

# The Monthly Employment Report

Washington 5.1%

United States 5.2%

Seasonally adjusted

August 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](mailto: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 16,800 in August 2021.<sup>1</sup> BLS estimates the private sector gained 13,000 jobs during the month and the public sector gained 3,800 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for August 2020 through August 2021 indicate an increase in employment of 174,600 for the state. The private sector gained 175,100 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 500 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for August 2021 is 5.1 percent. The revised estimated July 2021 unemployment rate is at 5.1 percent. The August 2020 unemployment rate was 9.1 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The July 2021 preliminary estimated gain of 22,700 jobs was revised to a gain of 24,300 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, July and August 2020 and 2021

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

	August 2021 (Preliminary)	July 2021 (Revised)	August 2020 (Revised)	July 2020 (Revised)
<b>United States</b>				
Unemployment rate	5.2%	5.4%	8.4%	10.2%
<i>Seasonally adjusted</i>				
<b>Washington</b>				
Unemployment rate	5.1%	5.1%	9.1%	10.8%
Resident labor force	3,923,000	3,906,300	3,886,100	3,920,400
Unemployed	198,800	199,200	353,200	423,200
<b>Seattle/Bellevue/Everett</b>				
Unemployment rate	5.1%	5.1%	8.2%	9.3%
Resident labor force	1,754,800	1,751,000	1,728,900	1,723,700
Unemployed	88,700	89,200	141,100	160,500

Labor Market and Economic Analysis  
September 2021

<sup>1</sup>Most 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 August 2021 is 5.1 percent. The revised estimated July 2021 unemployment rate is 5.1 percent.

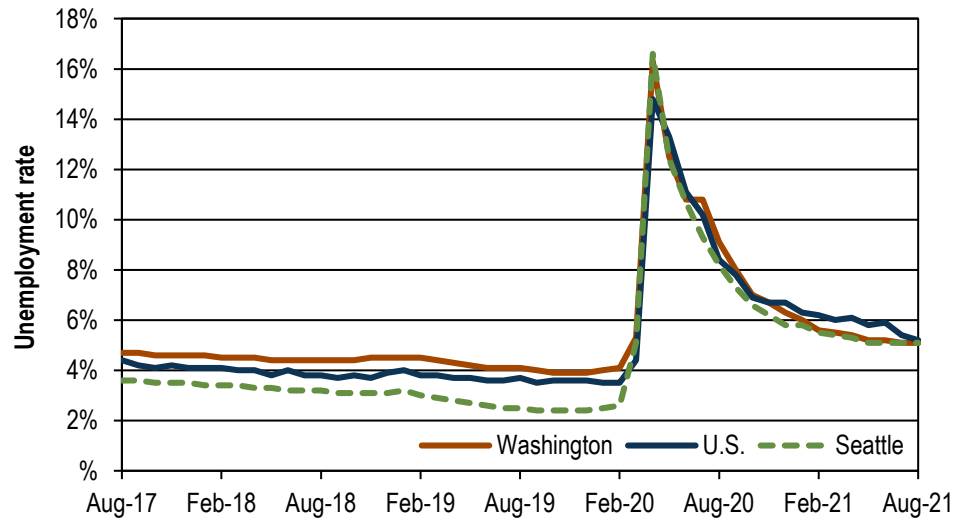
According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed people fell by 400 in August 2021 compared to July 2021. At the same time, the number of employed people rose by an estimated 17,100. Overall, this amounted to an increase of 16,700 people in the labor force.

The preliminary August 2021 unemployment rate is 4.0 percentage points lower than the July 2020 rate of 9.1 percent

### Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted

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

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



### August 2021 preliminary unemployment rates:

U.S. (preliminary) 5.2%  
 Washington (preliminary) 5.1%  
 Seattle area (preliminary) 5.1%

## Employment change, seasonally adjusted

Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment increased by 16,800 jobs from July 2021 to August 2021.

