

Clark County profile



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Overview

Regional context

Clark County is located in southwest Washington on the Columbia River, roughly 100 miles upstream from the Pacific Ocean. It is the fifth most populous county in the state, and has a large employment base that has been diversifying into headquarters and upper-end services.

The county is part of the Portland Metropolitan Area, and its economy can be understood only in that context: historically almost a third of the county's labor force, about 65,000 in 2019, commuted to Portland on a daily basis, while only about 17,000 commuted in the opposite direction. The county is also in a unique position tax-wise: Washington has a sales tax but no income tax, while Oregon has an income tax but no sales tax. Clark County has excellent transportation linkages, including proximity to Portland International Airport, location on east-west and north-south rail lines, and immediate access to Interstate 5 and 205 north-south and Interstate 84 heading east.

Some history

Before the advent of Europeans, the area around Clark County was part of a densely-settled region of native tribes (primarily the Chinook) along the Columbia River. The area was rich in salmon, the high-protein camas root, wapato, bitterroot, berries, along with deer, elk, and waterfowl. There was an active trade network with tribes throughout the Northwest. Between 1820 and 1850, diseases brought by traders and fur trappers killed off many natives (up to 90 percent in some cases), and from 1850 onwards, U.S. troops forced natives to move to reservations. Fort Vancouver served as a holding center for Indians captured in wars in other parts of the Northwest before they were forcibly settled elsewhere.

White settlers began arriving in large numbers in the 1850s, initially drawn by farmland and timber. In fact, the first apple tree in the state is still standing there. The Camas paper mill was started in the 1870s. The cheap power from damming the Columbia helped spur industrialization, including an aluminum smelter built in the late 1930s that closed in 2001 following the Enron energy price manipulation.

In the 1970s, the county began to attract investment in electronics, which became its most important industry in the 1990s and remains so today, despite the loss of one-third of its employment base in the 2001 recession. Important employers include Wafertech, Hewlett Packard, SEH America and Linear Semiconductor.

Population and employment grew rapidly during the 1990s, but slowed after the 2001 recession. Construction and homebuilding remained strong until the housing bubble burst.

The county lost 6 percent of its employment base in the downturn, about the same as the state and nation, but by early 2020 was 23 percent above its pre-recession peak, compared with 16 percent for the state and 10 percent for the nation. Growth has been spurred by the relocation of the headquarters of both PeaceHealth and Banfield Pet Hospital, the expansion of Fisher Investment and the opening of the Ilani Casino. A major new development on the Columbia River waterfront is changing the face of Vancouver. Hotels, 3,700 condo and apartment units, office space, retail outlets and restaurants, a public park with a pier stretching 90 feet out over the river, and a public market; all of which are either completed, under construction, or in the planning process. The first phase is well under way; several buildings and the pier has been completed, and new buildings are under construction.

Major industry sectors in Clark County include health care and social assistance (26,200 jobs in 2021), professional and business services (22,300), retail trade (18,900 jobs), leisure and hospitality (14,800 jobs) and manufacturing (14,000 jobs). In addition, government employed 25,700, about half of which were in public education.

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division, County data tables

Geographic facts

	Clark County	Rank in state
Land area, 2022 (square miles)	628	35
People per square mile, 2022	828.1	2

Source: Census Bureau

Outlook

Clark County has had a strong recovery from the COVID-19 recession, stronger than the nation, Washington state, Oregon, Portland metro and Seattle metro. While it will always ride the waves of national business cycles, its long-term prospects look very good. While maintaining a diversified manufacturing base, it has diversified in professional services, and its relatively small software industry has started to expand. Its transportation connections, effective port districts, low-cost power and educated workforce bode well for the future.

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.

Clark County's unemployment rate was below the state and national averages throughout the 1990s, but has been above both since 2000. The financial meltdown and subsequent recession widened the gap to four percentage points in 2010. Unemployment has dropped since then due to job growth, but remains higher than average, with an average of 4.7 percent in 2019, versus 4.0 percent for the Portland Metro area, 4.3 percent statewide, and 3.7 percent nationally. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the county's rate up to 14.6 percent in May, before it dropped to 6.5 percent in October. Note that April 2020 rates across the country were underestimated by up to five percentage points, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, due to issues with how some survey questions were answered. The underestimate for May was up to four points, before becoming much smaller in subsequent months.

In 2021, the average unemployment rate was 5.5 percent, a little different from the state and nation. In June of 2022, the (unadjusted) rate was 4.5 percent, a bit above the 3.8 percent of the U.S. and 3.9 percent for the state.

Estimates of the county labor force and employed residents should be used with caution, since their trend is significantly different – much weaker growth – than has been shown by nonfarm employment, a more trustworthy data series. For example, official estimates show the number of employed residents increasing by 14 percent from 2008 to 2019, well below the 24 percent for nonfarm employment.

