



Monthly Employment Report

May 2020



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

Employment estimates in this report are generated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Monthly employment estimates are subject to revision in subsequent months when more sample data become available. BLS data in this report are rounded to the nearest 100.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicate nonfarm employment in Washington rose by 52,500 in May 2020.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 72,600 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 20,100 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for May 2019 through May 2020 indicate a decrease in employment of 408,200 for the state. The private sector lost 360,100 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 48,100 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2020 is 15.1 percent. The revised estimated April 2020 unemployment rate is at 16.3 percent. The May 2019 unemployment rate was 4.4 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. April's preliminary estimated loss of 527,000 jobs was revised to a loss of 457,800 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, April and May, 2019 and 2020
Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

	May 2020 (Preliminary)	April 2020 (Revised)	May 2019 (Revised)	April 2019 (Revised)
United States				
Unemployment rate				
Seasonally adjusted	13.3%	14.7%	3.6%	3.6%
Washington				
Unemployment rate	15.1%	16.3%	4.4%	4.4%
Resident labor force	3,943,500	3,963,300	3,898,200	3,889,600
Unemployed	594,300	645,100	170,800	172,500
Seattle/Bellevue/Everett				
Unemployment rate	14.4%	14.5%	2.9%	3.0%
Resident labor force	1,705,600	1,714,100	1,723,500	1,719,700
Unemployed	246,300	247,900	50,300	51,100



¹Most of the employment numbers discussed in this report refers to jobs, not people. For example, if a person holds two positions, these positions are counted as two jobs in the employment series. In the section titled "Unemployment," these positions refer to individuals, not jobs. In this case, a person holding two jobs is counted only once.

Unemployment, seasonally adjusted

The BLS estimates Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2020 is 15.1 percent. The revised estimated April 2020 unemployment rate is 16.3 percent.

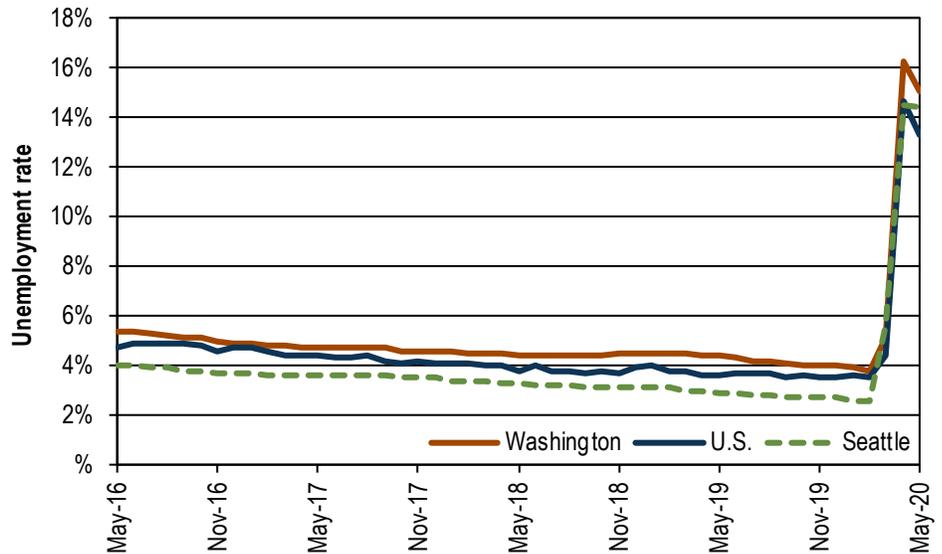
According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed people fell by 50,800 in May 2020 compared to April 2020. At the same time, the number of employed people rose by an estimated 31,000. Overall, this amounted to a decrease of 19,800 people in the labor force.

The preliminary May 2020 unemployment rate is 10.7 percentage points higher than the May 2019 rate of 4.4 percent.

Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted

U.S., Washington and Seattle, May 2016 through May 2020

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



May 2020 preliminary unemployment rates:

U.S. (preliminary) 13.3%

Washington (preliminary) 15.1%

Seattle area (preliminary) 14.4%

Employment change and moving average, seasonally adjusted

Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment increased by 52,500 jobs from April 2020 to May 2020.

Recent employment change:

March 2020: down 25,400 jobs (revised)

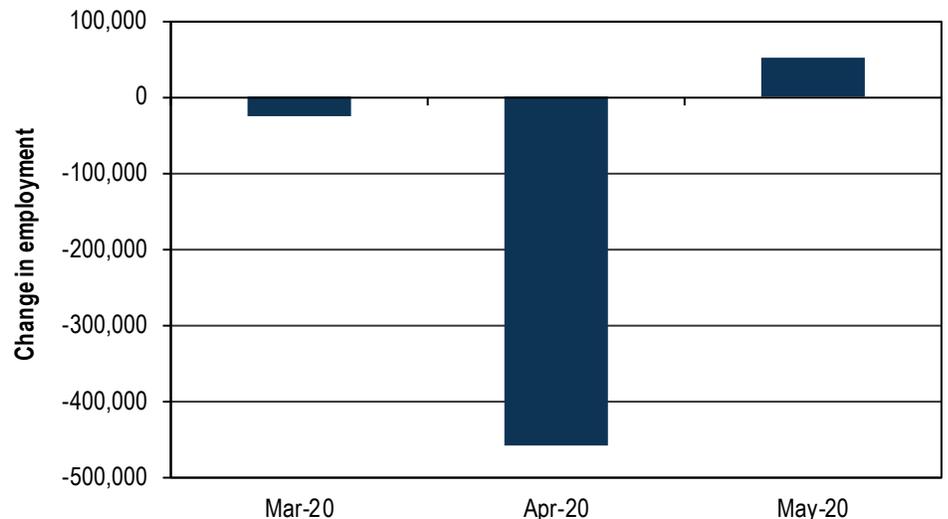
April 2020: down 457,800 jobs (revised)

May 2020: up 52,500 jobs (preliminary)

Monthly employment change, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, March 2020 through May 2020

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



Employment and unemployment, seasonally adjusted

March 2008

(start of 2008 employment recession in Washington)

Nonfarm employment: 3,008,000
Unemployment rate: 4.8%

April 2010

(end of 2008 employment recession in Washington)

Nonfarm employment: 2,824,000
Unemployment rate: 10.4%

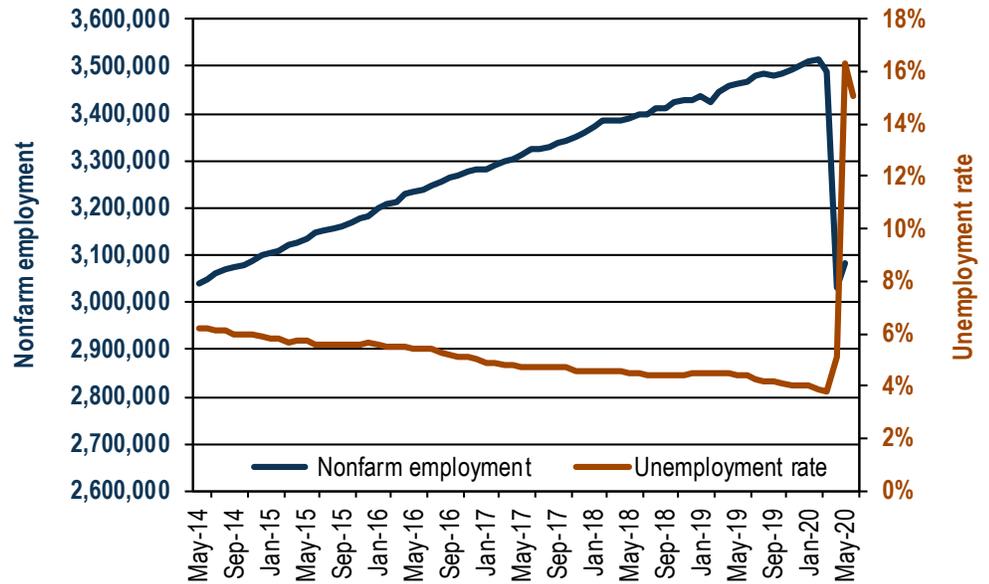
May 2020 (preliminary)

