

The Monthly Employment Report

Washington 5.6%

United States 6.2%

Seasonally adjusted

February 2021



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE



For workers and businesses affected by COVID-19, Employment Security has programs that may help. Please see ESD's website for more information. For labor market information questions, please send your emails to lmea@esd.wa.gov.

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 24,500 in February 2021.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 23,600 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 900 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for February 2020 through February 2021 indicate a decrease in employment of 213,800 for the state. The private sector lost 162,500 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 51,300 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for February 2021 is 5.6 percent. The revised estimated January 2021 unemployment rate is at 6.0 percent. The February 2020 unemployment rate was 4.1 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The January 2021 preliminary estimated gain of 4,400 jobs was revised to a gain of 10,100 jobs.

For more information, call Paul Turek, labor economist at 360-706-3044.

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, January and February 2020 and 2021
Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

	February 2021 (Preliminary)	January 2021 (Revised)	February 2020 (Revised)	January 2020 (Revised)
United States				
Unemployment rate				
Seasonally adjusted	6.2%	6.3%	3.5%	3.5%
Washington				
Unemployment rate	5.6%	6.0%	4.1%	4.0%
Resident labor force	3,837,400	3,835,200	3,962,000	3,957,000
Unemployed	215,900	228,600	162,700	157,100
Seattle/Bellevue/Everett				
Unemployment rate	5.4%	5.8%	2.6%	2.5%
Resident labor force	1,741,800	1,737,800	1,743,800	1,742,600
Unemployed	94,800	100,400	44,800	42,700

¹Most of the employment numbers discussed in this report refers to jobs, not people. 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 February 2021 is 5.6 percent. The revised estimated January 2021 unemployment rate is 6.0 percent.

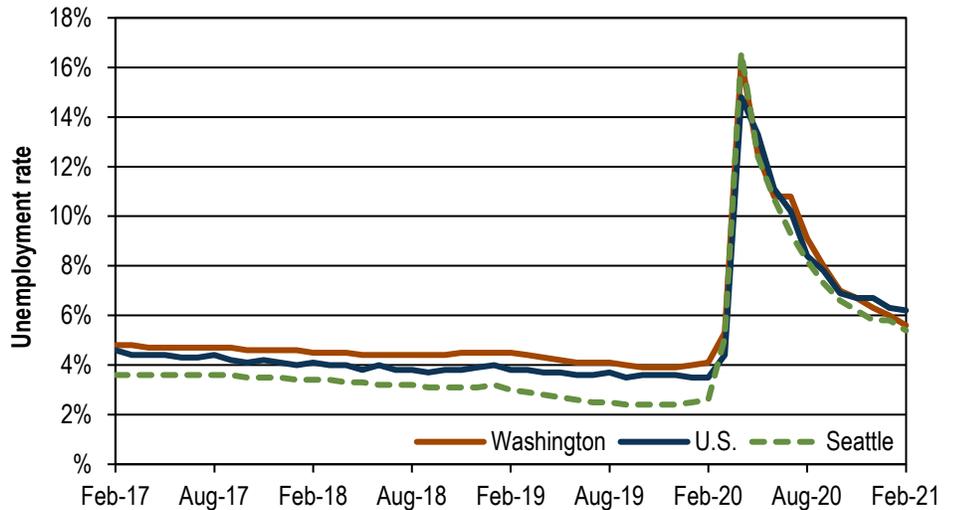
According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed people fell by 12,700 in February 2021 compared to January 2021. At the same time, the number of employed people rose by an estimated 14,900. Overall, this amounted to an increase of 2,200 people in the labor force.

The preliminary February 2021 unemployment rate is 1.5 percentage points higher than the February 2020 rate of 4.1 percent.

Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted

U.S., Washington and Seattle, February 2017 through February 2021

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



February 2021 preliminary unemployment rates:

U.S. (preliminary) 6.2%
 Washington (preliminary) 5.6%
 Seattle area (preliminary) 5.4%

Employment change, seasonally adjusted

Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment increased by 24,500 jobs from January 2021 to February 2021.