The labor force participation rate, as measured through the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, was 64.2 percent in 2019, about four points lower than a decade earlier. The decline was partly due to demographic trends – labor force participation declines sharply over the age of 54, and so the overall rate would drop as more baby-boomers reached that age – but the drop was much sharper (which occurred around the 2008 to 2009 recession) than for the state and nation. The participation rate for the prime-working-age population – those aged 25 to 54 – decreased slightly to 83.4 percent in 2019, slightly higher than the state and nation.

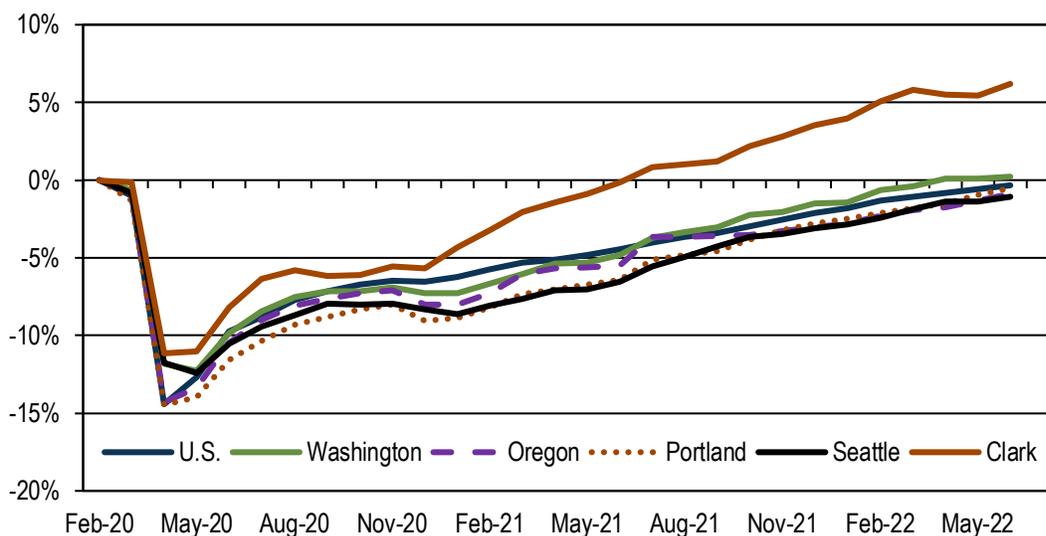
Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division, County data tables

Industry employment

Current industry employment statistics are available on the [Labor area summaries](#) page.

From 2000 to 2019, Clark County nonfarm employment grew almost three times faster than the nation, and 58 percent faster than the state. During the 2008 through 2009 recession, employment fell by 6 percent, closely tracking the state and nation. A slow recovery started in 2010, and in early 2013, hiring accelerated and was exceedingly strong before moderating in 2018 through 2019. In the first two months of the COVID-19 recession, the county lost 19,000 jobs, 11.1 percent of its employment base. The county recovered all of those jobs by July 2021, much more quickly than comparable areas. According to preliminary estimates, June 2022 employment was 10,600 jobs (6.2 percent) above pre-COVID-19 levels.

Change in nonfarm employment, February 2020 through June 2022

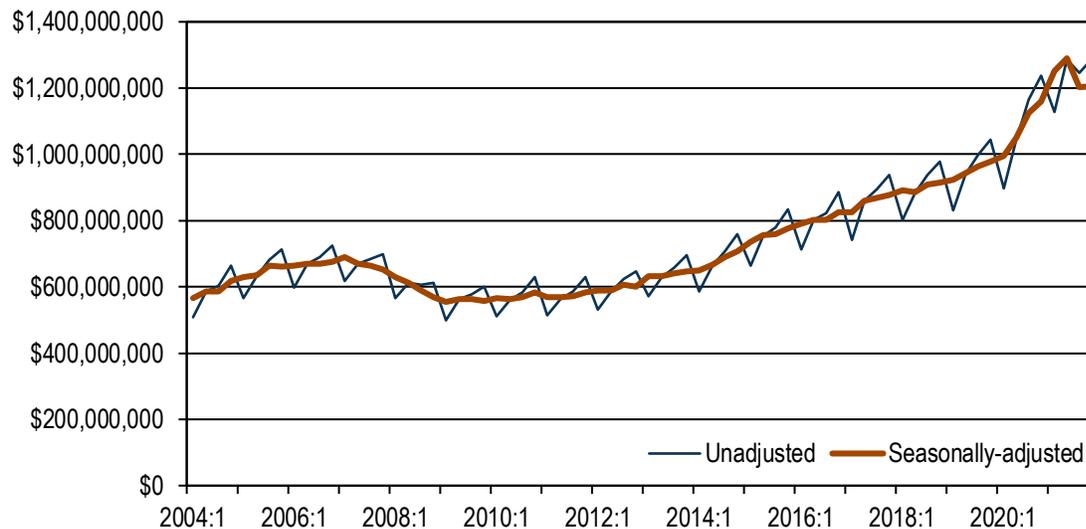


Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Oregon Employment Department

