

Yakima County profile

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Overview

Regional context

Yakima County is located in south central Washington state among seven neighboring counties. The geography varies from densely timbered, mountainous terrain in the west, rolling foothills, broad valleys and arid regions to the east and fertile valleys in its central and southern parts. Agriculture has been the staple of the economy over the last 100 years.

According to the Yakima County Economic Profile published by the Yakima County Development Association's New Vision office, Yakima is the second largest county in Washington state at 2.75 million acres. Three entities own 63.4 percent of this total:

- The Yakama Nation (1,074,174 acres)
- The U.S. Forest Service (503,726 acres)
- The Yakima Training Center (165,787 acres)

Yakima County was separated from Kittitas County in 1883. Yakima County's development was shaped largely by the Northern Pacific Railroad and the Yakima River. Most of the county's population is concentrated along this river, largely because irrigation was critical to the success of the communities and the farmers who settled in this area.

The Washington Legislature passed the State Fair Act in 1893 and designated North Yakima in Yakima County as the site for an annual State Agricultural Fair. Some say it was a consolation prize for Yakima, which lost its bid to Olympia to be named the state capital.

Local economy

Yakima settlers developed the land into a commercial agricultural enterprise in the 1880s. With irrigation and railroads, commercial fruit production flourished. Yakima established wine grape vineyards in 1869 and hops acreage in 1872, which remain major parts of its agricultural industry today. Forestry and livestock, dairies and the growing, storage and shipping/processing of deciduous tree fruits (apples, cherries, pears, etc.), are bedrocks of Yakima County's economy.

In terms of jobs provided, agriculture is certainly the "big kid on the block" in Yakima County. The two other local industries in second and third place in terms of employment are health services and local government. Specifically, on an average annual basis in 2017, agricultural employers provided 30,227 jobs, or 26.6 percent of total covered

employment countywide. Health services provided 15,922 jobs, or 14.0 percent; and local government averaged 13,859 jobs, or 12.2 percent of total employment. Hence, these three industries/sectors, accounted for over half (specifically 52.8 percent) of total covered employment (113,540 jobs) in the county in 2017.

Geographic facts

	Yakima County	Washington state
Land area, 2010 (square miles)	4,295.4	66,455.5
People per square mile, 2010	56.6	101.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Outlook

The Yakima County economy added approximately 1,600 nonfarm jobs between 2016 (84,500 jobs) and 2017 (86,200 jobs), an average annual increase of 1.9 percent. The most recent nonfarm employment estimates available at the time of report preparation is for October 2018. These estimates indicate that although job growth in Yakima County’s nonfarm labor market was solid in first quarter 2018 (in roughly the three-percent range), the job growth pace slowed in the second and third quarters. In October 2018, the local nonfarm economy tallied 89,100 jobs versus 88,500 in October 2017, a modest 600 job and 0.7 percent upturn.

This “slower than the state” trend in Yakima County’s nonfarm job growth is nothing new. In fact, it is more the rule than the exception. If we compare nonfarm job growth trends in the county and the state during the most current ten-year period of 2007 to 2017 (eleven years, inclusive), we note that only in 2015 did the local labor market grow at the same (2.9 percent) pace as Washington’s labor market. Hence, it lagged behind Washington in 2007, 2008, 2011 to 2014, and from 2015 to 2017. However, to every cloud there is a silver lining, and the consolation is that during the “bad” economic years of the most recent recession (i.e., 2009 and 2010), nonfarm job-loss rates in Yakima County were not as severe as those experienced statewide. For example, in 2009, Washington’s economy lost 4.4 percent of its nonfarm jobs while Yakima County’s labor economy shrank by 1.9 percent. In 2010, Washington’s nonfarm market still retrenched by 0.9 percent, while the county’s economy dipped at a more modest 0.4 percent. Why? The local agricultural industry appeared to exert a moderating effect on Yakima County’s labor market.

Despite slowing nonfarm job growth in Yakima County during the second and third calendar quarters of 2018, there are encouraging economic indicators for the local economy. For example:

- Yakima County’s average annual not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for 2017 was 6.8 percent, the lowest average annual rate in Yakima County since electronic records for these data were implemented in 1990. Preliminary monthly unemployment estimates in the first ten months of 2018 indicate that the average annual rate for 2018 may be lower still.