### Recent employment change:

**June 2021:** up 25,600 jobs (revised)

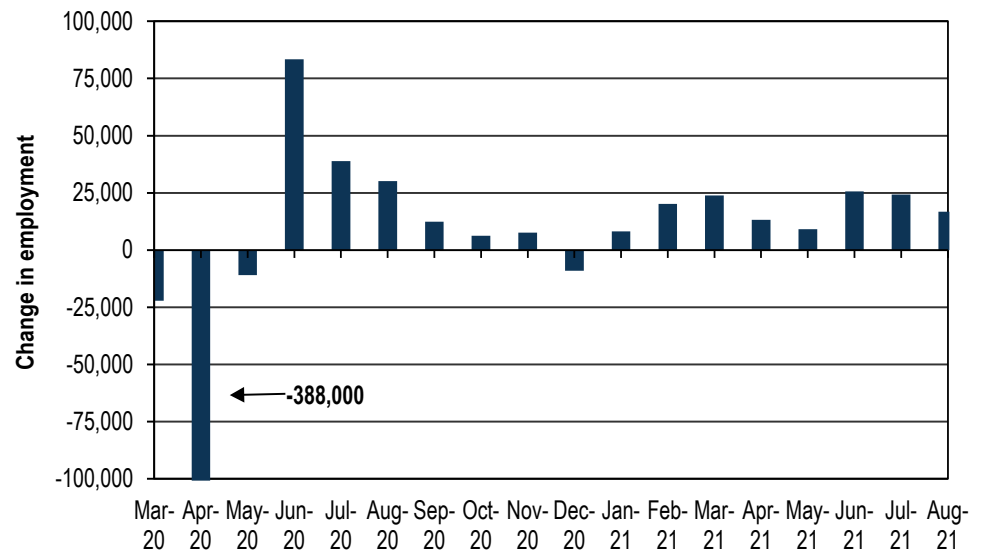
**July 2021:** up 24,300 jobs (revised)

**August 2021:** up 16,800 jobs (preliminary)

### Monthly employment change, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, March 2020 through August 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: 3,515,300

Unemployment rate: 4.1%

### August 2021 (preliminary)

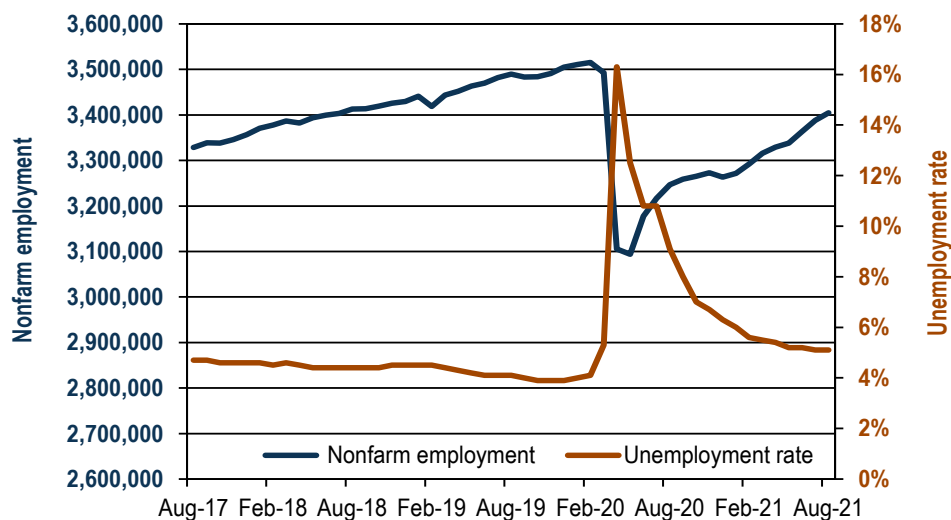
Nonfarm employment: 3,404,800

Unemployment rate: 5.1%

Nonfarm employment and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, August 2017 through August 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. The COVID-19 pandemic 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](https://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

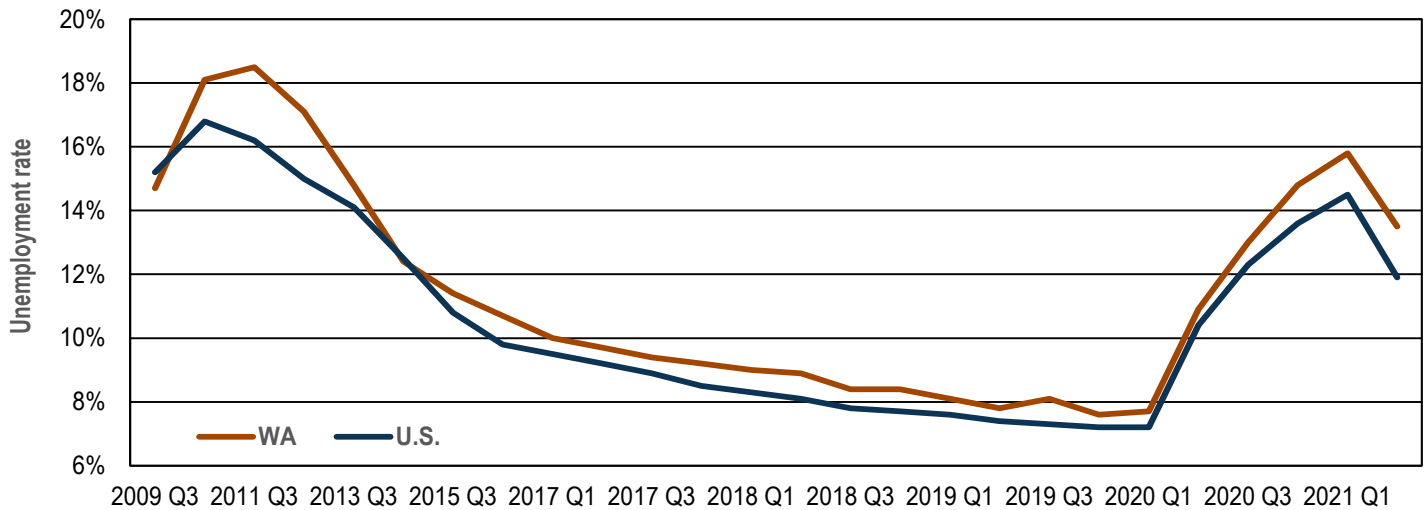
### U-6: Broader unemployment measure decreased in the four-quarter period ending second quarter 2021