Industry detail:

- Construction and mining employed 15,700 in 2019, well over the peak employment in the housing bubble years. Since bottoming out in 2011, construction averaged 9 percent growth per year, and has consistently been one of the fastest-growing industries in the county. Construction employment took a hit early in the pandemic, but recovered relatively quickly, averaging 16,600 in 2021. In that year, more than 5,600 housing unit permits were issued; an all-time high. Multifamily housing was particularly strong. A variety of commercial and industrial projects kept contractors busy, pushed costs up and led to labor shortages.
 - In the first half of 2022, construction employment was running almost 8 percent above the year-ago level. Housing permits in the first five months of the year were about the same for single-family housing, but well below 2021 for multi-family housing.
- Manufacturing employed 14,200 in 2019, the same as in 2018. The industry took a hit during the pandemic but had recovered by the end of 2021. Electronics continued to be the largest segment with 3,300 employees, followed by food processing (1,600 jobs), metal fabrication (1,500 jobs), and machinery (1,100 jobs).
 - Manufacturing was holding steady around 14,700 jobs in the first half of 2022. Durable goods outside of electronics was running stronger, while other nondurable goods had reduced staffing.
- Businesses in wholesale trade employed 6,800 in both 2019 and 2021.
 - Wholesale trade gained 100 jobs in the first half of 2022.
- In part due to the increase in online shopping, employment in retail trade fell by 200 jobs (1 percent) to 18,700 in 2019. The increase in consumer demand during the pandemic meant that retail employment recovered fairly quickly, by the end of 2020. The annual average for 2021 was 18,900. Taxable sales at retail outlets soared during the recession, jumping from \$1.0 billion to \$1.3 billion in second quarter 2021, before coming back down as consumers shifted spending back into services. Sales were still above trend at the end of 2021, at \$1.2 billion each of the last two quarters of 2021.
 - Retail employment fell by 400 jobs in the first half of 2022 as general merchandise retailers dealt with falling sales and excess inventories.

Quarterly taxable sales at retail stores (NAICS 44-45), adjusted for inflation



Source: Washington Department of Revenue, adjusted for inflation and seasonality by ESD/DATA Division

- After a decade of flat employment, transportation and warehousing added 200 jobs in both 2018 and 2019. Total employment reached 4,500. The COVID-19 recession led to a loss of 300 jobs, most of which had been recovered by the end of 2021. Unlike some other areas, Clark County did not see a big increase in warehouse jobs during the pandemic.
 - The industry was still slightly below its pre-COVID-19 peak in early 2022. There were reports that Amazon had purchased land and would be starting construction of distribution centers in the near future.
- Information services employed 2,900 in 2019, before adding 400 jobs in 2020 and 300 more in 2021, thanks in part to a growth spurt in software publishing.
 - This sector was holding steady in the first half of 2022.
- The financial activities sector expanded steadily from 2011 to 2019, growing from 6,300 jobs to 9,400 jobs. Job losses in the early stage of the pandemic were minimal, due to the industry's ability to move activities online. It has been a steady job creator since 2011, averaging over 5 percent growth per year. Average employment in 2021 matched that of 2019.
 - Finance and insurance continued to expand in 2021 and 2022, and by mid-year was 60 jobs (10 percent) above pre-COVID-19 levels. Real estate, rental and leasing was unchanged, however.
- Professional and business services gainfully employed 20,700 in 2019. After a small initial job loss, professional services went on an absolute tear during the pandemic, increasing from 8,600 to 10,300 at the end of 2021. The gain was due mostly to startups and small business expansion. Corporate office employment reached 3,800 in 2019, and lost 200 jobs during the pandemic, with little in the way of recovery. Business services, the third part of this sector, averaged 7,800 jobs in 2019. After losing 600 jobs in the opening months of COVID-19, this industry came roaring back, matching the growth of professional services.
 - The patterns described above continued into 2022, with professional services and business services both expanding rapidly, while corporate offices trimmed staffing.

