

# Spokane County Profile

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## Overview

### *Regional context*

Spokane County is situated east of the Cascade Range and on the western slope of the Coeur d'Alene Mountains next to the Idaho border. Spokane County ranks in the middle of other counties in terms of land area, which was 1,763.79 square miles in 2010. It was the eighth most densely populated county at 267.2 persons per square mile in 2010. Spokane is the most populous county in Eastern Washington and ranks fourth in the state.

The city of Spokane is the second-largest city in Washington state. It serves as the business, transportation, medical, industrial and cultural hub of the region, the inland Northwest. In 2017, the city of Spokane had 217,108 residents, 43 percent of the county's population.

### *Local economy*

Spokane County was created by an act passed by the Territorial Assembly in 1858. After settlement in the 1870s, Spokane became the hub in the inland Northwest for mining, timber and railroad activities.

Of all the forces that shaped the Spokane County economy, none is more powerful than Spokane's historic role as a regional center of services for the surrounding rural populations of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho. Regional services include government and higher education, medical services, retail trade and finance.

Fairchild Air Force Base is the county's largest employer. In addition, manufacturing has had a solid base due to the nexus of the Bonneville dam power generation, rail systems and the Interstate highway system. Spokane is competitive with other urban centers in attracting national and international investment in the form of tourism and conventions, the military and research. These investments in turn support the creation and expansion of still other complementary businesses, creating a well-rounded and diversified economy.

## Geographic facts

	Spokane County	Rank in state
Land area, 2010 (square miles)	1,763.79	19
People per square mile, 2010	267.2	8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## Outlook

For 2017-2018, a significant increase in jobs was posted in the private sector. Key industries posting increases in the first half of 2018 are transportation/warehousing, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, finance/insurance, information (IT), education and agriculture. Not only are jobs being created, but also an increasing number of replacement workers are needed for workers who are retiring.

Several new developments will continue to create jobs. A new Health Sciences campus opened in 2014 with health programs from Washington State University, Eastern Washington University and Gonzaga. Private firms specializing in research, development and biotechnology have made Spokane their home because of the Health Sciences/Medical School campus at River Pointe, and will play an increasingly important role in the area's economy. Amazon is building a fulfillment center (warehouse) to be opened in 2019, which in addition to warehousing will increase air and road transportation employment. Leisure and hospitality gained a boost with construction of a major Spokane downtown hotel and conference center. Spokane may benefit from a migration of IT firms moving to Spokane trying to reduce stress for their workers. Contributing to labor stress in major urban areas are increased cost of living, labor shortages and high commute times. Economic development targets will continue in industries such as advanced manufacturing and materials, energy products and services, information technology and digital services and logistics and distribution businesses.

## 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.

In the first six months of 2018, the Spokane county labor force averaged 237,165. The unemployment rate was estimated at 5.7 percent, with 13,747 unemployed residents.

Source: Employment Security Department/WITS

## Industry employment

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

Spokane County is the largest labor market in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho. Spokane's economy survived "The great Recession" and emerged more diversified. Steady growth is forecasted for the future.

Spokane's recovery is being led by 5 industries, advanced manufacturing, health services, finance/Insurance, transportation/warehousing and education. Without the advantage of mega employers, these five industries have medium sized employers that are flexible and

efficient in their markets. The health sciences and medical school development has been a game changer for Spokane-Spokane Valley MSA. High-tech companies in manufacturing, scientific and technical industries are creating new jobs and will expand the economic base in 2018-2019.

- For the first half of 2018, Spokane-Spokane Valley MSA nonfarm jobs averaged 248,200 compared to the average of the same period in 2017 of 242,900.
- Goods-producing employment recorded 31,400 jobs in the first half of 2018, up 1,700 jobs from the same period in 2017.
- Service-providing employment totaled 216,800 in the first half of 2018, up 3,500 jobs from 2017.

For historical industry employment data, *contact an economist*.

Source: Employment Security Department/WITS

### *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.

#### *Spokane County highlights:*

In 2017, the largest job holder age group in Spokane County was the 25 to 34 cohort at 22.9 percent of the workforce. This percentage was closely followed by job holders aged 55 and over, with 22.2 percent of the workforce.

In 2017, men held 50 percent and women held 50 percent of the jobs in Spokane County.

- Male-dominated industries included construction (85.7 percent), manufacturing (76.3 percent) and transportation and warehousing (76 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included healthcare and social assistance (75.1 percent), educational services (66.2 percent) and finance and insurance (64.3 percent).

Source: The Local Employment Dynamics

## **Wages and income**

In 2017, Spokane County averaged 218,464 jobs covered by unemployment insurance with a total payroll over \$10.1 billion.

The county's average annual wage was \$46,562 in 2017, which ranked 13<sup>th</sup> among all Washington counties. The state's average annual wage was \$62,077 and the state less King County was \$48,424.

### *Personal 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.

Per capita income reached \$42,028 in 2016, 23<sup>rd</sup> in the state. This is 14.7 percent below the U.S. average and 23 percent below the state average of \$54,579.

Median household income over the period 2012 to 2016 was \$50,550, well below the state's \$62,848, according to the U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts.

Over the period 2012 to 2016, 13.3 percent of the population was living below the poverty level in Spokane County. This is well above 11 percent for the state.

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

### **Population**

Spokane County's population was estimated at 506,152 in 2017, making it the fourth largest county in the state. The city of Spokane recorded a population of 217,108 in 2017, 43 percent of the county's population.

The population's total percent change from 2010 to 2017 was 7.4 percent. The increase was due to both natural increase and in-migration.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

### *Population facts*

	<b>Spokane County</b>	<b>Washington state</b>
Population 2017	506,152	7,405,743
Population 2010	471,225	6,724,545
Percent change, 2010 to 2017	7.4%	10.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

### *Age, gender and ethnicity*

Most of the people moving into the county are in search of jobs and tend to be younger. Even with the in-migration of younger individuals, the large swell of the baby boomers will continue to increase the median age. At some point, the aging of Spokane County may decrease with the influx of younger individuals, who may stay in the area and start families and a concurrent loss of retirees who migrate out of Spokane County to follow the sun.

Spokane County is far less diverse than either the state or the nation. In 2017, 89.3 percent of the county was white compared to 79.5 percent of the state and 76.6 percent of the nation. Hispanics or Latinos made up 5.7 percent of the population compared to 12.7 percent in the state.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## Demographics

	Spokane County	Washington state
<b>Population by age, 2017</b>		
Under 5 years old	6.1%	6.2%
Under 18 years old	22.2%	22.2%
65 years and older	15.7%	15.1%
<b>Females, 2017</b>	<b>50.4%</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Race/ethnicity, 2017</b>		
White	89.3%	79.5%
Black	2%	4.2%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	1.8%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	3%	9.7%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	5.7%	12.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## Educational attainment

Spokane County had more adults 25 years and older who were high school graduates in the 2012-2016 period at 93.1 percent than the state at 90.6 percent or the nation at 87 percent.

In terms of a bachelor's degree or higher, Spokane County had slightly fewer adults age 25 and older with higher education at 28.7 percent than the state at 33.6 percent.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

## Useful links

- [County data tables](#)
- [Community Indicators Initiative of Spokane](#)
- [EWU | Institute for Public Policy and Economic Analysis](#)
- [Greater Spokane Incorporated](#)
- [Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State](#)
- [Spokane County home page](#)
- [Spokane County on ChooseWashington.com](#)
- [Spokane County on ofm.wa.gov](#)
- [Spokane County Thumbnail History](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#)
- [Washington Ports](#)
- [Workforce Development Areas and WorkSource Office Directory](#)

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.