LEGISLATIVE REPORT

2024 Labor Market and Economic Report

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2024 LABOR MARKET AND ECONOMIC REPORT

This report was prepared in accordance with RCW 50.38.040. Content is based primarily on data available through September 2024. Historical values are subject to revision and may not equal prior report values. This report is published on the Labor market and economic report web page.

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Executive summary

The Employment Security Department (Employment Security) submits an annual labor market and economic report to the legislature and the governor under RCW 50.38.040. Key insights from the 2024 report:

- In September 2024 Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.8%. Gradual increases in unemployment suggest the tight labor market is easing.
- The labor force participation rate decreased over the past 12 months, dropping to 63.3% in September 2024.
- Washington's civilian labor force included 4,003,205 people in September 2024. This is 29,653 fewer workers than September 2023, despite overall population growth.
- The preliminary tally of jobs for September 2024 was 3,652,400 – an increase of 44,600, or 1.2%, from the previous year.
- The sectors with the largest job gains were education and health services, government, construction and other services.
- Washington ranked fourth in the nation for telecommuting, with 28.5% of workers working at home for pay.
- As of Nov. 21, 2024, Employment Security received 66 notices from businesses planning layoffs during the 2024 calendar year. The notices could have affected 8,950 workers.
- From October 2023 to September 2024, an average of 66,021 people per month received an unemployment insurance benefit payment.
- There were 102,545 participants in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser programs from July 2023 to June 2024.
- The industry sectors projected to have the largest increases in employment shares are information, leisure and hospitality, and professional and business services.
- The industry sectors projected to have the largest decreases in employment shares are retail trade, manufacturing and financial activities.
- The occupational groups projected to grow the fastest are computer and mathematical; life, physical and social science; and personal care and services.
- The 2023 average annual wage for workers in Washington was $87,091, a 5.0% increase from the 2022 average annual wage of $82,912.

- Workers in Washington had an average hourly wage of $39.10 in 2023, about 24.2% above the U.S. average of $31.48. The statewide median hourly wage was $29.99 compared to the U.S. median of $23.11.

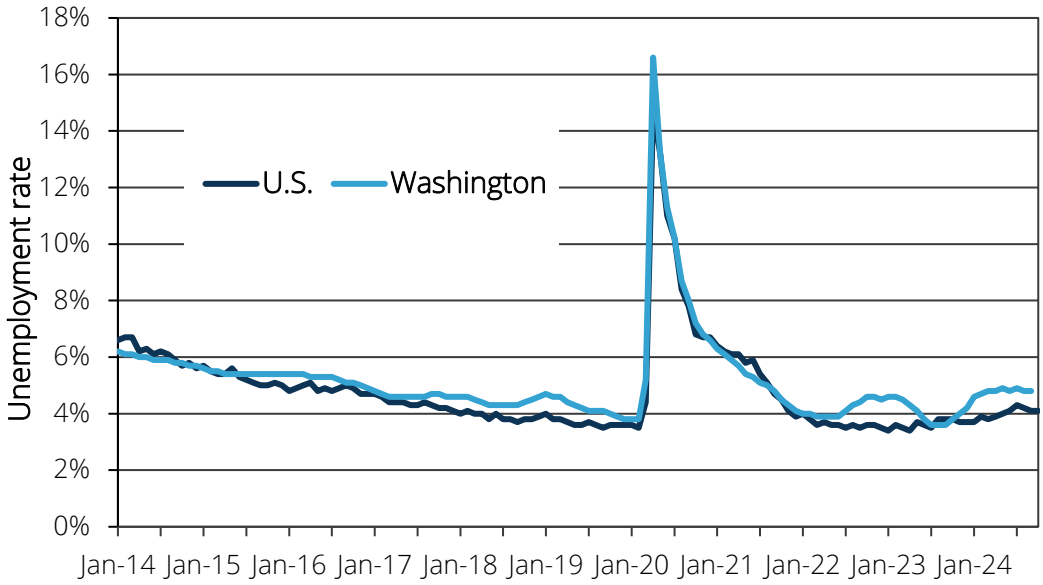
Chapter 1: The labor market

Unemployment

In September 2024, Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 4.8% – virtually unchanged since March 2024. In September 2023 it was 3.6%.

Washington's unemployment rate historically tracks with the national rate. In 2023, the two rates diverged, then converged again. Over the past several months, Washington's rates have been more volatile than the nation's. The national unemployment rate remained below 4% from early 2022 to October 2024. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows the national unemployment rate held steady at 4.1% in September and October 2024.

Figure 1-1: Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, Washington, January 2014 to September 2024 and the United States, January 2014 to October 2024.



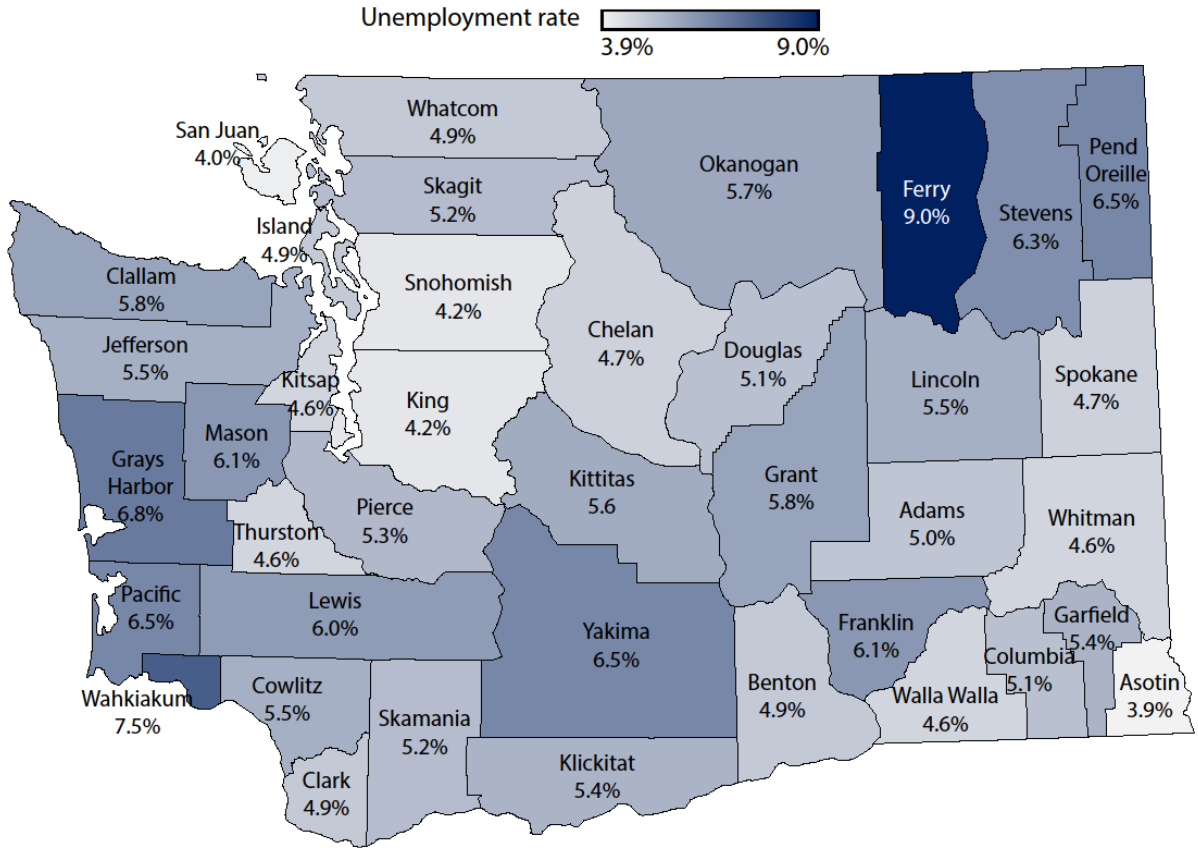
Source: Employment Security Department/Labor Market Information and Research (LMIR) Division, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics/Current Population Survey, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Historically speaking, unemployment rates below 5% are low and signal a tight labor market. The incremental increase over the past several months suggests the tight labor market that

characterized the past couple of years is easing. For job seekers, this means connecting with employers is more difficult today than this time last year. For employers competing for workers, the moderating unemployment rate is a welcome shift.

Although unemployment rates have been stagnant in recent months, they are expected to increase slightly over the next couple of years. The Economic and Revenue Forecast Council revised expectations in its September forecast. The average annual unemployment rate for 2024 is expected to rise from 4.5% in 2024 to 4.9% in 2025 and 5.0% in 2026 and 2027 before trending down slightly to the high 4% range in 2028 and 2029. Earlier forecasts predicted the unemployment rate would remain below 5% for the entire evaluation period. The revision shows the model is picking up on the weakening labor market.

