Employment estimates in this report are generated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Monthly employment estimates are subject to revision in subsequent months when more sample data become available.

BLS data in this report are rounded to the nearest 100.

Monthly Employment Report
for May 2015

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 7,700 from April 2015 to May 2015.[1] BLS estimates the private sector gained 8,400 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 700 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for May 2014 through May 2015 indicate an increase in employment of 111,500 for the state. The private sector added 100,000 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 11,500 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2015 is 5.4 percent. The revised estimated April 2015 unemployment rate was at 5.5 percent. The May 2014 unemployment rate was 6.2 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. April's preliminary estimated gain of 8,200 jobs was revised to a gain of 7,800 jobs.

For more information, call Paul Turek, labor economist at 360-407-2306.

Resident civilian labor force and unemployment, seasonally adjusted

The **resident civilian labor force** is the total number of people in the workforce, employed and unemployed, ages 16 and up.

The number of **unemployed** is the estimated number of people who currently do not have a job, are available for work and have actively looked for work in the last four weeks.

The **unemployment rate** is the ratio of the estimated number of unemployed divided by the civilian labor force.

Resident civilian labor force and unemployment, seasonally adjusted
United States and Washington state, April and May, 2014 and 2015
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

	May 2015 (Preliminary)	April 2015 (Revised)	May 2014 (Revised)	April 2014 (Revised)
United States				
Unemployment rate				
Seasonally adjusted	5.5%	5.4%	6.3%	6.2%
Washington				
Unemployment rate	5.4%	5.5%	6.2%	6.2%
Resident labor force	3,551,400	3,549,200	3,471,100	3,467,400
Unemployed	191,000	196,500	213,900	215,100
Seattle/Bellevue/Everett				
Unemployment rate	4.1%	4.3%	4.8%	4.9%
Resident labor force	1,586,600	1,585,400	1,549,400	1,549,400
Unemployed	65,100	67,400	74,300	75,200

[1]*Most of the employment numbers discussed in this report refers to jobs, not persons. For example, if a person holds two positions, these positions are counted as two jobs in the employment series. In the section titled "Unemployment," these positions refer to individuals, not jobs. In this case, a person holding two jobs is counted only once.*

Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

Labor Market and Performance Analysis
June 2015

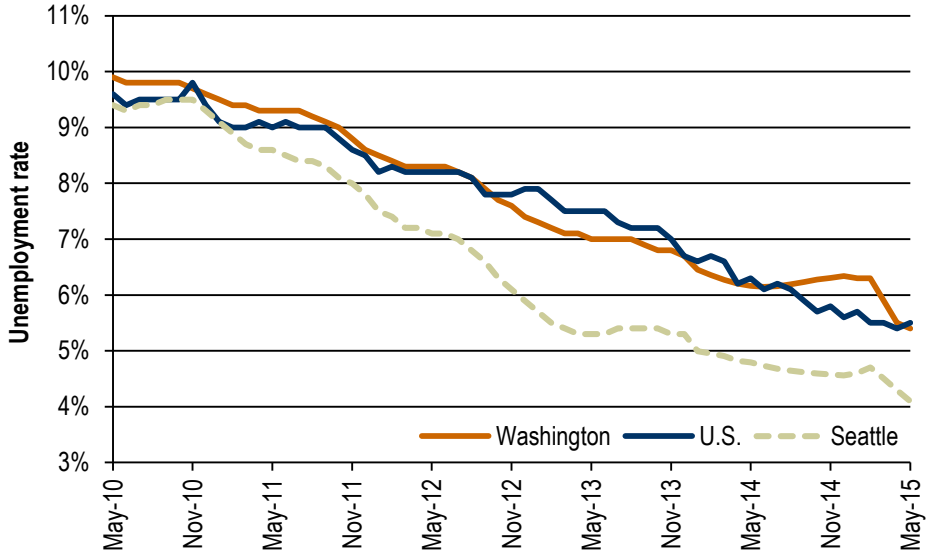
Unemployment, seasonally adjusted

The BLS estimates Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2015 was 5.4 percent. The revised estimated April 2015 unemployment rate was 5.5 percent.

According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed people fell by 5,500 in May 2015 compared to April 2015. At the same time, the number of employed people rose by an estimated 7,700. Overall, this amounted to an increase of 2,200 people in the labor force.

The preliminary May 2015 unemployment rate is 0.8 percentage points below the May 2014 rate of 6.2 percent.

Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted
U.S., Washington and Seattle, May 2010 through May 2015
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



May 2015 preliminary unemployment rates:

U.S. (preliminary) 5.5%
Washington (preliminary) 5.4%
Seattle area (preliminary) 4.1%

Employment change and moving average, seasonally adjusted

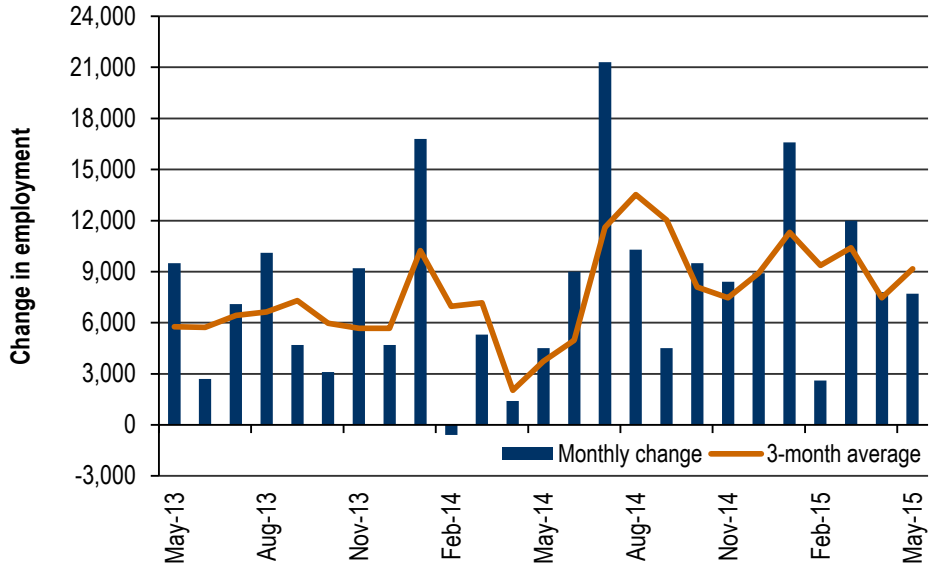
Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment increased by 7,700 jobs from April 2015 to May 2015.

Recent employment change
March 2015: up 12,000 jobs (revised)

April 2015: up 7,800 jobs (revised)

May 2015: up 7,700 jobs (preliminary)

Monthly employment change and three-month moving average, seasonally adjusted
Washington state, May 2013 through May 2015
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics



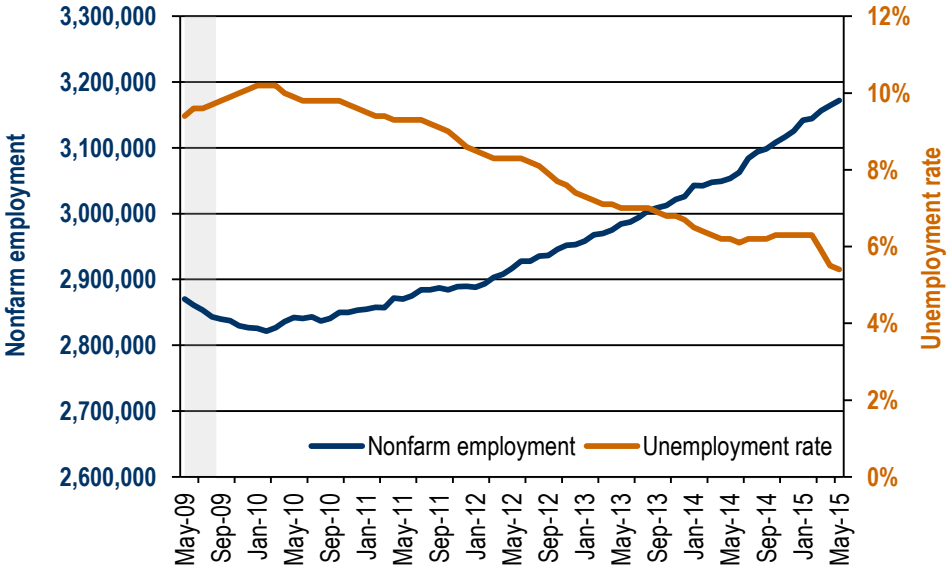
Employment and unemployment, seasonally adjusted

February 2008
(start of recent employment recession in Washington)
Nonfarm employment: 3,010,900
Unemployment rate: 4.6%

February 2010
(end of recent employment recession in Washington)
Nonfarm employment: 2,821,300
Unemployment rate: 10.2%

May 2015 (preliminary)
Nonfarm employment: 3,172,200
Unemployment rate: 5.4%

Nonfarm employment and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted
Washington state, May 2009 through May 2015
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



U.S. recession is shaded in gray.

Understanding what seasonally adjusted means

Over the course of a year, the size of the state's labor force and the levels of employment and unemployment undergo sharp fluctuations due to such seasonal events as changes in weather, reduced or expanded production, harvest, major holidays and the opening and closing of schools. The effect of such seasonal variation can be very large; seasonal fluctuations may account for as much as 95 percent of the month-to-month changes in unemployment at the national level.

