



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE

Unemployment Benefits Exhaustee Survey Report

July 2011

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Washington State Employment Security Department

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Contents

Exhaustee survey report

Summary.....	2
Quantitative survey results.....	4
Qualitative survey results	7

Appendices

Appendix A – Demographics, county of residence, industry and occupation	10
Appendix B – Claimants, exhaustees and location of exhaustee employers	14
Appendix C – Survey methodology	17

Summary

In April 2011, the Employment Security Department conducted a survey of people in Washington who had used up all of their unemployment benefits to learn about their current employment situation, programs or services they used to look for work and barriers they encountered during their search.

Individuals who have used all of their available weeks of unemployment benefits are known as exhaustees. Typically, unemployment benefits are available for up to 26 weeks. However, due to extended benefits and emergency unemployment compensation, many exhaustees were eligible for up to 99 weeks of unemployment benefits. At the time the survey was developed, 47,026 Washington workers had exhausted their unemployment benefits.

While all the respondents to this survey are unemployment exhaustees, the length of time since their last unemployment payment may vary. This is not a cohort study, but a point-in-time sample representing all recent exhaustees.

The survey was conducted in support of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's "Retooling Washington" initiative. Retooling Washington is an effort of the state's workforce-development system partners to identify ways to make a difference quickly in the economic well-being of employers and unemployed workers.

Survey results

Only about 25 percent of those who responded to the survey had found work. Most of these said they used online resources and networking to find their jobs.

More than 54 percent of the reemployed exhaustees had found work in King, Pierce or Snohomish counties. Another 19 percent of reemployed exhaustees found work outside the state of Washington.

Eight in 10 reemployed exhaustees who responded to the survey were earning less money than they did prior to becoming jobless. At the time of the survey, the average wage of reemployed exhaustees was \$18.12. The average wage for the same group was \$25.38 prior to becoming unemployed.

Of the exhaustees responding to the survey who have not found work, more than 86 percent were still looking for work, and nearly half said age is their greatest barrier to finding work.

Survey results of particular interest include the following:

- Nearly 90 percent (3,942 of 4,451 respondents) of respondents said they visited a WorkSource office during their unemployment benefits claim period.
- More than 46 percent (392 of 847 respondents) of reemployed exhaustees found WorkSource services helpful in finding employment.
- Reemployed exhaustees cited résumé assistance, job-search help, use of office equipment and classes as some of the most helpful WorkSource services.
- One in 12 exhaustees who have not found work cited lack of education or skills as his or her greatest barrier to finding employment.

The average and median age of exhaustees is 47. The survey asked exhaustees if they had retired, but because responses to this question were inconsistent, the results are not included in this report.

About the survey

The survey was emailed to 31,744 exhaustees for whom Employment Security had email addresses, and was conducted April 18-29, 2011, using SurveyMonkey. The department received responses from 5,065 exhaustees.

The survey asked yes-no questions and follow-up questions that allowed the respondents to answer as they wished. Respondents who were employed were also asked for information on their employment. Respondents' comments to the open-ended questions were categorized using key words and conditional formatting.

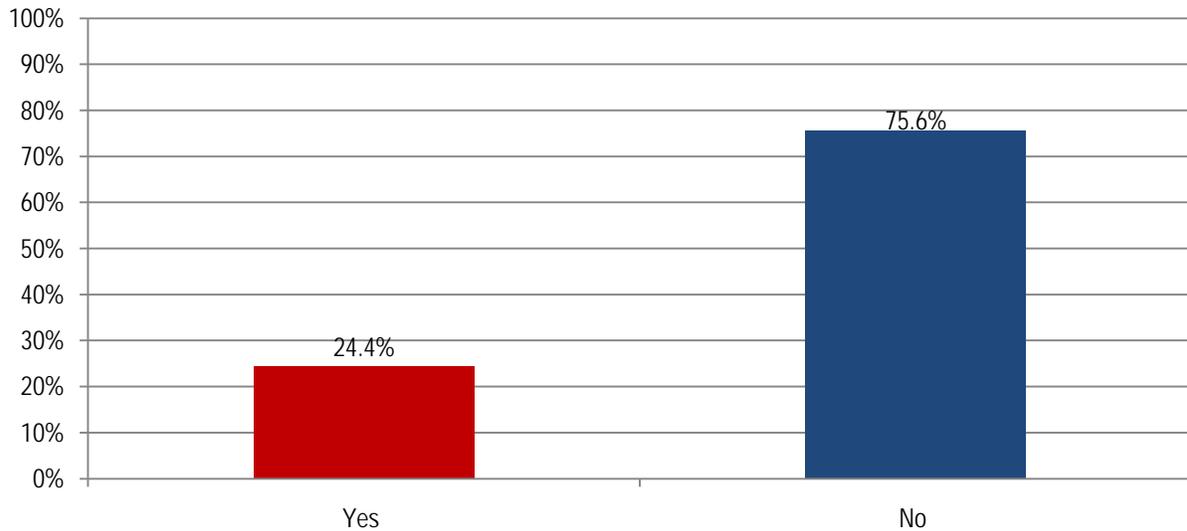
Breakdowns of the exhaustees by age, gender, ethnicity, education and county of residence are in appendices A and B.

Quantitative survey results

Answers to the following survey questions were “yes” or “no.”