Figure 1-2: 12-month average unemployment rate by county, October 2023 to September 2024



Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics/Current Population Survey, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

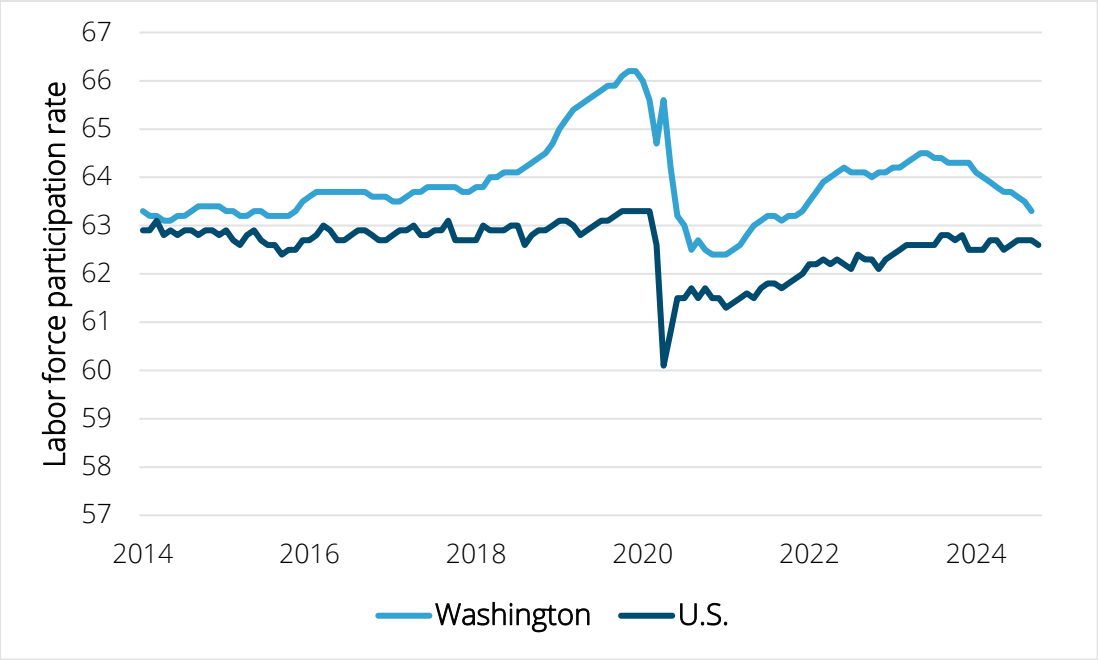
Unemployment rates vary across the state. Statewide, the average unemployment rate for the 12-month period of October 2023 through September 2024 was 4.7%. Ferry County had the highest unemployment rate (9.0%), and Asotin County had the lowest (3.9%).

Labor force participation

In the first half of 2024, the labor force participation rate in Washington decreased slightly. Just prior to the pandemic it was in the 65% to 66% range. It dipped below 63% in 2020 and increased to the 64% range in 2022 and 2023. The rapid recovery of the labor force suggested a possible return to pre-pandemic labor force participation rates. In May 2023, the labor force participation rate hit 64.5%, and has decreased over the past 12 months. In September 2024 it was 63.3%. This could reflect a number of different dynamics including an aging workforce. It may also indicate a cooling labor market.

Washington's civilian labor force was made up of 4,003,205 people in September 2024. Over the year, the labor force contracted by 29,653, or 0.7%, despite overall population growth. The Washington State Office of Financial Management reported an annual population increase of 84,550 or 1.1% in 2024.

Figure 1-3: Labor force participation rate, seasonally adjusted, Washington January 2014 to September 2024 and United States, January 2014 to October 2024



Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics/Current Population Survey

Declining labor force participation influences the unemployment rate. A declining pool of job seekers and incumbent workers can cause the unemployment rate to drop, especially in the context of an economy where job opportunities continue to expand (albeit at a slowing pace).

At a national level, the Bureau of Labor Statistics can calculate monthly labor force dynamics with demographic information. In October 2024, the labor force participation rate was 55.6% for youth (16 to 24 years), 83.5% for prime-aged workers (25 to 54 years), and 38.6% for older workers (55 and over). Declining rates are driven by the baby boom generation's slow exit from the workforce.

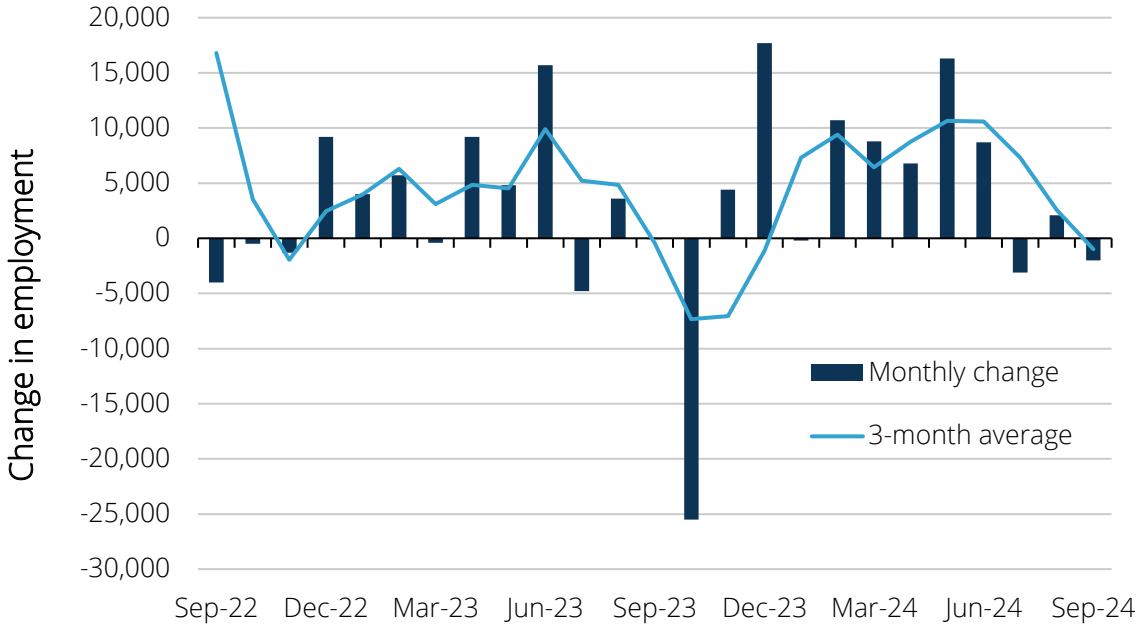
Monthly demographic data for states is unavailable, however household data from the U.S. Census Bureau (Census) helps fill the gap. In 2023, the Washington's labor force participation rates were 63.7% for youth, 84.2% for prime-aged workers and 38.1% for workers 55 and older. Visit the Census website for more demographic data for Washington's workforce.

Nonfarm employment

Total nonfarm employment continues to increase, but at a slowing pace. Coming out of the pandemic, employment growth was rapid. Over the past couple of years, Washington employment growth has slowed, but continues to expand in aggregate. The preliminary tally of jobs for September 2024 was 3,652,400; this is an increase of 44,600, or 1.2%, over the year.

Seasonally adjusted employment grew every month in 2024 with the exception of January (down 200), July (down 3,100) and September (down 2,000). While employment growth has been slowing, the patterns of growth and decline vary by industry. Some continue to expand and others are reducing their workforce.

Figure 1-4: Monthly employment change, seasonally adjusted, Washington, September 2022 to September 2024



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

Hiring slowed over the past several months and remains up in most industries from the previous year. At a sector level, the highest year-over-year gains were in education and health services (up 19,500 jobs or 3.6%), government (up 18,600 jobs or 3.2%), construction (up 5,300 jobs or 2.2%) and other services (up 5,100 or 4.2%). Four sectors reported annual losses: information (down 5,400 or 3.2%), manufacturing (down 2,400 or 0.9%), leisure and hospitality (down 2,100 or 0.6%) and mining and logging (down 700 or 12.1%).

Figure 1-5: Change in industry employment, not seasonally adjusted, Washington, net employment change from September 2023 to September 2024

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

As of September 2024, most industries have recovered the total number of jobs lost during the pandemic. At a sector level, the largest proportional increases from pre-pandemic levels were from hiring in professional and business services (up 13.6% over February 2020), transportation, warehousing and utilities (up 9.4% over the same period), education and health services (up 9.1%) and information (up 7.0%). Five industry sectors – mining and logging, manufacturing, retail trade and other services – were below pre-pandemic employment levels.

The Economic and Revenue Forecast Council's September forecast placed a damper on already slow growth predicted in 2024. The council predicts 1.0% year-end job growth in 2024 – down from 1.2%. The Council expects a modest employment increase (1.4%) in 2025 and a subsequent slowdown through 2029.

Labor turnover

Turnover measures are easing and suggest that the post pandemic labor market characterized by high turnover is ending (*Figure 8*). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in Washington, the number of new hires decreased by 2,000 or 1.9% over the year. This downward trend is reflected in payroll data as well, with a slowing rate of increase.

