

# Pacific County profile

By Jim Vleming  
Regional labor economist  
Updated May 2022



[Overview](#) | [Geographic facts](#) | [Outlook](#) | [Labor force and unemployment](#) | [Industry employment](#) | [Wages and income](#) | [Population](#) | [Useful links](#)

## Overview

### Regional context

Pacific County is located in the southwestern part of the state with the Pacific Ocean on its western border. It was established as a county in 1851, and its boundaries were adjusted multiple times from 1860 to 1925. The Chinook and Chehalis tribes inhabited the area, and found their numbers greatly reduced by disease introduced by Europeans.

### Local economy

Some of the early settlers arrived via shipwreck due to the difficulty in navigating the estuary at the mouth of the Columbia. The Hudson Bay Company attracted fur trappers who settled in the area. The 1845 California Gold Rush created a housing boom in San Francisco, which opened markets for timber and oysters, mainstays of Pacific County. Willapa Bay in the county is the nation's largest farmed shellfish producer. Cranberry bogs, forest products, manufacturing and dairy farms are also important to the county's industrial mix. Tourism is also a critical feature of the Pacific County economy. In 2020, 22.4 percent of earned income came from residents working outside the county.

## Geographic facts

	Pacific County	Rank in state
Land area, 2010 (square miles)	932.66	30
People per square mile, 2010	22.4	24

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## Outlook

After being flat in 2017, nonfarm job growth in Pacific County grew by 1.2 percent in 2018 only to see 2019 take that gain back. The beginning of the pandemic sliced further into that growth cutting nonfarm employment by another -6.7 percent. The good news is that 2021 saw a reversal of fortune as nonfarm employment in the county bounced back posting a solid 4.7 percent increase in nonfarm employment in the county.

## 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.

The unemployment rate in the county was 11.0 percent in 2020; in 2021 that rate fell dramatically to 7.9 percent. While that's a nice drop, it still is a full point above the county's average rate of 6.9 percent in 2018. The coming year will see the rate continue to drop but not so dramatically.

The civilian labor force in the county was 8,296 in 2020, with 7,871 counted as employed as 675 sought work. This was well below the labor force of 9,299 in 2009.

Source: Employment Security Department

## Industry employment

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

Nonfarm employment in the county is primarily in service-providing industries, with government being the largest employer. In 2021, service industries accounted for 4,720 of the 5,920 nonfarm jobs in the county. In the services sector, government held 1,750 jobs followed by leisure and hospitality (940) and the trade, transportation, and utilities sector (780). In the goods-producing sector, manufacturing provides the bulk of employment (600 jobs). The leisure and hospitality sector retreated the most during the pandemic, but seems to be poised to continue its strong comeback.

Annual job growth is up from 2020, but the overall picture is less positive as nonfarm employment in the county stayed flat since 2000.

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

Source: Employment Security Department

## 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.

### ***Pacific County highlights:***

In 2020, the largest job holder age group in Pacific County was the 55 and older age category, making up 30.0 percent of employment across all industries. The next largest shares were among people age 35 to 44 at 21.2 percent of employment.

In 2020, the county's workers mirrored state patterns with workers age 14 to 24 dominating the accommodation and food services jobs in the county with 27.4 percent of the positions. This age group was also well represented in arts, entertainment and recreation and retail trade.

Workers in the 55 year and older age category were prevalent in transportation and warehousing, other services, and mining.

Females made up 51.7 percent of the labor force in Pacific County with males making up the difference at 48.4 percent in 2020. Men were more often represented in higher paying industries.

- Male-dominated industries included mining (91.0 percent), construction (83.6 percent), utilities (75.2 percent), manufacturing (70.9 percent) and transportation and warehousing (77.8 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included finance and insurance (84.1 percent), health care and social assistance (77.5 percent), professional, scientific, and technical services (81.5 percent) and educational services (69.4 percent).

Source: The Local Employment Dynamics

## Wages and income

In 2020, there were 5,976 jobs covered by unemployment insurance in Pacific County, with a total payroll of over \$245.5 million.

The county's average annual wage in 2020 was \$41,084. That total lags both the state (\$76,801) and the U.S. (\$50,834).

The median hourly wage in 2020 was \$22.25, below the state's median hourly wage of \$29.28 and the state excluding King County median hourly wage of \$25.01.

### 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.

Personal income in 2020 lagged both the state and nation as Pacific County's per capita personal income was \$43,749. The U.S. average was \$59,510 and the state average was \$67,126.

The median household income in Pacific County was \$50,873 in 2016 to 2020 according to the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts. The county's median was less than the state's (\$77,006) and the nation's (\$64,994).

Over the period 2016 to 2020, 13.6 percent of Pacific County's population was living below the poverty level, compared with 9.5 percent for the state and the nation at 11.4 percent. The state and national rates are not directly comparable to the county rate because they each use different data sources.

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

## Population

The population of Pacific County has grown over the years adding over 2,000 individuals to the total since 2010. The largest city is Raymond, with a population of 3,075, followed by South Bend (1,750) and Long Beach (1,700).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts; Washington Office of Financial Management

## Population facts

	Pacific County	Washington state
Population 2021	23,365	7,738,692
Population 2010	20,920	6,724,540
Percent change, 2010 to 2021	11.69%	15.08%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## Age, gender and ethnicity

The population of Pacific County is considerably older than that of the state, as evidenced by the percentage in the 65 and older group.

The county is much less diverse than the state in terms of race and ethnicity, with over 90.0 percent white and just 1.1 percent black. The American Indians and Alaskan Natives make up 2.8 percent of the county population. The Asian alone category is 2.1 percent.

## Demographics

	Pacific County	Washington state
<b>Population by age, 2021</b>		
Under 5 years old	4.0%	6.0%
Under 18 years old	15.3%	21.8%
65 years and older	32.2%	15.9%
<b>Females, 2021</b>	<b>50.3%</b>	<b>49.9%</b>
<b>Race/ethnicity, 2021</b>		
White	90.0%	78.5%
Black	1.1%	4.4%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	2.8%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	2.3%	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	10.1%	13.0%

## Educational attainment

Most Pacific County residents age 25 and older (89.8 percent) were high school graduates, which compares with 91.7 percent of Washington state's residents and 88.5 percent of U.S. residents in the period 2016 to 2020.

Those with a bachelor's degree or higher made up 20.3 percent of Pacific County residents age 25 and older compared to 36.7 percent of state residents and 32.9 percent of U.S. residents during the same period.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## Useful links

- [County data tables](#)
- [Census Bureau Profile](#)
- [Pacific County on ofm.wa.gov](#)
- [Pacific County on ChooseWashington.com](#)
- [Pacific County History](#)

- [Pacific County home page](#)
- [Long Beach Peninsula Visitor's Bureau](#)
- [Ocean Park Area Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Tokeland-North Cove Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Port of Ilwaco](#)
- [Port of Peninsula](#)
- [Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#)
- [Willapa Harbor Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Pacific County Economic Development Council](#)
- [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.