- Construction activity and job growth is strong. In fact, year over year, Yakima County's construction industry has either stabilized or added jobs for the past 18 months (May 2017 through October 2018).
- Taxable retail sales reached an all-time high (over \$3.8 billion) in Yakima County during 2017, as noted on the Yakima County Development Authority (YCDA) Choose Yakima Valley website at <https://www.chooseyakimavalley.com/2018/08/09/taxable-retail-sales-reach-time-high/>.

Between 2016 and 2017, Washington's labor market provided 77,900 new nonfarm jobs, an average annual increase of 2.4 percent, more robust than Yakima County's 1.9 percent advance during this timeframe. The state's economy has posted year-over-year nonfarm employment increases for 97 consecutive months (October 2010 through October 2018). In October 2018, business and government organizations across Washington supplied 3,474,700 nonfarm jobs (not seasonally adjusted) compared to 3,355,500 jobs in October 2017, a 3.6 percent year-over-year employment increase.

Official long-term, (i.e., ten-year) industry employment projections produced by the Employment Security Department are for a 1.2 percent average annual nonfarm growth rate from 2016 to 2026 for the four-county (Kittitas, Klickitat, Skamania and Yakima) South Central Workforce Development Area (WDA), and for a 1.6 percent growth rate for Washington state.

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.

Before the recent recession, in 2007 and 2008, average annual unemployment rates in Yakima County were in the 7.0 percent range. Specifically, the rate averaged 7.0 percent in 2007 and 7.3 percent in 2008. During the recession however, unemployment rates in Yakima County increased to 9.0 percent in 2009 and to 10.6 percent in 2010 before peaking at 10.7 percent in 2011. Since 2011, the average annual unemployment rate in Yakima County has decreased for six consecutive years (from 2012 to 2017, inclusive). In fact, the 6.8 percent rate for calendar year 2017 is the lowest average annual unemployment rate since our agency began compiling data electronically in 1990 – 28 years ago. This is excellent economic news for Yakima County.

Between 2016 and 2017 in Yakima County:

- The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined from 7.5 to 6.8 percent, a seven-tenths percentage point contraction. Washington's unemployment rate decreased by five-tenths of a point (from 5.3 percent in 2016 to 4.8 percent in 2017).
- The average number of unemployed decreased from 9,415 to 8,602 (down 8.6 percent), equating to 813 fewer residents out of work in the county area during 2017. Simultaneously, the civilian labor force (CLF) rose by 980, from 125,834 to 126,814 residents, a 0.8 percent increase. Hence, although the local CLF grew at a less robust clip (0.8 percent) than Washington's labor force (which expanded by

2.5 percent during 2017), the number of unemployed in Yakima County decreased more rapidly (8.6 percent) than across Washington (which saw the number of unemployed decline at a 7.2 percent clip during 2017).

Yakima County's labor force has been expanding for the past 14 months (from September 2017 through October 2018). Between October 2017 and October 2018, the number of residents in the CLF grew by 6,393, a 4.8 percent increase. However, the number of unemployed also rose by 220 and 3.5 percent. Hence, Yakima County's unemployment rate dipped one-tenth of a point between October 2017 (when the rate was 4.8 percent) and October 2018 (when the rate was 4.7 percent). The current 4.7 percent rate is the lowest reading for the month of October in Yakima County since electronic records were implemented.

When evaluating recent current labor force trends in Yakima County, it is also helpful to look at the bigger picture (i.e., what's going on in Washington state). Washington's CLF expanded by 89,522 residents (a 2.5 percent upturn) from 2016 to 2017. The state's labor force has increased year over year for the past 57 months (February 2014 through October 2018). In October 2018, Washington's CLF tallied 3,823,627 residents versus 3,757,972 in October 2017 equating to 65,655 more Washingtonians in the labor force (up 1.7 percent).

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA

Industry employment

Current industry employment statistics are available on the [Labor area summaries](#) page.

The analysis in the first part of this section is derived primarily from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey sample and Washington Quarterly Benchmarked (WA-QB) data. Advantages of these data are that each month Employment Security Department (ESD) economists estimate job gains and losses based on the survey of employers (CES). The next month, these estimates are replaced with revised estimates. Then, at the end of each quarter, economists revise these estimates based on actual numbers from employer tax records (QCEW). The process that replaces employment estimates with the actual number of job gains or losses is called benchmarking. While ESD benchmarks our data quarterly, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) benchmarks its data once a year. However, a limitation of WA-QB estimates is that they are nonfarm related (i.e., agricultural employment figures are not included).