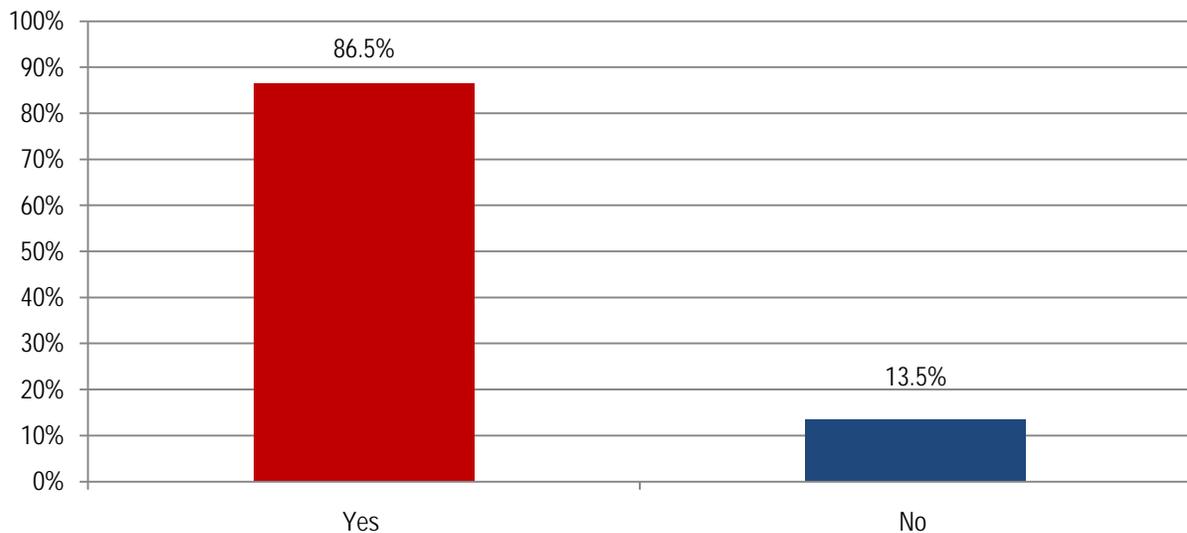
1. Since you exhausted your unemployment insurance benefits, have you found employment? (5,065 total responses)

Of the 5,065 exhaustees who responded to this question, 3,827 (75.6 percent) have not found a job since exhausting their unemployment benefits, and 1,238 (24.4 percent) have found a job.



2. Are you still looking for work? (3,512 total responses)

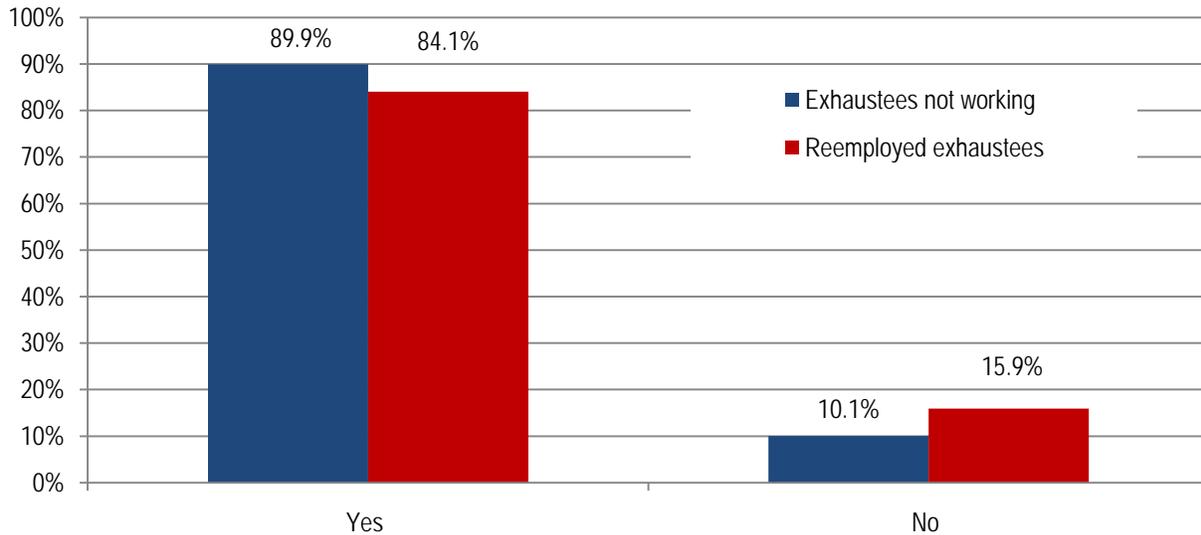
Of the 3,512 unemployed exhaustees who responded to this question, 3,038 (86.5 percent) said they were still looking for work and 474 (13.5 percent) said they were no longer looking for work.



3. Did you visit a WorkSource office during your claim period?

(4,451 total responses)

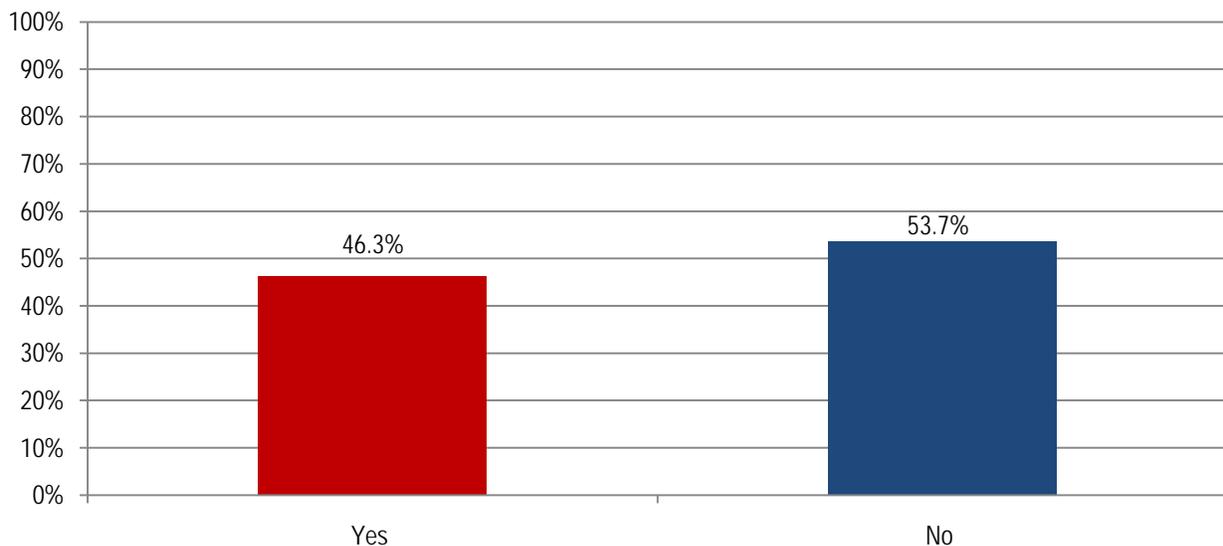
- Of the 4,451 exhaustees who responded to this question, 3,942 (88.5 percent) said they visited a WorkSource office during their unemployment benefits claim period.
- Of the 1,042 reemployed exhaustees who responded to this question, 876 (84.1 percent) said they visited a WorkSource office during their claim period.



