

Northwest Washington Labor Market Review

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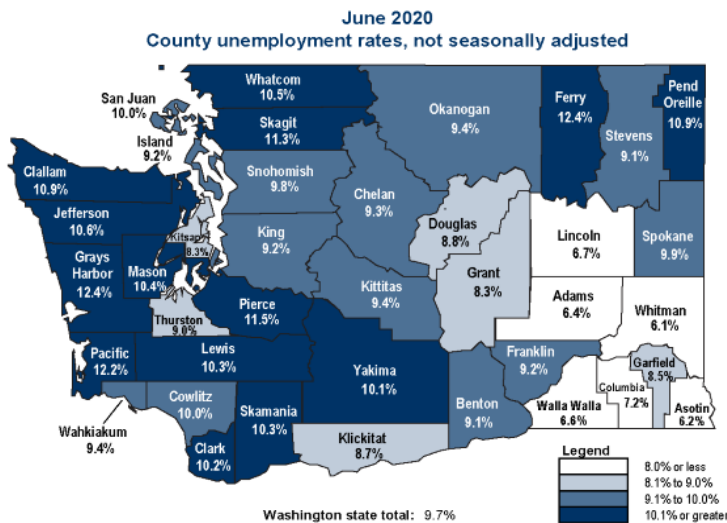
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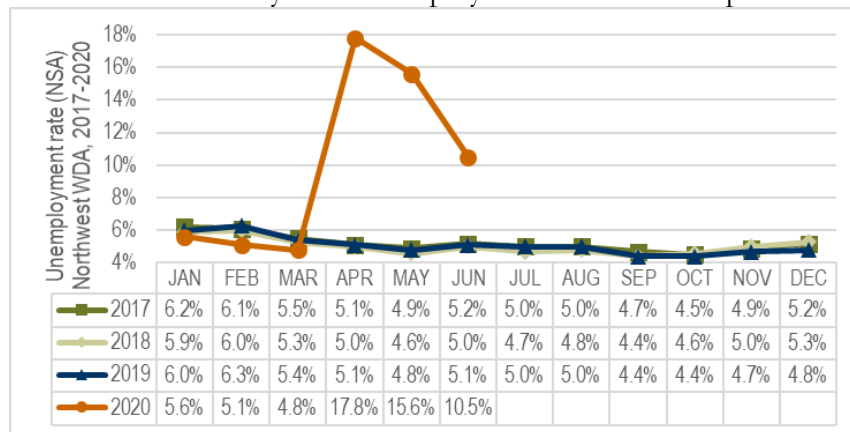
For all intents and purposes, this is the third report to record the effects of the Covid-19 economic situation in Northwest Washington.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 71,000 in June 2020. BLS estimates the private sector gained 71,700 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 700 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for June 2019 through June 2020 indicate a decrease in employment of 312,400 for the state. The private sector lost 265,700 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 46,700 jobs over the year.



Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for June 2020 is 9.8 percent. The revised estimated May 2020 unemployment rate is at 15.1 percent. The June 2019 unemployment rate was 4.3 percent.



BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. May’s preliminary estimated gain of 52,500 jobs was revised to a gain of 146,400 jobs.

The unemployment rate for the Northwest Workforce Development Area jumped to 17.8 percent in April. In June, the four-county area had an unemployment rate of 10.5 percent.

Whatcom County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Whatcom County was 10.5 percent in June 2020 (preliminary), down from a record-breaking 17.7 percent reported in April 2020 and 15.6 in May (revised). The unemployment rate in June 2019 was 5.1 percent.

- Compared to 12 months ago, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 6,312 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 6,276. The labor force as a whole remained virtually unchanged. Whatcom County’s labor force was estimated at 115,432 in June 2020.

Whatcom County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Bellingham Metropolitan Statistical Area (Whatcom County)
 Data benchmarked through December 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jun-20	Revised May-20	Revised Jun-19	Change		
				May-20 Jun-20	Jun-19 Jun-20	Jun-19 Jun-20
Total Nonfarm	89,200	86,900	97,400	2,300	-8,200	-8.4%
Total Private	72,900	70,000	78,300	2,900	-5,400	-6.9%
Goods Producing	17,900	16,700	18,900	1,200	-1,000	-5.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	7,600	6,700	8,000	900	-400	-5.0%
Manufacturing	10,300	10,000	10,900	300	-600	-5.5%
Service Providing	71,300	70,200	78,500	1,100	-7,200	-9.2%
Private Services Providing	55,000	53,300	59,400	1,700	-4,400	-7.4%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	16,300	15,100	16,600	1,200	-300	-1.8%
Retail Trade	11,600	10,000	11,200	1,600	400	3.6%
Financial Activities	3,800	3,700	4,000	100	-200	-5.0%
Professional and Business Services	8,400	8,300	8,600	100	-200	-2.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	6,700	5,700	11,200	1,000	-4,500	-40.2%
Government	16,300	16,900	19,100	-600	-2,800	-14.7%
Federal Government	1,400	1,400	1,500	0	-100	-6.7%
Total State Government	5,600	6,100	6,800	-500	-1,200	-17.6%
Total Local Government	9,300	9,400	10,800	-100	-1,500	-13.9%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll in Whatcom County (not seasonally adjusted) increased by 2,300 from May to June 2020. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs decreased by 8,200 (8.4 percent).