Total separations decreased by 12,000 (9.0%) from September 2023 to September 2024, with an increase in the total number of layoffs (up 3,000) and a decrease in the number of voluntary quits (down 12,000). An increase in layoffs (involuntary separations) and a decrease in voluntary quits suggests the favorable labor market that job seekers have enjoyed for the past couple of years is cooling and shifting to a more favorable market for employers.

The number of job openings fell by 14,000 (7.7%) from August 2023 to August 2024, continuing an overall trend. Although the number of openings remains high by historic standards, it has come down rapidly in recent months.

These measures point to a labor market that is beginning to return to something closer to normal (or at least closer to pre-pandemic patterns). Placing this within the context of pre- and post-pandemic labor market conditions, readings from the past several months are remarkably similar to readings from the months leading up to the pandemic.

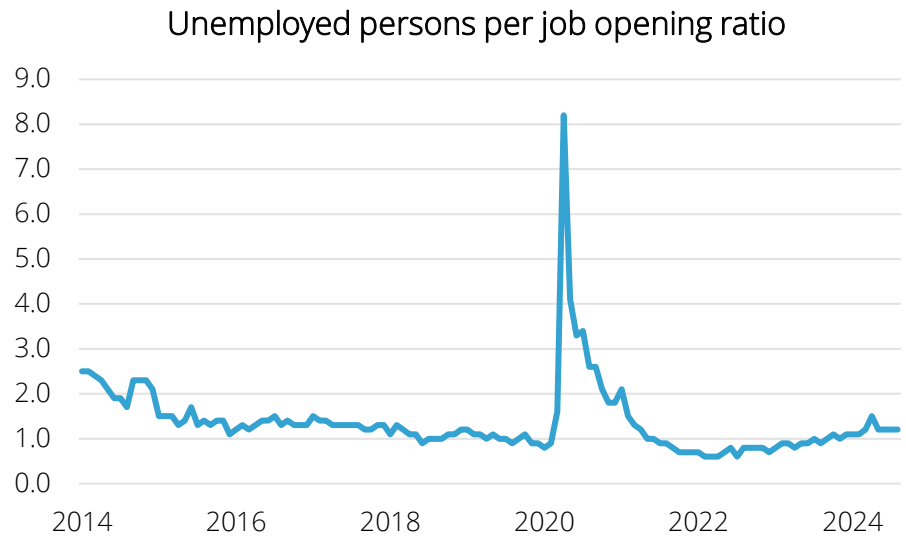
Figure 1-6: Turnover measures in Washington, August 2019, August 2023 and August 2024 (thousands of jobs)

Turnover measure	August 2019	August 2023	August 2024	One-year change	One-year change
Hires	137,000	106,000	104,000	-2,000	-1.89%
Total separations	123,000	133,000	121,000	-12,000	-9.02%
Layoffs & discharges	38,000	49,000	52,000	3,000	6.12%
Quits	77,000	75,000	63,000	-12,000	-16.00%
Job openings	175,000	183,000	169,000	-14,000	-7.65%
Unemployed persons per opening	1.1	0.9	1.2	0.3	33.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)

Another way of evaluating slack in the labor market is through the ratio of unemployed persons per job opening (*Figure 1.7*). The number of job openings exceeded the number of unemployed individuals every month from July 2021 to June 2023. The ratio has since shifted to a larger number of unemployed job seekers relative to job openings. The only other occasion the labor market dipped below a 1:1 ratio since this measure has been available was in 2019. The labor market is loosening and resembles a more historically typical pattern.

Figure 1-7: Unemployed persons per job openings in Washington, January 2014 to August 2024



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS)

Telecommuting

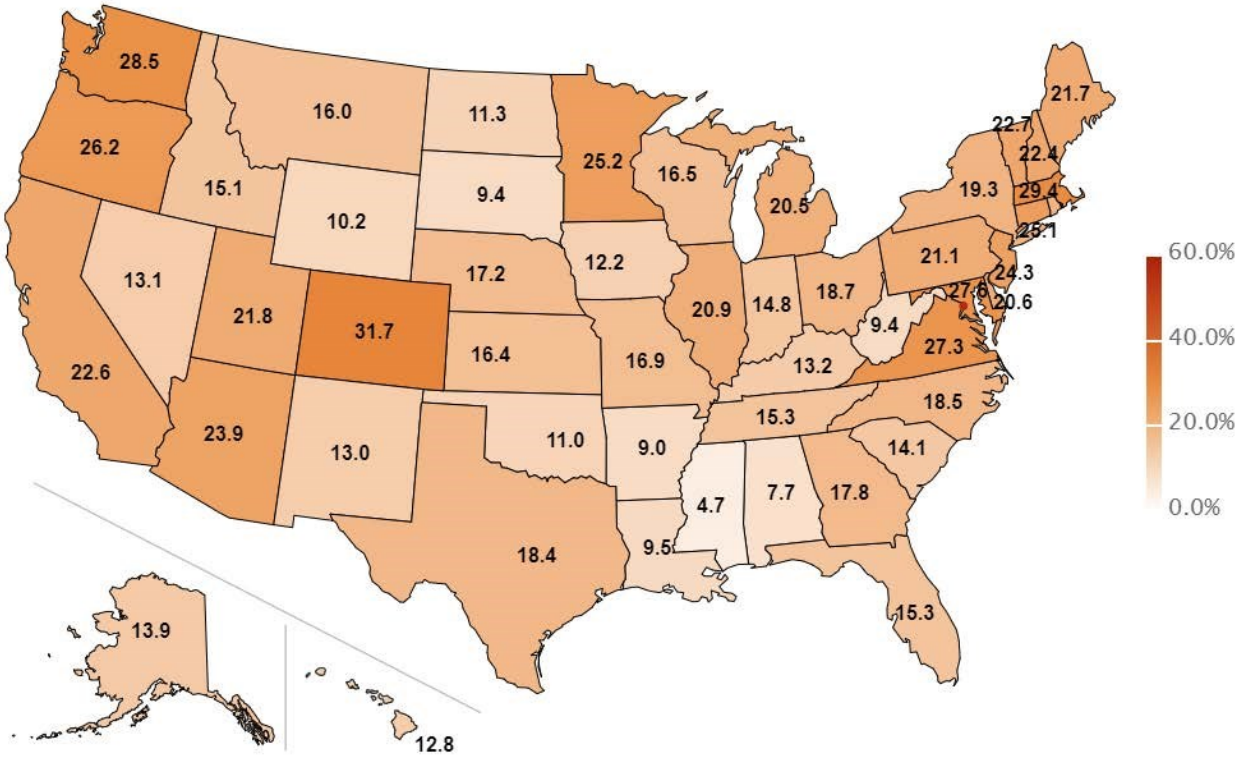
Washington had one of the highest telecommuting rates in the country in 2023. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bureau of Labor Statistics began gathering information about telecommuting due to the pandemic in the Current Population Survey (CPS). The question was reframed to include telecommuting regardless of reason. This new data series starts October 2022, and the first full year of data (2023) was published September 2024.

In 2023, 19.7% of workers in the United States telecommuted or worked at home for pay. Within that estimate, 9.4% teleworked some hours and 10.3% teleworked all hours. In Washington, 28.5% of workers telecommuted, with 14.0% telecommuting part time and 14.5% telecommuting full time. This ranked Washington fourth in the nation. The only places with higher rates of telework were the District of Columbia (56.5%), Colorado (31.7%) and Massachusetts (29.4%).

This reflects Washington's larger than average proportion of workers in the "tech" sector. Recently, the information sector has had the largest number of job losses over the year. The count of laid off workers in computer related occupations is increasing. Meanwhile, shifts in the

tech sector and among prominent employers may influence the telecommuting situation in Washington.

Figure 1-8: State-level telework data, annual averages, October 2022 to October 2023



Note: The 2023 U.S. annual average is 19.7%.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, state telework data, September 2024

The proportion of workers telecommuting at a national level has increased for men and women. As of September 2024, 21.3% of men ages 16 years and older telecommuted compared to 26.5% of women. Educational level is positively related to telecommuting. Only 3.8% of workers with less than a high school education telecommuted. Compare with 9.7% for high school or equivalent, 19.4% for some college or an associate degree, and 41.4% with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Chapter 2: Seasonal, structural and cyclical industry employment

This section examines key economic factors influencing Washington's industry employment trends. The results can be used to understand job trends and inform practical aspects like job placement, unemployment benefits and training initiatives. Notably, industries with seasonal or cyclical fluctuations show obvious employment changes, requiring training program development to accommodate these variations.

This analysis is based on historical employment data from January 2002 through December 2023. The analysis splits industry employment changes among four components:

1. Seasonal: Predictable employment fluctuations that occur annually due to factors such as weather changes, school calendars, and fixed holidays.
2. Structural (trend): Long-term employment growth trends influenced by structural changes and productivity in various industries, rather than by temporary economic fluctuations. Shifts often result from technology advancements, policy adjustments, or lasting societal changes.
3. Cyclical: Employment changes attributed to the business cycle in general.
4. Irregular: Random employment changes not picked up by regular seasonal and cyclical changes (e.g., labor strikes).

