

April 2020

Monthly Employment Report



Washington
15.4%



United States
14.7%

Seasonally adjusted

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.

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 fell by 527,000 in April 2020.¹ BLS estimates the private sector lost 498,500 jobs during the month and the public sector lost 28,500 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for April 2019 through April 2020 indicate a decrease in employment of 485,800 for the state. The private sector lost 463,900 jobs while the public sector lost an estimated 21,900 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2020 is 15.4 percent. The revised estimated March 2020 unemployment rate is at 5.1 percent. The April 2019 unemployment rate was 4.4 percent.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. March's preliminary estimated loss of 11,100 jobs was revised to a loss of 25,400 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, March and April, 2019 and 2020
Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

	April 2020 (Preliminary)	March 2020 (Revised)	April 2019 (Revised)	March 2019 (Revised)
United States				
Unemployment rate				
Seasonally adjusted	14.7%	4.4%	3.6%	3.8%
Washington				
Unemployment rate	15.4%	5.1%	4.4%	4.5%
Resident labor force	3,957,300	3,890,700	3,889,600	3,882,400
Unemployed	610,700	198,600	172,500	173,800
Seattle/Bellevue/Everett				
Unemployment rate	14.5%	5.6%	3.0%	3.0%
Resident labor force	1,713,200	1,709,400	1,719,683	1,716,757
Unemployed	247,800	95,900	51,136	51,976



¹Most 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 April 2020 is 15.4 percent. The revised estimated March 2020 unemployment rate is 5.1 percent.

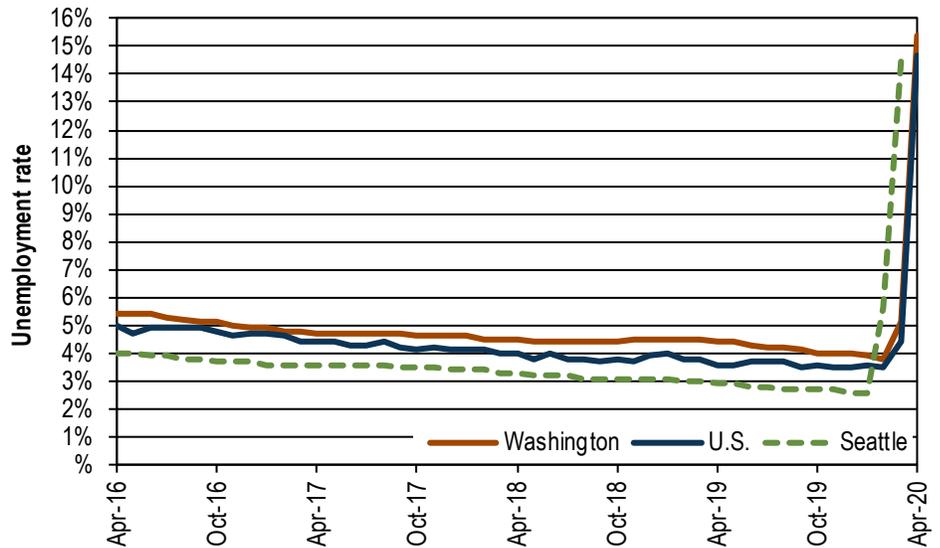
According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed people rose by 412,100 in April 2020 compared to March 2020. At the same time, the number of employed people fell by an estimated 345,500. Overall, this amounted to an increase of 66,600 people in the labor force.

The preliminary April 2020 unemployment rate is 11.0 percentage points higher than the April 2019 rate of 4.4 percent.

Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted

U.S., Washington and Seattle, April 2016 through April 2020

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



April 2020 preliminary unemployment rates:

U.S. (preliminary) 14.7%
 Washington (preliminary) 15.4%
 Seattle area (preliminary) 14.5%

Employment change and moving average, seasonally adjusted

Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment decreased by 527,000 jobs from March 2020 to April 2020.