4. Were WorkSource services helpful in finding employment for reemployed exhaustees?

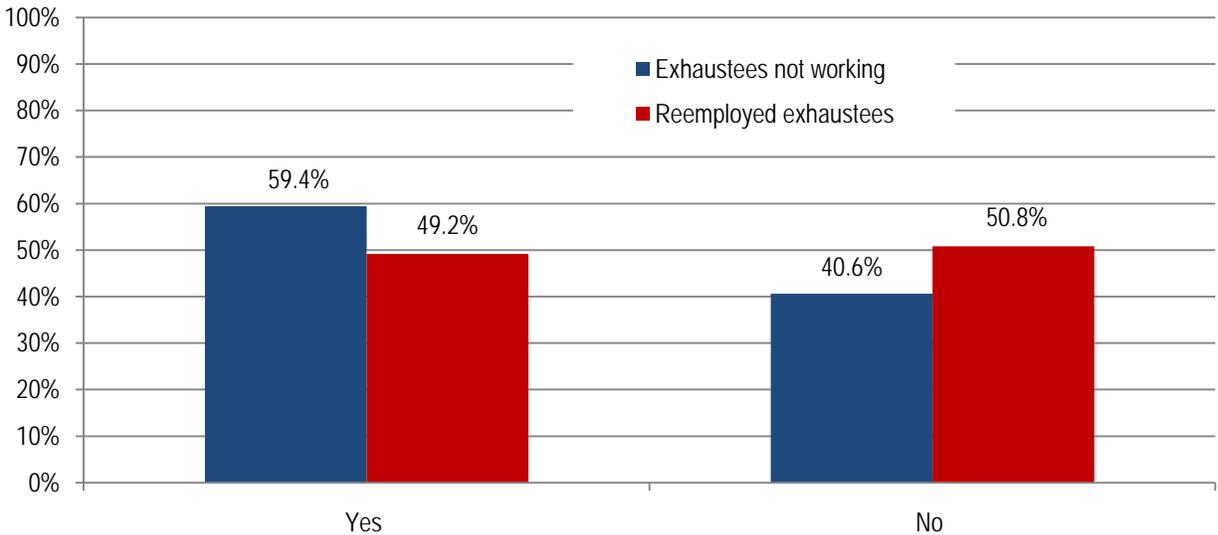
(847 total responses)

Of the 847 reemployed exhaustees who responded to this question, 392 (46.3 percent) found WorkSource services helpful in finding employment.



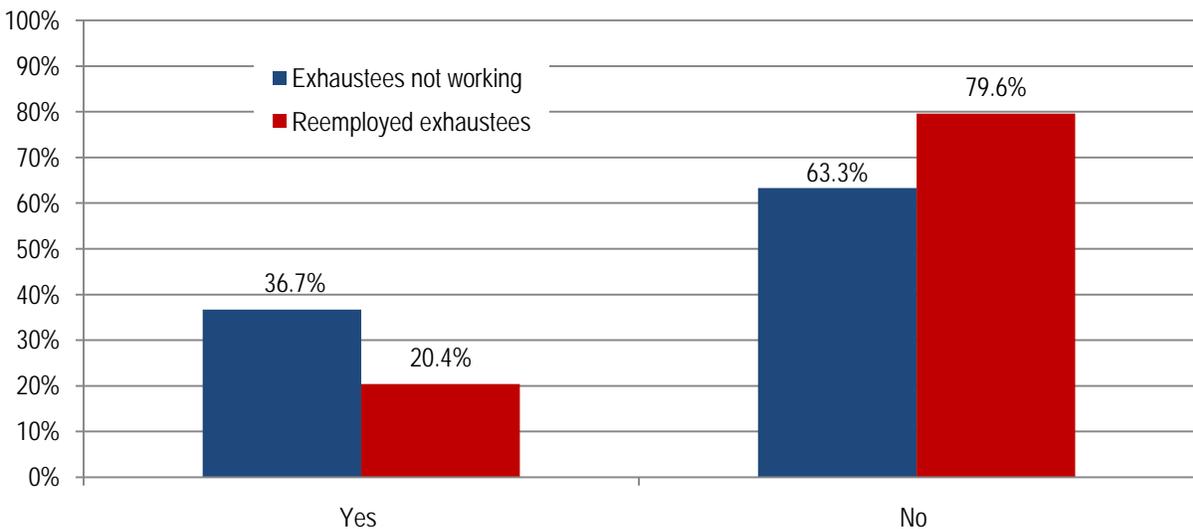
5. Have you used any programs or services (other than WorkSource) to help you obtain a job? (4,328 total responses)

- Of the 4,328 exhaustees who responded to this question, 2,466 (57 percent) said they used programs or services other than WorkSource to help them look for work.
- Of the 1,025 reemployed exhaustees who responded to this question, 504 (49.2 percent), said they used services other than WorkSource to help them find a job.



6. Are there other needs that you would like to find assistance for? (4,556 total responses)

- Of the 4,556 exhaustees who responded to this question, 1,506 (33.1 percent) said they would like assistance with other needs. Question 11 categorizes these other needs.
- Of the 1,019 reemployed exhaustees who responded to this question, 208 (20.4 percent) said they would like assistance with other needs.