Nonfarm employment: 3,082,800
Unemployment rate: 15.1%

Nonfarm employment and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, May 2014 through May 2020

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



Workers and businesses affected by COVID-19

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

U-6 unemployment rate

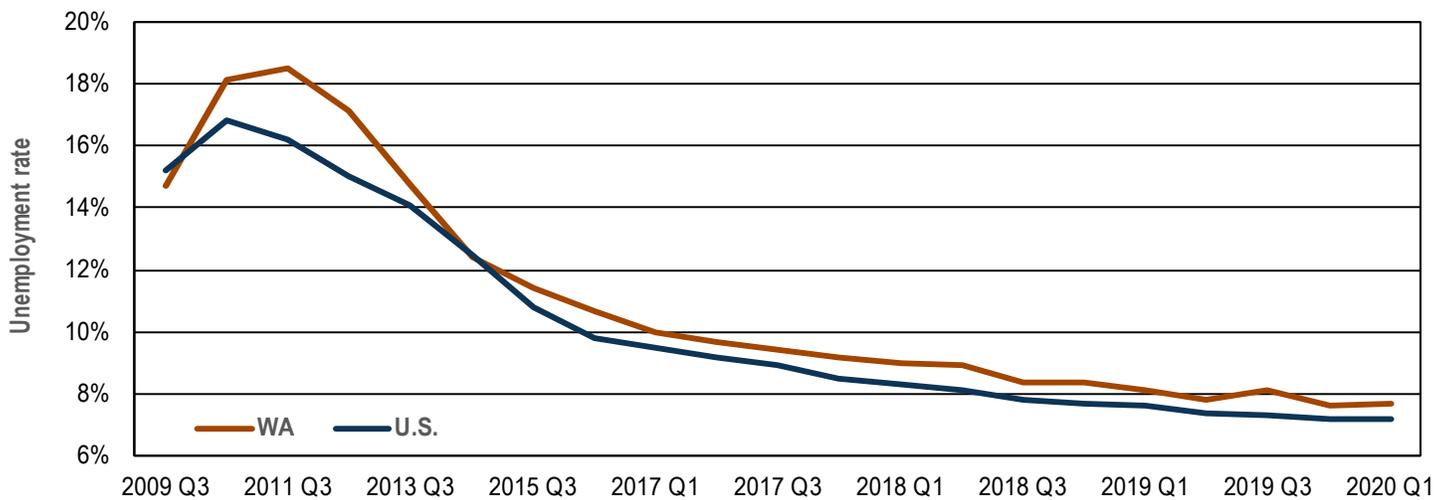
U-6: Broader unemployment measure increased in the four-quarter period ending first quarter 2020

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

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

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

The U-6 annual unemployment rate for first quarter 2020 for Washington state was 7.7 percent. This was higher compared to the 7.6 percent U-6 unemployment 2019 annual rate. The U.S. U-6 unemployment rate was 7.2 percent in first quarter 2020.



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

Year	WA/U.S.	Q1	Q2	Q3	Annual average
2020	WA	7.7%			
	U.S.	7.2%			
2019	WA	8.1%	7.8%	8.1%	7.6%
	U.S.	7.6%	7.4%	7.3%	7.2%
2018	WA	9.0%	8.9%	8.4%	8.4%
	U.S.	8.3%	8.1%	7.8%	7.7%
2017	WA	10.0%	9.7%	9.4%	9.2%
	U.S.	9.5%	9.2%	8.9%	8.5%
2016	WA	10.9%	10.7%	10.7%	10.3%
	U.S.	10.1%	9.9%	9.8%	9.6%
2015	WA	12.0%	11.7%	11.4%	11.0%
	U.S.	11.6%	11.3%	10.8%	10.4%
2014	WA	13.3%	12.8%	12.4%	12.5%
	U.S.	13.4%	12.9%	12.5%	12.0%
2013	WA	16.4%	15.7%	14.8%	14.0%
	U.S.	14.5%	14.3%	14.1%	13.8%
2012	WA	17.6%	17.0%	17.1%	16.9%
	U.S.	15.6%	15.3%	15.0%	14.7%

