

# The Monthly Employment Report

Washington 5.5%

United States 6.1%

Seasonally adjusted

April 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](mailto: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 11,200 in April 2021.<sup>1</sup> BLS estimates the private sector gained 7,600 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 3,600 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for March 2020 through March 2021 indicate an increase in employment of 230,700 for the state. The private sector gained 238,700 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 8,000 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2021 is 5.5 percent. The revised estimated March 2021 unemployment rate is at 5.5 percent. The April 2020 unemployment rate was 16.3 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The March 2021 preliminary estimated gain of 23,100 jobs was revised to a gain of 28,100 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, March and April 2020 and 2021  
Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

	April 2021 (Preliminary)	March 2021 (Revised)	April 2020 (Revised)	March 2020 (Revised)
<b>United States</b>				
Unemployment rate				
Seasonally adjusted	6.1%	6.0%	14.8%	4.4%
<b>Washington</b>				
Unemployment rate	5.5%	5.5%	16.3%	5.3%
Resident labor force	3,864,900	3,850,700	3,988,400	3,932,000
Unemployed	213,100	210,800	652,100	207,200
<b>Seattle/Bellevue/Everett</b>				
Unemployment rate	5.4%	5.4%	16.6%	5.1%
Resident labor force	1,751,100	1,747,500	1,705,300	1,712,000
Unemployed	94,500	94,000	283,200	86,600

<sup>1</sup>Most 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 April 2021 is 5.5 percent. The revised estimated March 2021 unemployment rate is 5.5 percent.

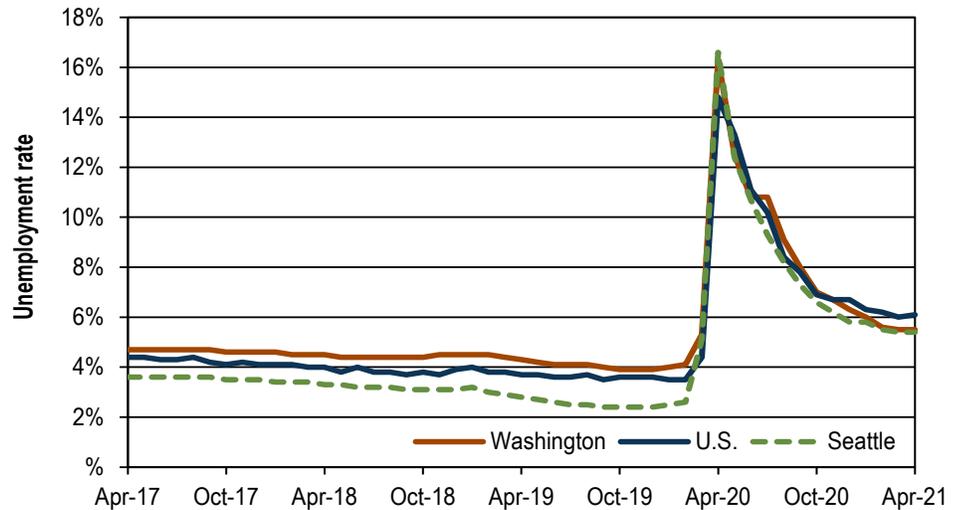
According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed people rose by 2,300 in April 2021 compared to March 2021. At the same time, the number of employed people rose by an estimated 11,900. Overall, this amounted to an increase of 14,200 people in the labor force.

The preliminary April 2021 unemployment rate is 10.8 percentage points lower than the April 2020 rate of 16.3 percent.

### Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted

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

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



### April 2021 preliminary unemployment rates:

U.S. (preliminary) 6.1%  
 Washington (preliminary) 5.5%  
 Seattle area (preliminary) 5.4%

## Employment change, seasonally adjusted

Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment increased by 11,200 jobs from March 2021 to April 2021.

