

Chelan and Douglas County profiles



By Donald W. Meseck,
Regional labor economist
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Overview

Regional context

Chelan and Douglas counties are on the eastern edge of the Cascade Mountains and are separated by the Columbia River. Chelan and Douglas counties have a very diverse geographic area that includes mountains and lakes and flat areas next to the Columbia River. The varied terrain supports the two major industries in the area, tourism and agriculture.

The legislature created Chelan County in 1899, carving it out of Okanogan and Kittitas counties. Wenatchee is its county seat.

Douglas County is close to the geographic center of the state. Douglas County was created in 1883, named after U.S. Senator Steven Douglas of Illinois who was the chairman of the U.S. Commission on Territories when the Territory of Washington was created. Waterville is the county seat.

Chelan County ranks third in the state in land area while Douglas County ranks 17th. Both counties are sparsely populated as measured by people per square mile.

Local economy

The first people of the area now known as Chelan and Douglas counties were tribes whose culture and economy centered on fishing, hunting and gathering. The Yakima Treaty of 1855 removed 10.8 million acres from the indigenous people's title to the land. The result was war throughout the territory and eventual movement of tribes to the Colville Reservation.

Trappers and Chinese gold prospectors were among the first non-Indians who lived in the area in the early 1800s. White settlers followed, beginning in the 1870s. Irrigation along with railroads spurred agricultural development in Chelan County, particularly fruit orchards. Now grape vines are replacing some fruit orchards, driving development in wineries.

The Wenatchee Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes both Chelan and Douglas counties, depends heavily upon agriculture as well as seasonal employment in retail and leisure and hospitality. Agriculture tends to be the economic force for the area and it specifically revolves around various tree fruit that includes apples, cherries, pears and peaches. Wineries are playing an increasing role in both agriculture and in tourism.

Agricultural employment directly links to nonfarm employment through nondurable goods manufacturing (i.e., food processing), wholesale trade (i.e., fresh fruit packinghouses) and transportation.

Chelan County is on the eastern slopes of the Cascade Mountain range in central Washington. Lake Chelan is the third deepest lake in the country. With its nearly year-round sunshine, it has developed into an all-season outdoor recreational destination. Although agriculture is still the dominant industry in Chelan County (with 21.4 percent of total covered employment in 2019), its top employer ranking is slipping. For example, in 2009 agriculture provided 9,598 jobs countywide but it tallied only 9,474 in 2019; a 124 job and 1.3 percent downturn. The industry which provided the second-highest number of jobs in Chelan County in 2019 was private health services with 14.6 percent of total covered employment. Tourism-related industries (especially hotels, eating and drinking places, and amusement and recreation services) also contribute to the local labor market with two very popular areas for the state: Lake Chelan and Leavenworth. Lake Chelan is a great tourist area in the summer. Leavenworth provides year-round tourism with a Bavarian-themed village that hosts an Oktoberfest festival and has multiple ski resorts very close to town.

Agriculture in Douglas County (as in neighboring Chelan County) is still a pillar of the economy with 23.7 percent of total covered employment in 2019. But, it's "Number One" employment sector ranking (of 22 NAICS industries/sectors) also weakened during the past ten years. For example, in 2009 the agricultural industry across Douglas County provided 3,138 jobs countywide, but it tallied only 2,961 in 2019; a 177 job and 5.6 percent downturn. The industry which offered the second-highest number of jobs in Douglas County in 2019 was local government (public school districts, public utility districts, police and fire departments, etc.). Local government organizations countywide accounted for 1,889 jobs in 2019 and 15.1 percent of all covered employment. In addition, a regional retail hub is located in East Wenatchee, the largest city in Douglas County, which features North Central Washington's largest shopping mall.

Geographic facts

	Chelan County	Douglas County	Washington state
Land area, 2010 (square miles)	2,920.53	1,819.26	66,455.52
People per square mile, 2010	24.8	21.1	101.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Outlook

The Wenatchee MSA's nonfarm labor market netted approximately 100 new jobs in 2019, a 0.3 percent upturn – considerably less robust than Washington's 2.0 percent growth rate during 2019. In November 2020, total nonfarm employment across this two-county area provided 3,000 fewer jobs than in November 2019, contracting from 46,840 jobs to 43,400, a 6.5 percent abatement. In fact, year over year, nonfarm job-loss rates across the Wenatchee MSA have hovered in the -6.0 to -7.0 percent range in each of the past four months (August through November 2020).

