9%	5.7%	-1.0%
San Juan County	3.9%	3.4%	4.7%	-0.8%



BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The July 2022 preliminary estimated gain of 6,600 jobs was revised to a gain of 10,200 jobs.

# Whatcom County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.8 percent in August 2022 (preliminary), above 3.9 percent reported in July (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 6.1 percent. The unemployment rate in Whatcom County reached 17.4 percent in April 2020.

- Compared to August 2021, the labor force expanded by 2,042 workers (1.8 percent). Within that estimate, the number of employed workers expanded by 3,496 and the number of unemployed workers contracted by 1,454. Whatcom County's estimated labor force was 115,561 in August 2022.

## Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

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

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-22	Revised Jul-22	Revised Aug-21	Change		
				Jul-22 Aug-22	Aug-21 Aug-22	Aug-21 Aug-22
Total Nonfarm	93,300	94,700	89,700	-1,400	3,600	4.0%
Total Private	78,600	78,700	74,800	-100	3,800	5.1%
Goods Producing	18,300	18,700	17,100	-400	1,200	7.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,500	8,700	8,000	-200	500	6.3%
Manufacturing	9,800	10,000	9,100	-200	700	7.7%
Service Providing	75,000	76,000	72,600	-1,000	2,400	3.3%
Private Services Providing	60,300	60,000	57,700	300	2,600	4.5%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,900	16,700	16,200	200	700	4.3%
Retail Trade	10,900	10,700	10,900	200	0	0.0%
Financial Activities	4,000	3,900	4,000	100	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	9,200	9,100	8,500	100	700	8.2%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,800	10,800	10,300	0	500	4.9%
Government	14,700	16,000	14,900	-1,300	-200	-1.3%
Federal Government	1,500	1,500	1,500	0	0	0.0%
Total State Government	3,700	4,100	4,000	-400	-300	-7.5%
Total Local Government	9,500	10,400	9,400	-900	100	1.1%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by 1,400 from July to August 2022. Over the year, nonfarm employment increased by 3,600 (4.0 percent).

- In August, the largest employment gains were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (+200), with gains concentrated in retail trade. The deepest losses were observed in government (-1,300).
- Employment in most major sectors included in this report expanded employment over the year, with the largest increases attributable to manufacturing and leisure and hospitality (700 each). Government employment dropped over the year.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 4.9 percent (preliminary) in August 2022—up over the month from 4.2 percent (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 6.2 percent. The unemployment rate in April 2020 reached a record 18.8 percent.

- Compared to August 2021, the labor force expanded by 607 (1.0 percent). Within that, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 1,415 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ contracted by 808, bringing the unemployment rate down. Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 63,301 in August.

### Skagit County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted  
**Mount Vernon-Anacortes Metropolitan Statistical Area (Skagit County)**  
 Data benchmarked through December 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-22	Revised Jul-22	Revised Aug-21	Change		
				Jul-22 Aug-22	Aug-21 Aug-22	Aug-21 Aug-22
Total Nonfarm	50,800	50,900	50,200	-100	600	1.2%
Total Private	39,700	39,300	38,900	400	800	2.1%
Goods Producing	10,700	10,700	10,400	0	300	2.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,300	4,300	4,400	0	-100	-2.3%
Manufacturing	6,400	6,400	6,000	0	400	6.7%
Service Providing	40,100	40,200	39,800	-100	300	0.8%
Private Services Providing	29,000	28,600	28,500	400	500	1.8%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,600	9,400	9,800	200	-200	-2.0%
Retail Trade	6,600	6,600	6,900	0	-300	-4.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	5,100	5,200	5,100	-100	0	0.0%
Government	11,100	11,600	11,300	-500	-200	-1.8%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,100	1,200	1,200	-100	-100	-8.3%
Local Government	9,600	10,000	9,700	-400	-100	-1.0%

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County decreased by 100 jobs over the month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 600 or 1.2 percent.

- One-month employment gains were observed in trade, transportation and utilities (+200). All other sectors captured in this report remained unchanged or shed jobs over the month. The deepest losses were attributable to government (-500).
- Over the year, government, trade, transportation, warehousing, and utilities (including retail trade) and construction shed jobs. Manufacturing employment expanded and leisure and hospitality remained unchanged.