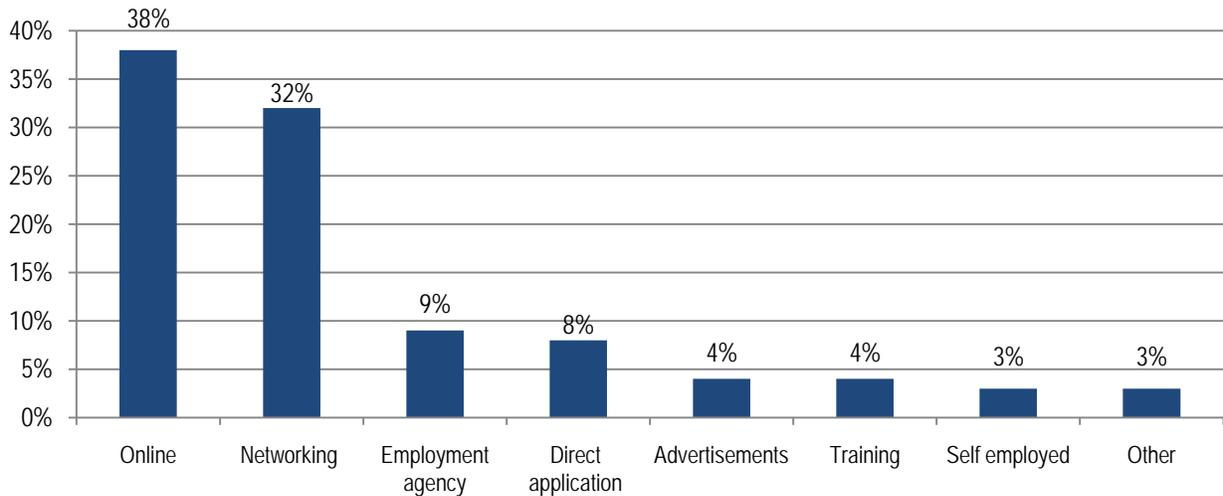


Qualitative survey results

Answers to the following survey questions were open-ended. The comments (qualitative answers) provided by survey respondents were sorted using key words and conditional formatting, then categorized.¹

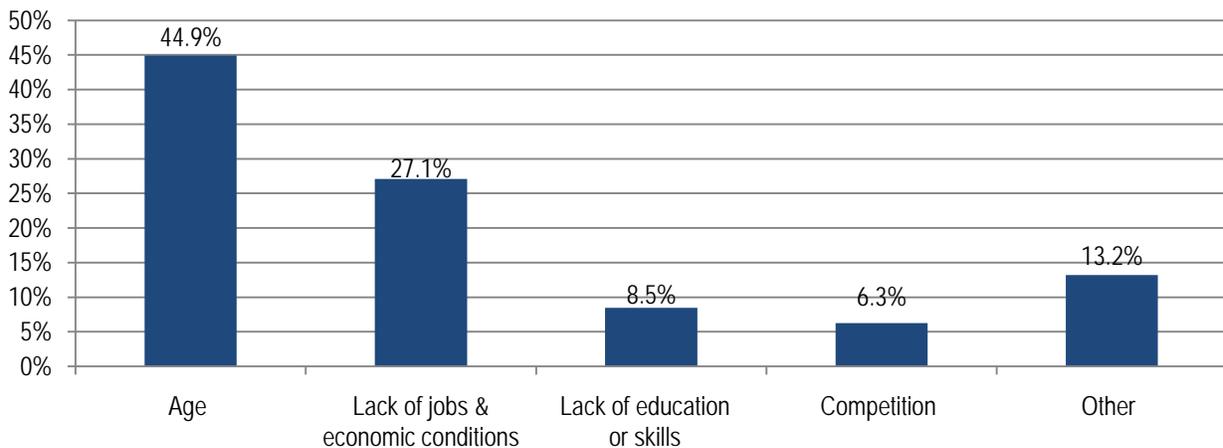
7. How did you find this job? (931 total responses)

Of the 931 reemployed exhaustees who responded to this question, the majority (70 percent) used online resources and networking, alone or in combination, to find work. They also said they used employment agencies, direct applications, advertisements, training or self-employment.



8. What do you believe has been the greatest obstacle or barrier to your reemployment? (3,484 total responses)

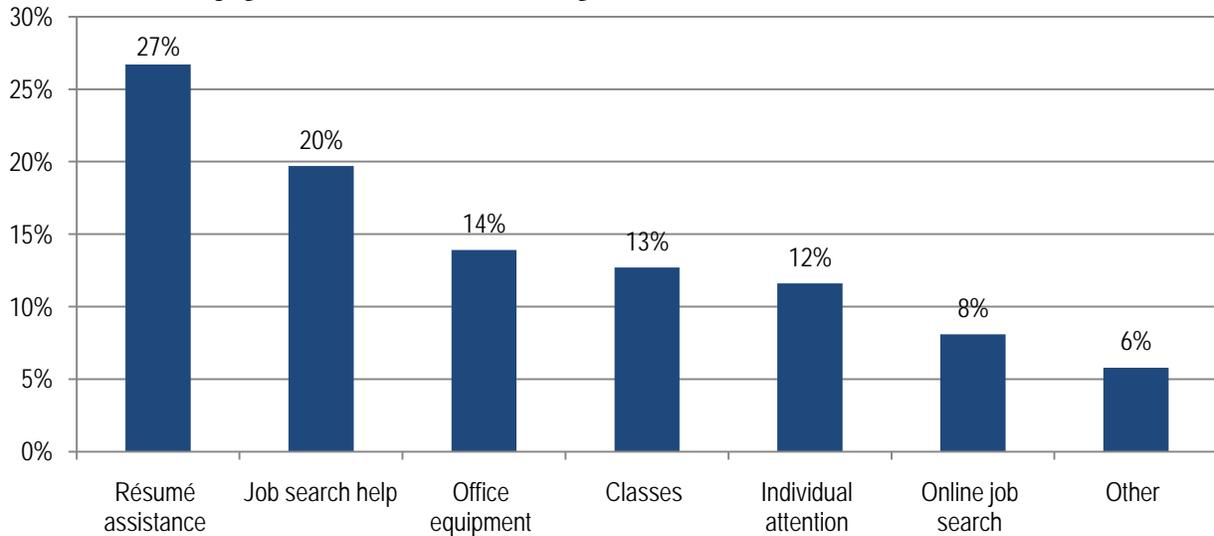
Of the 3,484 exhaustees who responded to this questions, almost half (45 percent) said age was their greatest barrier to reemployment. Just 1 in 12 survey respondents (8.5 percent) said lack of education or skills was a barrier to finding work.



