

# Ferry County Profile

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*Updated November 2019*



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## Overview

### *Regional context*

Ferry County, named for Governor Ferry, was carved out of Stevens County in 1899. The County is bordered to its north by British Columbia and Lincoln County to its south. Okanogan County lies to the west and Stevens County to the east. Ferry County is sparsely populated. This rural economy is defined by limited transportation routes and its dependence on resource extraction. The Colville Confederated Tribe owns the southern portion of the county and the northern portion is largely part of the Colville National Forest. Less than 18 percent of the land in Ferry County is privately owned.

### *Local economy*

Ferry County was settled after the discovery of gold in the 1850s. As this gold rush came to an end around 1900, lumber began to play a major role in Ferry County’s early history. In 1907, President Roosevelt created a system of national forests. The newly recognized Colville National Forest made up the northern half of Ferry County. Ferry County remained remote and inaccessible until roads and communication systems were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Lake Roosevelt was also developed in the 1930s, which spurred employment, electricity and irrigation.

Ferry County and particularly the town of Republic, have relied on mining for decades. The Republic mines were the major producers of gold in the state for many years in the 20th century. Since 2009, employment growth has been slightly negative.

## Geographic facts

	Ferry County	Rank in state
Land area, 2010 (square miles)	2,203.16	9
People per square mile, 2010	3.4	38

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## Outlook

The economy of Ferry County has remained static with little change over time. The lack of economic growth is reflected in slow population growth, an older than average population and negative real employment growth. Ferry County continues to be plagued by limited transportation and little private land. These issues limit growth of resource

extraction as well as overall economic activity. The largest employer in Ferry County, a gold mine near Republic, closed in 2018. The indirect impact of the closure, due to the lost high-wage jobs, will impact local businesses and schools. However, a trend of unemployed miners working in other mines around the country, but continuing to keep their residencies in Ferry County, will help offset lost jobs and wages. Still, Ferry County is likely to experience decreases in employment and income.

## 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 civilian labor force for the first ten months of 2019 (2,539) was up slightly compared to the same period in 2018 (2,490).

The preliminary county unemployment rate for the first ten months of 2019 was 11.8 percent. In 2018, the rate was 11.9 percent for the same period. The unemployment rate peaked in 2010 at 17.5 percent.

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA

## Industry employment

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

Ferry County has 1,700 nonfarm jobs located in the county. A large number of the employed residents work in jobs or for firms located outside the county.

Total nonfarm jobs in the first ten months of 2019 decreased slightly from the same period in 2018.

- Goods-producing employment is averaging 280 jobs in the first ten months of 2019, the same as the 2018 annual average of 280. A majority of these jobs are in manufacturing.
- Service-providing employment is averaging 1,420 jobs in the first ten months of 2019. According to the most recent estimates, government, the largest employment sector, is slightly down from 2018.

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

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA

## 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.

### *Ferry County highlights:*

The largest job holder age group in Ferry County in 2018 was the 55 and older group at 29.0 percent. This percentage was closely followed by job holders aged 45 to 54, with 20.4 percent of the workforce.

In 2018, men held 51.6 percent of the jobs in Ferry County, and women held 48.4 percent. There were substantial differences in gender dominance by industry.

- Male-dominated industries included transportation and warehousing (97.1 percent), construction (88.1 percent) and manufacturing (79.3 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included finance and insurance (79.5 percent), healthcare and social assistance (64.5 percent) and accommodation and food services (74.9 percent).

Source: The Local Employment Dynamics

## **Wages and 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 2018, there were 1,729 jobs covered by unemployment insurance with a total payroll of over \$66.4 million.

The 2018 average annual wage was \$38,431, well below the state's average annual wage of \$66,195 and ranked 32nd in the state.

### *Personal income*

In 2017, the per capita personal income was \$35,771 in Ferry County, less than the state (\$57,896). Ferry County has ranked 38th in the state in terms of per capital personal income.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, the median household income was \$41,924 in 2014 to 2018, less than the median for the state at \$70,116.

In the period 2014 to 2018, 17.8 percent of Ferry County's population was living below the poverty level, higher than the state's level of 10.3 percent according to the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts.

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## **Population**

Ferry County's population was estimated at 7,649 in 2018. It grew at a rate of 1.3 percent from 2010 to 2018 compared to the state's growth rate of 12.1 percent.

The largest city in Ferry County is Republic.

### *Population facts*

	<b>Ferry County</b>	<b>Washington state</b>
Population 2018	7,649	7,535,591
Population 2010	7,554	6,724,540
Percent change, 2010 to 2018	1.3%	12.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

### *Age, gender and ethnicity*

Ferry County has an older population than does the state.

- In Ferry County, those 65 and older made up 27.2 percent of Ferry County's 2018 population compared to the state's 15.4 percent.
- Residents under 18 made up 17.4 percent of Ferry County's population compared to 22.1 percent for the state.

Ferry County showed less diversity in 2018 than did the state in all racial/ethnic categories except American Indians and Alaska Natives. The Colville Confederated Tribe owns a significant portion of the county.

### *Demographics*

	<b>Ferry County</b>	<b>Washington state</b>
<b>Population by age, 2018</b>		
Under 5 years old	4.8%	6.1%
Under 18 years old	17.4%	22.1%
65 years and older	27.2%	15.4%
<b>Females, 2018</b>	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Race/ethnicity, 2018</b>		
White	75.7%	78.9%
Black	0.7%	4.3%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	17.1%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	1.3%	10.1%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	5.0%	12.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

### *Educational attainment*

Most Ferry County residents age 25 and older (86.1 percent) were high school graduates, which compares with 91.1 percent of Washington State's residents, over the period 2014 to 2018.

Those with a bachelor's degree or higher made up 18.2 percent of Ferry County residents age 25 and older compared to 35.3 percent of state residents over the same period.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## Useful links

- [County data tables](#)
- [Census Bureau Profile](#)
- [Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation](#)
- [Ferry County on ofm.wa.gov](#)
- [Ferry County home page](#)
- [Ferry County on ChooseWashington.com](#)
- [Ferry County History and Information](#)
- [Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State](#)
- [Tri County Economic Development District](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#)
- [Washington Ports](#)
- [Workforce Development Areas and WorkSource Office Directory](#)
- [Northeast Washington Trends](#)

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.