How long this economic downturn will last is uncertain. Much depends on how soon the COVID-19 virus can be contained and/or eradicated. This makes preparing an outlook during these COVID-19 times difficult. Nevertheless, official long-term, (i.e., ten-year) industry employment projections produced by the Employment Security Department are for a 1.3 percent average annual nonfarm growth rate from 2017 to 2027 for the five-county (Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Grant and Okanogan) North Central Workforce Development Area (WDA), and for a 1.5 percent growth rate for Washington state.

Labor force and unemployment

Current labor force and unemployment statistics are available on the [Labor area summaries](#) page on ESD's labor market information website.

Unemployment rates in the Wenatchee MSA (Chelan and Douglas counties) were remarkably consistent in the four-year period from 2006 to 2008 (before the last recession). Rates ranged from a low of 5.4 percent in 2007 to a high of 5.8 percent in 2008 – a relatively narrow range. During the recession, unemployment rates in the Wenatchee MSA jumped to 9.2 percent in 2010 before decreasing to 5.9 percent in 2015, then increasing to 6.1 percent in 2016. This was due to the idling of the Alcoa smelter in January 2016 and the subsequent layoffs of over 400 workers at this plant. The rate dropped again in 2017 to 5.2 percent and finally bottomed out at the historic low rate of 4.9 percent in 2018. This 4.9 percent reading in 2018 was the lowest average annual unemployment rate in the Wenatchee MSA since electronic records were implemented by our agency in 1980 (28 years ago), encouraging news for the local economy. In 2019, the rate edged upwards to 5.1 percent – still a relatively low average annual unemployment rate in the two-county (Chelan and Douglas counties) Wenatchee MSA.

If we look deeper at recent changes in the Wenatchee MSA's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) we observe that the average number of unemployed increased from 3,309 in 2018 to 3,438 in 2019, equating to 129 more residents out of work in this two-county area (up 3.9 percent). On the positive side, the CLF grew at a modest 0.3 percent clip from 66,879 in 2018 to 67,080 in 2019, indicating that 201 more residents entered the local labor force. The bottom line was that in 2019, the growth in the labor force was not strong enough to offset the rising number of residents unemployed, hence the two-tenths point upturn in the rate between 2018 (4.9 percent) and 2019 (5.1 percent).

In calendar year 2020, we observed that year over year COVID-19-related layoffs pushed local unemployment rates upwards from April through November 2020. At the time of report preparation, the most current monthly county-level unemployment rates are for November 2020. Preliminary November 2020 estimates indicate that the local labor force decreased by 2,439 residents between November 2019 and November 2020, from 65,148 to 62,709 (down 3.7 percent). Simultaneously, the number of unemployed residents in the Wenatchee MSA (Chelan and Douglas counties) jumped from 3,164 in November 2019 to 4,127 in November 2020, a 30.4 percent increase. Hence, a shrinking labor force coupled with more residents out of work combined pushed the Wenatchee MSA's unemployment rate up from 4.9 percent in November 2019 to 6.6 percent in November 2020.

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA

Industry employment

Current industry employment statistics are available on the [Labor area summaries](#) page on ESD's labor market information website.

The analysis in the first part of this section is derived primarily from Current Employment Statistics (CES) data. One advantage of these data is that the employment information is updated monthly using CES employment estimates. However, estimates are nonfarm related, (i.e., they do not include agricultural employment figures). In addition, these data combine employment figures for Chelan and Douglas counties into the two-county Wenatchee Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

The analysis in the second part of this section are derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wage (QCEW) program, conducted by the ESD. It takes a little longer to acquire QCEW data, but it is more detailed than CES data and it provides

employment, wage and size of firm figures down to the county level. QCEW data include agricultural and nonfarm employment and wages for firms, organizations and individuals whose employees are covered by the Washington State Employment Security Act. Also included are data for federal government agencies covered by Title 5, U.S.C. 85. Covered employment generally exceeds 85 percent of total employment in the state of Washington. Types of jobs not covered under the unemployment compensation system, and hence not included in QCEW data, include casual laborers not performing duties in the course of the employer's trade or business such as:

- Railroad personnel
- Newspaper delivery people
- Insurance or real estate agents paid on a commission basis only
- Non-covered employees working for parochial schools, religious or non-profit organizations
- Employees of sheltered workshops
- Inmates working in penal institutions
- Non-covered corporate officers

Analysis using CES data:

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) announced that a severe national recession occurred from December 2007 through June 2009. However, in the Wenatchee MSA, nonfarm employment “peaked” at a pre-recession high of 40,200 jobs in 2008 with the effects of the recession (i.e., job losses) being felt in 2009 and 2010. The “trough” of the recession occurred in 2010 when nonfarm employment in Chelan and Douglas counties (the Wenatchee MSA) sank to an average of 38,100 jobs. It then took six years, from 2009 until 2014 (inclusively), for the Wenatchee MSA economy to regain and surpass the 40,200-job level of calendar year 2008. It did so in 2014 when the Wenatchee MSA nonfarm market averaged 40,600 jobs. Since this low point of 38,100 jobs in 2010, the local economy has expanded for the past nine consecutive years (from 2011 through 2019, inclusively). By 2019, nonfarm employment averaged 46,300 jobs, an all-time high for the Wenatchee MSA.

Following is a summary of average annual nonfarm job changes in the Wenatchee MSA in the last three completed years (2017 to 2019, inclusively):

- In 2017 – The Wenatchee MSA’s nonfarm economy averaged 44,900 jobs, a modest 1.6 percent and 700 job increase – less robust than the 2.4 percent growth rate statewide. The main contributors to the 700-job upturn in calendar year 2017 were construction (up 200), health services (up 200) and local government (up 200).
- In 2018 – The local economy had a very good year in terms of nonfarm job growth. The MSA’s labor market averaged 46,200 jobs, a 2.8 percent average annual growth rate and a 1,300-job expansion over 2017. Construction and health services were two of the “star” performers, each generating 300 new jobs in 2018. Washington’s economy expanded at a respectable, but less robust 2.4 percent clip during 2018.
- In 2019 – The MSA’s nonfarm labor market averaged 46,300 nonfarm jobs, a marginal 0.1 percent growth rate and a 100-job expansion over 2018. In 2019, retail trade and state government each netted 100 fewer jobs than in the prior year. Manufacturing, leisure and hospitality, and local government countered by adding 100 jobs each. Washington’s economy expanded at a much faster 2.0 percent clip in 2019.

Analysis using QCEW data:

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is an industry classification system that groups businesses/organizations into categories or sectors based on the activities in which they are primarily engaged. There are 19 private sectors and three government sectors (for a total of 22 sectors) at the two-digit NAICS code level within each county-level economy. One can observe much about the structure of a county's economy by quantifying and comparing the number of jobs and the percentage of jobs in these sectors by using average annual QCEW data. The most recent average annual employment data available for Chelan and Douglas counties are for 2019.

Top five Chelan County industry sectors in 2019 in terms of employment were:

Industry sector	Number of jobs	Share of employment
1. Agriculture, forestry and fishing	9,474	21.4%
2. Health services	6,440	14.6%
3. Local government	5,382	12.2%
4. Accommodation and food services	4,847	11.0%
5. Retail trade	4,337	9.8%
All other industries	13,745	31.1%
Total covered employment	44,225	100%

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA, QCEW

Chelan County's covered employment of 44,225 in 2019 was over three and a half times larger than neighboring Douglas County's covered employment of 12,496 jobs. More than two-thirds (68.9 percent) of all jobs in Chelan County were in five, two-digit NAICS industries or sectors (i.e., agriculture, health services, local government, accommodation and food services and retail trade), indicating that this is not a tremendously diverse economy. This is not unusual. The economic structure of Chelan County is representative of the labor market structures of many agricultural-based economies (i.e., in Adams, Douglas, Grant, Okanogan and Yakima counties) throughout Central Washington.

