

The Monthly Employment Report

Washington 5.4%

United States 6.0%

Seasonally adjusted

March 2021



Employment Security Department
WASHINGTON STATE



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

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 23,100 in March 2021.¹ BLS estimates the private sector gained 18,600 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 4,500 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for March 2020 through March 2021 indicate a decrease in employment of 166,400 for the state. The private sector lost 121,200 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 45,200 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March 2021 is 5.4 percent. The revised estimated February 2021 unemployment rate is at 5.6 percent. The March 2020 unemployment rate was 5.3 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The February 2021 preliminary estimated gain of 24,500 jobs was revised to a gain of 33,200 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, February and March 2020 and 2021

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

	March 2021 (Preliminary)	February 2021 (Revised)	March 2020 (Revised)	February 2020 (Revised)
United States				
Unemployment rate				
Seasonally adjusted	6.0%	6.2%	4.4%	3.5%
Washington				
Unemployment rate	5.4%	5.6%	5.3%	4.1%
Resident labor force	3,849,500	3,837,000	3,932,000	3,962,000
Unemployed	209,500	215,600	207,200	162,700
Seattle/Bellevue/Everett				
Unemployment rate	5.4%	5.5%	5.1%	2.6%
Resident labor force	1,747,200	1,742,000	1,712,000	1,743,800
Unemployed	93,600	95,000	86,600	44,800

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 March 2021 is 5.4 percent. The revised estimated February 2021 unemployment rate is 5.6 percent.

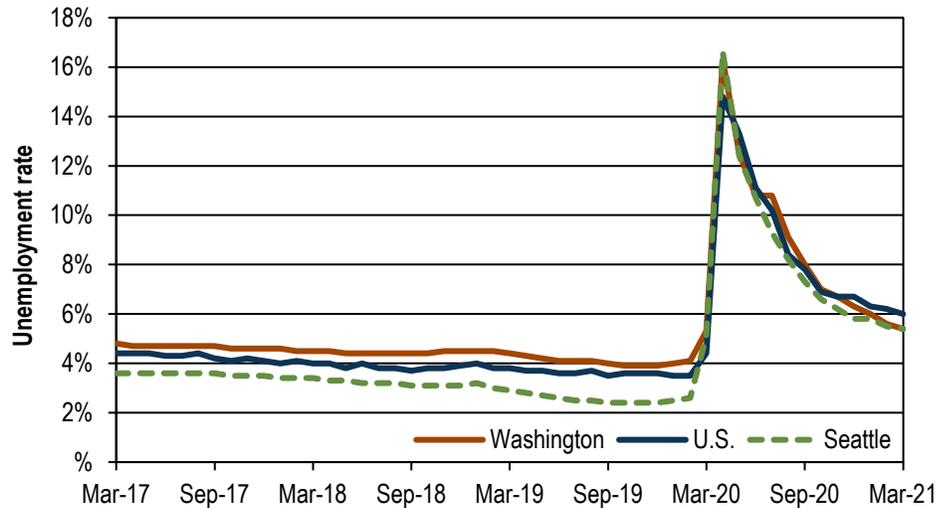
According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed people fell by 6,100 in March 2021 compared to February 2021. At the same time, the number of employed people rose by an estimated 18,600. Overall, this amounted to an increase of 12,500 people in the labor force.

The preliminary March 2021 unemployment rate is 0.1 percentage points higher than the March 2020 rate of 5.3 percent.

Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted

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

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



March 2021 preliminary unemployment rates:

U.S. (preliminary) 6.0%
 Washington (preliminary) 5.4%
 Seattle area (preliminary) 5.4%

Employment change, seasonally adjusted

Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment increased by 23,100 jobs from February 2021 to March 2021.

Recent employment change:

January 2021: up 5,100 jobs (revised)

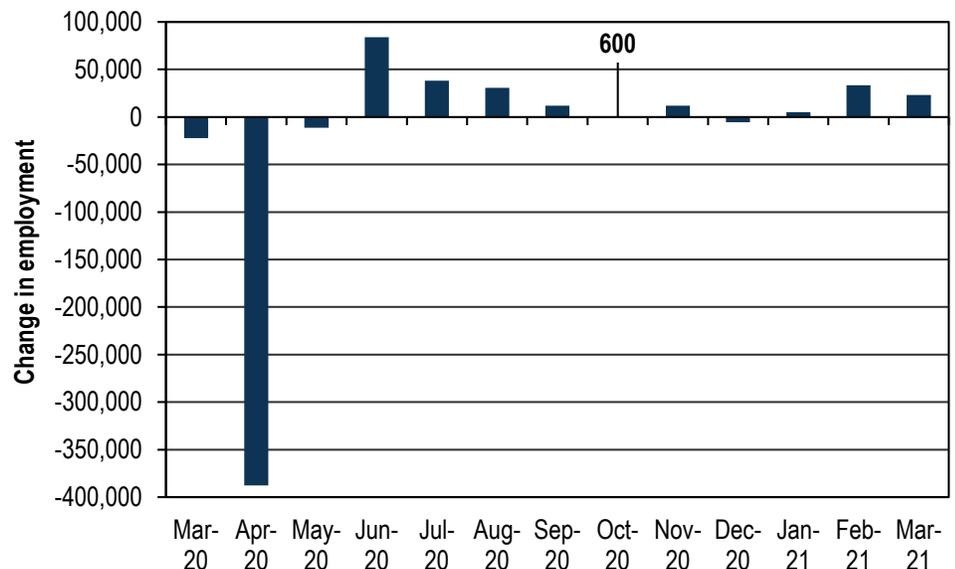
February 2021: up 33,200 jobs (revised)