Of the 93 industries in Washington, 17 indicate high levels of seasonality with a seasonal factor over 4.0%. Crop production, scenic and sightseeing transportation, and support activities for agriculture and forestry were most subject to seasonal fluctuations.

Figure 2-1: Industries with high seasonality, January 2002 to December 2023

NAICS	Industry	Seasonal factor
111	Crop production	29.78%
487	Scenic and sightseeing transportation	20.66%
115	Support activities for agriculture and forestry	17.09%
711	Performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries	9.87%
213	Support activities for mining	9.00%
525	Funds, trusts, and other financial vehicles	7.51%
237	Heavy and civil engineering construction	6.93%
814	Private households	5.81%

519	Web search portals, libraries, archives and other information services	5.63%
114	Fishing, hunting and trapping	5.56%
492	Couriers and messengers	5.28%
721	Accommodation	5.19%
312	Beverage and tobacco product manufacturing	5.14%
491	Postal service	4.30%
316	Leather and allied product manufacturing	4.30%
713	Amusement, gambling and recreation industries	4.20%
311	Food manufacturing	4.08%

Note: Crop production, scenic and sightseeing transportation and support activities for agriculture and forestry have historically been the industries with the highest degree of seasonality in Washington.

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

For total covered employment, structural factors account for 60.53% of employment changes. There were five industries where the structural component accounted for at least two-thirds of the change in employment as shown in *Figure 2-2*. The industry with the largest structural factor was ambulatory health care services with a structural factor of 76.10%.

Figure 2-2: Industries most influenced by structural factors, January 2002 to December 2023

NAICS	Industry	Structural factor
621	Ambulatory health care services	76.10%
425	Wholesale trade agents and brokers	73.58%
238	Specialty trade contractors	69.07%
541	Professional, scientific and technical services	68.14%
236	Construction of buildings	68.00%

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

The cyclical component accounted for more than half of the change in employment for 33 industries. For total covered employment, the cyclical component represented 39.47% of total employment change. The top five industries most affected by cyclical changes were:

- Executive, legislative and other general government support (77.18%)
- Support activities for mining (72.02%)
- Oil and gas extraction (63.12%)
- Funds, trusts and other financial vehicles (63.09%)

- Pipeline transportation (61.29%)

Figure 2-3: Industries most influenced by cyclical factors, January 2002 to December 2023

NAICS	Industry	Cyclical factor
921	Executive, legislative and other general government support	77.18%
213	Support activities for mining	72.02%
211	Oil and gas extraction	63.12%
525	Funds, trusts and other financial vehicles	63.09%
486	Pipeline transportation	61.29%
512	Motion picture and sound recording industries	60.60%
487	Scenic and sightseeing transportation	59.29%
901	Federal government (other)	58.53%
713	Amusement, gambling and recreation industries	57.80%
711	Performing arts, spectator sports and related industries	56.38%
721	Accommodation	56.18%
324	Petroleum and coal products manufacturing	55.15%
315	Apparel manufacturing	54.68%
483	Water transportation	53.90%
313	Textile mills	53.71%
114	Fishing, hunting and trapping	53.52%
516	Broadcasting and content providers	53.50%
482	Rail transportation	53.19%
111	Crop production	53.14%
491	Postal service	52.94%
712	Museums, historical sites and similar institutions	52.92%
316	Leather and allied product manufacturing	52.91%
332	Fabricated metal product manufacturing	52.79%
331	Primary metal manufacturing	52.38%
115	Support activities for agriculture and forestry	52.11%
445	Food and beverage retailers	51.59%
449	Furniture, home furnishings, electronics and appliance retailers	51.27%
333	Machinery manufacturing	51.26%
336	Transportation equipment manufacturing	51.09%
902	State government (other)	50.68%
456	Health and personal care retailers	50.59%
457	Gasoline stations and fuel dealers	50.26%
513	Publishing industries	50.19%

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

Chapter 3: Closures and mass layoffs

Since the federal Mass Layoff Statistics program discontinued in 2013, Employment Security has had limited ability to definitively measure layoffs and affected workers. Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs) are one way Employment Security can quantify layoffs.

Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN)

Under the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, companies planning a mass layoff are required to notify workers 60 days before the layoff. Companies also must inform Employment Security.

WARNs allow workers and communities to prepare for possible layoffs. Not all layoffs occur, the number of affected workers can vary, and many layoffs are never reported as they do not fall under the WARN act requirements for reporting.

As of Nov. 21, 2024, Employment Security received 66 WARNs from businesses planning layoffs during the 2024 calendar year or early 2025. If all layoffs occurred according to the WARN estimates, a total of 8,950 workers could have been directly affected. WARN information includes the company name and location, layoff start date, whether the layoff is due to a closure, and the type of layoff (i.e., permanent or temporary). You can learn more about the WARN Act and view the full database on Employment Security's website.

Major causes of plant closures and mass layoffs

Businesses filing WARNs are not required to provide the specific causes of layoffs and closures. It is possible to gather information about closures and trends through data analysis and media reports.

In 2024, several technology businesses filed WARNs with the department, which included layoffs related to video game publishing (Unity Technologies, TEKsystems, Inc., Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc., Lost Boys Interactive LLC, and Sony Interactive Entertainment LLC, Firewalk Studios), travel (Expedia), online retail operations (Zulily, Walmart) and others (RaterLabs, Inc., Appen AI, Jabil, Inc., Block, Inc., Assurance IQ LLC, Obvio Health, and Broadcom Inc.). Some layoffs could be connected to reduced demand and changing spending priorities

post-pandemic (e.g., video game publishers and travel tech). Information sector jobs as a whole have been declining throughout the year.

Several companies closed or reduced their workforces related to warehousing and logistics in 2024 including warehousing operations for Amazon and Nordstrom, trucking and delivery services (Paradigm Delivery LLC, Merit Logistics LLC, Penske Logistics, and Flexe Inc.), and packaging services (WestRock Company, Sunoco Products Co and Unity Technologies). Like technology, retail trade experienced a boon during the pandemic, as consumers temporarily increased spending on consumer goods. Rising prices and shifting spending priorities may be showing up in the retail, wholesale and transportation markets.

Several firms in or related to food production, warehousing and agriculture closed or downsized in 2024. New Columbia Fruit Packers closed their Yakima facility, Lamb Weston closed their potato processing facility in Connell, Del Monte Foods closed their Toppenish location, Roy Farms laid off workers and Skagit Horticulture shut down operations in Mount Vernon and Mabton. Lamb Weston, the largest layoff, said its closure was due to reduced demand from restaurants for frozen potato products.

Aerospace giant Boeing delivered a WARN in mid-November affecting 2,199 Washington workers starting in late December 2024. The Boeing layoff announcement is part of the company's plans to cut 10% of its global workforce.

Chapter 4: Unemployment insurance recipients and exhaustions

In September 2024, 58,856 people received an unemployment insurance (UI) benefit payment. From October 2023 to September 2024, an average of 66,021 people per month received a UI benefit payment.

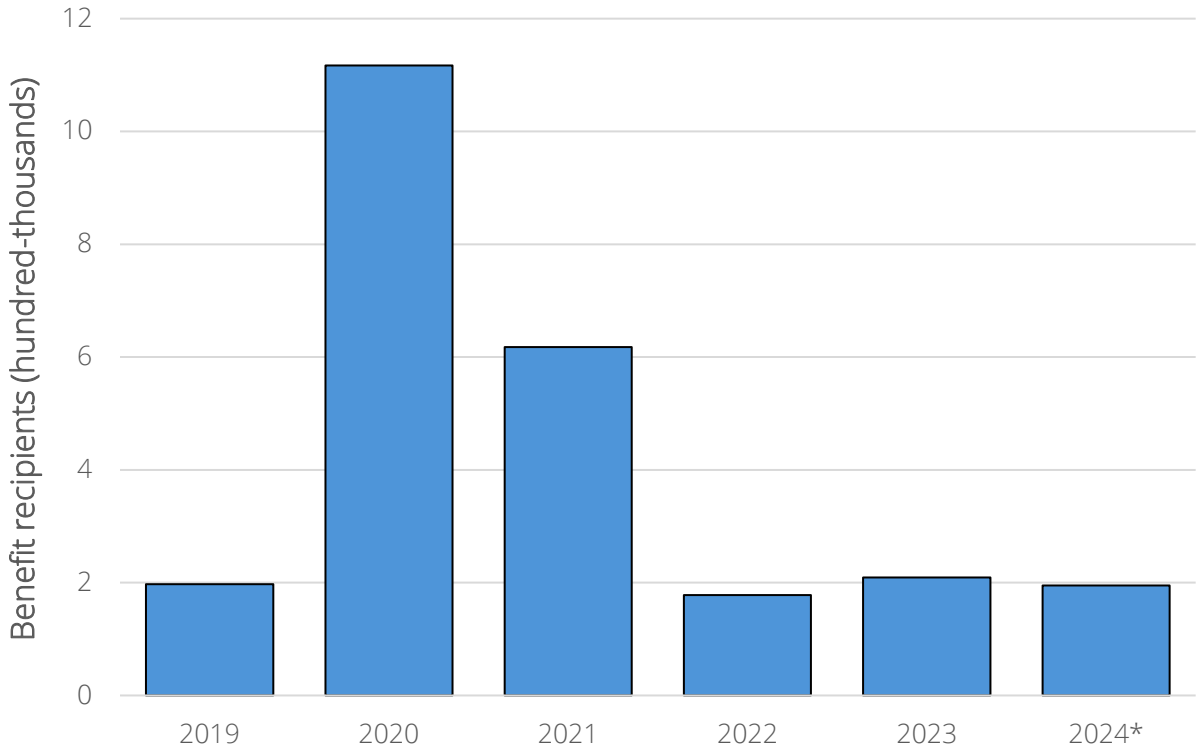
Unemployment benefits provide workers with temporary income when they lose their job through no fault of their own. The benefits are based on prior earnings. Typically, workers covered by unemployment insurance can receive up to 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits in a 52-week benefit year, which begins when they apply for unemployment benefits. Most people receive between 13 and 26 weeks of benefits. During periods of high unemployment, the duration of benefits can be extended through the extended benefits program, or through Federal legislation (i.e. CARES Act). In addition to being laid off through no fault of their own, they also must meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Worked at least 680 hours in their base year.
- Earned some wages in Washington, unless they recently left the military and are currently located in Washington.