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 lost an estimated 52,500 jobs during the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- Overall, employment increased in ten major industries and contracted in three in May.
- Private sector employment is estimated to have increased by 72,600 and government employment decreased by 20,100.
- Employment in construction increased by 30,000 overall with 22,100 jobs added by specialty trade contractors.
- The number of jobs in leisure and hospitality increased by 22,600, with an increase of 16,900 in food services and drinking places.
- Education and health services employment rose by 7,000 overall, with 11,200 jobs added in ambulatory health care services.
- Employment in professional and business services increased by 4,100, with 2,500 jobs added in professional, scientific and technical services.
- Retail employment rose by 3,500, with 2,000 jobs gained in building material and garden supply stores.

Estimated one-month employment change by industry, seasonally adjusted
Washington state, April 2020 to May 2020

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

Total nonfarm	52,500
Construction	30,000
Leisure and hospitality	22,600
Education and health services	7,000
Manufacturing	5,800
Professional and business services	4,100
Retail trade	3,500
Wholesale trade	1,200
Other services	1,000
Financial activities	500
Mining and logging	100
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-600
Information	-2,600
Government	-20,100

As we navigate the COVID-19 developments

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

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

Industry employment in Washington, not seasonally adjusted

Change by industry over the year

Based on a BLS survey of businesses and governments, Washington lost an estimated 408,200 jobs from May 2019 through May 2020.

- Overall, one major industry expanded and twelve contracted.
- Private sector employment fell 12.5 percent, down an estimated 360,100 jobs.
- Public sector employment fell 8.0 percent, down an estimated 48,100 jobs.
- Professional and business services employment decreased by 9,500, led by a 7,700 decrease in employment services.
- Retail trade subtracted 25,800 jobs, with 12,800 jobs lost by clothing and clothing accessories stores.
- Employment in construction is down 25,800 with the numbers employed as specialty trade contractors down 14,200.
- Education and health services employment decreased by 55,900, with 44,400 jobs lost in health services and social assistance.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality is down by 160,300, with food services and drinking places shedding 109,200 jobs.

Estimated employment change by industry over the year, not seasonally adjusted Washington state, May 2019 through May 2020

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

Total nonfarm	-408,200
Information	1,400
Mining and logging	-700
Financial activities	-7,700
Wholesale trade	-8,300
Professional and business services	-9,500
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-9,700
Manufacturing	-25,400
Retail trade	-25,800
Construction	-25,800
Other services	-32,400
Government	-48,100
Education and health services	-55,900
Leisure and hospitality	-160,300

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, May 2020

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

	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
Total nonfarm	56,000	108,500	52,500
Construction	22,300	52,300	30,000
Leisure and hospitality	14,400	37,000	22,600
Retail trade	5,600	9,100	3,500
Education and health services	3,900	10,900	7,000
Manufacturing	3,900	9,700	5,800
Professional and business services	3,700	7,800	4,100
Other services	1,600	2,600	1,000
Wholesale trade	1,000	2,200	1,200
Financial activities	1,000	1,500	500
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	400	-200	-600
Mining and logging	200	300	100
Information	-100	-2,700	-2,600
Government	-1,900	-22,000	-20,100

Based on historical patterns, Washington employment typically increases by 56,000 from April to May. This year the state gained an estimated 108,500 jobs, amounting to a seasonally adjusted increase of 52,500 jobs.