¹ Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

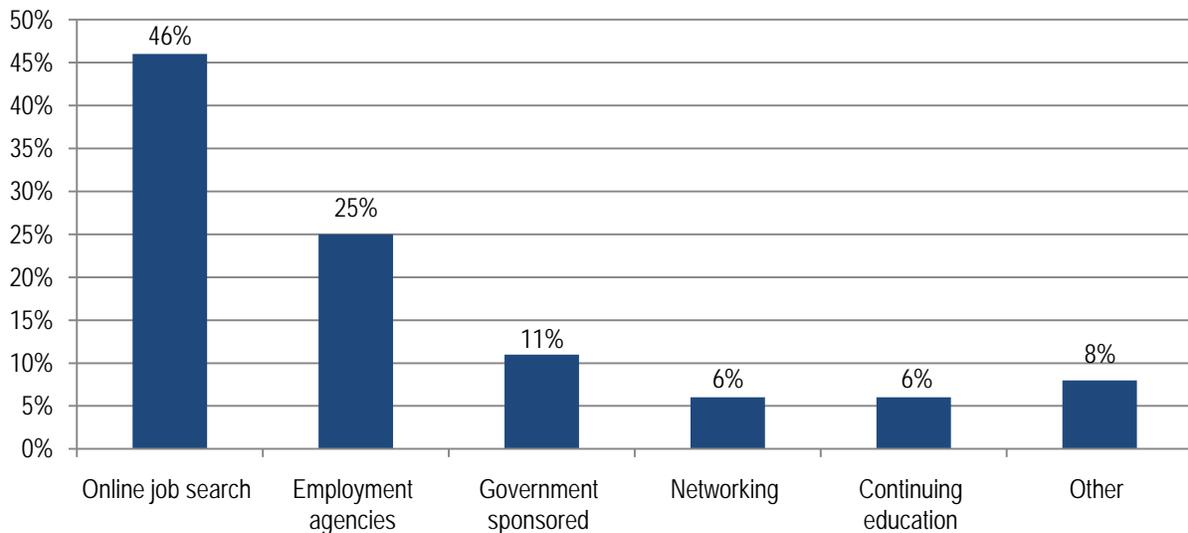
9. Which WorkSource service(s) were most helpful? (338 total responses)

Of the 338 reemployed exhaustees who responded to this question, 27 percent said résumé assistance was one of the most helpful WorkSource services. They also said job-search help, use of office equipment and classes were helpful WorkSource services.



10. List any other programs or services you have used to help you obtain a job. (504 total responses)

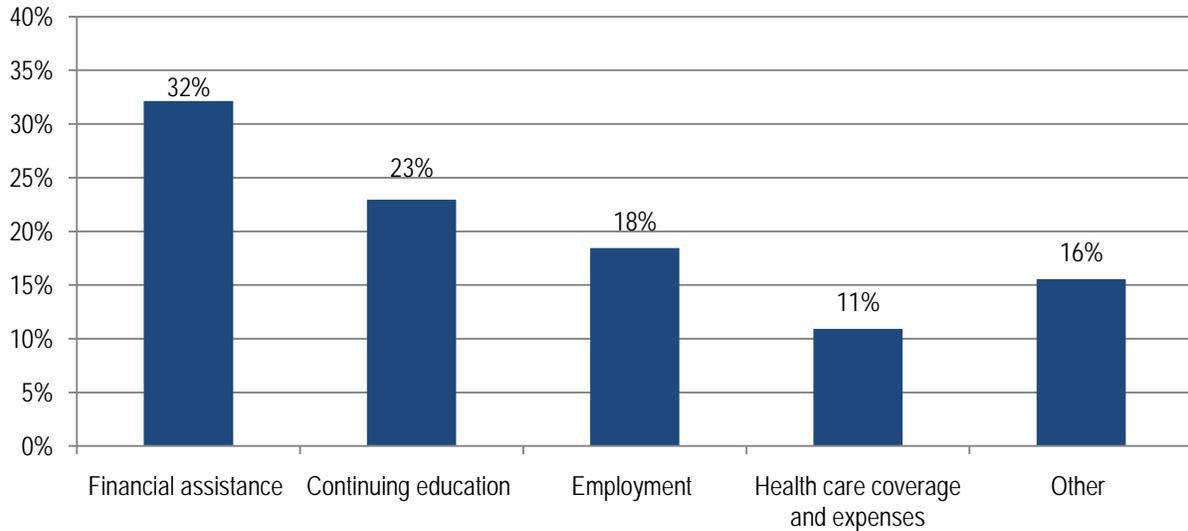
Of the 504 reemployed exhaustees who responded to this question, 232 (46 percent) said they used services other than WorkSource to find work. The most common other programs or services used were online job search and employment agencies. Responses in the “Government sponsored” category included Worker Retraining, WIA and Veterans Affairs.



11. What are there other needs that you would like to find assistance for?

(1,308 total responses)

Of the 1,308 exhaustees who are not working and who responded to this question, 486 (32 percent) said they would like financial assistance.



Appendix A – Demographics, county of residence, industry and occupation

Information in this appendix is based on data from the Employment Security Department's unemployment insurance database, employer database and continued claims database, November 2009 through March 2011. Reemployed exhaustees were identified using survey data.

Table 1: Demographics of claimants, exhaustees and reemployed exhaustees

Gender*	All claimants (448,180)	All exhaustees (47,026)	Survey respondents (5,065)	Reemployed exhaustees (1,238)
Female	28.0%	40.2%	40.3%	40.2%
Male	72.0%	59.8%	59.7%	59.8%

Source: Employment Security Unemployment Insurance Database, Employer Database and Continued Claims Database

Age group*	All claimants (448,180)	All exhaustees (47,026)	Survey respondents (5,065)	Reemployed exhaustees (1,238)
16 - 24	7.6%	2.4%	2.3%	2.9%
25 - 34	25.4%	18.8%	18.9%	17.4%
35 - 44	25.6%	22.1%	23.2%	22.2%
45 - 54	24.1%	27.4%	26.8%	28.6%
55 - 64	14.2%	22.4%	21.0%	22.4%
Older than 64	2.1%	7.7%	7.7%	6.6%

Source: Employment Security Unemployment Insurance Database, Employer Database and Continued Claims Database