- Private educational services – which include not only private schools but all sorts of instruction like gymnastics, dance, tutoring, martial arts – employed 2,300 in 2019. This industry had grown steadily for more than a decade, doubling its payrolls in that time period. Most of the increase in jobs has not been in private schools per se, but in small businesses which provide services like test prep, gym/dance/martial arts instruction, etc. This industry lost 300 jobs early during the COVID-19 pandemic, but had fully recovered by mid-2021.
 - Private educational services added another 100 jobs in the first half of 2022.
- Health care and social assistance employed 25,200 in 2019. Health care was hit hard initially with the suspension of elective surgery and patients deferring regular checkups. Medical offices initially cut 2,000 jobs, but bounced back by the beginning of 2021. Hospitals and nursing facilities cut about 100 jobs each but brought staff back in the ensuing months, but both recovered fairly quickly. COVID-19 burnout exacerbated staffing shortages that persisted into 2022. Social assistance employed 6,500 in 2019. Just over half worked in social service agencies, the rest were in home health care, reimbursed by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Many of the caretakers were family members. Social assistance employment declined by only 200 jobs during the pandemic. Most of the 600-job increase since then was through the DSHS program.
 - Medical offices added 600 jobs in the first half of 2022, hospitals 200, while nursing facilities were unchanged. Social assistance added 500 jobs during this time period.
- Leisure and hospitality employed 16,500 in 2019. This sector was hit hard by COVID-19, and has been slow to recover. Arts, entertainment and recreation lost 1,300 jobs early in the recession, and had the largest percent loss – 55 percent – of any industry. The lodging industry – hotels, motels, campgrounds – was almost as bad, at -500 jobs/-42 percent. Neither had recovered by the end of 2021. Taxable sales in lodging dropped by 71 percent into the summer of 2020, and were still off by about 10 percent at the end of 2021. Full-service restaurants declined by 2,300 jobs (-43 percent), and was still a bit short of recovery at the end of 2021. Limited-service restaurants lost 1,400 jobs (-20 percent), but were quicker coming back (April 2021) making use of drive-through services. Restaurant sales fell by 29 percent, but recovered in mid-2021, and were up 4 percent from the pre-COVID-19 high in fourth quarter 2021.
 - Arts, entertainment and recreation was still 300 jobs short of recovery in June 2022. The lodging industry finally made it back in mid-2022, and was poised to expand with the opening of at least one new hotel. Full-service restaurants were 2 percent above pre-COVID-19 staffing in June 2022, while limited-service restaurant employment was up 12 percent.
- Other services include repair and maintenance services, personal and laundry services, and a range of non-profit community groups. This sector employed 6,300 in 2019, before being hammered by COVID-19, losing 1,000 jobs (-15 percent).
 - Employment slowly crawled back from the depths of the recession, with full recovery finally reached in June 2022.
- The public sector employed 25,700 in 2019, about half of which was in public education, the other half in county government, cities, tribal governments and other districts like ports and fire departments. Initially COVID-19 had its biggest impact on the non-education side, with a loss of 1,300 jobs (-19 percent), mostly recovered by September 2020. Public education losses hit bottom in September 2020, and school districts were still short 600 jobs at the end of 2021.

- By mid-2022, K-12 schools and other local government agencies were both about 200 jobs below pre-pandemic levels. State government was also about 200 jobs short, and federal government was off by 300 jobs, due mostly to cuts at the Bonneville Power Administration unrelated to COVID-19.

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

Agriculture

According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, there were 750 farms in the county with a total of more than half a million acres and \$99 million in sales. The fruits, tree nuts and berries category accounted for \$64 million in sales – the county has extensive production of cherries and wine grapes. There were almost \$10 million in sales of cattle and calves, and \$8 million in grains, oilseeds, dry beans and dry peas – mostly in wheat.

Industry employment by age, sex and race/ethnicity

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.

Clark County highlights:

In 2021, 14 percent of the jobs in Clark County were held by workers under the age of 25, while 22 percent of jobs were held by those aged 55 and over. The rest of the jobs were evenly split among those aged 25 to 34, 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 with each about 21 to 22 percent of the total. The county's age profile closely matches that of the state. After big demographic changes in the 1990 through 2007 period due to the aging of the Baby Boomers, the share of employment by age has been relatively stable over the past decade.

Jobs were almost evenly divided between men (49 percent) and women (51 percent) in 2019. There were substantial differences in gender dominance by industry.

- Male-dominated industries included construction (79 percent), manufacturing (73 percent), transportation and warehousing (74 percent) and wholesale trade (68 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included health care and social assistance (80 percent), educational services (public and private combined, 73 percent), corporate offices (65 percent) and finance and insurance (55 percent).