The analysis in the second part of this section are derived from the BLS' QCEW program, conducted by ESD. Although it takes a little longer to acquire QCEW data (than WA-QB data), the economic information provided is broader and more detailed than that provided by WA-QB. First, QCEW includes employment, wage, and size of firm figures for the agricultural sector, which WA-QB does not include. Second, QCEW data provide employment, wage and size of firm figures for businesses and government organizations in Yakima County down to the 3-digit NAICS sub-sector level (i.e., more detail than WA-QB). QCEW data include agricultural and nonagricultural employment and wages for firms, organizations and individuals whose employees are covered by the Washington State Employment Security Act. Also included are data for federal government agencies covered by Title 5, U.S.C. 85. Covered employment generally exceeds 85 percent of total employment in the state of Washington.

Types of jobs not covered under the unemployment compensation system, and hence not included in QCEW data, include casual laborers not performing duties in the course of the employer's:

- Trade or business
- Railroad personnel
- Newspaper delivery people
- Insurance or real estate agents paid on a commission basis only
- Non-covered employees working for parochial schools, religious or non-profit organizations
- Employees of sheltered workshops
- Inmates working in penal institutions
- Non-covered corporate officers, etc.

Analysis using CES Washington Quarterly Benchmarked (WA-QB) data:

The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) announced that the national recession occurred from December 2007 through June 2009. However, the effects of the recession hit Yakima County's nonfarm labor market heavily in 2009, 2010 and again in 2012. Please note: nonfarm employment data do not count agricultural jobs. Nonfarm figures are derived from CES sample-based estimates and from WA-QB data. The "pre-recession" peak for nonfarm employment was in 2008 when the local economy provided 80,100 jobs. Then the recession hit and it took six years, until 2014, for the Yakima County economy to regain (and slightly exceed) this level of employment. The recent recession hit the local nonfarm market harder than the total covered employment job market. It took only three years (from 2009 to 2011, inclusive) for total covered employment (which includes agricultural jobs) to bounce back to the pre-recession peak. In 2014, nonfarm employment averaged 81,400. The "valleys" of our local recession here in Yakima County occurred in 2010 and in 2012, when nonfarm employment averaged just 78,400.

Following is a summary of average annual nonfarm job changes since the recent recession:

- In 2009 – Nonfarm employment across Yakima County dropped 1.8 percent (down 1,500 jobs) to an average annual figure of 78,600. Losses were centered in manufacturing (down 900 jobs and 10.3 percent) and in construction (down 600 jobs and 16.4 percent). If there was any consolation to the dismal performance of the local economy in 2009, it was that the state's nonfarm market fared even worse – falling by 4.4 percent between 2008 and 2009.
- In 2010 – Nonfarm employment countywide ebbed by 0.3 percent (down 200 jobs) to an average annual figure of 78,400. In relative terms, Washington state's economy fared worse as the number of nonfarm jobs declined 0.9 percent between 2009 and 2010.
- In 2011 – Yakima County's labor market rebounded by 0.4 percent (up 300 jobs) to 78,700 jobs in 2011. During 2011, the state's economy began to recover as the number of nonfarm jobs expanded 1.3 percent. This was the first year of economic recovery for Yakima County and for Washington following the recession.