### Recent employment change:

**February 2021:** up 29,600 jobs (revised)

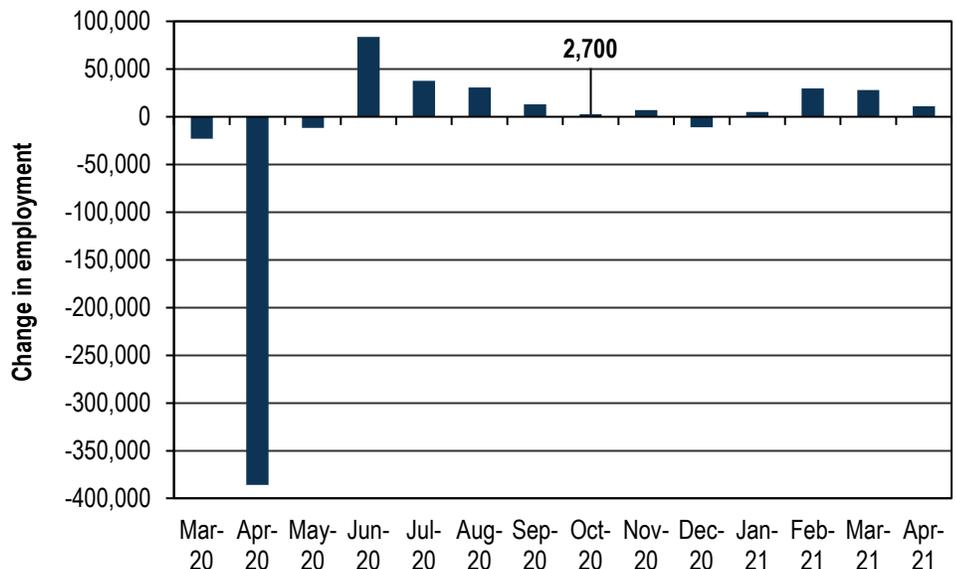
**March 2021:** up 28,100 jobs (revised)

**April 2021:** up 11,200 jobs (preliminary)

### Monthly employment change, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, March 2020 through April 2021

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



## Employment and unemployment, seasonally adjusted

### February 2020

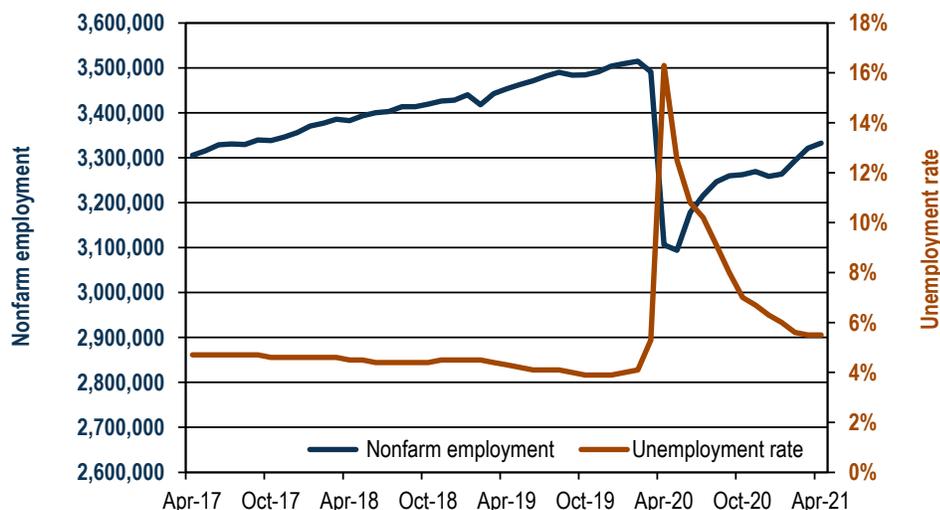
(Start of 2020 employment recession in Washington)

Nonfarm employment: 3,514,800  
Unemployment rate: 4.1%

### April 2021 (preliminary)

Nonfarm employment: 3,332,500  
Unemployment rate: 5.5%

Nonfarm employment and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted  
Washington state, April 2017 through April 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. The COVID-19 pandemic 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](https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo) and select the email icon at the top of the page.



