

# Monthly Employment Report for March 2016



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.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 9,000 from February 2016 to March 2016.<sup>1</sup> BLS estimates the private sector gained 8,400 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 600 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for March 2015 through March 2016 indicate an increase in employment of 98,200 for the state. The private sector added 87,600 jobs while the public sector gained an estimated 10,600 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March 2016 is 5.8 percent. The revised estimated February 2016 unemployment rate was also at 5.8 percent. The March 2015 unemployment rate was 5.6 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. February's preliminary estimated gain of 10,600 jobs was revised to a gain of 13,400 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, February and March, 2015 and 2016  
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

	March 2016 (Preliminary)	February 2016 (Revised)	March 2015 (Revised)	February 2015 (Revised)
<b>United States</b>				
Unemployment rate <i>Seasonally adjusted</i>	5.0%	4.9%	5.5%	5.5%
<b>Washington</b>				
Unemployment rate	5.8%	5.8%	5.6%	5.7%
Resident labor force	3,619,000	3,605,700	3,526,500	3,523,900
Unemployed	208,600	208,700	198,300	200,100
<b>Seattle/Bellevue/Everett</b>				
Unemployment rate	4.9%	5.0%	4.4%	4.4%
Resident labor force	1,608,800	1,601,500	1,573,300	1,571,600
Unemployed	79,300	80,600	69,400	63,900

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Unemployment, seasonally adjusted

The BLS estimates Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March 2016 was 5.8 percent. The revised estimated February 2016 unemployment rate was at 5.8 percent.

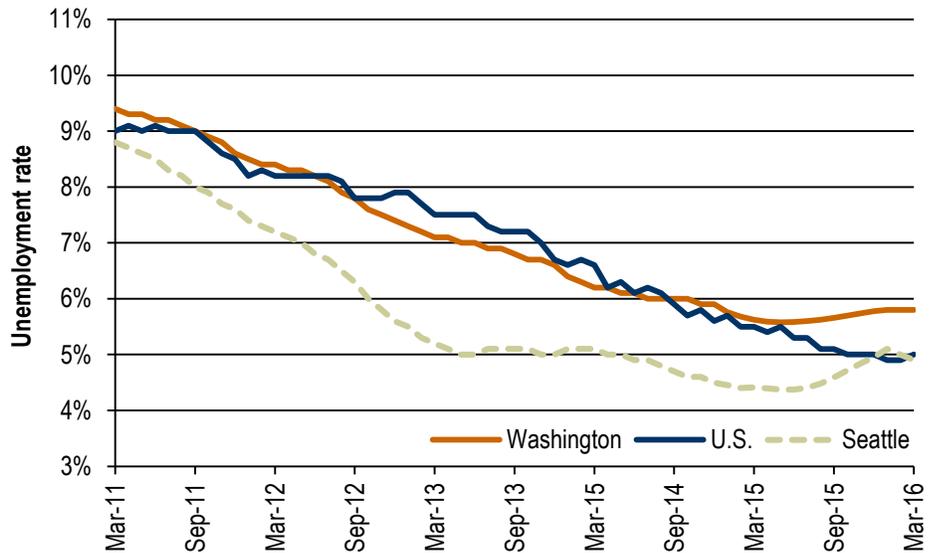
According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed people fell by 100 in March 2016 compared to February 2016. At the same time, the number of employed people rose by an estimated 13,400. Overall, this amounted to an increase of 13,300 people in the labor force.

The preliminary March 2016 unemployment rate is 0.2 percentage points above the March 2015 rate of 5.6 percent.

### Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted

U.S., Washington and Seattle, March 2011 through March 2016

Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



**March 2016 preliminary unemployment rates:**

U.S. (preliminary) 5.0%  
 Washington (preliminary) 5.8%  
 Seattle area (preliminary) 4.9%

## Employment change and moving average, seasonally adjusted

Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment increased by 9,000 jobs from February 2016 to March 2016.