Industry employment by race/ethnicity

The following table shows estimated employment by industry, and by race or ethnicity of the worker holding the job. For the most part, employment patterns by race roughly conform to the average for all workers. Some exceptions: African Americans held 2.2 percent of jobs in the county, and held 6.4 percent of jobs in transportation and warehousing (mostly in high-wage port-related industries). Native Americans, with 1.7 percent of jobs, had 5.4 percent of the jobs in public administration. Asian Americans made up 5.0 percent of the professional services workforce, versus 3.2 percent of all jobs. Pacific Islanders held 1.1 percent of the jobs in transportation and warehousing and

business services, almost double their 0.6 percent share of all jobs. Latinos were 8.5 percent of the workforce, and 14.0 percent of job holders in business services, 13.7 percent in accommodations and food services.

Jobs by industry and by race/ethnicity of employee, 2020

NAICS	Total*	White Non Latino	African American	Native American	Asian American	Pacific Islander	Two or more races	Latino
Total	154,713	120,192	4,475	1,814	9,409	1,071	5,427	14,835
11	655	468	17	15	33	1	26	115
21	135	117	0	0	0	0	0	12
22	489	438	5	5	11	0	12	21
23	14,930	11,719	297	224	322	64	400	1,646
31-33	13,596	9,913	306	159	1,416	142	435	1,469
42	6,929	5,556	142	62	434	42	198	581
44-45	16,972	13,057	510	215	824	128	733	1,828
48-49	3,929	3,226	137	52	108	51	116	289
51	3,346	2,663	109	32	182	15	143	248
52	5,514	4,518	107	39	308	24	184	395
53	3,255	2,567	103	37	118	23	122	344
54	8,467	6,962	143	59	617	32	254	479
55	3,616	2,904	86	29	255	22	116	245
56	8,468	5,896	510	145	475	106	314	1,225
61	14,500	12,653	247	83	401	38	374	829
62	26,550	20,001	1,006	310	2,066	235	964	2,381
71	2,633	1,947	64	58	256	17	119	215
72	11,646	7,816	463	201	956	85	601	1,861
81	4,693	3,510	102	51	501	20	182	399
92	4,934	4,263	121	42	129	27	137	254

* Includes all non-federal jobs covered by unemployment insurance.

Source: The Local Employment Dynamics Database

Wages and income

When it comes to average wages:

- The inflation-adjusted average has risen almost every year for the past three decades.
- The 2021 average annual wage for jobs in the county was \$65,032, well below the state (\$82,513) but close to the national average (\$67,610).
- Averages varied widely by industry, as shown in the following table:

Average wages by industry in Clark County

Industry	NAICS	2021	2021
		Average annual wage	Median hourly wage
All industries		\$65,032	\$27.01
Higher-wage industries			
Finance and insurance	52	\$122,988	\$40.46
Corporate offices	55	\$112,029	\$43.92
Information services	51	\$102,111	\$36.24
Professional services	54	\$99,131	\$38.97
Lower-wage industries			
Accommodations and food services	72	\$25,755	\$17.68
Arts, entertainment and recreation	71	\$28,000	\$20.26
Private educational services	61	\$34,346	\$25.05
Retail trade	44-45	\$39,979	\$18.69

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division, County data tables

There were wide disparities in wages by age, gender, education and race in the county, as shown in the following tables. Notably, wages for Black, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, and Latinx workers averaged around 80 percent or less than the average for all workers. These gaps have held since 1990 (the first year this data was first available). Wages for female workers has slowly risen relative to male workers, from 57 percent in 1990 to 70 percent in 2021.

Average monthly wage in 2021 for Clark County

	Average monthly wage	Percent of total
Total	\$5,294	100%
Black	\$4,231	80%
Indigenous	\$4,250	80%
Asian American	\$5,760	109%
Pacific Islander	\$3,911	74%
White non-Latino	\$5,477	103%
Multi-racial	\$5,046	95%
Latino	\$3,977	75%
Gender:		
Male	\$6,279	119%
Female	\$4,371	83%
Age:		
14-18	\$1,265	24%
19-21	\$2,103	40%
22-24	\$2,924	55%
25-34	\$4,436	84%
35-44	\$5,912	112%
45-54	\$6,578	124%
55-64	\$6,149	116%
65+	\$4,385	83%
Education (ages 25 and older):		
Did not complete high school	\$4,435	84%
High school diploma/GED only	\$4,851	92%
Some college, including AA degree	\$5,324	101%
Bachelor's or higher	\$7,215	136%

Note: Includes all non-federal "full-quarter" jobs covered by unemployment insurance.

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division

With rising wage inequality, it's important to look beyond the average to get a more detailed look at wage distribution. The four major conclusions:

- Wages paid by Clark County employers have been increasing across the wage spectrum.
- Wage inequality has also increased.
- The number of higher-wage jobs has been growing faster than average.
- The minimum wage has pushed wages up on the low end faster than average.