- In 2012 – The local economy slipped backwards 0.4 percent (down 300 jobs) to 78,400. The industry which lost the most jobs between 2011 and 2012 in Yakima County was healthcare and social assistance. This industry fell from an average of 15,800 jobs in 2011 to 15,400 in 2012, a 400 job and 2.4 percent downturn. Washington’s nonfarm economy moved upwards by 1.6 percent in 2012 – the second year of the statewide labor market recovery.
- In 2013 – The Yakima County nonfarm sector regained its footing by growing 1.2 percent (up 900 jobs) to 79,300. This rebound in the local economy was led by average annual upturns in construction (up 200 jobs) and in manufacturing (up 300 jobs). The tempo of job growth improved statewide as well. Washington’s economy averaged a 2.2 percent nonfarm job growth rate between 2012 and 2013.
- In 2014 – Local nonfarm payrolls advanced by 1.4 percent (up 1,100 jobs) to 80,400. Approximately 45.5 percent of total nonfarm growth occurred in construction (up 300 jobs) and food services (up 200 jobs). Once again, however, Washington’s growth rate outpaced Yakima’s. The state’s economy expanded at a 2.5 percent clip in 2014.
- In 2015 – Employment countywide averaged 82,700 jobs, a 2.9 percent and 2,300 job upturn above the 80,400 tallied in 2014. Industries that had a particularly good year in 2015: construction (up 400 jobs and 11.3 percent), wholesale trade (up 300 jobs and 5.8 percent), retail trade (up 400 jobs and 4.3 percent), food services (up 400 jobs and 8.3 percent) and local government (up 300 jobs and 1.9 percent). How did the state’s nonfarm economy fare during 2015? The short answer: roughly the same as Yakima County. Washington’s labor market grew 2.9 percent between 2014 and 2015.
- In 2016 – The local economy netted 1,800 more nonfarm jobs in 2016 than in 2015, as total nonfarm employment rose to an average of 84,500 (up 2.2 percent). Three Yakima County industries added approximately 400 jobs during 2016: retail trade, professional and business services (primarily at temporary help agencies), and healthcare and social assistance. Washington’s nonfarm market expanded at a more rapid 3.1 percent clip in 2016.
- In 2017 – The Yakima County economy netted 1,600 more nonfarm jobs as employment rose to an average of 86,200 (up 1.9 percent). Three Yakima County industries accounted for over 90 percent of total nonfarm job growth in 2017: healthcare and social assistance, food services and local government. Washington’s nonfarm market expanded at a slightly faster 2.4 percent clip in 2017.

A generalization about the Yakima County economy, at least during the most recent ten-year (2007 to 2017) period is: “In good economic years, the county’s nonfarm job growth rates lag the state, but in bad years, the county leads the state.” Nonfarm employment trends substantiate this generalization. Specifically:

- Average annual job growth in Yakima County lagged nonfarm job growth statewide in 2007 and 2008.
- Washington’s nonfarm economy lost jobs more rapidly than Yakima County during the recession in 2009 and 2010.

- In six of the seven years since the recession (2011 to 2014 and 2016 to 2017, inclusive) average annual nonfarm job growth rates in Yakima County lagged statewide growth rates. Only in calendar year 2015 did the county and the state see their nonfarm economies expand at the same 2.9 percent pace.

Analysis using QCEW data:

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) is an industry classification system that groups businesses/organizations into categories or sectors based on the activities in which they are primarily engaged. There are 19 private sectors and 3 government sectors (for a total of 22 sectors) at the 2-digit NAICS code level, within each county-level economy. One can observe much about the structure of a county’s economy by quantifying and comparing the number of jobs and the percentage of jobs in these sectors by using annual average Quarterly Census of Employment and Wage (QCEW) data. The most recent average annual covered employment, or QCEW, data available for Yakima County are for 2017.

The top five Yakima County industry sectors in 2017 in terms of employment were:

Sector	Number of jobs	Share of employment
1. Agriculture, forestry and fishing	30,227	26.6%
2. Health services	15,922	14.0%
3. Local government	13,859	12.2%
4. Retail trade	10,892	9.6%
5. Manufacturing	8,530	7.5%
All other industries	34,110	30.0%
Total covered employment	113,540	100%

Seventy percent (70.0 percent, to be exact) of all jobs in Yakima County were in these five, two-digit NAICS industries or sectors (i.e., agriculture, health services, local government, retail trade and manufacturing). A comparison of the top five sectors that provided the most jobs in Yakima County in 2017 with the sectors that produced the highest payrolls follows:

- Agriculture provided 26.6 percent of all jobs countywide, but supplied only 21.3 percent of total wage income. Why? Many agricultural jobs are seasonal.
- Conversely, health services tallied 14.0 percent of total covered employment in 2017 but accounted for 16.2 percent of total wage income – indicating it is a relatively “good paying” industry.
- Local government provided 12.2 percent of total covered employment, but accounted for 14.4 percent of total wage income – indicating, as in health services, that this is a relatively “good paying” industry. Jobs with local public school districts (primary and secondary schools) are tallied under the local government category. Jobs and wages at Native American (tribal) businesses/organizations are also tallied under the local government category, along with public healthcare agencies/providers.