Recent employment change:

December 2020: down 5,400 jobs (revised)

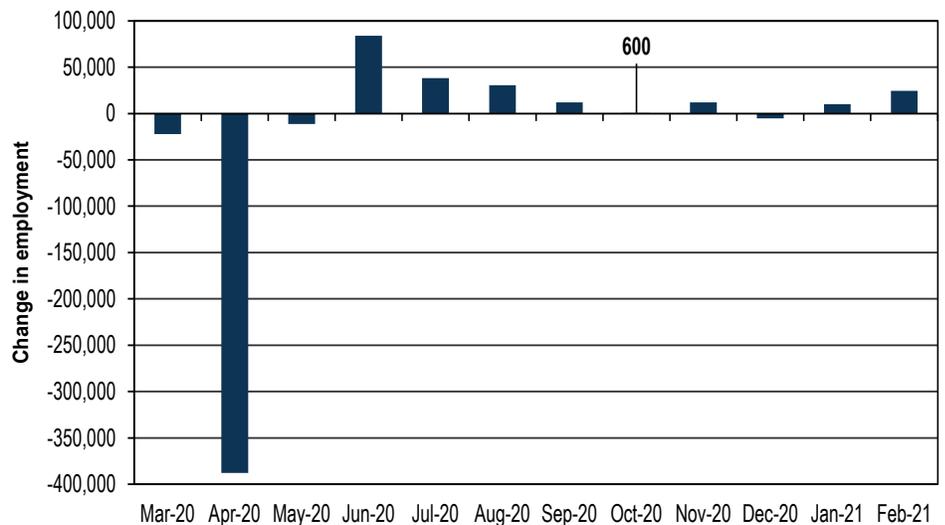
January 2021: up 10,100 jobs (revised)

February 2021: up 24,500 jobs (preliminary)

Monthly employment change, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, March 2020 through February 2021

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



Employment and unemployment, seasonally adjusted

February 2020

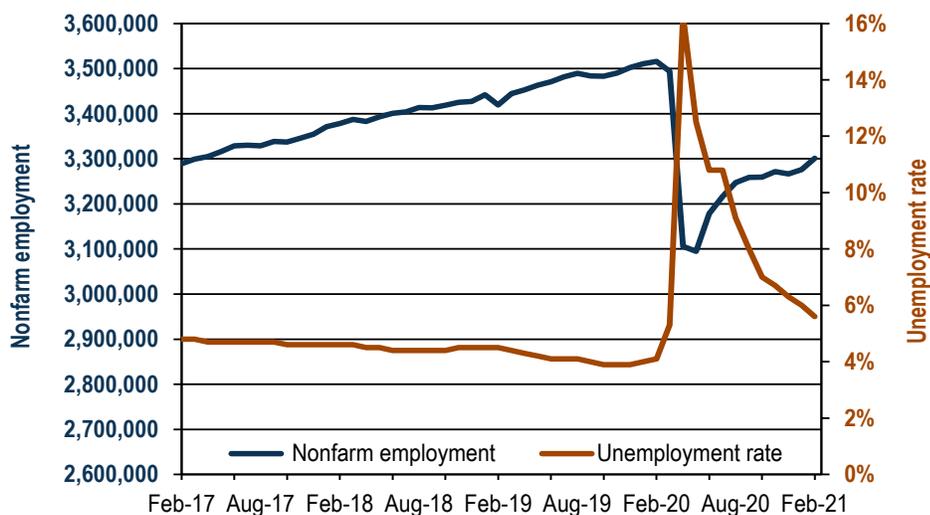
(Start of 2020 employment recession in Washington)

Nonfarm employment: 3,516,800
Unemployment rate: 4.1%

January 2021 (preliminary)

Nonfarm employment: 3,300,800
Unemployment rate: 5.6%

Nonfarm employment and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted
Washington state, February 2017 through February 2021
Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,
Current Employment Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Workers and businesses affected by COVID-19

Employment Security's **COVID-19 online information page** covers topics for businesses and workers impacted by COVID-19. Topics include:

- Subscribing for updates
- Frequently asked questions
- Workers Q&A
- Business Q&A
- CARES ACT
- Federal stimulus updates
- Eligibility checker
- COVID-19 rulemaking
- Action alerts and updates

We are all in this together. COVID-19 has created an unprecedented demand for services, but we are building capacity, updating technology, and we thank you for your patience while we work to serve you better.