March 2021: up 23,100 jobs (preliminary)

Monthly employment change, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, March 2020 through March 2021

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



Employment and unemployment, seasonally adjusted

February 2020

(Start of 2020 employment recession in Washington)

Nonfarm employment: 3,516,000

Unemployment rate: 4.1%

January 2021 (preliminary)

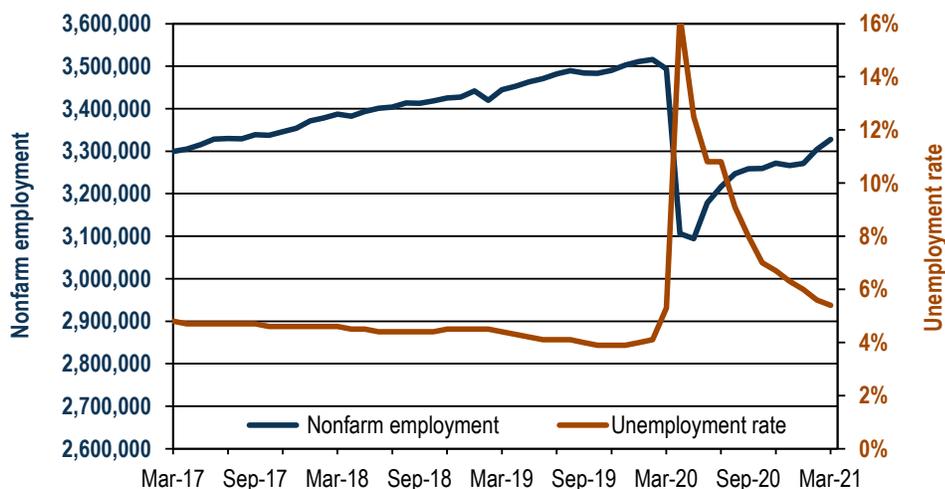
Nonfarm employment: 3,327,600

Unemployment rate: 5.4%

Nonfarm employment and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, March 2017 through March 2021

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



Workers and businesses affected by COVID-19

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

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

We are all in this together. 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 fourth quarter 2020

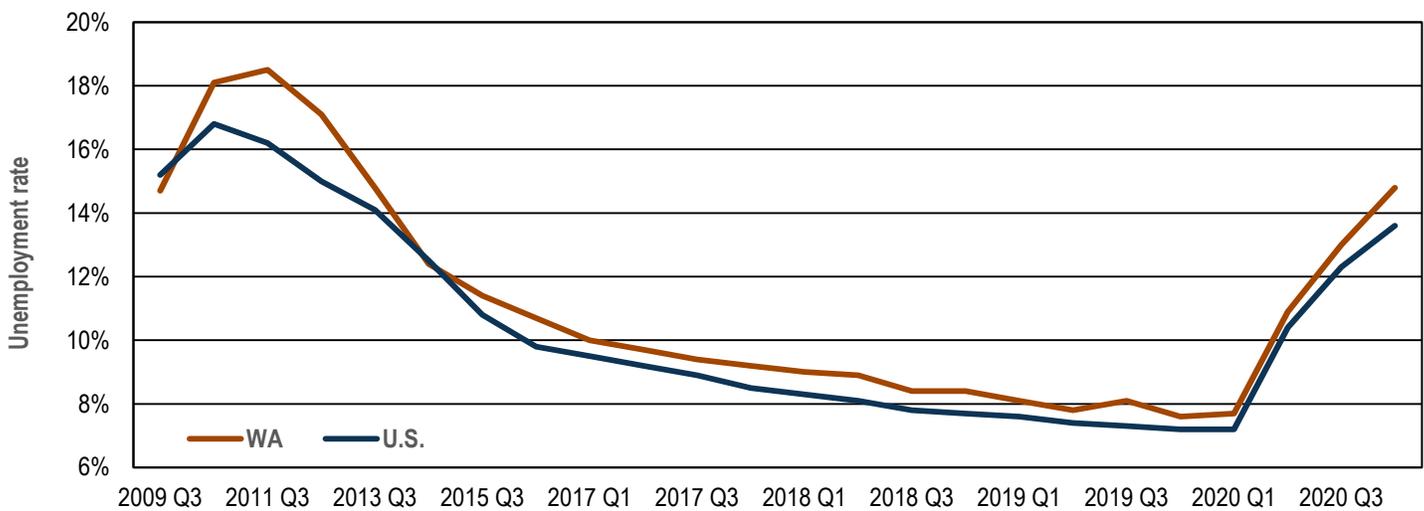
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently updated its “alternative measures of labor underutilization” for states to include annual averages for first quarter 2020. One such alternative measure is the U-6 rate, which considers not only the unemployed population