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently updated its “alternative measures of labor underutilization” for states to include annual averages for second quarter 2021. 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 unemployment rate for the third quarter 2020 through the second quarter 2021 for Washington state was 13.5 percent. This was lower compared to the 15.8 percent U-6 unemployment rate for the second quarter 2020 through the first quarter 2021. The U.S. U-6 unemployment rate for the third quarter 2020 through the second quarter 2021 was 11.9 percent.

**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
2021	WA	15.8%	13.5%		
	U.S.	14.5%	11.9%		
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%

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 16,800 jobs during the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- Overall, employment increased in nine major industries, decreased in three, and was unchanged in one in August.
- Private sector employment is estimated to have increased by 13,000 and government employment increased by 3,800.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality increased by 8,500, led by 5,700 jobs gained in food services and drinking places.
- Employment in professional and business services increased by 3,400 overall, with 1,600 jobs gained in professional, scientific and technical services.
- Manufacturing employment rose by 2,000, with 1,100 jobs gained in durable goods manufacturing and 900 jobs gained in nondurable goods manufacturing.
- The number of jobs in construction decreased by 1,600 overall, with 1,600 jobs lost by specialty trade contractors.
- Retail trade employment fell by 1,700, with 1,100 jobs lost in other retail trade.

Estimated one-month employment change by industry, seasonally adjusted  
Washington state, July 2021 to August 2021

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

<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>16,800</b>
Leisure and hospitality	8,500
Government	3,800
Professional and business services	3,400
Manufacturing	2,000
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	1,500
Other services	700
Education and health services	200
Financial activities	100
Information	100
Mining and logging	0
Wholesale trade	-200
Construction	-1,600
Retail trade	-1,700

### 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.

If you have specific questions regarding labor market information, please send your emails to [lmea@esd.wa.gov](mailto: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 gained an estimated 174,600 jobs from August 2020 through August 2021.

- Overall, ten major industries expanded, two contracted and one remained unchanged.
- Private sector employment rose 6.5 percent, up an estimated 175,100 jobs.
- Public sector employment fell 0.1 percent, down an estimated 500 jobs.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality is up by 63,400, with food services and drinking places adding 38,100 jobs.
- Professional and business services employment increased by 34,800, with 21,800 jobs added in professional, scientific and technical services.
- Education and health services employment increased by 25,700, with 14,100 jobs added in education services.
- Retail trade employment rose 8,300 overall, with 4,700 jobs gained in food and beverage stores.
- Employment in manufacturing is down 5,100, led by a decrease of 7,900 in aerospace product and parts manufacturing.

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

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

<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>174,600</b>
Leisure and hospitality	63,400
Professional and business services	34,800
Education and health services	25,700
Wholesale trade	12,600
Information	9,100
Retail trade	8,300
Financial activities	8,300
Other services	8,000
Construction	6,200
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	3,800
Mining and logging	0
Government	-500
Manufacturing	-5,100



## 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, August 2021

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

	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>-15,400</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>16,800</b>
Professional and business services	2,700	6,100	3,400
Information	1,400	1,500	100
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	400	1,900	1,500
Wholesale trade	400	200	-200
Construction	300	-1,300	-1,600
Other services	0	700	700
Mining and logging	-100	-100	0
Financial activities	-400	-300	100
Manufacturing	-700	1,300	2,000
Education and health services	-800	-600	200
Leisure and hospitality	-2,100	6,400	8,500
Retail trade	-2,600	-4,300	-1,700
Government	-13,900	-10,100	3,800

Based on historical patterns, Washington employment typically decreases by 15,400 from July to August. This year the state gained an estimated 1,400 jobs, amounting to a seasonally adjusted increase of 16,800 jobs.

