

# Northwest Washington Labor Area Summary

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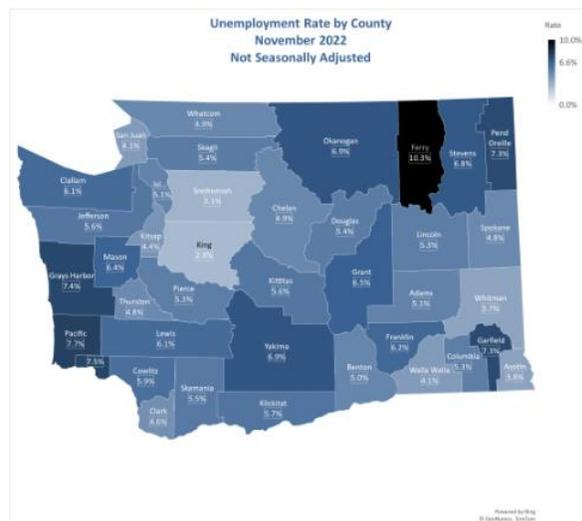
November 2022

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Pandemic-related employment effects began to show up in Washington state as early as 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 13,100 in November 2022.<sup>1</sup> BLS estimates the private sector gained 11,000 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 2,100 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for November 2021 through November 2022 indicate an increase in employment of 130,900 for the state. The private sector gained 118,700 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 12,200 jobs over the year.



# Whatcom County

## Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 4.9 percent in November 2022 (preliminary), above 4.1 percent reported in October (revised). For comparison, the unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.5 percent. The unemployment rate reached 17.4 percent in April 2020.

- Compared to November 2021, the labor force expanded by 671 workers (0.6 percent). Within that estimate, the number of employed workers expanded by 132 and the number of unemployed workers expanded by 539. Whatcom County's estimated labor force was 117,596 in November 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 Nov-22	Revised Oct-22	Revised Nov-21	Change		
				Oct-22 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22
Total Nonfarm	97,700	96,800	93,300	900	4,400	4.7%
Total Private	79,200	78,800	75,500	400	3,700	4.9%
Goods Producing	18,000	18,200	17,400	-200	600	3.4%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	8,100	8,300	8,300	-200	-200	-2.4%
Manufacturing	9,900	9,900	9,100	0	800	8.8%
Service Providing	79,700	78,600	75,900	1,100	3,800	5.0%
Private Services Providing	61,200	60,600	58,100	600	3,100	5.3%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	17,100	16,600	16,500	500	600	3.6%
Retail Trade	11,100	10,600	11,300	500	-200	-1.8%
Financial Activities	3,900	3,900	3,900	0	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	9,100	9,000	8,500	100	600	7.1%
Leisure and Hospitality	10,900	10,900	10,200	0	700	6.9%
Government	18,500	18,000	17,800	500	700	3.9%
Federal Government	1,500	1,400	1,500	100	0	0.0%
Total State Government	6,000	6,100	6,100	-100	-100	-1.6%
Total Local Government	11,000	10,500	10,200	500	800	7.8%

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 900 from October (revised) to November (preliminary) 2022. Over the year, nonfarm employment increased by 4,400 (4.7 percent). Whatcom County employment is now at pre-recession levels.

- In November, goods producers (construction and manufacturing) recorded employment losses. Construction was down 200 jobs and manufacturing remained unchanged. Most service-providing industries expanded over the month, with the largest gains attributable to trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (specifically within retail trade) and government. Each added 500 jobs in November.

- Over the year, most sectors detailed in this report expanded employment, with the largest gains attributable to manufacturing (up 800) and leisure and hospitality and government (each added 700 jobs). Employment in construction and retail trade (an industry found within trade, transportation, warehousing, and utilities) each dropped by 200.

## Skagit County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 5.4 percent (preliminary) in November 2022—up over the month from 4.3 percent (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.0 percent. The unemployment rate in April 2020 reached a record 18.8 percent.

- Compared to November 2021, the labor force contracted by 782 (1.2 percent). Within that, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 997 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ increased by 215. Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 62,620 in November.

### 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 Nov-22	Revised Oct-22	Revised Nov-21	Change		
				Oct-22 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22
Total Nonfarm	50,900	50,800	50,100	100	800	1.6%
Total Private	39,300	39,200	38,400	100	900	2.3%
Goods Producing	10,600	10,600	10,300	0	300	2.9%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,200	4,200	4,200	0	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	6,400	6,400	6,100	0	300	4.9%
Service Providing	40,300	40,200	39,800	100	500	1.3%
Private Services Providing	28,700	28,600	28,100	100	600	2.1%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	9,500	9,600	10,000	-100	-500	-5.0%
Retail Trade	6,600	6,500	7,100	100	-500	-7.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	4,900	5,000	4,600	-100	300	6.5%
Government	11,600	11,600	11,700	0	-100	-0.9%
Federal Government	300	300	400	0	-100	-25.0%
State Government	1,200	1,300	1,200	-100	0	0.0%
Local Government	10,100	10,000	10,100	100	0	0.0%

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County increased by 100 jobs over the month. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 800 or 1.6 percent. For context, the current level of employment (50,900) is 2,700 (5.6 percent) higher than the observed level in November 2020 but still 1,400 jobs (2.7 percent) shy of the November 2019 reading prior to the pandemic.