A comparison of the top five sectors that provided the most jobs in Chelan County in 2019 with the sectors that produced the highest payrolls:

- Agriculture provided 21.4 percent of all jobs countywide yet supplied only 14.7 percent of total wage income. Why? Many jobs in agriculture are seasonal. The number of agricultural jobs (NAICS 11) dropped from 10,609 in 2018 to 9,474 in 2019 across Chelan County, a substantial 1,135 job and 10.7 percent employment downturn. Agriculture was the sector (of all two-digit 22 NAICS sectors) which lost the most jobs in the Chelan County labor market during 2019. This slowing in agricultural hiring in Chelan County is not a new phenomenon. In fact, if we look at employment trends in this industry over the most recent ten-year period (for which average annual employment figures exist) we observe that in 2009, agriculture provided 9,598 jobs countywide but tallied only 9,474 in 2019; a 124 job and 1.3 percent downturn. This equates to an annualized loss rate of -0.1 percent, versus an annualized total covered employment growth pace of 1.2 percent in Chelan County in this timeframe. There are probably many reasons for these recent and ten-year (2009 to 2019) declines in agricultural employment in Chelan County; but at least two possibilities are: automation and the gradual conversion of some seasonal agricultural jobs to year-round positions.

- Private health services tallied 14.6 percent of total covered employment (see “Top five Chelan County industry sectors in 2019” table, above) yet accounted for 21.8 percent of total wage income countywide, indicating that many positions in this industry pay relatively well. The number of health services (NAICS 62) jobs rose from 6,343 in 2018 to 6,440 in 2019, a 97 job and 1.5 percent employment increase. In terms of job growth, health services tied with manufacturing as the sector which added the most jobs to the Chelan County labor market in 2019. One of the reasons for this relatively high ratio of private health services jobs in Chelan County is that it is becoming a hub for medical services in Central Washington. For example, in neighboring Douglas County, health services accounts for only 6.5 percent of total covered employment. One of the reasons is accessibility. It is a short drive across the bridges from East Wenatchee (Douglas County) to Wenatchee (Chelan County) where a relatively wider array of state-of-the-art medical services are available.
- The local government sector accounted for 12.2 percent of all jobs in Chelan County and 16.4 percent of total wage income. Local government increased by 44 jobs, rising from 5,338 in 2018 to 5,382 jobs in 2019, up a modest 0.8 percent. From 2009 through 2019, the annualized job growth rate amongst local government organizations (local public schools, public utility districts, police and fire departments, city and county administrative offices, etc.) was identical (1.2 percent) to the total covered employment job growth rate across Chelan County. Local government organizations tallied 4,778 jobs in 2009 and 5,382 in 2019, a 604 job and 12.6 increase (again, with an annualized job growth pace of 1.2 percent).
- More than one in every ten jobs in Chelan County is in the accommodation and food services sector (primarily in hotels or at eating and drinking places). Accommodation and food services accounted for 11.0 percent of all jobs in Chelan County in 2019, but only 5.8 percent of total wage income, an indicator that many of these positions are part time or seasonal. In 2009, accommodation and food services businesses provided 3,359 part- or full-time jobs countywide, but ten years later (in 2019) this figure rose to 4,847; a strong 1,488 job and 44.3 percent upturn. This equates to a robust annualized rate of 3.1 percent, versus an annualized total covered employment growth pace of 1.2 percent in this timeframe.
- Retail trade ranked as the fifth-largest job provider in Chelan County, accounting for 9.8 percent of total covered employment countywide in 2019 but providing only 7.0 percent of covered wage income (see the “Wages and income” section, below). Retail trade employment averaged 4,436 jobs in 2018 versus 4,337 in 2019, a 99 job and 2.2 percent downturn. Many local “brick and mortar stores” appear to be feeling the pinch as more of their customers engage in Internet shopping.

Top five Douglas County industry sectors in 2019 in terms of employment were:

Industry sector	Number of jobs	Share of employment
1. Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2,961	23.7%
2. Local government	1,889	15.1%
3. Retail trade	1,781	14.3%
4. Accommodation and food services	984	7.9%
5. Health services	808	6.5%
All other industries	4,073	32.6%
Total covered employment	12,496	100%

Douglas County's covered employment of 12,496 in 2019 was 28.3 percent of Chelan County's covered employment of 44,225 jobs. More than two-thirds (67.4 percent) of all jobs in Douglas County were in five, two-digit NAICS industries or sectors (i.e., agriculture, local government, retail trade, accommodation and food services and private health services) indicating that this is not a diverse economy. This is not unusual. The economic structure of Douglas County is representative of the labor market structures of many agricultural-based economies (i.e., in Adams, Chelan, Grant, Okanogan and Yakima counties) throughout Central Washington.