Most people find work and stop receiving benefits before exhausting their maximum benefit amount. However, the number and percentage of people who exhaust their benefit can reveal a lot about the labor market. For example, industries such as construction have a high number of claimants and few exhaustions because layoffs and job changes are common. An increase in exhaustions in the labor market — or in a particular industry — can mean workers are unable to find new employment due to an economic downturn or because the skills of the labor force do not match employers' needs.

Figure 4-1 shows the number of people who claimed benefits over the last five years. Data for 2024 is through Sept. 30, 2024, and does not capture a full year of data. The number of UI benefit payments surged in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, additional UI programs became available, and eligibility was expanded. As of 2024, the number of people claiming UI benefits has returned to near pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 4-1: Unemployment insurance recipients 2019 through Sept. 30, 2024



Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division

Figure 4-2 shows the number of people who claimed benefits and the number of those who exhausted their regular unemployment benefits over the last five years. The percentage of claimants exhausting their benefits peaked in 2021 at 45.6% and has since declined. Because claimants have a full year to use their benefits, we expect the number of exhaustions in 2024 to continue to rise.

Figure 4-2: Unemployment insurance recipients and exhaustions since 2019

Year	Benefit recipients	Exhaustions	Share of claims exhausted
2019	197,052	74,010	37.6%
2020	1,116,910	275,997	24.7%
2021	617,859	281,606	45.6%
2022	178,150	57,730	32.4%
2023	209,265	73,695	35.2%
2024*	195,080	51,441	26.4%

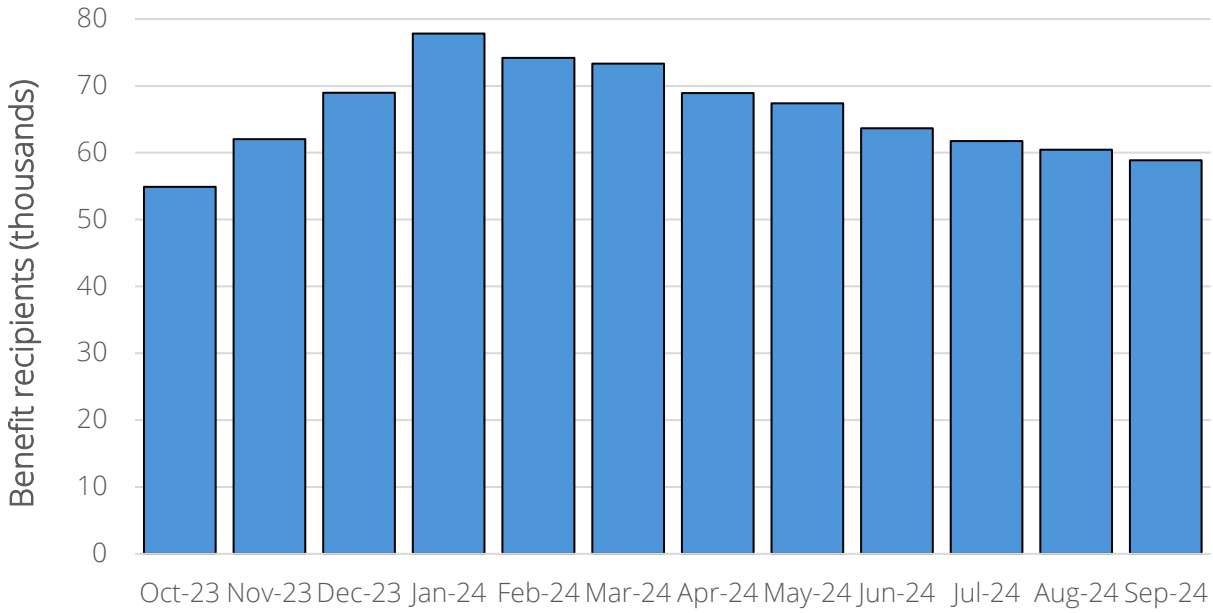
*Data through Sept. 30, 2024, and does not represent a full year of data. The number and share of exhaustions are likely to increase over time.

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division

Seasonal patterns

The number of dislocated workers varies over the year and has a strong seasonal pattern. UI claims typically rise over the fall, peak in January, and then slowly decline through spring and summer. This pattern is due to seasonal business patterns, although certain industries and individual businesses may not fit this trend. *Figure 4-3* shows the number of UI benefit recipients per month from October 2023 through September 2024.

Figure 4-3: Unemployment insurance benefit recipients by month Oct. 1, 2023 to Sept. 30, 2024



Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division

Exhaustions by industry

The table in *Figure 4-4* shows the number of UI applicants who received a benefit and the number of those who exhausted their regular unemployment benefits from Oct. 1, 2023, through Sept. 30, 2024, grouped by their last employer's North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Figure 4-4: Claims and exhaustions by industry

NAICS description	NAICS	Total claims	Exhausted	Share exhausted
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	11	9,833	1,885	19.2%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	21	356	55	15.4%
Utilities	22	481	113	23.5%
Construction	23	49,330	7,973	16.2%
Manufacturing	31-33	22,279	4,205	18.9%
Wholesale trade	42	9,596	2,671	27.8%
Retail trade	44-45	12,483	3,772	30.2%
Transportation and warehousing	48-49	8,562	1,711	20.0%
Information	51	8,196	3,541	43.2%
Finance and insurance	52	5,203	1,577	30.3%
Real estate and rental and leasing	53	3,489	1,079	30.9%
Professional, scientific and technical services	54	17,244	5,713	33.1%
Management of companies and enterprises	55	464	122	26.3%
Administrative and support, and waste management and remediation services	56	17,297	4,756	27.5%
Educational services	61	5,283	860	16.3%
Health care and social assistance	62	13,722	3,611	26.3%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	71	2,861	640	22.4%
Accommodation and food services	72	9,208	2,221	24.1%
Other services (except public administration)	81	4,309	1,198	27.8%
Public administration	92	5,658	1,543	27.3%
Government	99	9,368	2,579	27.5%
Not identified	NA	38,958	10,577	27.1%
Total		**254,180**	**62,402**	**24.6%**

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division

Exhaustions by occupation

The table in *Figure 4-5* shows the number of UI applicants who received a benefit and the number of those who exhausted their regular unemployment benefits from Oct. 1, 2023, through Sept. 30, 2024, grouped by their primary Standard Occupational Classification (SOC).

Figure 4-5: Claims and exhaustions by occupation

SOC description	SOC	Claims	Exhausted	Share exhausted
Management	11	39,931	12,827	32.1%
Business and financial operations	13	11,224	3,887	34.6%
Computer and mathematical	15	16,044	6,109	38.1%
Architecture and engineering	17	4,945	1,185	24.0%
Life, physical and social science	19	3,070	723	23.6%
Community and social services	21	2,660	630	23.7%
Legal	23	1,605	332	20.7%
Education, training and library	25	3,998	489	12.2%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media	27	5,260	1,676	31.9%
Healthcare practitioners and technical	29	3,570	824	23.1%
Healthcare support	31	4,490	1,194	26.6%
Protective service	33	2,887	728	25.2%
Food preparation and serving related	35	9,657	2,209	22.9%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	37	5,562	1,195	21.5%
Personal care and service	39	3,830	1,044	27.3%
Sales and related	41	10,419	3,384	32.5%
Office and administrative support	43	19,612	5,620	28.7%
Farming, fishing and forestry	45	10,079	2,017	20.0%
Construction and extraction	47	51,395	8,557	16.6%
Installation, maintenance and repair	49	8,714	1,580	18.1%
Production	51	16,349	2,966	18.1%
Transportation and material moving	53	18,507	3,112	16.8%
Military specific	55	371	114	30.7%
Not identified		1	0	0.0%
Total		**254,180**	**62,402**	**24.6%**

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division

Exhaustions by region

The table in *Figure 4-6* shows the number of UI applicants who received a benefit and the number of those who exhausted their regular unemployment benefits from Oct. 1, 2023, through Sept. 30, 2024, grouped by the claimant's Washington State Workforce Development Area (WDA).

