

Ferry County Profile

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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 (squaremiles)	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, will close 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 nine months of 2018 (2,504) was down slightly compared to the same period in of 2017 (2,524).

The preliminary county unemployment rate for the first nine months of 2018 was 12.4 percent. In 2017, the rate was 11 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 just over 1,670 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 nine months of 2018 decreased slightly from the same period in 2017.

- Goods-producing employment is averaging 270 jobs in 2018, a slight decrease from the 2017 average of 312. A majority of these jobs are in manufacturing.
- Service-providing employment is averaging 1,400 in 2018. According to the most recent estimates, government is the only sector trending up.

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 2017 was the 55 and older group at 29.4 percent. This percentage was closely followed by job holders aged 45 to 54, with 20 percent of the workforce.

In 2017, men held 53 percent of the jobs in Ferry County, and women held 47 percent. There were substantial differences in gender dominance by industry.

- Male-dominated industries included construction (91.2 percent) and manufacturing (83 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included finance and insurance (81.6 percent), healthcare and social assistance (65.3 percent) and accommodations and food service (73.7 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 2017, there were 1,733 jobs covered by unemployment insurance with a total payroll of over \$68.9 million.

The 2017 average annual wage was \$39,785, well below the state's average annual wage of \$62,077 and ranked 24th in the state.

Personal income

In 2016, the per capita personal income was \$32,876 in Ferry County, less than the state (\$54,579). Ferry County has ranked 39th in the state in terms of per capital personal income for the past five years.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts, the median household income was \$39,555 in 2012 to 2016, less than the median for the state at \$62,848.

In the period 2012 to 2016, 21.3 percent of Ferry County's population was living below the poverty level, higher than the state's level of 11 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 7,594 in 2017. It grew at a rate of 0.5 percent from 2010 to 2017 compared to the state's growth rate of 10.1 percent.

The largest city in Ferry County is Republic (population 1,095 in 2017).

Population facts

	Ferry County	Washington state
Population 2017	7,594	7,405,743
Population 2010	7,551	6,724,545
Percent change, 2010 to 2017	0.5%	10.1%

Age, gender and ethnicity

Ferry County has an older population than does the state.

- In Ferry County, those 65 and older made up 26.3 percent of Ferry County's 2017 population compared to the state's 15.1 percent.
- Residents under 18 made up 17.3 percent of Ferry County's population compared to 22.2 percent for the state.

Ferry County showed less diversity in 2017 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

	Ferry County	Washington state
Population by age, 2017		
Under 5 years old	4.8%	6.2%
Under 18 years old	17.3%	22.2%
65 years and older	26.3%	15.1%
Females, 2017	48.7%	50%
Race/ethnicity, 2017		
White	75.8%	79.5%
Black	0.7%	4.2%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	17.1%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	1.4%	9.7%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	4.6%	12.7%

Educational attainment

Most Ferry County residents age 25 and older (87.5 percent) were high school graduates, which compares with 90.6 percent of Washington state's residents, over the period 2012 to 2016.

Those with a bachelor's degree or higher made up 18.1 percent of Ferry County residents age 25 and older compared to 33.6 percent of state residents over the same period.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Useful links

- [County data tables](#)
- [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.