The median hourly wage for jobs in Clark County in 2021 was \$27.01. The median rose by a record 6.5 percent in 2019, in large part because job losses were predominantly in lower-wage industries, before falling 1.3 percent in 2021. The end result was positive: a \$1.33 inflation-adjusted increase in the median over a two-year period. Clark's median was more than \$2 per hour below the state median of \$30.50 per hour.

The county's average hourly wage rose even faster than the median, by 9.4 percent in 2020 and another 2.4 percent in 2021. When the average rises faster than the median, it means that wage disparities – the gap between high-wage earners and low-wage workers – has increased. A standard measure of that gap, the 90/10 ratio, is computed by comparing the average hourly wage for the top 10 percent of jobs with that of the bottom 10 percent of jobs. That ratio increased from 7.8 in 2019 to 8.7 in 2021, despite a hefty increase in the minimum wage in 2020.¹

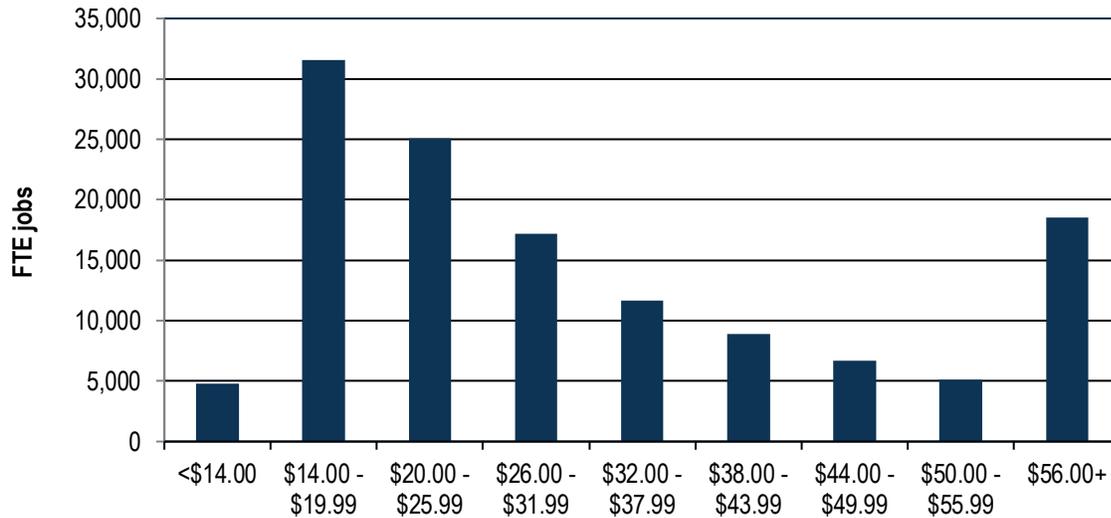
The county has been seeing an increase in the number and pay of higher-wage jobs. From 2010 to 2021, the total number of jobs increased by 38 percent, while the number of those paying above \$56.00 per hour more than doubled. The average wage for the top 10 percent of jobs rose by 37 percent over that period, while the median hourly wage rose by 16.5 percent. Large increases in the minimum wage in 2017 and 2020 meant that wages on the lower end increased by 32 percent. An important note: corporate officers, the highest wage earners at a business, often opt out of the unemployment insurance system, and so are not in the database. In 2021, an estimated 2,400 corporate officers at Clark County employers opted out.

In 2021, as shown in the following chart, just under 4,800 jobs in the county paid below \$14.00 per hour. Almost 31,600 jobs paid between \$14.00 and \$19.99 per hour, and another 25,000+ paid between \$20.00 and \$25.99 per hour. Over 18,500 jobs paid \$56.00 per hour or more.

Comparing 2019 with 2021, two trends stood out. There was a large decline in jobs paying below \$14.00, due to the increase in the minimum wage. It wasn't just a matter of those jobs being pushed into the next higher wage bracket. A tighter labor market meant a substantial shift of jobs into higher pay ranges all the way up to \$32.00 per hour.