Figure 4-6: Claims and exhaustions by region

WDA description	WDA	Claims	Exhausted	Share exhausted
Olympic Consortium	1	8,681	2,027	23.3%
Pacific Mountain	2	15,356	3,331	21.7%
Northwest Washington	3	13,283	2,627	19.8%
Snohomish	4	26,285	6,401	24.4%
Seattle-King	5	71,848	21,433	29.8%
Tacoma-Pierce	6	28,267	6,895	24.4%
Southwest Washington	7	16,605	3,908	23.5%
North Central Washington	8	11,851	1,928	16.3%
South Central Washington	9	16,406	3,409	20.8%
Eastern Washington	10	5,163	983	19.0%
Benton-Franklin	11	10,606	2,031	19.1%
Spokane	12	16,603	3,204	19.3%
Not Specified	NA	13,226	4,225	31.9%
Total		**254,180**	**62,402**	**24.6%**

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division

Chapter 5: Experience of workers in their efforts to be reemployed

This chapter summarizes Employment Security's research and evaluations regarding the experience of workers in their efforts to become reemployed.

Program enrollment in program year 2023

Figure 5-1 presents the number of participants in the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser programs in program year 2023 (July 2023 to June 2024), as well as expenditures in each program. There were 102,545 participants in program year 2023 and $65,597,935 invested in these programs, an average of $640 per participant. The largest program in terms of enrollment was Wagner-Peyser (general employment services), which had 82,781 participants in program year 2023, followed by WIOA Adult services with 11,989 participants, WIOA Dislocated Worker services with 5,166 participants, and lastly WIOA Youth services with 2,609 participants.

Figure 5-1: Participants and expenditures in program year 2023

Target population	PY 2023 participants	PY 2023 expenditures	Cost per participant
Adults	11,989	$15,973,648	$1,332
Dislocated workers	5,166	$16,571,580	$3,208
Youth	2,609	$17,588,703	$6,742
Wagner-Peyser	82,781	$15,464,004	$187
Total	**102,545**	**$65,597,935**	**$640**

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division

Research and evaluations

Between October 2023 and September 2024, the Employment Security completed three studies that focus on the experience of workers in their efforts to become reemployed:

- An evaluation of the impact of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments program (RESEA) in 2022.
- An evaluation of the Opioid Disaster Recovery Grant program.
- A study to understand the experience of farmworkers and agricultural employers in the Employment Security application and referral process.

This section summarizes the findings of these studies.

RESEA Evaluation: 2022 Report

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments program (RESEA) is an initiative set forth by the U.S. Department of Labor to simultaneously assess eligibility for UI claimants and provide individualized job search assistance in one-on-one meetings. UI claimants are usually referred to this program based on their estimated probability of exhausting their UI benefits. Priority is given to those most likely to exhaust their UI benefits.

Starting Dec. 28, 2021, Employment Security conducted a randomized controlled trial (RCT) where eligible UI claimants were randomly assigned to participate in RESEA. The goal of the RCT was to determine whether being randomly assigned to receive RESEA services reduced UI benefit receipt through employment. The agency conducted secondary analyses to determine whether RESEA strengthened program integrity and whether RESEA served as an entry point for claimants into other WorkSource programs and services. In August 2024, Employment Security published a phase 1 report summarizing the results. The report analyzed the data of 51,271 claimants considered for RESEA between Dec. 28, 2021, and Dec. 26, 2022. Within these claimants, 41,476 were assigned to receive RESEA services and 9,795 were assigned to a control group that was not offered RESEA services.

This evaluation found that, on average, being assigned to receive RESEA services in 2022:

- Increased the probability of a claimant being employed in the first and second quarter after their UI claim by 2.4 and 1.7 percentage points, respectively.
- Increased a claimant's earnings over the first two quarters after their UI claim by $842.93.
- Decreased the amount of UI benefit a claimant received by 0.78 weeks or $435.75.
- Decreased the probability that a claimant would exhaust their UI benefit by 2.7 percentage points.
- Increased the probability of claimants having their UI benefits reduced or denied by 4.2 percentage points, and the probability that claimants were determined to have received

an overpayment by 3.9 percentage points. Approximately half of this increase in benefit reductions/denials and overpayments was a result of claimants becoming ineligible for unemployment benefits due to not attending their RESEA meeting. The other half was primarily due to claimants not being able and available for work.

- Increased the probability that claimants engaged with other WorkSource services by 24.3 percentage points.

The findings provide evidence that being assigned to receive RESEA services reduced average UI benefit receipt through reemployment. The findings also provide evidence that RESEA strengthened program integrity through increased detection of non-compliance with UI eligibility requirements and that RESEA served as an entry point for many UI claimants into other WorkSource programs and services. These impacts align with the goals of RESEA set forth in the Social Security Act §306(b). Data collection for this RCT is still ongoing, and follow-up reports incorporating data from UI claimants in 2023 and 2024 are planned.

Opioid Disaster Recovery Grant evaluation

In May 2019, the Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council (WDC) received an Opioid Disaster National Dislocated Worker Grant. The objective of the opioid program is to improve employment and health outcomes for people directly and indirectly affected by the opioid crisis.

The WIOA Dislocated Worker Grant (WIOA DWG) offers reemployment services to people affected by adverse economic events, such as plant closures and mass layoffs. The opioid program provides a wider array of services than the WIOA DWG. The program offers reemployment services, provides temporary employment opportunities and may finance training for people transitioning into health care careers related to the opioid epidemic.

The opioid program evaluation consists of two phases. The first report was published in January 2022. The study focused on individuals who enrolled into the program between July 2019 and August 2021. It found that program participants receiving additional services through the opioid program had higher earnings and worked more hours than those receiving WIOA DWG services. This evaluation suggests that augmented services targeted to populations in need can improve career outcomes of program participants.

The second report, published in October 2023, explored program participation and intermediate program outcomes. The study compared opioid program participants in the later phase of the program (from the third quarter of 2022 through the second quarter of 2023) to

opioid program participants in the earlier phase of the program (from the third quarter of 2019 through the second quarter of 2021).

Key takeaways from the report:

- The number and the type of received services differed across the phases. For example, participants in the later phase of the program received fewer basic services and were less likely to co-enroll in programs. At the same time, they received a similar number of individualized training and support (ITS) services.
- Both phases of the program served relatively similar participants, with a few notable differences (e.g., in terms of pre-program long-term unemployment, occupational goals).
- The average program funding per participant was similar in both phases. Total program funds were spent slightly differently between the two phases.
- Participants in the later phase of the program had higher training and work experience program completion rates than earlier program participants.

The second study provides additional evidence about the opioid program and informs the provision of comprehensive services to people affected by the opioid crisis.

Agricultural and seasonal workforce customer experience study

The Employment Security commissioner appoints the Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services (ASWS) Advisory Committee, per RCW 50.75.040. In even years, the committee must submit a report to identify how to improve the effectiveness of Employment Security's domestic farmworker recruitment process as part of the H-2A application.

In 2020, the advisory committee requested a customer experience study to better understand the experience of farmworkers and employers in Employment Security's application and referral process. Employment Security contracted with human-centered design research firm, Anthro-Tech, to conduct the study. The study consisted of two phases.

The first phase, completed in July 2023, examined the experience of apple, berry, cherry, grape, and pear farmworkers and growers with Washington's agricultural recruitment system. Based on interviews and focus groups, the study identified several findings. Specifically, Anthro-Tech documented how farmworkers' community culture influences work culture; described how communication channels between employers and employees may be misaligned; highlighted problematic perceptions of farmworker reliability by agricultural employers; and highlighted how government complexity and misunderstanding of the roles of Employment Security and

WorkSource may influence the recruitment and hiring processes in agriculture. Anthro-Tech made recommendations based on these findings.

The second phase, completed in July 2024, built on the first phase, explored new topics, and examined the potential impact of policy improvements. Anthro-Tech conducted interviews and focus groups with agricultural employers, farmworkers, foreign labor contractors, and WorkSource staff. Anthro-Tech provided additional insights on WorkSource office processes; employer and foreign labor contractors operations and interactions with the WorkSource offices; the role of foreign labor contractors in agricultural recruitment; the process of job search, recruitment, and retention during the harvest season; communication channels and barriers in agricultural recruitment; and economic pressures and labor market dynamics in the agricultural sector. Based on these findings, Anthro-Tech compiled a detailed list of recommendations to improve the recruitment and hiring experiences and outcomes of agricultural employers and farmworkers.