Recent employment change:

February 2020: up 3,900 jobs (revised)

March 2020: down 25,400 jobs (revised)

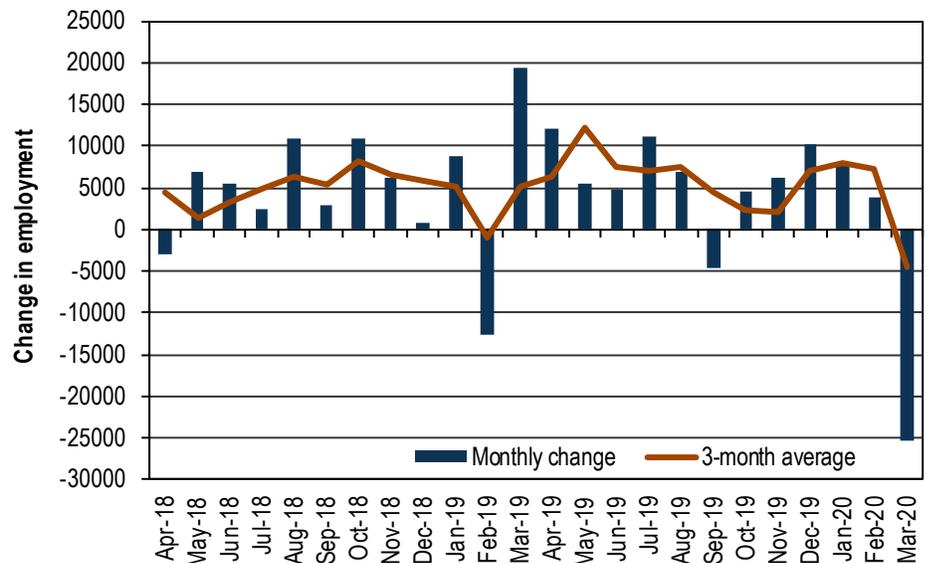
April 2020: down 527,000 jobs (preliminary)

Note: Due to the extremely large magnitude of job losses in April, they are not represented in the graph.

Monthly employment change and three-month moving average, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, April 2018 through March 2020

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



Employment and unemployment, seasonally adjusted

March 2008

(start of recent employment recession in Washington)

Nonfarm employment: 3,008,000
Unemployment rate: 4.8%

February 2010

(end of recent employment recession in Washington)

Nonfarm employment: 2,824,000
Unemployment rate: 10.4%

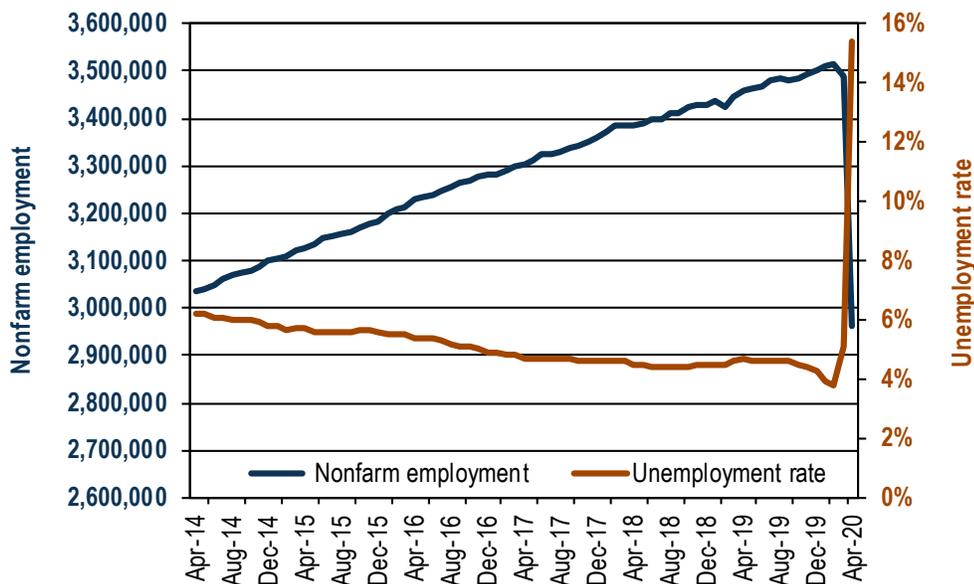
April 2020 (preliminary)

Nonfarm employment: 2,961,100
Unemployment rate: 15.4%

Nonfarm employment and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted

Washington state, April 2014 through April 2020

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. COVID-19 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 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