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## U-6 unemployment rate

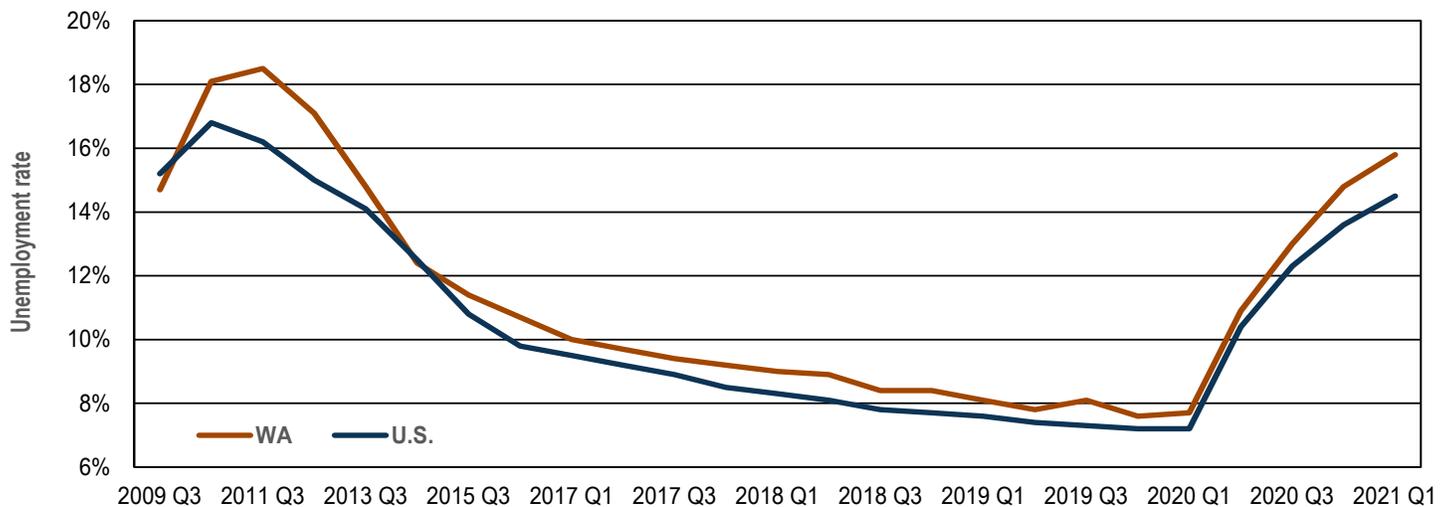
### U-6: Broader unemployment measure increased in the four-quarter period ending first quarter 2021

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 unemployment rate for the second quarter 2020 through the first quarter 2021 for Washington state was 15.8 percent. This was higher compared to the 14.8 percent U-6 unemployment annual 2020 rate. The U.S. U-6 unemployment rate for the second quarter 2020 through the first quarter 2021 was 14.5 percent.

**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
2021	WA	15.8%			
	U.S.	14.5%			
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%

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 11,200 jobs during the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- Overall, employment increased in eight major industries, decreased in four, and was unchanged in one in April.
- Private sector employment is estimated to have increased by 7,600 and government employment increased by 3,600.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality increased by 8,100, led by 5,000 jobs gained in food services and drinking places.
- Government employment rose by 3,600, led by 2,500 jobs added in local government educational services.
- Education and health services employment rose by 1,300 overall, with 2,300 jobs gained in social assistance.
- The number of jobs in construction increased by 800 overall, with 600 jobs added by specialty trade contractors.
- Employment in professional and business services decreased by 3,400 overall, with 2,600 jobs lost in employment services.