Because these seasonal events follow a more or less regular pattern each year, their influence on statistical trends can be eliminated by adjusting the statistics from one month to the next. These adjustments make nonseasonal developments, such as declines in economic activity, easier to spot. For example, the large number of youth entering the labor force each June is likely to obscure any other changes that have taken place relative to May, making it difficult to determine if the level of economic activity has risen or declined. However, because the effect of students finishing school in previous years is known, the statistics for the current year can be adjusted to allow for a comparable change. The adjusted figure provides a more useful tool with which to analyze changes in economic activity.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Industry employment in Washington, seasonally adjusted

One-month employment change by industry

Based on a BLS survey of businesses and governments, Washington gained an estimated 7,700 jobs, during the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- Overall, eight industries expanded employment in May and five contracted.
- Private-sector employment is estimated to have increased by 8,400 and government employment decreased by 700.
- Retail trade employment increased by 2,900, with 1,700 of the increase occurring in the category of other retail trade.
- The increase of 2,200 jobs in education and health services was driven by a gain of 1,700 in health services and social assistance.
- Employment in financial activities increased by 700, with a gain of 1,600 jobs in real estate, rental and leasing offsetting a loss of 900 jobs in finance and insurance.
- Construction employment increased by 400 overall, with the major gains coming in the construction of buildings.
- The number of government jobs was down by 700. Federal government and local government employment increased by 400 and 700 respectively, while state government employment fell by 1,800.

Estimated one-month employment change by industry, seasonally adjusted
Washington state, April 2015 to May 2015
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Total nonfarm	**7,700**
Retail trade	2,900
Education and health services	2,200
Wholesale trade	1,900
Information	700
Financial activities	700
Leisure and hospitality	600
Construction	400
Professional and business services	200
Manufacturing	-100
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-200
Mining and logging	-300
Other services	-600
Government	-700

Industry employment in Washington, not seasonally adjusted

Change by industry over the year

Based on a BLS survey of businesses and governments, Washington added an estimated 111,500 jobs from May 2014 through May 2015:

- Overall, twelve major industries expanded and one contracted.
- Private-sector employment rose 4.0 percent, up an estimated 100,000 jobs.
- Public-sector employment increased 2.1 percent, a net gain of 11,500 jobs.
- Professional and business services employment increased by 19,500, led by a 10,100 increase in administrative and support services.
- Employment in construction was up 19,400 with the number of employed in the specialty trade contractor sector up 13,300.
- Education and health services employment increased by 16,100 with 12,800 jobs added in health services and social assistance.
- Retailers added 14,600 jobs. Other retail trade, which includes online retail trade, was up by 8,500 jobs.
- Employment in the leisure and hospitality industry is up by 7,100, with 5,500 jobs added in food services and drinking places.

Estimated employment change by industry over the year, not seasonally adjusted
Washington state, May 2014 through May 2015
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Total nonfarm	**111,500**
Professional and business services	19,500
Construction	19,400
Education and health services	16,100
Retail trade	14,600
Government	11,500
Leisure and hospitality	7,100
Financial activities	6,800
Wholesale trade	6,500
Manufacturing	3,900
Other services	3,700
Information	1,800
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	1,000
Mining and logging	-400

Seasonally adjusted employment

Seasonally adjusted numbers account for normal seasonal patterns that occur year after year, such as strong seasonal hiring in retail trade around the holidays. Taking into account normal seasonal variations makes it possible to see unusual changes in employment levels.

Normal seasonal change is the expected monthly change in employment based on history.

Estimated change is the employment change over the month based on BLS survey data.

Seasonally adjusted change is change in employment accounting for normal seasonal patterns.

Normal seasonal change, estimated change and seasonally adjusted change
Washington state, May 2015
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
Total nonfarm	**19,500**	**27,200**	**7,700**
Leisure and hospitality	6,700	7,300	600
Construction	4,000	4,400	400
Retail trade	2,400	5,300	2,900
Manufacturing	1,200	1,100	-100
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	1,200	1,000	-200
Professional and business services	1,100	1,300	200
Other services	900	300	-600
Wholesale trade	700	400	-300
Education and health services	500	2,700	2,200
Financial activities	400	1,100	700
Government	300	-400	-700
Mining and logging	300	0	-300
Information	0	700	700

Based on historical patterns, Washington employment typically rises by 19,500 from April to May. This year the state gained an estimated 27,200 jobs, amounting to a seasonally adjusted increase of 7,700 jobs.