A comparison of the top five sectors that provided the most jobs in Douglas County in 2019 with the sectors that produced the highest payrolls:

- Agriculture provided nearly a quarter of all covered jobs (23.7 percent) countywide but supplied only 16.5 percent of total wage income (see the “Wages and income” section, below). Why? This industry still has a relatively high proportion of seasonal jobs. Agriculture was the sector (of all two-digit 22 NAICS sectors) which lost the most jobs in the Douglas County labor market during 2019. This slowing in agricultural hiring in Douglas County is not a new phenomenon. In fact, if we look at employment trends in this industry over the most recent ten-year period (for which average annual employment figures exist) we observe that in 2009, agriculture provided 3,138 jobs countywide but tallied only 2,961 in 2019; a 177 job and 5.6 percent downturn. This equates to an annualized loss rate of -0.6 percent, versus an annualized total covered employment growth pace of 1.4 percent in Douglas County in this timeframe. There are probably many reasons for these recent and ten-year (2009 to 2019) declines in agricultural employment in Douglas County; but at least two possibilities are: automation and the gradual conversion of some seasonal agricultural jobs to year-round positions.
- Local government provided the second-highest number of jobs in Douglas County in 2019 by tallying 15.1 percent of total covered employment yet accounting for 22.1 percent (\$107.8 million) of total wage income countywide in 2019 – ranking it first (among all 22 two-digit NAICS sectors) in payroll pumped into the local economy. This is an indicator that many local government jobs pay relatively well. Local government includes positions with local public schools (primary and secondary), public utility districts, ports, county health districts, police and fire departments, libraries, town and city government organizations, etc.
- In 2019, the retail trade sector (NAICS 44-45) accounted for 14.3 percent of total covered employment and 12.0 percent of total payroll in Douglas County. At a time when many “brick and mortar” stores statewide tightened their belts because of increased competition with Internet shopping, Douglas County's retail industry had a mediocre year. The number of part- and full-time retail trade jobs elevated from 1,754 in 2018 to 1,781 in 2019, a 27 job and 1.5 percent uptrend. However, during the most recent ten-year period from 2009 to 2019, retail trade businesses added more jobs than any other Douglas County industry sector. In 2009, retail trade provided 1,363 jobs and tallied 1,781 in 2019; a 418 job and 30.7 percent expansion. This equates to an annualized growth rate of 2.7 percent, versus an annualized total covered employment growth pace of 1.4 percent in Douglas County. Slightly more than 40 percent of these 418 new retail trade jobs added between 2009 and 2019 were in the motor vehicle and parts dealers (NAICS 441) subsector, in which employment lunged upwards from 138 to 306 (up 121.7 percent).

- In 2019, accommodation and food services accounted for 984 jobs (or 7.9 percent of total covered employment) in Douglas County, but only 4.1 percent of total wage income, an indicator that many of these jobs are part time or seasonal. In fact, although this sector is Douglas County's fourth largest in terms of covered employment, it is the ninth largest (of 22 industries/sectors) in terms of payroll.
- Douglas County's health services sector provided 808 jobs in 2019, 6.5 percent of total covered employment and 5.8 percent of total payroll.

For historical industry employment data, [*contact an economist*](#).

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA, QCEW

Industry employment by age and gender

The Local Employment Dynamics (LED) database, a joint project of state employment departments and the U.S. Census Bureau, matches state employment data with federal administrative data. Among the products is industry employment by age and gender. All workers covered by state unemployment insurance data are included; federal workers and non-covered workers, such as the self-employed, are not. Data are presented by place of work, not place of residence.

Chelan County highlights – 2019

- The county's largest job holder age group was the 55+ year-olds, accounting for 26.8 percent of the workforce. This group was followed by the 35 to 44-year-old group and the 25 to 34-year-old group respectively accounting for 21.0 and 20.6 percent of Chelan County's workforce.
- Men held 49.3 percent and women held 50.7 percent of all jobs in Chelan County.
- Male-dominated industries included construction (83.0 percent), utilities (74.9 percent) and transportation and warehousing (71.5 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included healthcare and social assistance (76.7 percent), finance and insurance (75.7 percent) and educational services (67.8 percent).