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 2020 for Washington state was 14.8 percent. This was higher compared to the 13.0 percent U-6 unemployment 2020 third quarter rate. The U.S. U-6 unemployment rate was 13.6 percent in 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	8.1%	10.9%	13.0%	14.8%
	U.S.	7.7%	10.4%	12.3%	13.6%
2019	WA	8.1%	7.8%	8.1%	7.6%
	U.S.	7.6%	7.4%	7.3%	7.2%
2018	WA	9.0%	8.9%	8.4%	8.4%
	U.S.	8.3%	8.1%	7.8%	7.7%
2017	WA	10.0%	9.7%	9.4%	9.2%
	U.S.	9.5%	9.2%	8.9%	8.5%
2016	WA	10.9%	10.7%	10.7%	10.3%
	U.S.	10.1%	9.9%	9.8%	9.6%
2015	WA	12.0%	11.7%	11.4%	11.0%
	U.S.	11.6%	11.3%	10.8%	10.4%
2014	WA	13.3%	12.8%	12.4%	12.5%
	U.S.	13.4%	12.9%	12.5%	12.0%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics: <https://www.bls.gov/lau/stalt.htm>.

Industry employment in Washington, seasonally adjusted

One-month employment change by industry

Based on a BLS survey of businesses and governments, Washington gained an estimated 23,100 jobs during the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- Overall, employment increased in eleven major industries, decreased in one, and was unchanged in one in March.
- Private sector employment is estimated to have increased by 18,600 and government employment increased by 4,500.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality increased by 9,200, led by 6,900 jobs gained in food services and drinking places.
- Education and health services employment rose by 2,600, with 1,900 jobs gained in education services.
- Information employment rose by 1,700, with 1,300 jobs added by software publishers.
- The number of jobs in construction increased by 1,400 overall, with 2,500 jobs added by specialty trade contractors
- Employment in professional and business services increased by 700 overall, with 1,000 jobs gained in professional, scientific and technical services.

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

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

Total nonfarm	23,100
Leisure and hospitality	9,200
Government	4,500
Education and health services	2,600
Information	1,700
Construction	1,400
Other services	1,200
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	800
Professional and business services	700
Wholesale trade	700
Retail trade	300
Financial activities	200
Mining and logging	0
Manufacturing	-200

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 166,400 jobs from March 2020 through March 2021.

- Overall, four major industries expanded and nine contracted.
- Private sector employment fell 4.2 percent, down an estimated 121,200 jobs.
- Public sector employment fell 7.6 percent, down an estimated 45,200 jobs.
- Retail trade employment rose 6,800 overall, with 7,100 jobs gained in other retail trade.
- Information employment increased by 4,400, with 3,000 jobs added by software publishers.
- Employment in manufacturing is down 27,200, led by a decrease of 15,500 in aerospace product and parts manufacturing.
- Government employment decreased by 45,200, with 21,400 jobs lost in local government education services.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality is down by 74,900, with food services and drinking places shedding 41,400 jobs.

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

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

Total nonfarm	-166,400
Retail trade	6,800
Information	4,400
Construction	3,100
Education and health services	2,100
Mining and logging	-200
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-2,000
Financial activities	-5,000
Professional and business services	-6,200
Wholesale trade	-6,700
Other services	-15,400
Manufacturing	-27,200
Government	-45,200
Leisure and hospitality	-74,900

Seasonally adjusted employment

Seasonally adjusted numbers account for normal seasonal patterns that occur year after year, such as strong seasonal hiring in retail trade around the holidays. Taking into account normal seasonal variations makes it possible to see unusual changes in employment levels.

Normal seasonal change is the expected monthly change in employment based on history.

Estimated change is the employment change over the month based on BLS survey data.

Seasonally adjusted change is change in employment accounting for normal seasonal patterns.