Recent employment change  
**January 2016:** up 14,000 jobs (revised)

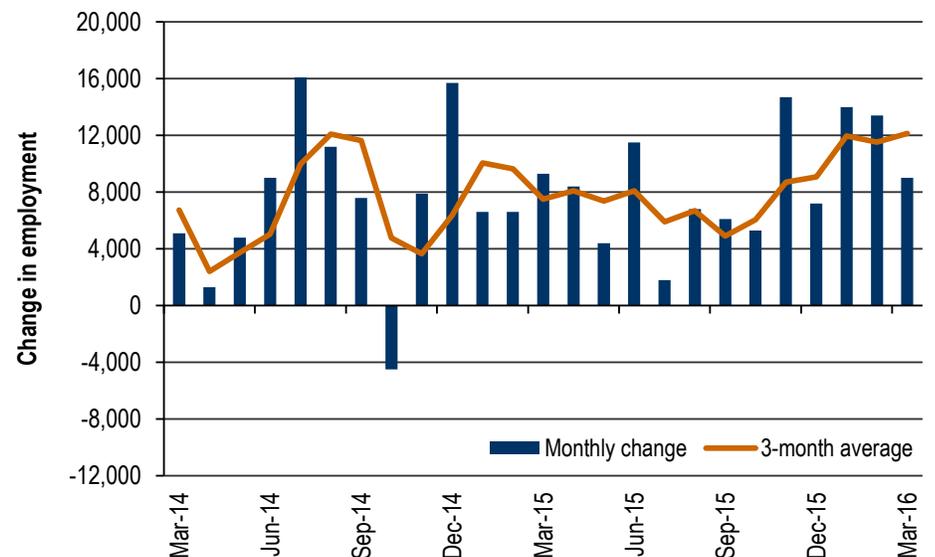
**February 2016:** up 13,400 jobs (revised)

**March 2016:** up 9,000 jobs (preliminary)

### Monthly employment change and three-month moving average, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, March 2014 through March 2016

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: 3,009,300  
Unemployment rate: 4.8%

### February 2010

(end of recent employment recession in Washington)

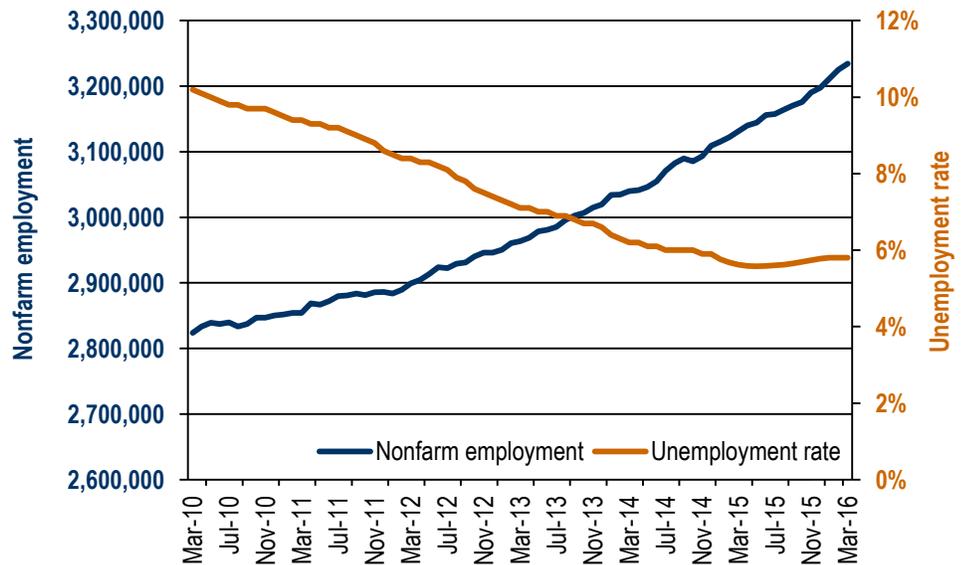
Nonfarm employment: 2,818,100  
Unemployment rate: 10.3%