Douglas County highlights – 2019

- The county's largest job holder age group was the 55+ year-olds, accounting for 26.5 percent of the workforce. This group was followed by the 35 to 44-year-olds with 21.2 percent of workforce.
- Men held 53.5 percent and women held 46.5 percent of all jobs in Douglas County, a switch from neighboring Chelan County where women accounted for slightly more than half of the workforce.
- Male-dominated industries included construction (81.2 percent), utilities (75.6 percent) and manufacturing (70.6 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included healthcare and social assistance (79.6 percent), management of companies and enterprises (73.6 percent) and educational services (71.0 percent).

Source: The Local Employment Dynamics

Wages and income

The total covered payroll in 2019 in Chelan County was approximately \$1.892 billion. The average annual wage was \$42,783 or 61.5 percent of the state average of \$69,606.

The top five Chelan County industry sectors in 2019 in terms of payrolls were:

Industry sector	Payroll	Share of payrolls
1. Health services	\$413,186,149	21.8%
2. Local government	\$310,983,511	16.4%
3. Agriculture, forestry and fishing	\$277,346,248	14.7%
4. Retail trade	\$132,531,311	7.0%
5. Wholesale trade	\$116,952,005	6.2%
All other industries	\$641,057,277	33.9%
Total covered payrolls	\$1,892,056,501	100%

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA, QCEW

In 2019, QCEW data showed that 66.1 percent, slightly less than two-thirds, of all earned wage income (\$1.892 billion) in Chelan County was earned in five, two-digit NAICS industries or sectors of health services, local government, agriculture, retail trade and wholesale trade.

Agriculture was the industry, or sector, which provided the most jobs in Chelan County in 2019 with 21.4 percent of total covered employment, but it ranked only third in terms of wages/payroll pumped into the local economy (behind private health services and local government). Health services provided \$413.2 million in wages in 2019 which placed this industry first out of all 22 sectors in wage income. Health services includes jobs at doctors/dentists' offices, in a private hospital or nursing home, at a vocational rehab facility, etc. During the most recent ten-year period (2009 to 2019) for which average annual covered employment and wage figures were available, the average annual payroll in private health services providers escalated from \$247.5 million in 2009 to \$413.2 million in 2019, a gain of \$165.7 million and a 66.9 percent upturn. The average annual payroll in agriculture advanced from \$189.3 million in 2009 to \$277.3 million in 2019, a gain of \$88.0 million and a more modest 46.5 percent upturn. These differences between wage/payroll growth rates in agriculture and health services are even more apparent when converted to annualized growth rates. Specifically, from 2009 through 2019, the annualized payroll growth rate amongst agricultural employers (NAICS 11) was 3.9 percent, whereas from 2009 through 2019 the annualized payroll growth rate amongst private health services providers (NAICS 62) was 5.3 percent. The total covered wage payroll growth rate countywide during this timeframe was 4.2 percent. Hence, payrolls rose more rapidly in Chelan County's health services industry than in the agricultural industry between 2009 and 2019.

The top five Douglas County industry sectors in 2019 in terms of payrolls were:

Industry sector	Payroll	Share of payrolls
1. Local government	\$107,812,544	22.1%
2. Agriculture, forestry and fishing	\$80,563,582	16.5%
3. Retail trade	\$58,491,657	12.0%
4. Construction	\$33,780,712	6.9%
5. Wholesale trade	\$32,574,758	6.7%
All other industries	\$175,413,490	35.9%
Total covered payrolls	\$488,636,743	100%

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA, QCEW

The total covered payroll in 2019 in Douglas County was approximately \$488.6 million. The average annual wage was \$39,103 or 56.2 percent of the state average of \$69,606.

Although agriculture was clearly the top job provider in Douglas County in 2019, with 23.7 percent of total covered employment, it provided only 16.5 percent of wage income. Conversely, local government tallied 15.1 percent of total covered employment countywide in 2019 but provided 22.1 percent (\$107.8 million) of total covered payroll, ranking this industry first out of 22 industries/categories in wages. Hence, more than one in every five dollars earned in Douglas County in 2019 was earned in a local government organization (i.e., local public schools, public utility districts, public health services, police and fire departments, public libraries, etc.).

Personal income

Personal income includes earned wage income, investment income, and government transfer payments (such as Social Security, welfare, and unemployment insurance benefits). Investment income includes income imputed from pension funds and from owning a home. Per capita personal income equals total personal income divided by the resident population.