- The employment increase on a seasonally adjusted basis was 3,400 in professional and business services in August. The normal seasonal increase is 2,700. It is estimated to have increased this August by 6,100.
- The estimated employment decrease in construction was 1,300. The normal seasonal increase is 300, so on a seasonally adjusted basis, construction employment fell by 1,600.
- Typically, manufacturing employment decreases by 700 in August. On a seasonally adjusted basis, manufacturing employment increased by 2,000 as the estimated increase was 1,300.
- The normal seasonal loss in leisure and hospitality employment is 2,100 in August. The estimated gain was 6,400, so employment increased by 8,500 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- Employment in retail trade normally falls by 2,600. It is estimated to have decreased by 4,300 this August, so it declined by 1,700 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](mailto: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](mailto:lmea@esd.wa.gov).

### Statewide labor economist:

Paul Turek, Ph.D.  
[pturek@esd.wa.gov](mailto:pturek@esd.wa.gov)  
 360-706-3044

Ajsa Suljic  
[asuljic@esd.wa.gov](mailto:asuljic@esd.wa.gov)  
 509-734-5928

Doug Tweedy  
[dtweedy@esd.wa.gov](mailto:dtweedy@esd.wa.gov)  
 509-434-5278

### Regional labor economists:

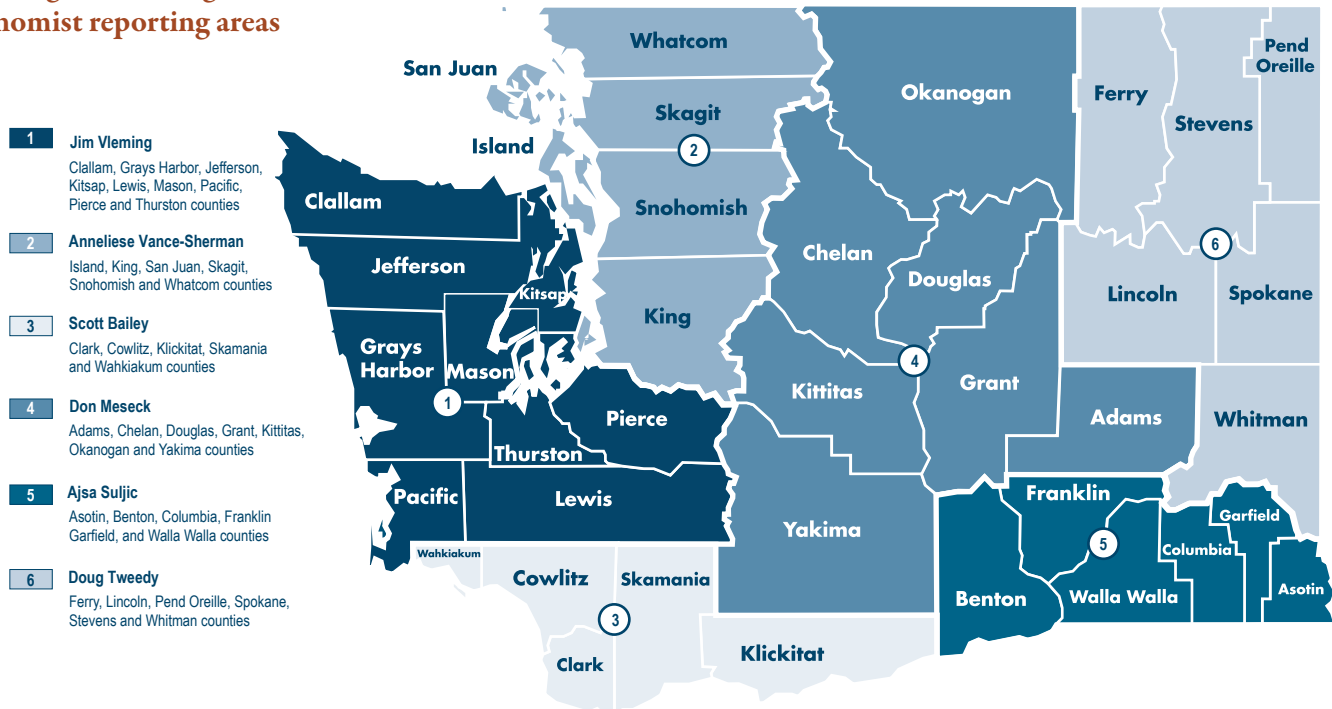
Scott Bailey  
[scott.bailey@esd.wa.gov](mailto:scott.bailey@esd.wa.gov)  
 360-810-0048

Anneliese Vance-Sherman, Ph.D.  
[avancesherman@esd.wa.gov](mailto:avancesherman@esd.wa.gov)  
 425-258-6315

Don Meseck  
[dmeseck@esd.wa.gov](mailto:dmeseck@esd.wa.gov)  
 509-574-0176

Jim Vleming  
[jvleming@esd.wa.gov](mailto:jvleming@esd.wa.gov)  
 360-819-3427

## Washington state regional labor economist reporting areas



The county level information will be available at 10 a.m., September 21, 2021.

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

Employment Security Department is an equal opportunity employer/programs. 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.

This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the recipient and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, expressed or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.