- In June, net employment expanded, with most major industries reporting increases. The largest increases were observed in trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities – specifically within retail trade (up 1,600). Government employment dropped in June.
- All major industries detailed in this report shed jobs over the year. The largest decreases came from leisure and hospitality (down 4,500) and government (down 2,800).

Skagit County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Skagit County was 11.3 percent in June 2020 (preliminary); this is down over the month, following a record-setting high unemployment rate of 19.1 percent in April and 16.5 percent in May. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.5 percent.

- Compared to June 2019, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ dropped by 4,429 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ expanded by 3,618. Skagit County’s resident labor force was estimated at 62,710 decreasing by 1.3 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 December 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jun-20	Revised May-20	Revised Jun-19	Change		
				May-20 Jun-20	Jun-19 Jun-20	Jun-19 Jun-20
Total Nonfarm	47,300	45,300	53,300	2,000	-6,000	-11.3%
Total Private	36,500	35,000	41,100	1,500	-4,600	-11.2%
Goods Producing	9,600	9,200	11,200	400	-1,600	-14.3%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	4,000	3,700	5,000	300	-1,000	-20.0%
Manufacturing	5,600	5,500	6,200	100	-600	-9.7%
Service Providing	37,700	36,100	42,100	1,600	-4,400	-10.5%
Private Services Providing	26,900	25,800	29,900	1,100	-3,000	-10.0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	10,000	8,700	10,000	1,300	0	0.0%
Retail Trade	8,100	6,800	7,200	1,300	900	12.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	3,200	2,700	5,700	500	-2,500	-43.9%
Government	10,800	10,300	12,200	500	-1,400	-11.5%
Federal Government	400	400	400	0	0	0.0%
State Government	1,300	1,400	1,500	-100	-200	-13.3%
Local Government	9,100	8,500	10,300	600	-1,200	-11.7%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm employment in Skagit County increased by 2,000 from May to June 2020. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs contracted by 6,000 or 11.3 percent.

- Over the month, all major industries in this report added jobs. The industry that added the most jobs was trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities, with job gains observed within retail trade (up 1,300).
- Covid-19 related losses reverberated throughout the economy, showing up in the year over year estimates for all industries. The deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (down 2,500). Retail trade, a subset of trade, transportation, warehousing and utilities was up over the year.

Island County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in Island County was 9.2 percent (preliminary) in May 2020. This is down from 15.8 percent reported in April and 13.7 percent reported in May (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 5.2 percent.

- Compared to June 2019, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 2,605 and the number of people counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work expanded by 1,307. Island County’s civilian labor force was estimated as 34,667 in June 2020.

Island County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted
Oak Harbor Micropolitan Statistical Area (Island County)

Data benchmarked through December 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jun-20	Revised May-20	Revised Jun-19	Change		
				May-20 Jun-20	Jun-19 Jun-20	Jun-19 Jun-20
Total Nonfarm	15,700	15,620	17,510	80	-1,810	-10.3%
Total Private	11,230	11,050	12,760	180	-1,530	-12.0%
Goods Producing	1,390	1,360	1,950	30	-560	-28.7%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	580	560	1,160	20	-580	-50.0%
Manufacturing	810	800	790	10	20	2.5%
Service Providing	14,310	14,260	15,560	50	-1,250	-8.0%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,730	2,670	2,760	60	-30	-1.1%
Retail Trade	2,120	2,070	2,140	50	-20	-0.9%
Information and Financial Activities	790	780	830	10	-40	-4.8%
Professional and Business Services	1,230	1,220	1,280	10	-50	-3.9%
Education and Health Services	2,500	2,470	2,420	30	80	3.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	1,730	1,690	2,620	40	-890	-34.0%
Government	4,470	4,570	4,750	-100	-280	-5.9%
Federal Government	1,300	1,320	1,310	-20	-10	-0.8%
State and Local Government	3,170	3,250	3,440	-80	-270	-7.8%
State and Local Government Education	1,330	1,390	1,590	-60	-260	-16.4%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Total nonfarm payroll jobs in Island County expanded by 80 from May to June 2020. Year-over-year, the tally of nonfarm jobs plunged by 1,810 or 10.3 percent.