QuickFacts reported that per capita income for the period 2015 to 2019 (in 2019 dollars) was \$30,870 and Douglas County's per capita income was \$30,544. Washington's inflation adjusted per capita income was \$38,915 and the nation was \$34,103.

Median household income for the period 2015 to 2019 (in 2019 dollars) was \$58,795 for Chelan County and \$62,951 for Douglas County compared to the state at \$73,775 and the nation at \$62,843.

Chelan County's poverty rate was 12.2 percent and Douglas County's was 10.9 percent over the period 2015 to 2019. In comparison, Washington state's rate was 9.8 percent and the nation's rate was 10.5 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts.

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Population

Chelan County's population in 2019 was 77,200, growing 6.5 percent from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019. The pace of growth in the county's population was less robust than the state's 13.2 percent growth rate over the same time period. The largest city in Chelan County is Wenatchee. Other notable cities are Cashmere, Chelan and Leavenworth.

Douglas County’s population in 2019 was 43,429, growing 13.0 percent from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019. The county’s growth rate was very close to the state’s 13.2 percent growth rate during this timeframe, but it was still considerably more rapid than neighboring Chelan County’s 6.5 percent rate. The largest city in Douglas County is East Wenatchee. Other noteworthy cities in Douglas County are Bridgeport and Waterville.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Population facts

	Chelan County	Douglas County	Washington state
Population 2019	77,200	43,429	7,614,893
Population 2010	72,460	38,427	6,724,540
Percent change, 2010 to 2019	6.5%	13.0%	13.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Age, gender and ethnicity

As of July 1, 2019, the percent of the population age 65 and older in Chelan County was 19.6 percent, and in Douglas County, it was 18.2 percent. Both counties tallied a greater proportion of residents aged 65 and up versus Washington state (15.9 percent) and the nation (16.5 percent).

As of July 1, 2019, Chelan County’s (23.2 percent) and Douglas County’s (25.8 percent) ratio of the population under 18 years of age were also larger than that of the state at 21.8 percent and the nation at 22.3 percent, respectively.

Chelan and Douglas counties each recorded between one-quarter and one-third of their total populations in 2019 as Hispanic or Latino. Specifically, the share of Hispanics was 28.2 percent in Chelan County and 32.3 percent in Douglas County, higher than the 13.0 percent ratio statewide and the 18.5 percent ratio across the nation.

Demographics

	Chelan County	Douglas County	Washington state
Population by age, 2019			
Under 5 years old	6.1%	6.5%	6.0%
Under 18 years old	23.2%	25.8%	21.8%
65 years and older	19.6%	18.2%	15.9%
Females, 2019	49.9%	49.4%	49.9%
Race/ethnicity, 2019			
White	93.2%	92.9%	78.5%
Black	0.9%	0.8%	4.4%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	2.0%	2.1%	1.9%
Asian	1.2%	1.1%	9.6%
Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.3%	0.8%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	28.2%	32.3%	13.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Educational attainment

According to the 2015 to 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), a lower percentage of adults age 25 years and older in Chelan County (82.6 percent) and in Douglas County (82.1 percent) were high school graduates or higher than in the state (91.3 percent). Correspondingly, there were fewer college graduates in these counties compared to the state. In Chelan County, 25.8 percent of residents age 25 and older held a bachelor's degree or higher while in Douglas County the share was only 20.5 percent. Conversely, in Washington state, the percent of the adult population earning a bachelor's degree or higher was 36.0 percent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Useful links

- [Chelan County data tables](#)
- [Douglas County data tables](#)
- [Chelan County home page](#)
- [Chelan and Douglas counties on ofm.wa.gov](#)
- [Chelan and Douglas counties on ChooseWashington.com](#)
- [Chelan County History](#)
- [Douglas County History](#)
- [Douglas County home page](#)
- [Chelan Douglas Trends](#)
- [North Central Washington Economic Development District](#)
- [SkillSource.org](#)
- [Self-sufficiency calculator for Washington state](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#)
- [Port of Chelan County](#)
- [Port of Douglas County](#)
- [Washington Ports](#)
- [Workforce Development Areas and WorkSource Office Directory](#)

Employment Security Department is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Language assistance services for limited English proficient individuals are available free of charge. Washington Relay Service: 711.