Chapter 6: Employment projections

Employment projections provide a general outlook for how an industry or occupation can change over time and how demand for workers may change. Find detailed projections information on Employment Security's website.

Industry projections

Through 2032, the industry sectors projected to have the largest increases in employment shares are:

- Information (0.68%)
- Leisure and hospitality (0.46%)
- Professional and business services (0.39%)

For the same period, the sectors projected to have the largest decrease in employment shares are:

- Retail trade (-0.55%)
- Manufacturing (-0.54%)
- Financial activities (-0.26%)

Figure 6-1: Base employment and projected nonfarm industry employment shares, 2022, 2027 and 2032

Industry sector	2022	2022 shares	2027 shares	2032 shares	2022-2027 change	2027-2032 change	2022-2032 change
Retail trade	338,800	9.58%	9.20%	9.0%	-0.38%	-0.17%	-0.55%
Manufacturing	268,600	7.60%	7.33%	7.1%	-0.26%	-0.28%	-0.54%
Financial activities	165,100	4.67%	4.49%	4.4%	-0.18%	-0.07%	-0.26%
Federal government	75,200	2.13%	2.02%	1.9%	-0.11%	-0.10%	-0.21%
Wholesale trade	137,200	3.88%	3.79%	3.7%	-0.09%	-0.11%	-0.21%
State and local government other	255,900	7.24%	7.24%	7.1%	0.00%	-0.11%	-0.11%
Natural resources and mining	5,700	0.16%	0.14%	0.1%	-0.02%	-0.01%	-0.03%
Utilities	5,600	0.16%	0.17%	0.2%	0.01%	0.00%	0.00%

Construction	232,300	6.57%	6.58%	6.6%	0.00%	0.00%	0.01%
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	136,200	3.85%	3.87%	3.9%	0.02%	0.07%	0.09%
Other services	119,900	3.39%	3.55%	3.5%	0.16%	-0.02%	0.14%
Education and health services	515,400	14.58%	14.73%	14.8%	0.15%	0.05%	0.21%
Professional and business services	545,900	15.44%	15.45%	15.8%	0.01%	0.38%	0.39%
Leisure and hospitality	326,700	9.24%	9.69%	9.7%	0.45%	0.00%	0.46%
Information	171,200	4.84%	5.01%	5.5%	0.16%	0.52%	0.68%

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

Figure 6-2 shows the historical and projected 10-year average annual growth rates for the state and Washington's 12 Workforce Development Areas (WDAs). All areas have projected growth rates less than the previous 10 years. The statewide historical growth rate is 2.41%, 1.07% greater than the projected growth rate.

The top three areas with the highest projected growth rates are:

- Benton-Franklin WDA (1.41%)
- Seattle-King County WDA (1.35%)
- Northwest WDA (1.35%)

The last column of *Figure 6-2* represents long-term growth on the historical linear trend line. Variances between long-term trend line rates and projected growth rates show the effects of the most recent changes in local employment trends and may reflect differences in cyclical behavior.

Figure 6-2: Historical and projected total nonfarm employment growth, 1990-2022 and 2022-2032

Workforce development area	Historical growth rate 2012-2022	Projected growth rate 2022-2032	Historical trend growth 1990-2022
Benton-Franklin	2.23%	1.41%	2.14%
Seattle-King County	2.66%	1.35%	1.41%
Northwest	1.87%	1.35%	1.55%
Washington State	**2.41%**	**1.34%**	**1.49%**

Southwest	3.16%	1.33%	1.86%
Tacoma-Pierce	2.52%	1.31%	1.68%
Snohomish	1.42%	1.31%	1.90%
Spokane	2.19%	1.28%	1.26%
North Central	2.19%	1.25%	1.28%
Pacific Mountain	2.34%	1.25%	1.29%
Olympic	1.62%	1.16%	1.07%
South Central	1.70%	1.10%	1.13%
Eastern	1.47%	1.10%	0.99%

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

Occupational projections

At the state level, 12 occupational groups are projected to increase employment shares from 2022 to 2032. The three largest projected increases in employment shares by 2032 at the state level are:

- Computer and mathematical occupations (0.52%)
- Business and financial operations occupations (0.24%)
- Food preparation and serving related occupations (0.21%)

The three largest projected decreases in employment shares by 2032 at the state level are:

- Office and administrative support occupations (-0.42%)
- Sales and related occupations (-0.37%)
- Production occupations (-0.34%)

Figure 6-3: Base employment and projected occupational employment shares, 2022 to 2032

2-digit SOC	Major occupational group	2022	2022 shares	2027 shares	2032 shares	2022-2027 change	2022-2032 change
11-0000	Management	229,679	5.73%	5.79%	5.86%	0.05%	0.13%
13-0000	Business and financial operations	289,231	7.22%	7.30%	7.46%	0.08%	0.24%
15-0000	Computer and mathematical	227,532	5.68%	5.82%	6.20%	0.14%	0.52%

17-0000	Architecture and engineering	81,264	2.03%	2.03%	2.01%	0.00%	-0.02%
19-0000	Life, physical, and social science	60,763	1.52%	1.58%	1.59%	0.06%	0.07%
21-0000	Community and social service	76,445	1.91%	1.92%	1.92%	0.01%	0.01%
23-0000	Legal	29,248	0.73%	0.71%	0.70%	-0.02%	-0.03%
25-0000	Education, training, and library	209,209	5.22%	5.33%	5.22%	0.11%	0.00%
27-0000	Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	79,050	1.97%	2.01%	2.02%	0.04%	0.05%
29-0000	Health care practitioners and technical	187,692	4.68%	4.71%	4.74%	0.03%	0.06%
31-0000	Health care support	157,618	3.93%	3.96%	4.00%	0.02%	0.07%
33-0000	Protective service	71,131	1.78%	1.82%	1.84%	0.05%	0.06%
35-0000	Food preparation and serving related	296,293	7.40%	7.60%	7.60%	0.21%	0.21%
37-0000	Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	118,190	2.95%	2.98%	3.00%	0.03%	0.05%
39-0000	Personal care and service	109,039	2.72%	2.83%	2.82%	0.11%	0.10%
41-0000	Sales and related	370,700	9.25%	8.98%	8.88%	-0.27%	-0.37%
43-0000	Office and administrative support	434,211	10.84 %	10.60 %	10.42 %	-0.24%	-0.42%
45-0000	Farming, fishing, and forestry	95,983	2.40%	2.29%	2.23%	-0.10%	-0.16%
47-0000	Construction and extraction	250,946	6.26%	6.25%	6.26%	-0.01%	0.00%
49-0000	Installation, maintenance, and repair	147,768	3.69%	3.66%	3.60%	-0.03%	-0.09%
51-0000	Production	178,357	4.45%	4.27%	4.12%	-0.18%	-0.34%
53-0000	Transportation and Material moving	306,282	7.64%	7.53%	7.50%	-0.11%	-0.15%

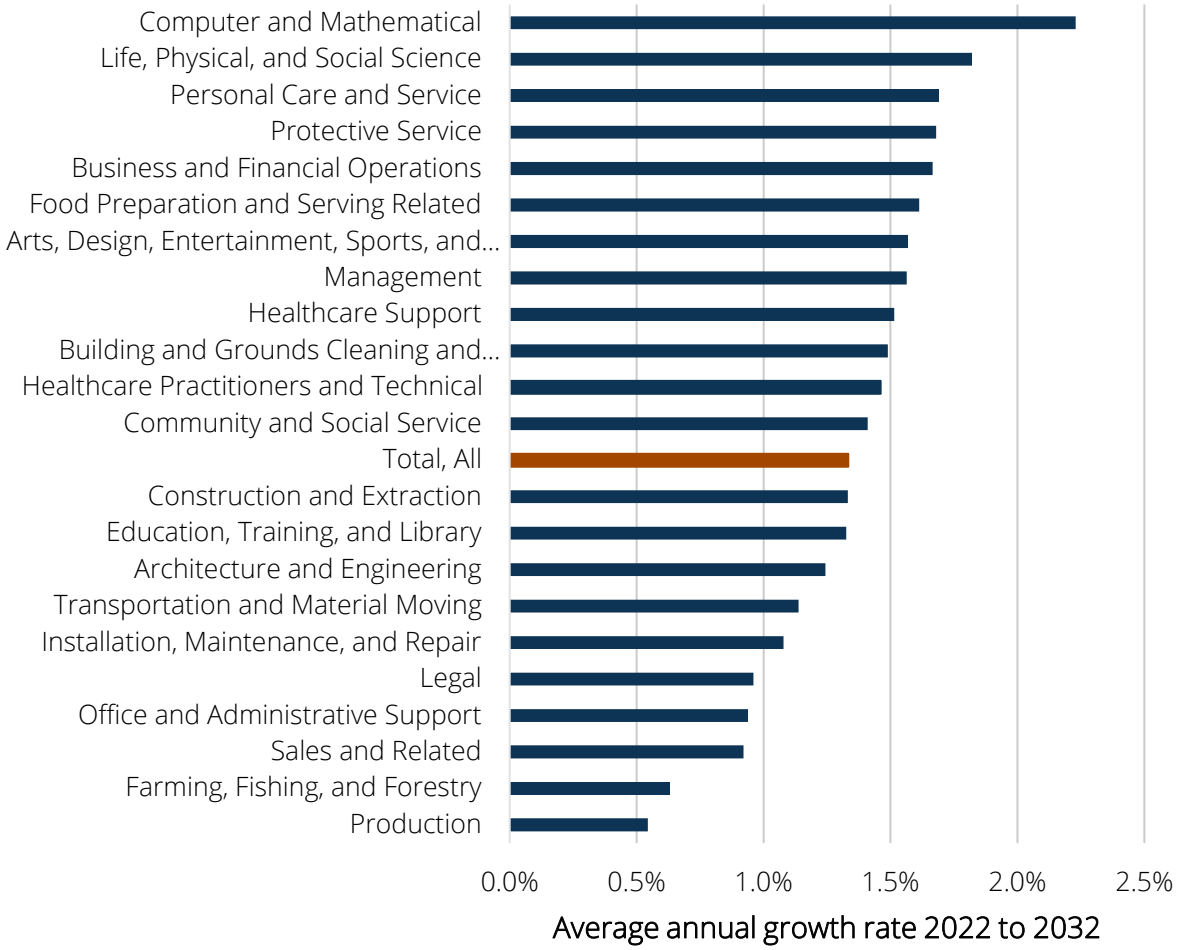
Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW); Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