- From May to June, most industries expanded employment. The largest increases were attributable to trade, transportation and utilities (up 60), with most job gains recorded in retail trade. Government shed 100 jobs over the month.
- Year-over-year, the deepest losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (down 890) and construction (down 580). Education and health services and manufacturing are the only two industries that expanded employment over the year.

Note that employment statistics for Island County do not include military employment.

San Juan County

Local Area Unemployment Statistics

The unemployment rate in San Juan County decreased from 17.8 percent in April (revised) to 16.1 percent in May and 10.0 percent in June (preliminary). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 3.5 percent.

- Compared to June 2019, the number of people counted as ‘employed’ decreased by 2,051 and the number counted as ‘unemployed’ or actively seeking work increased by 436. Altogether, the San Juan County labor force consisted of an estimated 7,573 resident workers and contracted by 17.6 percent over the year.

San Juan County local area payroll jobs

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

San Juan County

Data benchmarked through December 2019

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Jun-20	Revised May-20	Revised Jun-19	Change		
				May-20 Jun-20	Jun-19 Jun-20	Jun-19 Jun-20
Total Nonfarm	4,670	4,540	6,520	130	-1,850	-28.4%
Total Private	3,900	3,770	5,690	130	-1,790	-31.5%
Goods Producing	930	910	1,000	20	-70	-7.0%
Mining, Logging, and Construction	720	710	740	10	-20	-2.7%
Manufacturing	210	200	260	10	-50	-19.2%
Service Providing	3,740	3,630	5,520	110	-1,780	-32.2%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	970	940	1,140	30	-170	-14.9%
Information and Financial Activities	340	340	390	0	-50	-12.8%
Professional and Business Services	420	410	440	10	-20	-4.5%
Education and Health Services	500	500	630	0	-130	-20.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	550	480	1,890	70	-1,340	-70.9%
Government	770	770	830	0	-60	-7.2%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

Net nonfarm payroll in San Juan County expanded over the month (up 130), but not the usual summer employment gains San Juan businesses are accustomed to. Year-over-year, total nonfarm employment was down 1,850 or 28.4 percent.

- San Juan County has a highly seasonal economy, due to its orientation toward tourism. Most industries shed jobs in the winter and return with the sun. There was little movement over the month, but there were some gains in June. Leisure and hospitality added 70 – the largest increase of any sector this month. Given the timing of Covid-19, the tourism-reliant San Juan Islands are likely facing a difficult summer ahead.
- Over the year, there was a net employment loss, with all industries reporting 12-month losses. The largest one-year losses were observed in leisure and hospitality (down 1,340 or 70.9 percent).

Weekly Unemployment Insurance Claims information:

In March, 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.

Northwest weekly initial claims from March 1 to July 18, 2020:

Claim week	Whatcom	Skagit	Island	San Juan
Week 9 (March 1-7)	198	127	63	8
Week 10 (March 8-14)	238	163	66	17
Week 11 (March 15-21)	4,428	1,966	949	279
Week 12 (March 22-28)	6,268	3,425	1,520	465
Week 13 (March 29-April 4)	5,885	3,230	1,584	443
Week 14 (April 5-11)	3,968	2,731	1,577	271
Week 15 (April 12-18)	2,612	1,445	713	191
Week 16 (April 19-25)	4,343	2,164	1,297	503
Week 17 (April 26-May 2)	3,170	1,609	882	336
Week 18 (May 3-9)	2,914	1,529	755	195
Week 19 (May 10-16)	3,768	1,902	1,037	233
Week 20 (May 17-23)	1,418	753	386	104
Week 21 (May 24-30)	959	590	238	64
Week 22 (May 31-June 6)	801	487	215	47
Week 23 (June 7-13)*	955	468	192	37
Week 24 (June 14-20)	952	502	208	43
Week 25 (June 21-27)	1,091	573	201	39
Week 26 (June 28-July 4)	982	449	188	43
Week 27 (July 5-11)	1,361	616	304	75
Week 28 (July 12-18)	870	460	201	59

*Labor force and payroll reporting reflects employment during week 19 (June 7-13)

Weekly initial claims information is published every Thursday.

Weekly claims data can be found here: <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/unemployment-insurance-data>

Additional information can be found here: <https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19>

Forecast information for Washington state:

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. The most recent forecast was issued in June and updated in July. Forecast information is available 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.