Did you know that you can subscribe for email updates on a number of Employment Security Department topics all at once? Go to esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo and select the email icon at the top of the page.



Enter your email address and subscribe by checking the boxes for topics such as:

COVID-19
Labor market information
News releases
Employer news and resources
Paid Family and Medical Leave
Employer information
Shared work
WorkSource system
Unemployment insurance
Training

Many more to come, so sign up today for your email updates!

U-6 unemployment rate

U-6: Broader unemployment measure increased in the four-quarter period ending fourth quarter 2020

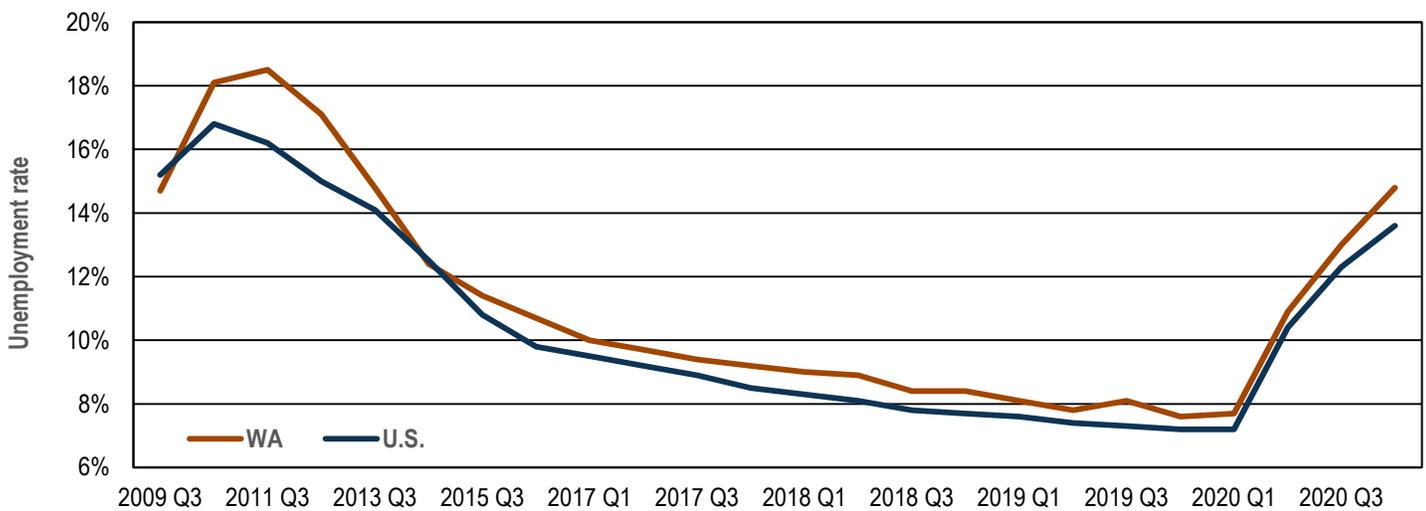
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently updated its “alternative measures of labor underutilization” for states to include annual averages for first quarter 2020. One such alternative measure is the U-6 rate, which considers not only the unemployed population in

the official “U-3” unemployment rate, but also marginally attached workers and those employed part time for economic reasons. The U-6 rate is defined by BLS as the “total unemployed, plus all marginally attached workers, plus total employed part time for economic reasons, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers.” This U-6 measure measures

the “unemployed, underemployed, and those who are not looking but who want a job.”

The U-6 annual unemployment rate for 2020 for Washington state was 14.8 percent. This was higher compared to the 13.0 percent U-6 unemployment 2020 third quarter rate. The U.S. U-6 unemployment rate was 13.6 percent in 2020.