Normal seasonal change, estimated change and seasonally adjusted change
Washington state, March 2021

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

	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
Total nonfarm	17,100	40,200	23,100
Leisure and hospitality	7,200	16,400	9,200
Construction	2,800	4,200	1,400
Professional and business services	2,800	3,500	700
Government	2,600	7,100	4,500
Education and health services	1,700	4,300	2,600
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	700	1,500	800
Wholesale trade	500	1,200	700
Manufacturing	100	-100	-200
Mining and logging	0	0	0
Other services	-100	1,100	1,200
Retail trade	-200	100	300
Information	-300	1,400	1,700
Financial activities	-700	-500	200

Based on historical patterns, Washington employment typically increases by 17,100 from February to March. This year the state gained an estimated 40,200 jobs, amounting to a seasonally adjusted increase of 23,100 jobs.

- The normal seasonal gain in leisure and hospitality employment is 7,200 in March. The estimated gain was 16,400, so employment increased by 9,200 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- The estimated employment increase in construction was 4,200. The normal seasonal increase is 2,800, so on a seasonally adjusted basis, construction employment rose by 1,400.
- The employment increase on a seasonally adjusted basis was 700 in professional and business services in March. The normal seasonal increase is 2,800. It is estimated to have increased this March by 3,500.
- Typically, manufacturing employment increases by 100 in March. On a seasonally adjusted basis, manufacturing employment decreased by 200 as the estimated decrease was 100.
- Employment in retail trade normally falls by 200. It is estimated to have increased by 100 this March so it increased by 300 on a seasonally adjusted basis.

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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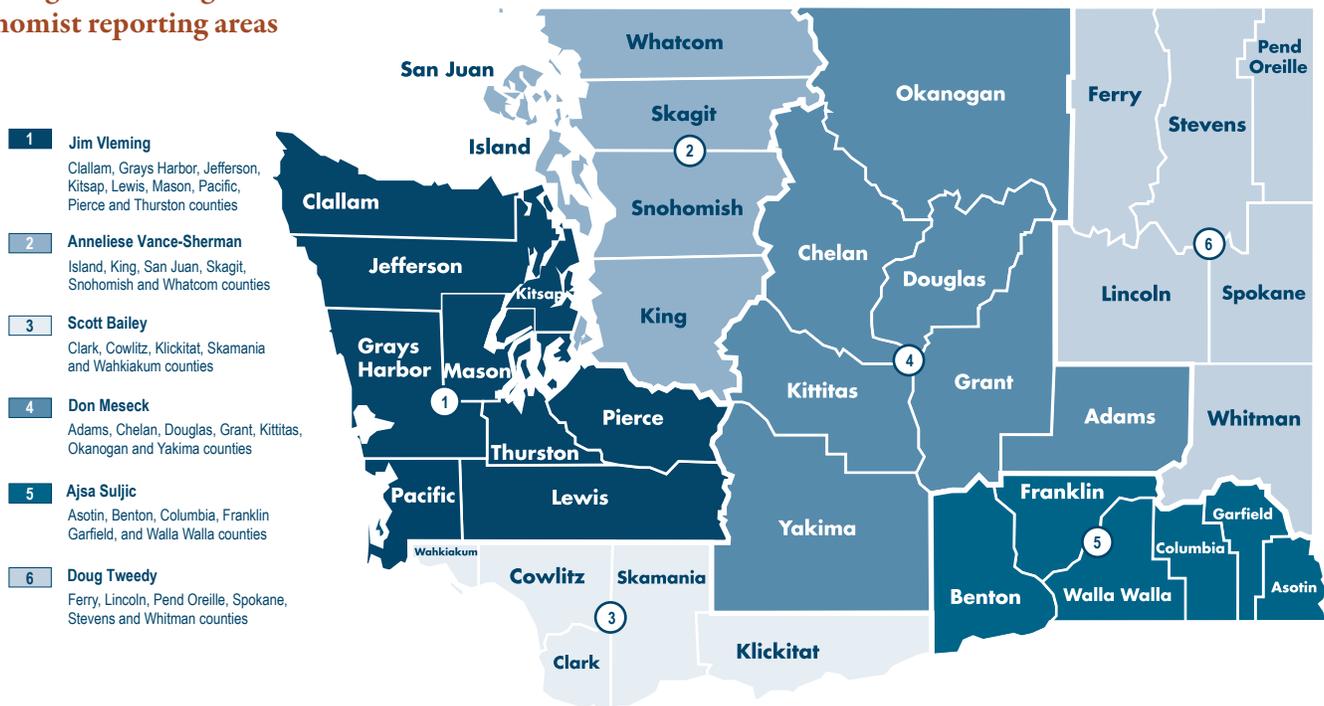
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Washington state regional labor economist reporting areas



The county level information will be available at 10 a.m., April 20, 2021.

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

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