- The local retail trade sector accounted for nearly one in ten jobs countywide, but provided only 7.6 percent of total wage income. The primary reason is that a relatively high percentage of jobs at retail stores are part time.
- Conversely, manufacturing supplied only 7.5 percent of all jobs in Yakima County but 9.4 percent of total wages/payroll. Nearly one in every ten dollars of wage income earned countywide during 2017 was earned at a manufacturing firm. (Note: the manufacturing sector includes the “food processing/manufacturing” subsector.)

If one analyzes employment changes in Yakima County over the most recent ten-year period of 2007 to 2017 (eleven years, inclusive) using ESD’s annual average QCEW data, it is noted that total covered employment increased from 99,135 in 2007 to 113,540 in 2017, a 14,405 job and 14.5 percent expansion. Of the 22 NAICS sectors mentioned earlier, there were five sectors (agriculture, health services, local government, retail trade and manufacturing), ranked by employment, which accounted for 65.9 percent of all jobs countywide in 2007. The same “top five” accounted for 70.0 percent of total covered employment countywide ten years later in 2017. Therefore, QCEW data indicate that the Yakima County economy was not a tremendously diverse economy in 2007, and by 2017, it had become even less diverse. Specifically, in 2007, agriculture provided 22.2 percent, local government 12.8 percent, health services 12.4 percent, retail trade 9.6 percent, and manufacturing 8.8 percent of total covered employment. In 2017, agriculture provided 26.6 percent, health services 14.0 percent, local government 12.2 percent, retail trade 9.6 percent, and manufacturing 7.5 percent of total covered employment countywide. Only two sectors switched rankings during this ten-year period. Local government slipped from “number two” (in terms of covered employment jobs) in 2007 to “number three” in 2017, while health services rose from “number three” in 2007 to “number two” in 2017. In addition, there was some fluctuation within these “top five” sectors between 2007 and 2017 – reference the percent of total covered employment provided.

Trends in Yakima County for the top five industry sectors from 2007 to 2017:

- Agriculture (NAICS 11) is ranked first in the top five job-providing sectors in Yakima County in 2017. Employment in agriculture, forestry and fishing (where the vast majority is in agriculture) jumped 37.1 percent (from 22,051 jobs in 2007 to 30,227 in 2017). Total covered employment netted 14,405 new jobs (up 14.5 percent) during this timeframe. Hence, employment in Yakima County’s agricultural sector grew more than twice as fast as the total covered employment during this most recent ten-year period. The subsector (within the agricultural sector) in which much of this job growth has occurred is agriculture and forestry support (NAICS 115). In 2007, agriculture and forestry support businesses tallied 6,107 jobs countywide, but by 2017, this subsector provided 9,578 jobs – a remarkable 56.8 percent and 3,471-job upturn.
- Health services registered a strong 30.0 percent expansion (from 12,248 jobs in 2007 to 15,922 in 2017) improving its ranking from the third-largest job-providing sector countywide in 2007 to the number two position by 2017.