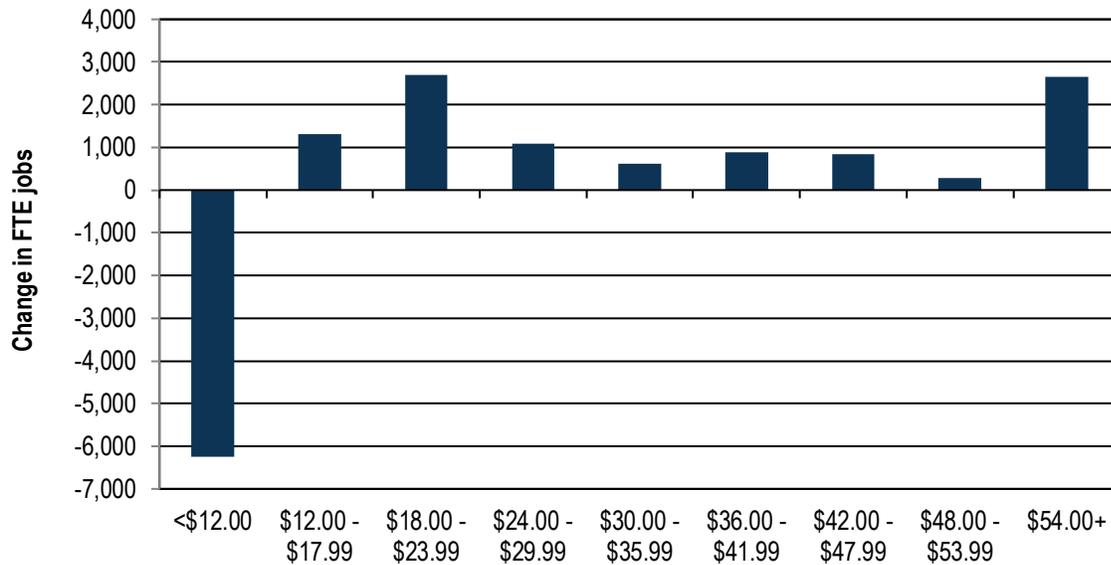
¹ Adjusted for inflation, the minimum wage actually declined in 2021, from \$14.02 to \$13.69.

Full-time employment (FTE) jobs by hourly wage range, 2021



Since 2010, there have been three noticeable shifts in the wage distribution. First, the increase in the minimum wage has helped push jobs out of the below \$14 per hour category into the \$14 to \$20 range. Second, the number of jobs paying between \$20 per hour up to \$56 per hour increased by roughly 30 percent. Finally, the number of jobs in the highest-paying range increased by more than double (+107 percent). Overall, this is a very positive story.

Change in FTE jobs by hourly wage range, 2019 to 2021



Turning to household income and poverty: unfortunately, 2020 household income data is not available due to low response rates in the 2020 American Community Survey.

Not surprisingly, median household income declined sharply in the recession, falling 9.7 percent from 2007 to 2010 – compared with 4.4 percent for the state and 5.8 percent nationally. From 2010 to 2019, however, the median rose by 27.8 percent, the state by 23.2 percent, and the U.S. by 14.4 percent. Clark County’s 2019 median household income of \$80,555 was higher than both the state (\$78,687) and the nation (\$65,712).

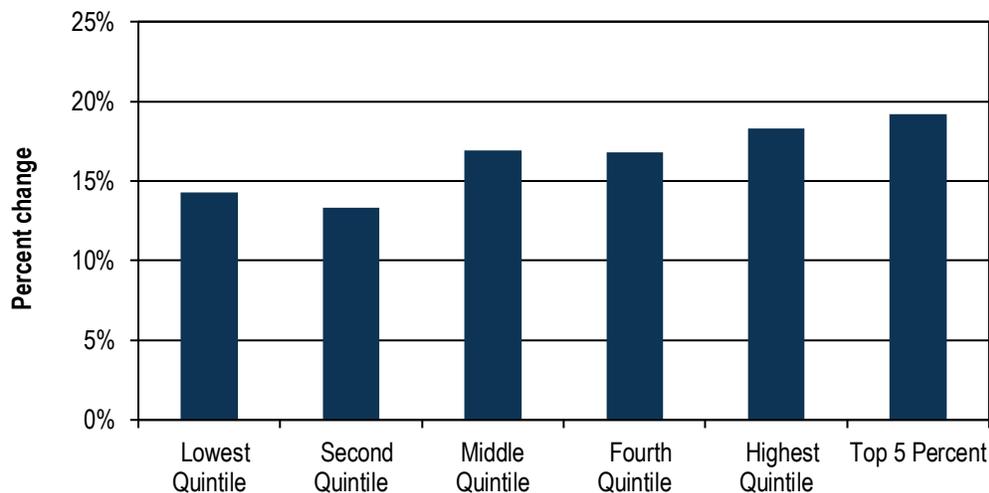
The good news: household incomes have been going up on average across the board during the past decade. However, incomes became increasingly unequal at the same time. Income for the poorest 20 percent of households was estimated at \$21,806 in 2019, an increase of 14.3 percent from 2006 to 2019. The average income for the top 20 percent of households was \$288,673 in 2019 and grew by 18.3 percent over that same period. The top 5 percent (at \$388,867) had grown at an even faster 19.2 percent. Research has indicated that household surveys (like the Census) do not accurately capture incomes at the upper end – average incomes for the top 20 and 5 percent are likely significantly higher than stated here.