- Employment in leisure and hospitality normally rises by 6,700. It is estimated to have increased by 7,300 this May yielding a gain of 600 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- The change on a seasonally adjusted basis was an estimated gain of 400 jobs in construction in May. The normal seasonal increase is 4,000. It is estimated to have increased by 4,400 this May.
- The normal seasonal gain in retail trade employment is 2,400 in May. The estimated increase was 5,300 yielding a 2,900 gain on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- The estimated employment increase in professional and business services was 1,300. The normal seasonal increase is 1,100, so on a seasonally adjusted basis, professional and business services employment rose by 200.
- Typically government employment increases by 300 in May. On a seasonally adjusted basis, government employment fell by 700 as the estimated decrease was 400.

Contact an economist

We have seven regional economists serving local labor markets in Washington. Regional economists can help you find and use labor-market data, fulfill special data requests and answer questions about the labor market in your area. They serve professionals and organizations in their areas for WorkSource offices, workforce development councils, non-profit organizations, higher education, businesses and the news media.

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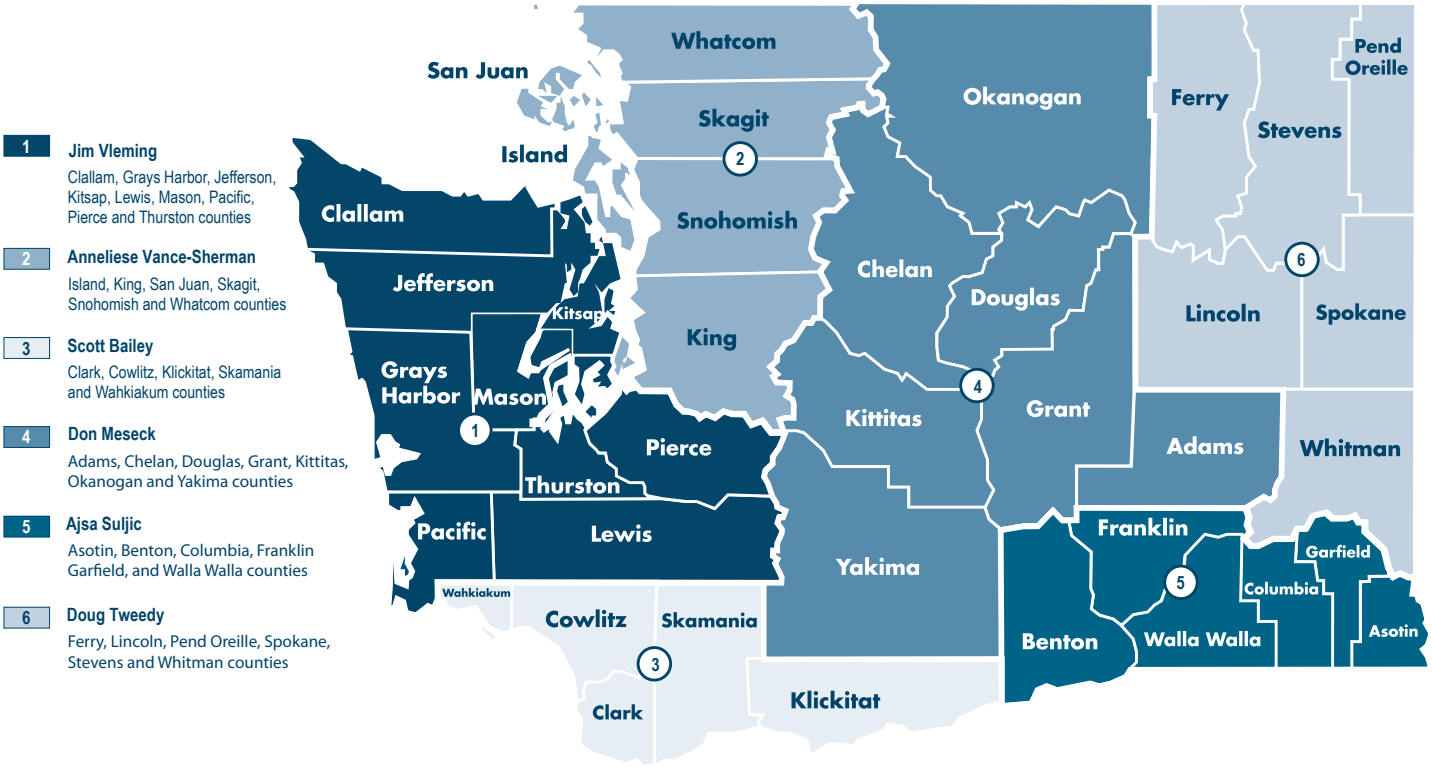
Washington State Regional Labor Economist Reporting Areas



Note: Due to changes in the processing of the monthly employment data by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the county-level information will be available at 10 a.m., June 23, 2015. The publication schedule for 2015 can be found at: https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/economic-reports/monthly-employment-report

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