Ethnicity*	All claimants (448,180)	All exhaustees (47,026)	Survey respondents (5,065)	Reemployed exhaustees (1,238)
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2.1%	2.3%	2.3%	1.7%
Asian or Pacific Islander	4.9%	7.1%	6.1%	6.6%
Black, not Hispanic	3.7%	7.3%	8.7%	8.8%
Hispanic	17.0%	5.2%	4.6%	4.9%
Information not available	3.4%	4.2%	4.2%	4.4%
White, not Hispanic	68.9%	73.9%	74.2%	73.6%

Source: Employment Security Unemployment Insurance Database, Employer Database and Continued Claims Database

Education*	All claimants (448,180)	All exhaustees (47,026)	Survey respondents (5,065)	Reemployed exhaustees (1,238)
Less than high school graduate **	21.9%	14.9%	14.2%	14.3%
High school graduate	44.8%	37.8%	37.5%	36.9%
Education beyond high school	33.3%	47.3%	51.7%	48.9%

Source: Employment Security Unemployment Insurance Database, Employer Database and Continued Claims Database

* Totals may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

** Includes GED.

Table 2: County of residence for claimants and exhaustees

County	All claimants (448,180)	All exhaustees (47,026)
Adams	0.7%	0.1%
Asotin	0.2%	0.1%
Benton	3.0%	1.1%
Chelan	2.2%	0.6%
Clallam	1.2%	0.8%
Clark	4.1%	6.0%
Columbia	0.0%	0.0%
Cowlitz	2.1%	1.7%
Douglas	1.1%	0.0%
Ferry	0.2%	0.1%
Franklin	2.1%	0.5%
Garfield	0.0%	0.0%
Grant	2.6%	0.6%
Grays Harbor	2.0%	1.4%
Island	0.6%	0.7%
Jefferson	0.3%	0.3%
King	17.5%	28.8%
Kitsap	2.2%	2.6%
Kittitas	0.7%	0.4%
Klickitat	0.4%	0.2%
Lewis	2.1%	1.2%
Lincoln	0.1%	0.1%
Mason	1.2%	0.8%
Okanogan	1.1%	0.5%
Pacific	0.5%	0.3%
Pend Oreille	0.2%	0.2%
Pierce	10.9%	13.0%
San Juan	0.1%	0.1%
Skagit	2.3%	1.4%
Skamania	0.2%	0.1%
Snohomish	9.4%	12.7%
Spokane	7.1%	6.3%
Stevens	1.0%	0.7%
Thurston	3.0%	2.9%
Wahkiakum	0.1%	0.1%
Walla Walla	0.6%	0.3%
Whatcom	3.0%	2.4%
Whitman	0.2%	0.1%
Yakima	7.9%	2.1%
Out of State	5.8%	8.7%

Table 3: Industry of employment prior to claimant and exhaustee status

Industry	All claimants (448,180)	All exhaustees (47,026)
Administrative and support services	7.9%	12.1%
Aerospace	0.4%	0.8%
Agriculture	5.5%	0.1%
Construction	22.3%	14.9%
Educational services	1.6%	2.1%
Finance and insurance	1.4%	4.3%
Fishing and hunting	0.6%	0.2%
Healthcare and social assistance	4.3%	6.0%
Information	1.1%	2.9%
Leisure and hospitality	8.3%	8.4%
Management of companies and enterprises	0.9%	0.5%
Manufacturing – durable goods	10.9%	10.4%
Manufacturing – non durable goods	5.5%	1.7%
Mining	0.0%	0.0%
Other services except public administration	2.0%	2.7%
Private households	0.1%	0.3%
Professional and technical services	2.7%	4.9%
Public administration	2.6%	3.0%
Retail trade	8.3%	11.7%
Support activities for agriculture	0.0%	0.0%
Transportation and warehousing	3.9%	3.0%
Utilities	0.2%	0.1%
Waste management and remediation	0.6%	0.5%
Wholesale trade	3.4%	5.1%
Unidentified	4.2%	1.1%