- In November 2022, employers in the goods producing sector saw no change relative to October. Trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities shed 100 jobs (despite the addition of 100 jobs in retail trade) and leisure and hospitality employment dipped by 100.
- Over the year, manufacturing and leisure and hospitality each added jobs (+300 each). The deepest 12-month losses were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities (-500); losses were attributed to retail trade (-500).

## Island County

### Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 5.1 percent (preliminary) in November 2022, up from 4.2 percent (revised) over the month. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 4.1 percent. In April 2020, the unemployment rate for Island County was a record 16.5 percent.

- Compared to November 2021, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 297 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 345. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 37,312, up 0.1 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 Nov-22	Revised Oct-22	Revised Nov-21	Change		
				Oct-22 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22
Total Nonfarm	17,640	17,450	17,090	190	550	3.2%
Total Private	13,050	12,960	12,580	90	470	3.7%
Goods Producing	2,060	2,050	1,870	10	190	10.2%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	1,420	1,400	1,260	20	160	12.7%
Manufacturing	640	650	610	-10	30	4.9%
Service Providing	15,580	15,400	15,220	180	360	2.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,680	2,700	2,650	-20	30	1.1%
Retail Trade	2,190	2,220	2,160	-30	30	1.4%
Information and Financial Activities	890	870	870	20	20	2.3%
Professional and Business Services	1,590	1,580	1,540	10	50	3.2%
Education and Health Services	2,500	2,490	2,410	10	90	3.7%
Leisure and Hospitality	2,470	2,420	2,380	50	90	3.8%
Government	4,590	4,490	4,510	100	80	1.8%
Federal Government	1,250	1,250	1,240	0	10	0.8%
State and Local Government	3,340	3,240	3,270	100	70	2.1%
State and Local Government Education	1,550	1,440	1,510	110	40	2.6%

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 190 from October (revised) to November (preliminary) 2022. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs expanded by 550 or 3.2 percent. The tally of Island County jobs has reached pre-recession levels. The number of jobs in November 2022 was 17,640. This is 250 jobs higher than the tally observed in November 2019.

- From October to November, the largest employment gains were observed in government (+100) and the deepest losses were attributable to leisure and hospitality (-160). Both sectors are highly seasonal, and these shifts align with seasonal expectations.
- Year-over-year, most industries detailed in this report added jobs. The largest observed employment gains were attributable to retail trade (-30), within the broad sector of trade, transportation and utilities (-20).

*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 4.1 percent in November 2022 (preliminary), up from 3.3 percent (revised) in October. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 3.7 percent. San Juan’s unemployment rate in April 2020 (the height of the pandemic recession) was 19.2 percent.

- Compared to November 2021, the number of residents counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 22 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 35. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 8,445 resident workers and expanded by 0.2 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 Nov-22	Revised Oct-22	Revised Nov-21	Change		
				Oct-22 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22
Total Nonfarm	5,660	5,520	5,480	140	180	3.3%
Total Private	4,840	4,700	4,620	140	220	4.8%
Goods Producing	1,030	1,020	980	10	50	5.1%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	780	770	740	10	40	5.4%
Manufacturing	250	250	240	0	10	4.2%
Service Providing	4,630	4,500	4,500	130	130	2.9%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	1,000	980	1,000	20	0	0.0%
Information and Financial Activities	390	410	390	-20	0	0.0%
Professional and Business Services	510	510	500	0	10	2.0%
Education and Health Services	560	570	560	-10	0	0.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,150	1,000	1,000	150	150	15.0%
Government	820	820	860	0	-40	-4.7%

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County expanded by 140 in November (preliminary). Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was up 180 or 3.3 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 October (revised) to November (preliminary) 2022, the county's largest sector – leisure and hospitality- expanded employment by an estimated 150 jobs. Small gains were also observed in trade, transportation and utilities and construction. Information and financial activities and education and health services each shed jobs over the month.
- Over the year, the payroll tally in San Juan County expanded by 180. The county's largest sector, leisure and hospitality, was responsible for the lions' share of growth, adding 150 jobs. Construction employment expanded by 40 and manufacturing and professional and business services each expanded by 10. All other sectors in this report were unchanged.

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

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. ERFC estimates indicate that Washington state employment will have expanded by 5.5 percent from 2021 to 2022, and will expand by 3.3 percent in 2023. The November forecast and December revised forecast are published online at [www.erfc.wa.gov](http://www.erfc.wa.gov).

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