### March 2016 (preliminary)

Nonfarm employment: 3,234,200  
Unemployment rate: 5.8%

Nonfarm employment and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted  
Washington state, March 2010 through March 2016

Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



## 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 9,000 jobs during the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- Overall, eleven industries expanded employment in March, one contracted and one was unchanged.
- Private sector employment is estimated to have increased by 8,400 and government employment increased by 600.
- Professional and business services employment rose by 2,200, with 1,600 jobs added in professional, scientific and technical services.
- Retail trade employment increased by 1,800, led by an increase of 1,200 jobs in other retail trade.
- Transportation, warehousing and utilities employment increased by 1,200 overall, with all of the jobs added in transportation and warehousing.
- The number of jobs in construction increased by 1,100, with a 1,500 gain in employment in specialty trade contractors offsetting a 400 job loss in building construction.
- Employment in information increased by 1,000, with software publishers adding 300 jobs.

Estimated one-month employment change by industry, seasonally adjusted  
Washington state, February 2016 to March 2016

Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>9,000</b>
Professional and business services	2,200
Retail trade	1,800
Wholesale trade	1,300
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	1,200
Construction	1,100
Information	1,000
Government	600
Manufacturing	500
Leisure and hospitality	400
Other services	400
Mining and logging	100
Financial activities	0
Education and health services	-1,600

## 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 98,200 from March 2015 through March 2016:

- Overall, eleven major industries expanded and two declined.
- Private-sector employment rose 3.5 percent, up an estimated 87,600 jobs.
- Public-sector employment increased 1.9 percent, a net gain of 10,600 jobs.
- Professional and business services employment increased by 17,100, led by an 8,100 increase in professional, scientific and technical services.
- Retailers added 14,900 jobs. Other retail trade, which includes online retail trade, was up by 8,100 jobs.
- Employment in the leisure and hospitality industry is up by 14,300, with 8,700 jobs added in food services and drinking places.
- Employment in construction is up 10,900 with the number employed as specialty trade contractors up 8,400.
- Education and health services employment increased by 9,000 with 5,800 of the jobs added in ambulatory healthcare services.

Estimated employment change by industry over the year, not seasonally adjusted Washington state, March 2015 through March 2016

Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>98,200</b>
Professional and business services	17,100
Retail trade	14,900
Leisure and hospitality	14,300
Construction	10,900
Government	10,600
Education and health services	9,000
Information	7,900
Wholesale trade	5,200
Financial activities	3,900
Other services	3,700
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	3,600
Mining and logging	-600
Manufacturing	-2,300

## 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.

Based on historical patterns, Washington employment typically rises by 11,800 from February to March. This year the state gained an estimated 20,800 jobs, amounting to a seasonally adjusted increase of 9,000 jobs.

- Employment in leisure and hospitality normally rises by 3,500. It is estimated to have increased by 3,900 this March yielding a gain of 400 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- The estimated employment increase in construction was 3,000. The normal seasonal increase is 1,900, so on a seasonally adjusted basis, construction employment rose by 1,100.

Normal seasonal change, estimated change and seasonally adjusted change  
Washington state, March 2016

Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>11,800</b>	<b>20,800</b>	<b>9,000</b>
Leisure and hospitality	3,500	3,900	400
Professional and business services	2,600	4,800	2,200
Government	2,500	3,100	600
Construction	1,900	3,000	1,100
Other services	800	1,200	400
Wholesale trade	600	1,900	1,300
Education and health services	500	-1,100	-1,600
Manufacturing	400	900	500
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	0	1,200	1,200
Mining and logging	-100	0	100
Retail trade	-100	1,700	1,800
Financial activities	-200	-200	0
Information	-600	400	1,000

- The change on a seasonally adjusted basis was an estimated loss of 1,600 jobs in education and health services in March. The normal seasonal increase is 500. It is estimated to have decreased by 1,100 this March.
- The normal seasonal gain in manufacturing employment is 400 in March. The estimated increase was 900 yielding a 500 gain on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- Typically, retail trade employment decreases by 100 in March. On a seasonally adjusted basis, retail trade employment increased by 1,800 as the estimated increase was 1,700.