Table 4: Occupation of employment prior to claimant and exhaustee status

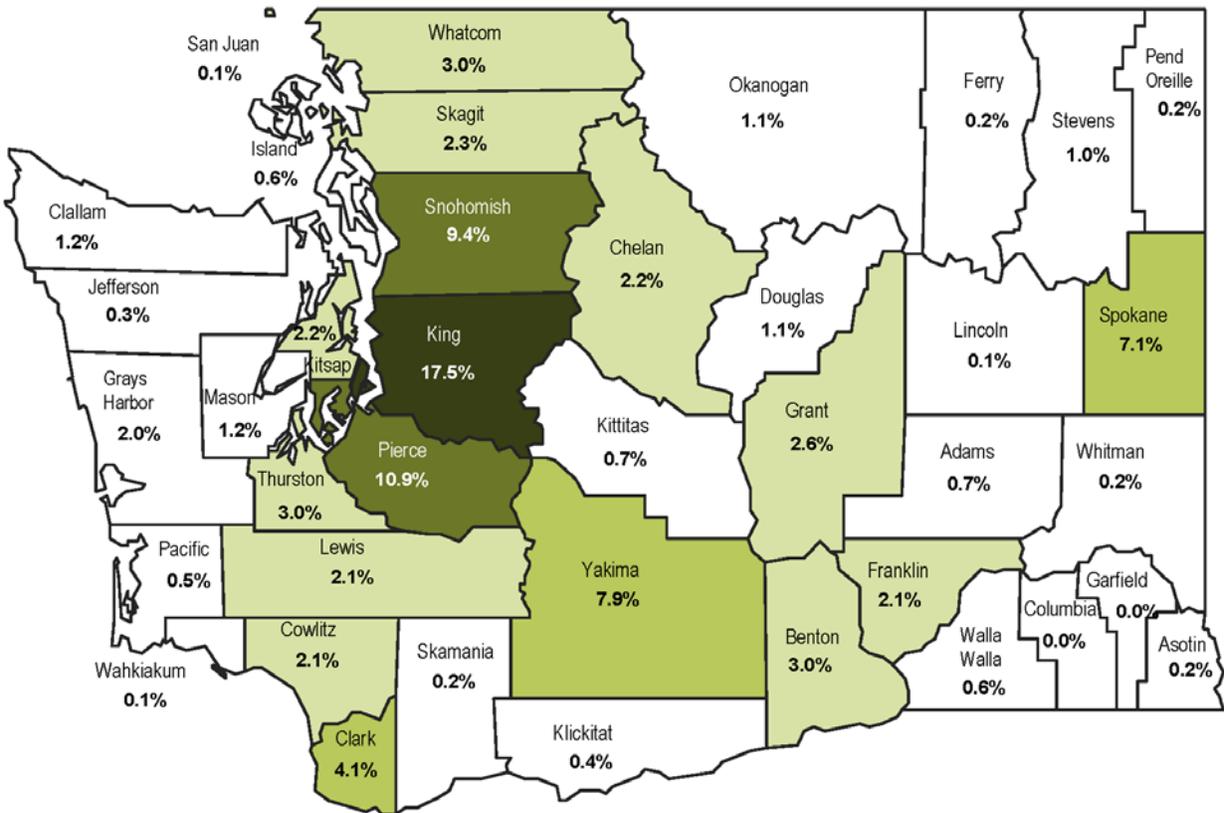
Occupation	All claimants (448,180)	All exhaustees (47,026)
Architecture and engineering	1.3%	2.8%
Arts, design and entertainment	1.0%	1.9%
Building and grounds cleaning	3.0%	1.9%
Business and financial operations	1.3%	4.0%
Community and social services	0.5%	0.7%
Computer and mathematical	1.3%	2.5%
Construction and extraction	24.8%	15.6%
Education, training and library	1.4%	0.8%
Farming, fishing and forestry	8.0%	1.2%
Food preparation and serving	3.8%	3.2%
Healthcare practitioner	0.7%	1.1%
Healthcare support	1.1%	1.2%
Installation, maintenance and repair	5.2%	4.4%
Legal	0.2%	0.5%
Life, physical and social science	0.7%	0.6%
Management	4.2%	11.2%
Military specific	0.2%	0.4%
Office and administrative support	7.4%	16.2%
Personal care and services	1.7%	2.4%
Production	14.9%	11.7%
Protective services	1.0%	1.1%
Sales and related	3.6%	8.4%
Transportation and material moving	12.7%	6.4%

Appendix B – Claimants, exhaustees and location of exhaustee employers

Information in this appendix is based on data from the Employment Security Department’s unemployment insurance database, employer database and continued claims database, November 2009 through March 2011.

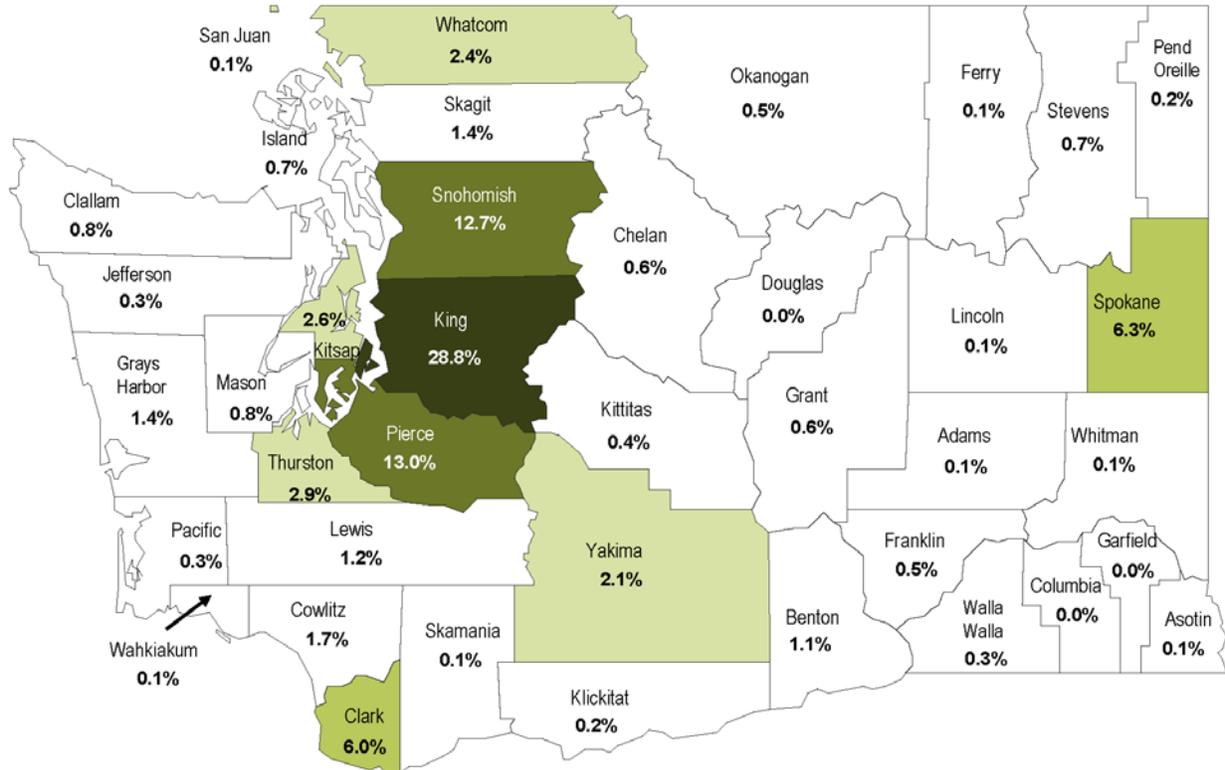
Percentage of claimants by county

From November 2009 through March 2011, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Yakima and Spokane counties had the highest concentrations of unemployment benefits claimants.