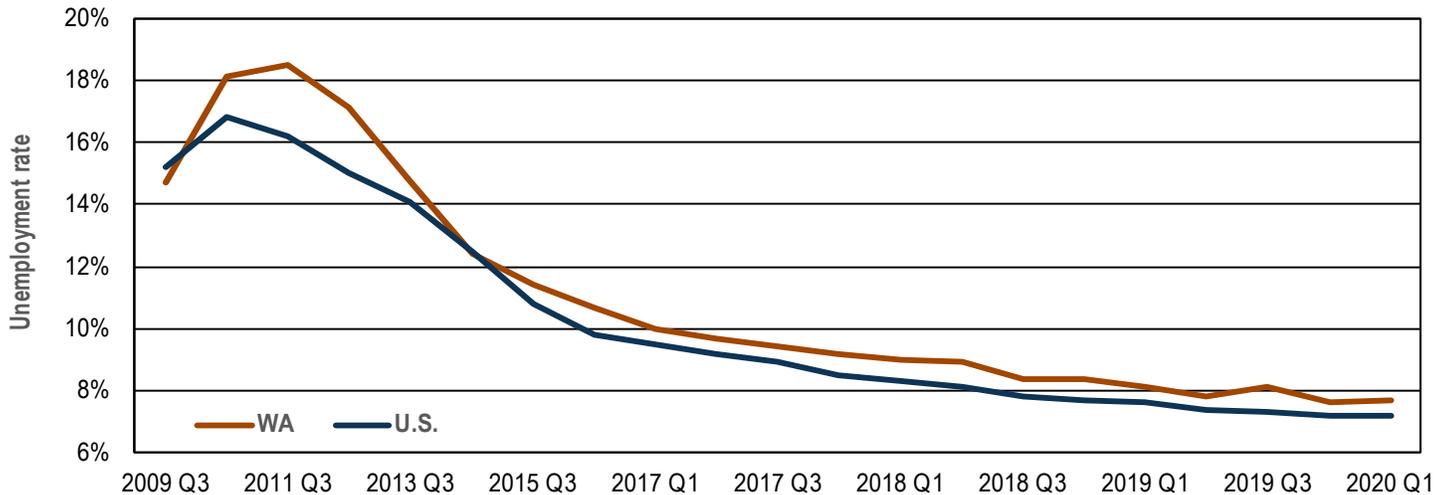
U-6: Broader unemployment measure increased in the four quarter period ending first quarter 2020

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently updated its “alternative measures of labor underutilization” for states to include annual averages for 2019. 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 annual unemployment rate for first quarter 2020 for Washington state was 7.7 percent. This was higher compared to the 7.6 percent U-6 unemployment 2019 annual rate. The U.S. U-6 unemployment rate was 7.2 percent in first quarter 2020.

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
2020	WA	7.7%			
	U.S.	7.2%			
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%
2014	WA	13.3%	12.8%	12.4%	12.5%
	U.S.	13.4%	12.9%	12.5%	12.0%
2013	WA	16.4%	15.7%	14.8%	14.0%
	U.S.	14.5%	14.3%	14.1%	13.8%
2012	WA	17.6%	17.0%	17.1%	16.9%
	U.S.	15.6%	15.3%	15.0%	14.7%

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 lost an estimated 527,000 jobs during the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- Overall, employment in all thirteen major industries contracted in April.
- Private sector employment is estimated to have decreased by 498,500 and government employment decreased by 28,500.
- Employment in professional and business services decreased by 35,300, with 12,300 jobs lost in employment services.
- Retail employment fell by 45,600, with 13,200 jobs lost in other retail trade.
- Education and health services employment fell by 66,700, with 52,900 jobs lost in health services and social assistance.
- Employment in construction decreased by 81,000 overall with 53,300 fewer jobs for specialty trade contractors.
- The number of jobs in leisure and hospitality decreased by 177,700, with a decrease of 120,500 in food services and drinking places.