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 4.7 percent (preliminary) in August 2022, up from 3.9 percent (revised) over the month. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.7 percent. In April 2020, the unemployment rate for Island County was a record 16.5 percent.

- Compared to August 2021, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ increased by 728 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work contracted by 363. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 36,578, up 1.0 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 December 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-22	Revised Jul-22	Revised Aug-21	Change		
				Jul-22 Aug-22	Aug-21 Aug-22	Aug-21 Aug-22
Total Nonfarm	17,290	17,390	17,410	-100	-120	-0.7%
Total Private	12,980	12,930	13,090	50	-110	-0.8%
Goods Producing	2,010	1,990	1,940	20	70	3.6%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,420	1,400	1,310	20	110	8.4%
Manufacturing	590	590	630	0	-40	-6.3%
Service Providing	15,280	15,400	15,470	-120	-190	-1.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,660	2,670	2,780	-10	-120	-4.3%
Retail Trade	2,160	2,170	2,210	-10	-50	-2.3%
Information and Financial Activities	860	870	880	-10	-20	-2.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,560	1,560	1,570	0	-10	-0.6%
Education and Health Services	2,470	2,460	2,410	10	60	2.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,600	2,560	2,630	40	-30	-1.1%
Government	4,310	4,460	4,320	-150	-10	-0.2%
Federal Government	1,250	1,260	1,250	-10	0	0.0%
State and Local Government	3,060	3,200	3,070	-140	-10	-0.3%
State and Local Government Education	1,260	1,380	1,250	-120	10	0.8%

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County contracted by 100 from July to August 2022. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs contracted by 120 or 0.7 percent.

- From July to August, leisure and hospitality, construction and education and health services added jobs. Government and trade, transportation and utilities (specifically retail trade) shed jobs over the month.
- Year-over-year, employment gains were observed in construction and education and health services (+110 and 60 respectively). The deepest losses were observed in trade, transportation and utilities (-120).

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

## San Juan County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County was 3.9 percent in August 2022 (preliminary), up from 3.4 percent (revised) in July. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.7 percent. San Juan's unemployment rate in April 2020 (the height of the pandemic recession) was 19.2 percent.

- Compared to August 2021, the number of residents counted as 'employed' decreased by 541 and the number counted as 'unemployed' or actively seeking work decreased by 90. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,621 resident workers and contracted by 7.6 percent over the year.

### San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

#### San Juan County

Data benchmarked through December 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Aug-22	Revised Jul-22	Revised Aug-21	Change		
				Jul-22 Aug-22	Aug-21 Aug-22	Aug-21 Aug-22
Total Nonfarm	5,050	5,080	6,630	-30	-1,580	-23.8%
Total Private	4,260	4,300	5,790	-40	-1,530	-26.4%
Goods Producing	1,020	1,030	1,060	-10	-40	-3.8%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	790	790	780	0	10	1.3%
Manufacturing	230	240	280	-10	-50	-17.9%
Service Providing	4,030	4,050	5,570	-20	-1,540	-27.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	930	940	1,190	-10	-260	-21.8%
Information and Financial Activities	350	350	450	0	-100	-22.2%
Professional and Business Services	530	530	500	0	30	6.0%
Education and Health Services	440	440	550	0	-110	-20.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	800	820	1,840	-20	-1,040	-56.5%
Government	790	780	840	10	-50	-6.0%

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County contracted by 30 in August. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 1,580 or 23.8 percent. Employment in San Juan County is highly seasonal. The small sampling size for this small county also means that routine revisions can be substantial.

- From July to August 2022, employment levels in all private industry sectors detailed in this report either dropped jobs or remained unchanged. Government was the only sector that expanded employment (+10).
- Over the year, the payroll tally in San Juan County contracted by 1,580. Annual gains were reported in professional and business services (+30) and construction (+10). All other industries included in this report shed jobs. The deepest one-year losses were observed in the tourism-dependent leisure and hospitality sector (-1,040).

### **Forecast information for Washington state:**

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. ERFEC estimates indicate that Washington state employment will have expanded by 5.5 percent from 2021 to 2022 and will expand by 2.6 percent in 2023. The June forecast and September revised forecast are published online at [www.erfc.wa.gov](http://www.erfc.wa.gov).

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