Estimated one-month employment change by industry, seasonally adjusted  
Washington state, March 2021 to April 2021

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

<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>11,200</b>
Leisure and hospitality	8,100
Government	3,600
Wholesale trade	1,900
Education and health services	1,300
Construction	800
Financial activities	700
Other services	300
Retail trade	200
Mining and logging	0
Information	-300
Manufacturing	-700
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-1,300
Professional and business services	-3,400

### 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.

If you have specific questions regarding labor market information, please send your emails to [lmea@esd.wa.gov](mailto: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 gained an estimated 230,700 jobs from April 2020 through April 2021.

- Overall, ten major industries expanded and three contracted.
- Private sector employment rose 9.4 percent, up an estimated 238,700 jobs.
- Public sector employment fell 1.4 percent, down an estimated 8,000 jobs.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality is up by 67,400, with food services and drinking places adding 49,000 jobs.
- Retail trade employment rose 53,200 overall, with 27,500 jobs gained in other retail trade.
- Education and health services employment increased by 48,600, with 25,100 jobs added in ambulatory healthcare services.
- Construction employment increased by 39,400, with 28,800 jobs added by specialty trade contractors.
- Employment in manufacturing is down 12,900, led by a decrease of 15,700 in aerospace product and parts manufacturing.

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

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

<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>230,700</b>
Leisure and hospitality	67,400
Retail trade	53,200
Education and health services	48,600
Construction	39,400
Professional and business services	17,600
Wholesale trade	10,100
Other services	8,600
Information	4,900
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	2,100
Mining and logging	400
Financial activities	-700
Government	-8,000
Manufacturing	-12,900

## 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, April 2021

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

	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>20,500</b>	<b>31,700</b>	<b>11,200</b>
Leisure and hospitality	10,300	18,400	8,100
Government	3,600	7,200	3,600
Professional and business services	2,900	-500	-3,400
Wholesale trade	1,800	3,700	1,900
Education and health services	1,500	2,800	1,300
Other services	1,200	1,500	300
Financial activities	1,200	1,900	700
Construction	1,200	2,000	800
Retail trade	1,100	1,300	200
Mining and logging	100	100	0
Information	-1,100	-1,400	-300
Manufacturing	-1,500	-2,200	-700
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-1,800	-3,100	-1,300

Based on historical patterns, Washington employment typically increases by 20,500 from March to April. This year the state gained an estimated 31,700 jobs, amounting to a seasonally adjusted increase of 11,200 jobs.

- The normal seasonal gain in leisure and hospitality employment is 10,300 in April. The estimated gain was 18,400, so employment increased by 8,100 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- The estimated employment increase in construction was 2,000. The normal seasonal increase is 1,200, so on a seasonally adjusted basis, construction employment rose by 800.
- The employment decrease on a seasonally adjusted basis was 3,400 in professional and business services in April. The normal seasonal increase is 2,900. It is estimated to have decreased this April by 500.
- Employment in retail trade normally rises by 1,100. It is estimated to have increased by 1,300 this April so it increased by 200 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- Typically, manufacturing employment decreases by 1,500 in April. On a seasonally adjusted basis, manufacturing employment decreased by 700 as the estimated decrease was 2,200.

## Benchmarking highlights

Benchmarking is a process that replaces employment estimates with the actual number of job gains or losses.

Each month, economists estimate monthly job gains and losses based on a survey of employers. Each quarter, economists benchmark the estimates by replacing them with data from employer tax records before applying seasonal adjustments.

Benchmarked employment data are now available through December 2020. Employment estimates for April 2021 presented in this report were based on the new data, plus seasonal adjustments.

Based on benchmarked December 2020 data:

- The two largest upward revisions were for wholesale trade and for transportation, warehousing and utilities, up 4,500 and 1,500, respectively.
- Financial activities had the largest downward revision, 3,300.