Estimated one-month employment change by industry, seasonally adjusted
Washington state, March 2020 to April 2020

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

Total nonfarm	-527,000
Mining and logging	-500
Information	-3,200
Financial activities	-7,600
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-9,500
Wholesale trade	-12,700
Manufacturing	-27,500
Government	-28,500
Other services	-31,200
Professional and business services	-35,300
Retail trade	-45,600
Education and health services	-66,700
Construction	-81,000
Leisure and hospitality	-177,700

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.

Since the current situation is still evolving, we will share information as soon as possible. In the meantime, if you have specific questions regarding labor market information, please send your emails to 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 lost an estimated 485,800 jobs from April 2019 through April 2020.

- Overall, one major industry expanded and twelve contracted.
- Private sector employment fell 16.3 percent, down an estimated 463,900 jobs.
- Public sector employment fell 3.7 percent, down an estimated 21,900 jobs.
- Professional and business services employment decreased by 19,100, led by a 10,400 decrease in employment services.
- Retail trade subtracted 32,900 jobs, with 13,100 jobs lost by clothing and clothing accessories stores.
- Education and health services employment decreased by 59,400, with 47,000 jobs lost in health services and social assistance.
- Employment in construction is down 74,100 with the number employed as specialty trade contractors down 47,600.
- Employment in leisure and hospitality is down by 190,700, with food services and drinking places shedding 133,600 jobs.

Estimated employment change by industry over the year, not seasonally adjusted Washington state, April 2019 through April 2020

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

Total nonfarm	-485,800
Information	5,700
Mining and logging	-800
Financial activities	-7,400
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-9,000
Wholesale trade	-11,400
Professional and business services	-19,100
Government	-21,900
Manufacturing	-31,100
Retail trade	-32,900
Other services	-33,700
Education and health services	-59,400
Construction	-74,100
Leisure and hospitality	-190,700

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, April 2020

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

	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
Total nonfarm	18,500	-508,500	-527,000
Leisure and hospitality	6,500	-171,200	-177,700
Professional and business services	4,500	-30,800	-35,300
Government	2,500	-26,000	-28,500
Retail trade	1,900	-43,700	-45,600
Construction	1,700	-79,300	-81,000
Wholesale trade	800	-11,900	-12,700
Other services	600	-30,600	-31,200
Education and health services	500	-66,200	-66,700
Financial activities	400	-7,200	-7,600
Mining and logging	0	-500	-500
Information	-100	-3,300	-3,200
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-200	-9,700	-9,500
Manufacturing	-600	-28,100	-27,500

Based on historical patterns, Washington employment typically increases by 18,500 from March to April. This year the state lost an estimated 508,500 jobs, amounting to a seasonally adjusted decrease of 527,000 jobs.

- The normal seasonal gain in leisure and hospitality employment is 6,500 in April. The estimated loss was 171,200, so employment decreased by 177,700 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- The employment decrease on a seasonally adjusted basis was 35,300 in professional and business services in April. The normal seasonal increase is 4,500. It is estimated to have decreased this April by 30,800.
- The estimated employment decrease in construction was 79,300. The normal seasonal increase is 1,700, so on a seasonally adjusted basis, construction employment fell by 81,000.
- Employment in retail trade normally rises by 1,900. It is estimated to have decreased by 43,700 this April, so it decreased by 45,600 on a seasonally adjusted basis.
- Typically, manufacturing decreases by 600 in April. On a seasonally adjusted basis, manufacturing employment decreased by 27,500 as the estimated decrease was 28,100.

Benchmarking highlights

Benchmarking is a process that replaces employment estimates with the actual number of job gains or losses.

Each month, economists estimate monthly job gains and losses based on a survey of employers. Each quarter, economists benchmark the estimates by replacing them with data from employer tax records before applying seasonal adjustments.

With the release of April 2020 data, industry employment numbers have also been revised through the annual benchmarking process administered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Benchmarked employment data are now available through December 2019. Employment estimates for April 2020 presented in this report were based on the new data, plus seasonal adjustments.

Based on benchmarked December 2019 data:

- The largest upward revision was for education and health services, up 1,800.
- Leisure and hospitality had the largest downward revision of -3,900.