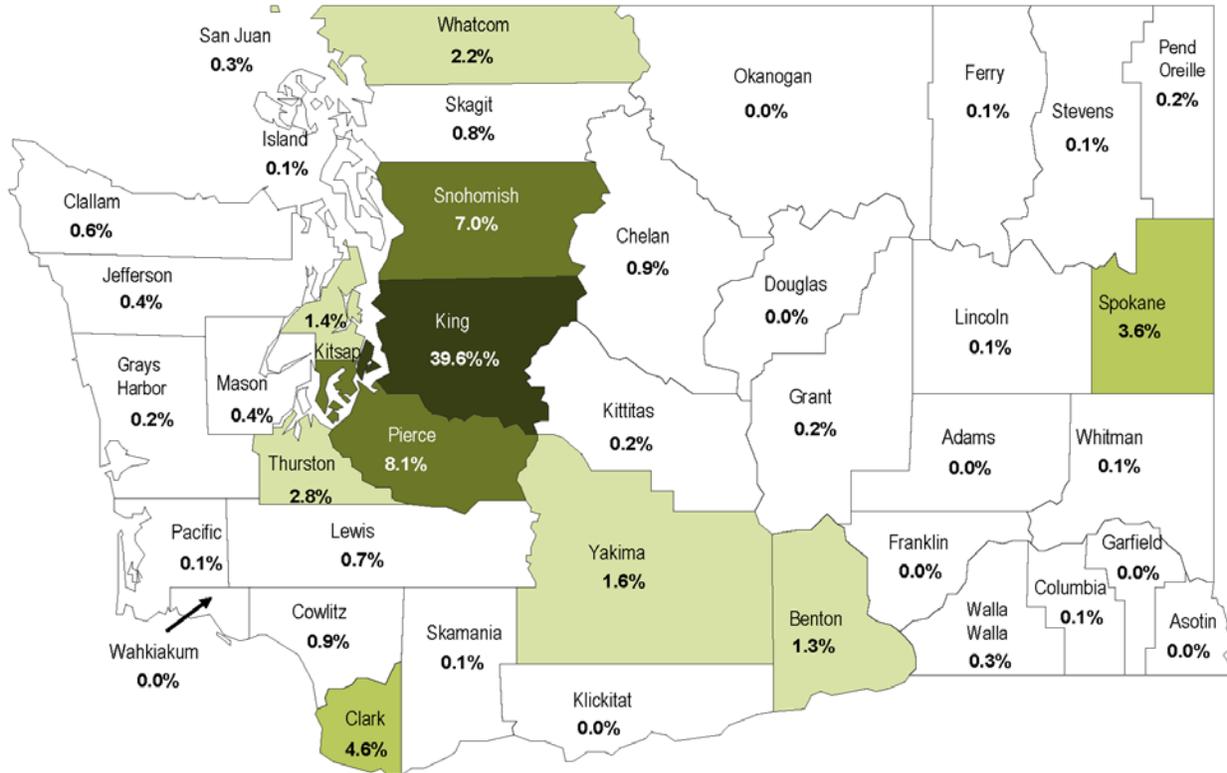
Percentage of exhaustees by county

Based on data from November 2009 through March 2011, King County had more than twice the number of exhaustees compared to any other Washington county. Pierce, Snohomish, Spokane and Clark counties also had high percentages of exhaustees.



Location of employers who hired exhaustees, by county

Of the 1,238 reemployed exhaustees, 898 provided the location of their new employer. More than 54 percent of reemployed exhaustees found work in King, Pierce or Snohomish counties. Another 19.4 percent of reemployed exhaustees found work outside the state of Washington.



Appendix C – Survey methodology

The survey population was drawn from the Employment Security Department's unemployment insurance database, employer database and continued claims database, November 2009 through March 2011.

Employment Security conducted the exhaustee survey April 18-29, 2011, using SurveyMonkey. The survey was emailed to 31,744 unemployment benefits exhaustees. We received responses from 5,065 exhaustees.

Information presented in this report is from survey data compiled on May 2, 2011.

A sample copy of the survey is shown below. This is the progression of questions:

- If question 1 is no, then go to question 3.
If question 3 is no, then go to question 4.
If question 4 is no, then go to question 5.
If question 5 is no, then go to question 7.
If question 7 is no, then go to question 8.

- If question 1 is yes, then go to question 2, then go to question 5.
If question 5 is yes, then go to question 6.
If question 6 is yes, then go to question 7.
If question 7 is yes, then go to question 8.

Employment Security Department Customer Follow- up Survey

*** Since you exhausted your unemployment insurance benefits, have you found employment?**

- Yes
 No

*** Employment Information:**

What is your current job title:

When did you start this job:

Rate of pay per hour:

How many hours per week do you work:

Employer zip code:

*** How did you find this job?**

*** Are you still looking for work?**

- Yes
 No

*** What do you believe has been the greatest obstacle or barrier to your re-employment?**

*** Are you retired?**

- Yes
 No

Employment Security Department Customer Follow- up Survey

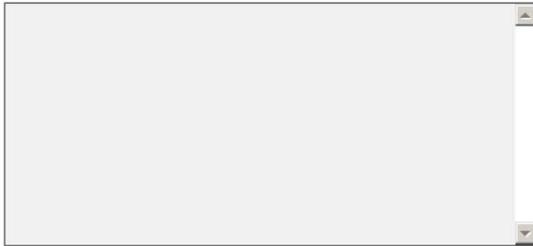
*** Did you visit a WorkSource office during your claim period?**

- Yes
- No

*** Were the services helpful in finding employment?**

- Yes
- No

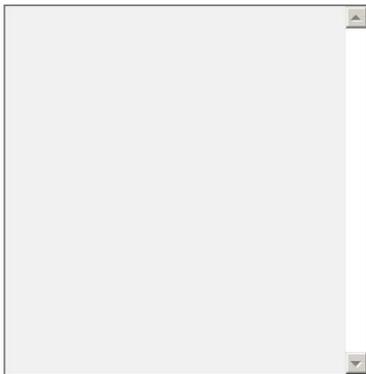
*** Which service(s) were most helpful?**

A rectangular text input field with a light gray background and a vertical scrollbar on the right side, intended for the respondent to list the most helpful services.

Have you used any other programs or services to help you obtain a job?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please list programs.

A rectangular text input field with a light gray background and a vertical scrollbar on the right side, intended for the respondent to list other programs used to obtain a job.

Employment Security Department Customer Follow-up Survey

Are there other needs that you would like to find assistance for?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain.

Thank you for your participation!

All the information collected is strictly confidential and important. Answers will have no bearing on current or future claims, and will be used only to help improve services.