Average household income by quintile for Clark County in 2019

	Lowest quintile	Second quintile	Middle quintile	Fourth quintile	Fifth quintile	Top 5 percent
Income	\$21,806	\$51,308	\$80,253	\$116,017	\$228,673	\$388,867
Percent change, 2006-2019	14.3%	13.3%	16.9%	16.8%	18.3%	19.2%

Source: Employment Security Department/ DATA Division, County data tables

Change in average household income by quintile, 2006 through 2019



Source: Employment Security Department/ DATA Division, County data tables

Clark County’s poverty rate rose from 9.3 percent in 2007 to 13.7 percent in 2011, before falling to 9.2 percent in 2019, below the state (9.8 percent) and nation (12.3 percent). The poverty rate for children was higher, but followed the same pattern, going from 11.0 percent to 18.0 percent then down to 12.8 percent.

Personal income

Personal income includes earned income, investment income, and government payments such as Social Security and Veterans 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.

In 2021, Clark County per capita personal income was \$57,863, the highest on record, and slightly lower than the national average of \$59,510. Per capita earned income actually increased during the pandemic, while per capita investment income declined slightly; both were close to the comparable U.S. figure. County per capita transfer payments jumped by 27 percent in 2020, due primarily to stimulus payments and expanded unemployment insurance benefits. Still, transfer payments per person were lower in the county than the state and nation, as shown in the following table.

Per capita transfer payments, 2020

Per capita transfer payments	U.S.	State	Clark
Total	\$12,872	\$12,112	\$11,412
Social Security benefits	\$3,272	\$3,272	\$3,352
Medicare benefits	\$2,486	\$2,008	\$2,005
Public assistance medical care benefits	\$2,035	\$1,814	\$1,633
Income maintenance benefits	\$918	\$771	\$792
Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits	\$176	\$137	\$121
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	\$254	\$226	\$249
Other income maintenance	\$488	\$407	\$422
Unemployment insurance compensation	\$1,630	\$1,599	\$1,162
Veterans' benefits	\$442	\$526	\$433
Refundable tax credits (e.g., stimulus payments)	\$1,232	\$1,100	\$1,170
All other	\$783	\$1,062	\$865

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

Population

Clark County's population was estimated at 520,900 as of April 1, 2022. The county was the fastest-growing in the state in the 1990s, and the second-fastest since then. Growth in the past was spurred by in-migration of new residents, but in 2010, more people moved out of the county than moved in for the first time since 1984. In-migration turned (barely) positive in 2011, and then roared back in 2014 to 2022. Vancouver was the largest city in the county, and the fourth-largest in the state, with a population of 197,600 in 2022.

Population facts

	Clark County	Washington state
Population 2010	425,363	6,724,540
Population 2022	520,900	7,864,400
Percent change, 2010 to 2022	22.5%	17.0%

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division, County data tables

Age, gender and ethnicity

When compared with the state, Clark County's population had a similar age distribution, with slightly more young people (under the age of 20), fewer younger adults (aged 20 to 39) and slightly more older adults.

The county is less diverse in terms of race and ethnicity than the state and nation, but has been slowly getting more diverse. In 2021, 72.8 percent of Clark's population was white and not Latino, compared with 63.7 percent statewide. Clark County's population was 12.1 percent Latino, versus 14.0 percent for the state.

Demographics

Population by age, 2021	Clark County	Washington state
Under 20 years of age	25.5%	24.1%
20 to 39 years old	24.7%	27.5%
40 to 59 years old	25.8%	24.8%
60 years and older	23.9%	23.6%
Population by race/ethnicity, 2021		
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	72.8%	63.7%
African American	2.5%	4.3%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	1.2%	1.9%
Asian-American	5.1%	9.9%
Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	1.1%	0.9%
Multi-racial	9.8%	10.2%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	12.1%	14.0%

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division, County data tables

Educational attainment

In 2020, 31.3 percent of Clark County residents age 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or higher. That was lower than the nation (32.9 percent) and state (36.7 percent). As Clark County has continued to attract more managerial and professional jobs, the county's educational attainment has moved closer to the state and nation.

Useful links

- [County data tables](#)
- [Census Bureau Profile](#)
- [2020 Census State Profile](#)
- [Clark County home page](#)
- [Clark County on ofm.wa.gov](#)
- [Port of Camas-Washougal](#)
- [Port of Ridgefield](#)
- [Port of Vancouver](#)
- [Washington Ports](#)
- [Clark County Profile from Choose Washington.com](#)
- [Clark County History](#)
- [Columbia River Economic Development Council](#)
- [Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#)
- [Workforce Development Areas and WorkSource Office Directory](#)

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