Quarterly benchmarked industry employment, seasonally adjusted  
Washington state, December 2020  
Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,  
Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Industry sector	Revisions to December 2020 employment level
<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>-7,700</b>
Wholesale trade	4,500
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	1,500
Leisure and hospitality	300
Other services	200
Mining and logging	200
Government	-400
Manufacturing	-500
Construction	-700
Information	-900
Education and health services	-2,800
Retail trade	-2,800
Professional and business services	-3,000
Financial activities	-3,300

## Media inquiries and contact information

Due to the high volume of requests for information, please send your emails to [media@esd.wa.gov](mailto: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](mailto:lmea@esd.wa.gov).

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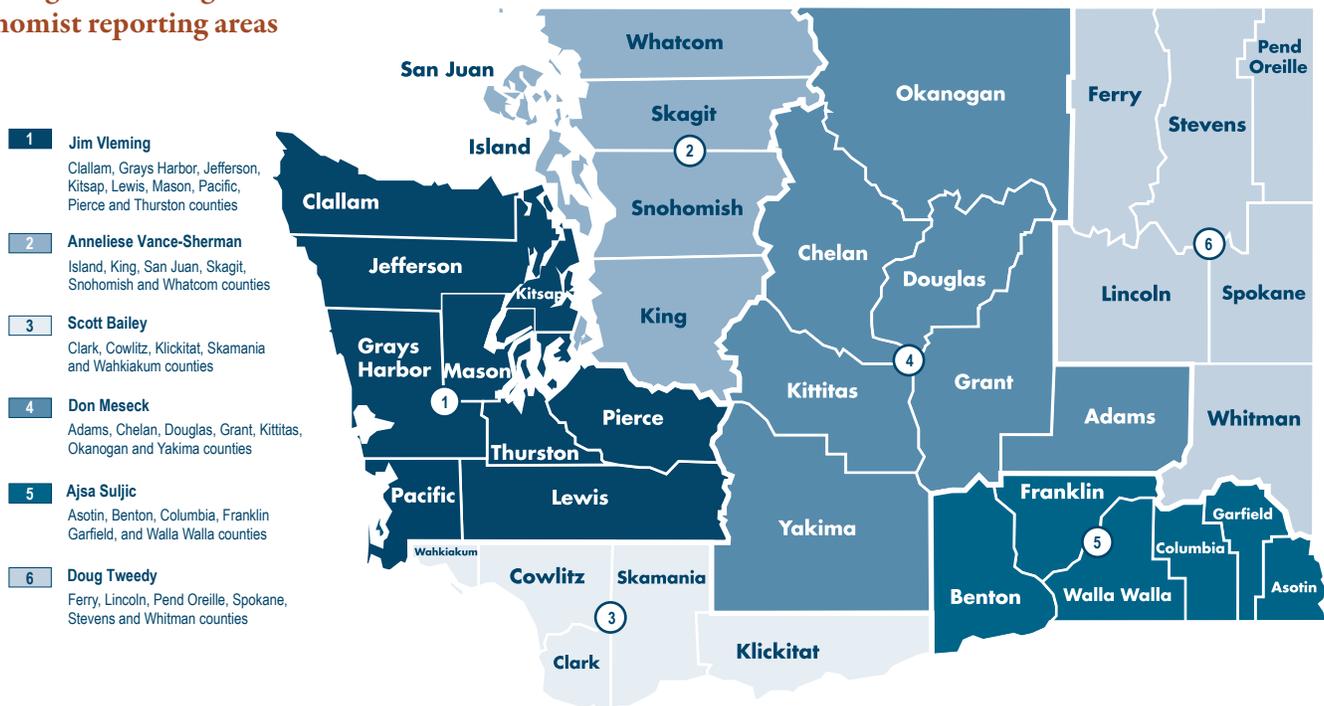
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## Washington state regional labor economist reporting areas



The county level information will be available at 10 a.m., May 25, 2021.

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

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