## 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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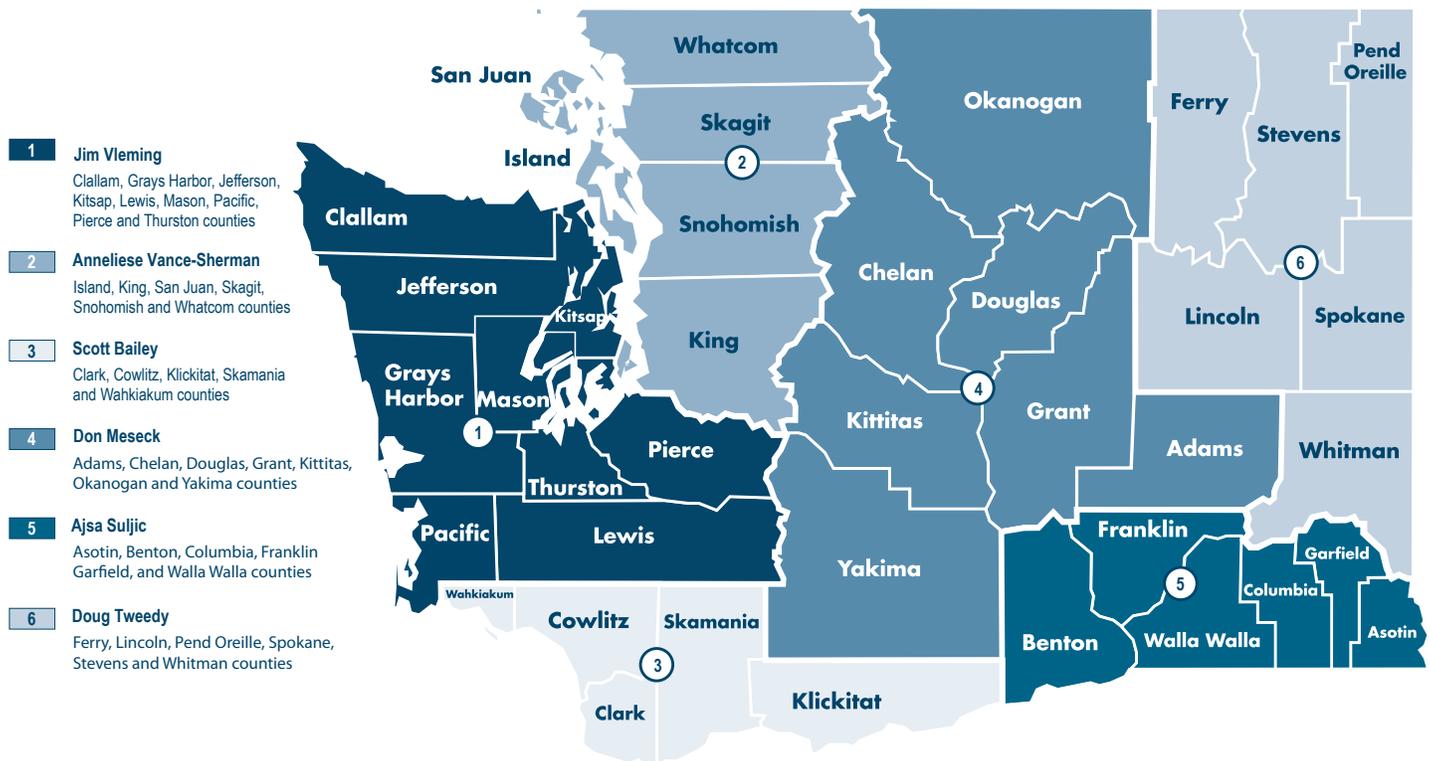
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### Contact an economist online!

## 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., April 19, 2016. The publication schedule for 2016 can be found at: <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/economic-reports/monthly-employment-report>

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