- Local government registered a 9.0 percent and 1,148 job upturn (from 12,711 jobs in 2007 to 13,859 in 2017). However, local government slipped in the top five ranking from the second-largest industry (by employment) in 2007, to the number three position by 2017, not because it did not expand, but because it did not expand at the pace of its next-closest “competitor” – health services.
- Retail trade was the fourth-largest job-providing sector in Yakima County in 2017. The number of part- and full-time retail trade jobs increased by 1,356 (up 14.2 percent), from 9,536 jobs in 2007 to 10,892 in 2017. Of the twelve three-digit NAICS subsectors classified within Yakima County’s retail trade sector, three accounted for 81.7 percent of the 1,356 new retail jobs added from 2007 to 2017 – motor vehicle and parts dealers (NAICS 441) added 161 jobs, up 11.1 percent; gas stations (NAICS 447) tallied up 161 more jobs; and general merchandise stores (NAICS 452) netted 786 new jobs, up 34.5 percent.
- Manufacturing was the fifth-largest, of the “top five” job-providing sectors in Yakima County in 2017. Manufacturing employment decreased 2.4 percent (from 8,739 jobs in 2007 to 8,530 in 2017). Why? Durable goods manufacturing took some hits in the decade from 2000 to 2010. Layoffs were particularly severe in transportation equipment manufacturing (i.e., closures at Chinook Trail Wagons and Western RV) and in lumber and wood products (i.e., the Yakima Resources closure). Nondurable goods manufacturing was not immune to layoffs either as food processing/manufacturing shed jobs when Del Monte closed their asparagus cannery in Toppenish. However, annual QCEW employment data show that although Yakima County’s manufacturers “troughed” at 7,470 jobs in 2010, this sector has generally been on an uptrend since then. Specifically, manufacturing employment rose to 7,869 in 2011, ebbed to 7,813 in 2012, expanded to 8,222 in 2014, virtually stalled at 8,216 jobs in 2014, increased to 8,279 in 2015, advanced to 8,368 jobs in 2016, and climbed to 8,530 in 2017. These data indicate a slow, but not steady, resurgence in Yakima County’s manufacturing employment since 2010. Following are examples of some manufacturing subsectors that have shown promise, and/or stability, in recent years:
 - Food manufacturing (NAICS 311) provides more jobs than any other manufacturing subsector in Yakima County. It provided 2,812 jobs across Yakima County in 2007 (which was the “low point” of employment in this subsector in the past ten-year period (2007 to 2017)). Food manufacturers experienced some ups and downs in hiring during this period. Nevertheless, this subsector provided 3,012 jobs in 2017, a 200 job and 7.1 percent upturn from the 2,812 jobs counted ten years prior.
 - Plastics and rubber product manufacturing (NAICS 326) has rebounded steadily from the low point of 1,102 jobs tallied in 2009 to 1,497 in 2017, a 395 job and 35.8 percent upturn. Clearly this subsector that has found a “niche” here in the Yakima Valley.
 - In 2009, the number of jobs in fabricated metal product manufacturing (NAICS 332) bottomed out at 674, but this subsector has generally been in a growth mode ever since. By 2017, it provided 927 positions, equating to 253 new jobs, a strong 37.5 percent employment rise. Clearly, fabricated metal product

manufacturing has been faring well in Yakima County during this recent eight-year period (2009 through 2017).

- Machinery manufacturing (NAICS 333) employment has progressed steadily from 473 jobs in 2010 to 640 in 2017, a gain of 167 jobs and 35.3 percent during this seven-year period (2010 through 2017).

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.

Yakima County highlights:

In 2017, women held 47.9 percent of the jobs in Yakima County. However, there were substantial differences in gender by industry.

- Male-dominated industries included mining (85.5 percent), utilities (83.7 percent), and construction (82.5 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included healthcare and social assistance (78.7 percent), finance and insurance (70.3 percent) and educational services (69.0 percent).

There were differences in 2017 between Yakima County and Washington state in the percentages of workers by age group:

- Only 21.0 percent of workers in Yakima County in all industries were in the 25-34 years of age group versus 23.1 percent statewide.
- Approximately 8.5 percent of workers in Yakima County in all industries were 65-99 years of age versus only 5.7 percent statewide.

Source: The Local Employment Dynamics

Wages and income

The total covered payroll in 2017 in Yakima County was nearly \$4.36 billion. The average annual wage was \$38,374 or 61.8 percent of the state average of \$62,073.

The top five Yakima County industries in 2017 in terms of payrolls were:

Sector	Payroll	Share of payrolls
1. Agriculture, forestry and fishing	\$929,623,084	21.3%
2. Health services	\$705,126,380	16.2%
3. Local government	\$626,844,417	14.4%
4. Manufacturing	\$409,630,191	9.4%
5. Retail trade	\$332,809,765	7.6%
All other industries	\$1,356,940,690	31.1%
Total covered payrolls	\$4,356,940,690	100%

As shown in the table above, QCEW data showed that Yakima County's workers received approximately \$4.36 billion in wages in 2017. Nearly seven out of ten (68.9 percent) dollars of covered wage income was earned in five two-digit NAICS industries or sectors (i.e., agriculture, health services, local government, manufacturing and retail trade). Agriculture was the largest provider of wages and jobs in the county in 2017, supplying 21.3 percent of total covered wage income and accounting for 26.6 percent of all jobs. The disparity in percentages between wages and employment is primarily due to a relatively high proportion of seasonal jobs in the agricultural sector. Private health services (i.e., jobs at a doctor/dentist's office, in a hospital, nursing home, vocational rehab facility, etc.) ranked second out of 22 industries in 2017 in terms of wages. It provided \$705.1 million in payroll and 16.2 percent of total earned wage income while accounting for 14.0 percent of total covered employment, indicating that, in aggregate, this is a relatively good-paying industry.