Alternate measures of labor underutilization, four-quarter moving average
Washington state versus U.S. U-6 unemployment rate



Year	WA/U.S.	Q1	Q2	Q3	Annual average
2020	WA	8.1%	10.9%	13.0%	14.8%
	U.S.	7.7%	10.4%	12.3%	13.6%
2019	WA	8.1%	7.8%	8.1%	7.6%
	U.S.	7.6%	7.4%	7.3%	7.2%
2018	WA	9.0%	8.9%	8.4%	8.4%
	U.S.	8.3%	8.1%	7.8%	7.7%
2017	WA	10.0%	9.7%	9.4%	9.2%
	U.S.	9.5%	9.2%	8.9%	8.5%
2016	WA	10.9%	10.7%	10.7%	10.3%
	U.S.	10.1%	9.9%	9.8%	9.6%
2015	WA	12.0%	11.7%	11.4%	11.0%
	U.S.	11.6%	11.3%	10.8%	10.4%
2014	WA	13.3%	12.8%	12.4%	12.5%
	U.S.	13.4%	12.9%	12.5%	12.0%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics: <https://www.bls.gov/lau/stalt.htm>.

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 24,500 jobs during the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- Overall, employment increased in twelve major industries and was unchanged in one in February.
- Private sector employment is estimated to have increased by 23,600 and government employment increased by 900.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality increased by 12,700 overall, with 12,900 jobs gained in food services and drinking places.
- Employment in professional and business services increased by 2,500 overall, with 2,500 jobs gained in employment services.
- Education and health services employment rose by 2,400, with 900 jobs gained in hospitals.
- Retail trade employment rose by 1,300, with 900 jobs added in food and beverage stores.
- The number of jobs in construction increased by 1,200, led by an increase of 800 by specialty trade contractors.

Estimated one-month employment change by industry, seasonally adjusted
Washington state, January 2021 to February 2021

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

Total nonfarm	24,500
Leisure and hospitality	12,700
Professional and business services	2,500
Education and health services	2,400
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	1,500
Retail trade	1,300
Construction	1,200
Government	900
Financial activities	800
Wholesale trade	600
Other services	300
Manufacturing	200
Mining and logging	100
Information	0

As we navigate the COVID-19 developments

in Washington state and beyond, we know Washington state businesses, nonprofits, city and county municipalities, educational institutions, as well as economic and workforce development professionals, are looking for sound data about the short and long term economic and workforce impacts to their individual businesses, industries and regions.

Since the current situation is still evolving, we will share information as soon as possible. In the meantime, if you have specific questions regarding labor market information, please send your emails to lmea@esd.wa.gov.

Industry employment in Washington, not seasonally adjusted

Change by industry over the year

Based on a BLS survey of businesses and governments, Washington lost an estimated 213,800 jobs from February 2020 through February 2021.

- Overall, three major industries expanded and ten contracted.
- Private sector employment fell 5.6 percent, down an estimated 162,500 jobs.
- Public sector employment fell 8.6 percent, down an estimated 51,300 jobs.
- Retail trade employment rose 7,600 overall, with 8,000 jobs gained in other retail trade.
- Information employment increased by 3,600, with 2,400 jobs added by software publishers.
- Employment in manufacturing is down 32,700, led by a decrease of 18,000 in aerospace product and parts manufacturing.
- Government employment decreased by 51,300, with 26,700 jobs lost in local government education services.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality is down by 96,200, with food services and drinking places shedding 58,600 jobs.

Estimated employment change by industry over the year, not seasonally adjusted
Washington state, February 2020 through February 2021

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

Total nonfarm	-213,800
Retail trade	7,600
Information	3,600
Construction	1,200
Mining and logging	-300
Education and health services	-3,500
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-3,600
Financial activities	-4,600
Wholesale trade	-7,900
Professional and business services	-9,100
Other services	-17,000
Manufacturing	-32,700
Government	-51,300
Leisure and hospitality	-96,200

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, February 2021

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

	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
Total nonfarm	9,000	33,500	24,500
Leisure and hospitality	4,400	17,100	12,700
Construction	2,800	4,000	1,200
Education and health services	2,500	4,900	2,400
Professional and business services	1,800	4,300	2,500
Government	1,200	2,100	900
Other services	500	800	300
Financial activities	400	1,200	800
Manufacturing	200	400	200
Wholesale trade	100	700	600
Mining and logging	-100	0	100
Information	-200	-200	0
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-1,200	300	1,500
Retail trade	-3,400	-2100	1,300

Based on historical patterns, Washington employment typically increases by 9,000 from January to February. This year the state gained an estimated 33,500 jobs, amounting to a seasonally adjusted increase of 24,500 jobs.