Quarterly benchmarked industry employment, seasonally adjusted
Washington state, December 2019
Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,
Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Industry sector	Revisions to December 2019 employment level
Total nonfarm	-4,800
Education and health services	1,800
Information	1,500
Government	1,200
Financial activities	600
Mining and logging	300
Other services	300
Wholesale trade	0
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-400
Manufacturing	-700
Professional and business services	-800
Construction	-1,400
Retail trade	-3,300
Leisure and hospitality	-3,900

Media inquiries and contact information

Due to the high volume of requests for information, please send your emails to 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.

Statewide labor economist:

Paul Turek, Ph.D.
pturek@esd.wa.gov
 360-706-3044

Regional labor economists:

Scott Bailey
scott.bailey@esd.wa.gov
 360-810-0048

Don Meseck
dmeseck@esd.wa.gov
 509-574-0176

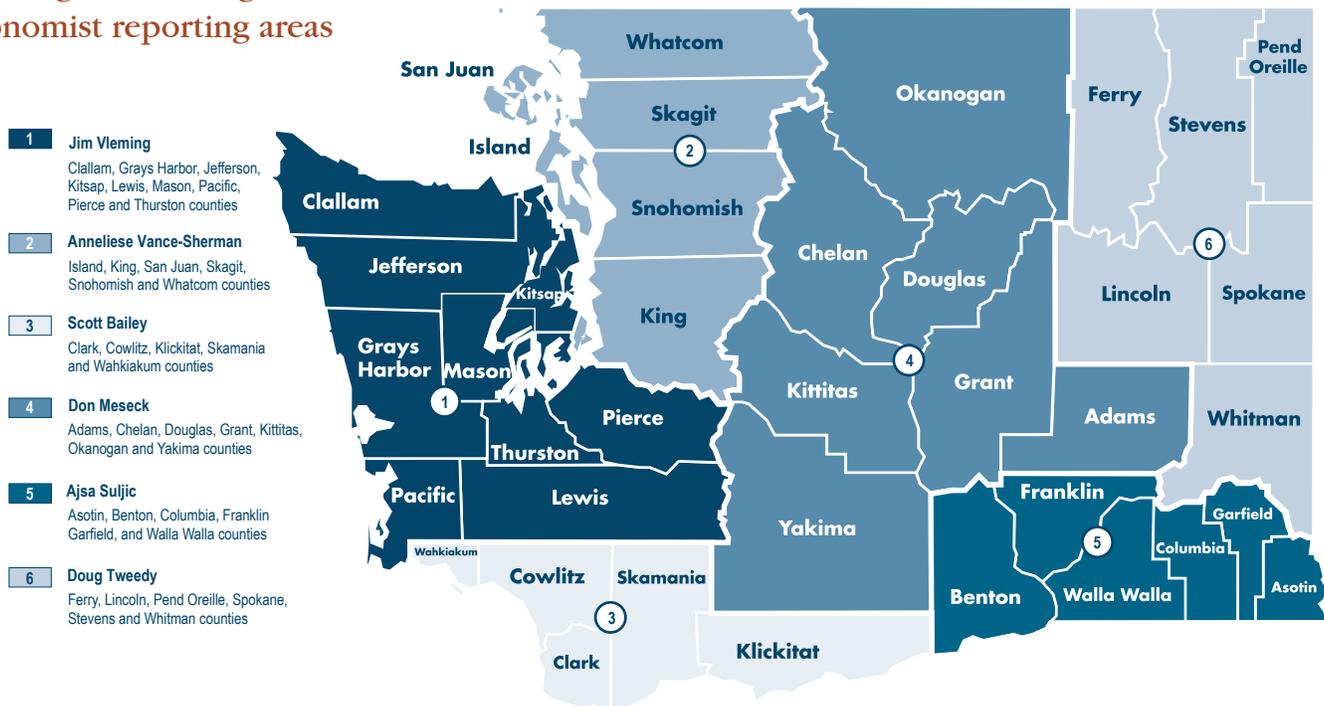
Ajsa Suljic
asuljic@esd.wa.gov
 509-734-5928

Doug Tweedy
dtweedy@esd.wa.gov
 509-434-5278

Anneliese Vance-Sherman, Ph.D.
avancesherman@esd.wa.gov
 425-258-6315

Jim Vleming
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., May 26, 2020. The publication schedule for 2020 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.