- The estimated employment increase in construction was 52,300. The normal seasonal increase is 22,300, so on a seasonally adjusted basis, construction employment rose by 30,000.
- The normal seasonal gain in leisure and hospitality employment is 14,400 in May. The estimated gain was 37,000, so employment increased by 22,600 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- Employment in retail trade normally rises by 5,600. It is estimated to have increased by 9,100 this May, so it increased by 3,500 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- Typically, manufacturing increases by 3,900 in May. On a seasonally adjusted basis, manufacturing employment increased by 5,800 as the estimated increase was 9,700.
- The employment increase on a seasonally adjusted basis was 4,100 in professional and business services in May. The normal seasonal increase is 3,700. It is estimated to have increased this May by 7,800.

Media inquiries and contact information

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

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

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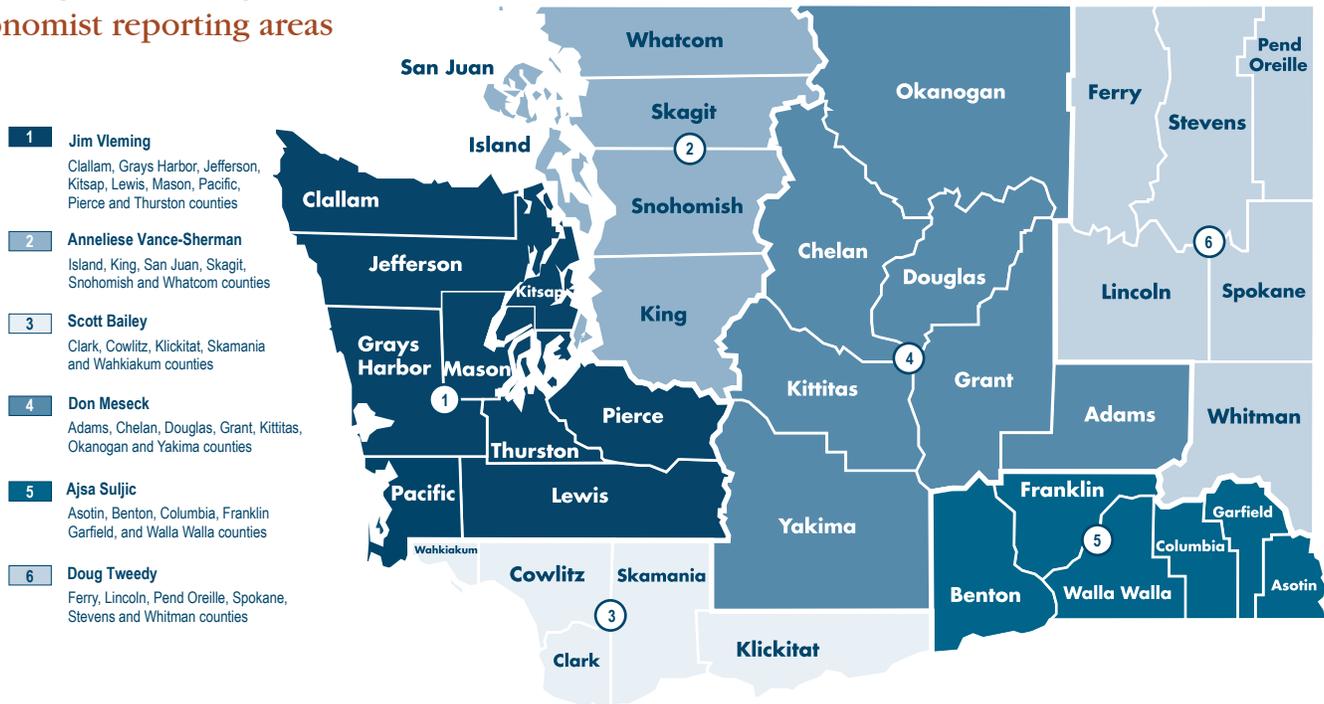
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Washington state regional labor economist reporting areas



The county level information will be available at 10 a.m., June 23, 2020. The publication schedule for 2020 is posted at: <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/monthly-employment-report>.

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