Average annual wages in Yakima County 2017 were highest in utilities (\$91,220) and in management of companies and enterprises (\$70,481). Conversely, average annual wages were lowest in accommodation and food services (\$17,954) and in arts, entertainment and recreation (\$20,768).

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.

Inflation-adjusted per capita income in Yakima County in 2016 was \$40,588 compared to the state at \$54,579 and the nation at \$49,246.

Median household income from 2012 through 2016 (in 2016 dollars) was \$45,700 in Yakima County, 72.7 percent of the state's median household income (\$62,848) and 82.6 percent of the nation's (\$55,322) according to the Census Bureau QuickFacts.

Yakima County's poverty rate in 2014 was considerably higher (18.2 percent) than the state's (11.0 percent) and the nation's (12.3 percent) poverty rates according to Census Bureau QuickFacts. The state and national rates are not directly comparable to the county rate because they each use different data sources.

Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Population

During the last ten years, Yakima County had an annual average population growth rate of about 0.6 percent, which was slower than Washington's 1.2 percent growth pace.

Yakima County's population was estimated at 250,193 in 2017, up 2.9 percent from the 243,237 county residents in 2010. Washington's state's population grew 10.1 percent, to 7,405,743 residents in 2017 from 6,724,545 in 2010. Hence, the local population grew less than one-third as fast as did the state's population during the past seven years.

During the next ten years (2016 through 2026), Yakima County's population is estimated to grow annually by 1.0 percent, not too far behind the state's projected yearly growth rate of 1.2 percent.

Population facts

	Yakima County	Washington state
Population 2017	250,193	7,405,743
Population 2010	243,237	6,724,545
Percent change, 2010 to 2017	2.9%	10.1%

Age, gender and ethnicity

Compared with the state, Yakima County's 2017 population has substantially more children under 5 years old and more youth under 18 years old. Approximately 29.7 percent of the county's residents are under 18 years old compared to 22.2 percent statewide. The county's population age 65 or older totals 13.5 percent compared to 15.1 percent in Washington state. Therefore, one may generalize that Yakima County has a younger population than the state as a whole.

As of 1 April 2017, Yakima County has a higher percentage of Latino and Hispanic residents than the state and nation. Specifically, Yakima County's Hispanic or Latino population makes up 49.4 percent of its population, much higher than Washington state (12.7 percent). Yakima County's American Indian/Native Alaskan population was 6.4 percent compared to 1.9 percent in the state, reflecting the presence of the Yakama Nation.

Demographics

	Yakima County	Washington state
Population by age, 2017		
Under 5 years old	8.1%	6.2%
Under 18 years old	29.7%	22.2%
65 years and older	13.5%	15.1%
Females, 2017	50.0%	50.0%
Race/ethnicity, 2017		
White, not Hispanic or Latino	43.2%	68.7%
Black	1.5%	4.2%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	6.4%	1.9%
Asian,	1.5%	8.9%
Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.8%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	49.4%	12.7%

Educational attainment

According to the American Community Survey, during the period 2012 to 2016, 72.5 percent of Yakima County's population 25 years and older were high school graduates or higher, considerably lower than the statewide average of 90.6 percent and the national average of 87.0 percent.

Yakima County also had a lower percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher (15.3 percent) compared to the state at 33.6 percent and the nation at 30.3 percent during the same time period.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Useful links

- [County data tables](#)
- [Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#)
- [Port of Grandview](#)
- [Port of Sunnyside](#)
- [Washington Ports](#)
- [Workforce Development Areas and WorkSource Office Directory](#)
- [Yakima County Development Association/New Vision](#)
- [Yakima County History](#)
- [Yakima County home page](#)
- [Yakima County on ChooseWashington.com](#)
- [Yakima County on ofm.wa.gov](#)

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