- The normal seasonal gain in leisure and hospitality employment is 4,400 in February. The estimated gain was 17,100, so employment increased by 12,700 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- The estimated employment increase in construction was 4,000. The normal seasonal increase is 2,800, so on a seasonally adjusted basis, construction employment rose by 1,200.
- The employment increase on a seasonally adjusted basis was 2,500 in professional and business services in February. The normal seasonal increase is 1,800. It is estimated to have increased this February by 4,300.
- Typically, manufacturing employment increases by 200 in February. On a seasonally adjusted basis, manufacturing employment increased by 200 as the estimated increase was 400.
- Employment in retail trade normally falls by 3,400. It is estimated to have decreased by 2,100 this February, so it increased by 1,300 on a seasonally adjusted basis.

Media inquiries and contact information

Due to the high volume of requests for information, please send your emails to media@esd.wa.gov so that we can forward your requests to the appropriate staff.

For labor market information questions, please send your emails to lmea@esd.wa.gov.

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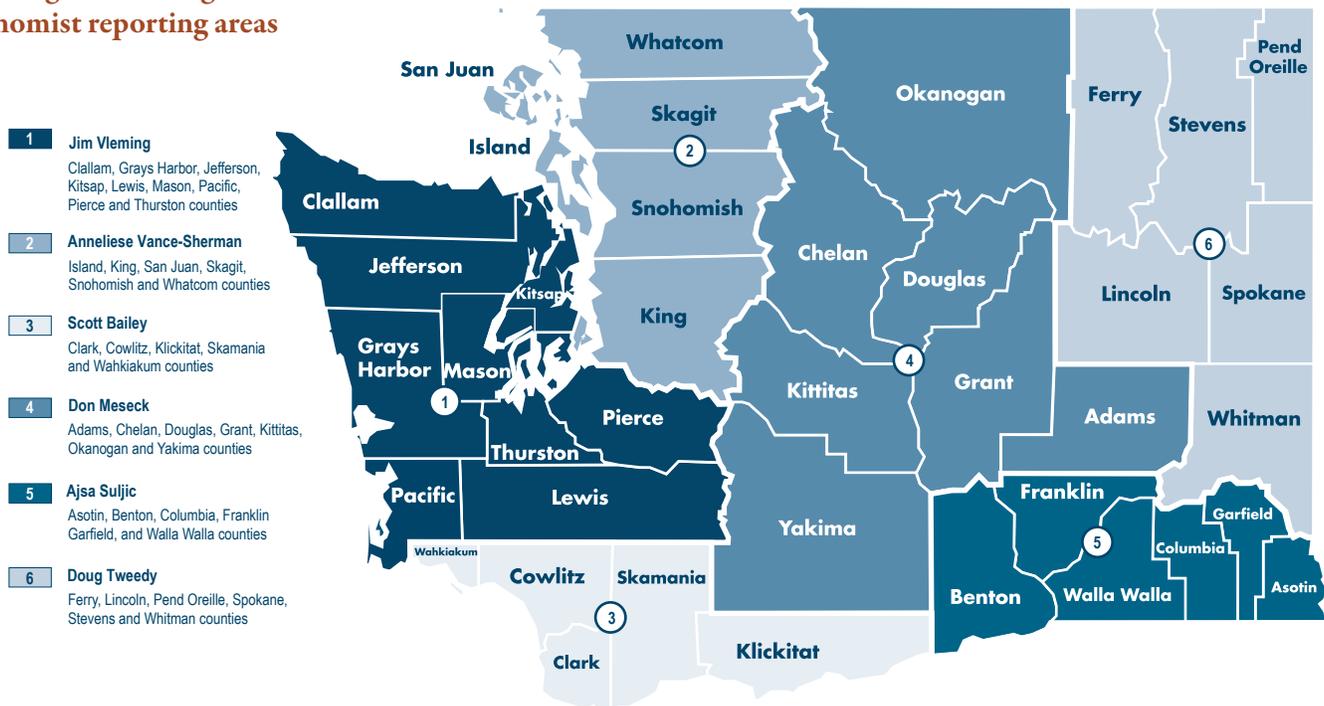
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Washington state regional labor economist reporting areas



The county level information will be available at 10 a.m., March 30, 2021.

The publication schedule for 2021 is posted at: <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/monthly-employment-report>.

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