Statewide, the projected average annual growth rate from 2022 to 2032 is 1.33%. Computer and mathematical occupations (2.23%), life, physical, and social science occupations (1.82%), and personal care and services occupations (1.69%) are projected to grow faster than other occupational groups by 2032.

Long-term, Employment Security projects five occupational groups to fall below a 1.00% average annual growth rate:

- Production occupations (0.54%)
- Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations (0.63%)
- Sales and related occupations (0.92%)
- Office and administrative support occupations (0.94%)
- Legal occupations (0.96%)

Figure 6-4: Projected average annual growth rates for major occupational groups



Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW); Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

Figure 6-5 presents a comparison between separations and alternative job openings methodologies to provide a further picture of the labor market. The alternative method measures turnover within occupations, while the separations method does not. Additionally, the separations labor force exits measure national exits, but do not track exits from states.

The average ratio for alternative to separations job openings from 2022 to 2032 is 2.64 at the state level. A ratio above this average indicates that a worker is more likely to change jobs within a given occupations than to transfer to another occupation.

The three largest projected alternative to separations ratios are for:

- Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations (3.84)
- Construction and extraction occupations (3.73)
- Legal occupations (3.39)

Figure 6-5: Comparison of alternative and separations methodologies on projected total openings

2-digit SOC	Major occupational group	2022	2032	Alternative 2022-2032	Separations 2022-2032	Alternative : separations ratio
11-0000	Management	229,679	268,246	86,139	26,460	3.26
13-0000	Business and financial operations	289,231	341,177	104,399	35,357	2.95
15-0000	Computer and mathematical	227,532	283,648	79,347	26,249	3.02
17-0000	Architecture and engineering	81,264	91,950	23,554	7,679	3.07
19-0000	Life, physical and social science	60,763	72,777	20,754	7,615	2.73
21-0000	Community and social service	76,445	87,940	27,239	9,367	2.91
23-0000	Legal	29,248	32,179	8,260	2,433	3.39
25-0000	Education, training and library	209,209	238,655	58,481	28,213	2.07
27-0000	Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media	79,050	92,365	29,072	11,285	2.58
29-0000	Healthcare practitioners and technical	187,692	216,991	64,535	16,816	3.84
31-0000	Healthcare support	157,618	183,190	70,311	29,514	2.38
33-0000	Protective service	71,131	84,028	25,357	11,948	2.12
35-0000	Food preparation and serving related	296,293	347,720	149,301	73,412	2.03
37-0000	Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	118,190	137,027	52,667	20,922	2.52
39-0000	Personal care and service	109,039	128,916	52,325	24,006	2.18
41-0000	Sales and related	370,700	406,279	140,501	56,397	2.49

43-0000	Office and administrative support	434,211	476,731	153,080	60,673	2.52
45-0000	Farming, fishing and forestry	95,983	102,198	42,845	15,732	2.72
47-0000	Construction and extraction	250,946	286,438	109,740	29,419	3.73
49-0000	Installation, maintenance and repair	147,768	164,499	53,457	16,997	3.15
51-0000	Production	178,357	188,292	54,976	21,870	2.51
53-0000	Transportation and material moving	306,282	342,970	124,504	47,601	2.62
Totals		**4,006,631**	**4,574,216**	**1,530,839**	**579,959**	**2.64**

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW); Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

Chapter 7: Annual and hourly wages

The Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program computes average annual wage by dividing total annual pay of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of employees. Pay data includes salaries, bonuses, the cash value of meals and lodging when supplied, tips and gratuities, and, in some states, employer contributions to certain deferred compensation plans such as 401(k) plans and stock options. Find detailed QCEW information on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website.

The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) survey produces average hourly wages using straight-time, gross pay, exclusive of premium pay. The survey includes base rate, cost-of-living allowances, guaranteed pay, hazardous-duty pay, incentive pay including commissions and production bonuses, and tips. The survey does not include overtime pay, severance pay, shift differentials, non-production bonuses, employer cost for supplementary benefits or tuition reimbursements. Detailed OEWS information is available on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website.

State average annual wages by industry

The 2023 average annual wage for jobs in Washington was $87,091, a 5.0% increase from the 2022 average annual wage of $82,912. *Figure 7-1* tracks the average annual wage at the industry two-digit super-sector level as defined by the North American Industry Classification System. Differences in wages may be the result of a combination of factors, such as industry of employment, hours worked, geographic location and worker skill. The information industry had the largest average annual wage in 2023 at $251,234. It was followed by management of companies and enterprises ($212,551), and professional, scientific and technical services ($143,303). From 2022 to 2023 the professional, scientific, and technical services industry experienced the largest increase in annualized wage growth at 10.5%.

Figure 7-1: Average annual wages by industry super-sector

2-digit NAICS	Industry subsectors	2023 average annual wage	2022 average annual wage	Growth 2022-2023
Total	Total	$87,091	$82,912	5.0%
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	$40,737	$38,844	4.9%
21	Mining	$86,950	$79,969	8.7%

22	Utilities	$128,822	$121,968	5.6%
23	Construction	$80,758	$76,433	5.7%
31 - 33	Manufacturing	$93,294	$88,402	5.5%
42	Wholesale trade	$103,559	$98,450	5.2%
44 - 45	Retail trade	$46,755	$45,929	1.8%
48 - 49	Transportation and warehousing	$75,966	$72,176	5.3%
51	Information	$251,234	$237,159	5.9%
52	Finance and insurance	$126,494	$124,690	1.4%
53	Real estate, rental and leasing	$75,961	$74,568	1.9%
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	$143,303	$129,739	10.5%
55	Management of companies and enterprises	$212,551	$196,610	8.1%
56	Administrative and waste management services	$69,780	$67,097	4.0%
61	Educational services	$48,600	$47,735	1.8%
62	Health care and social assistance	$66,280	$63,292	4.7%
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	$44,087	$43,237	2.0%
72	Accommodation and food services	$32,468	$30,497	6.5%
81	Other services (except public administration)	$54,921	$51,747	6.1%
GOV	Government	$81,771	$77,923	4.9%

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

County level annual average wages

Average annual wage levels varied widely across the state in 2023, from $120,463 in King County to $42,910 in Wahkiakum County. Wages at the county level are determined in large part by the industries present, the occupational pattern of employment in those industries, and the cost of living.

In 2023, King County had the highest county level annual average wage in Washington at $120,463, an increase of 5.7% from 2022. *Figure 7-2* tracks the average annual wage at the county level for 2022 and 2023. Average annual wages increased across all counties in 2023, with the largest increases occurring within Columbia County (15.4%), Snohomish County (8.9%) and Pend Oreille County (7.9%).

Figure 7-2: 2023 county average annual wages

County	2023 average annual wage	2022 average annual wage	Growth 2022-2023
Adams County	$50,474	$47,752	5.7%
Asotin County	$51,440	$48,716	5.6%
Benton County	$67,010	$64,479	3.9%
Chelan County	$54,174	$51,694	4.8%
Clallam County	$52,503	$50,027	4.9%
Clark County	$68,874	$66,823	3.1%
Columbia County	$67,007	$58,074	15.4%
Cowlitz County	$64,444	$62,280	3.5%
Douglas County	$49,790	$46,669	6.7%
Ferry County	$48,274	$47,483	1.7%
Franklin County	$55,046	$52,087	5.7%
Garfield County	$60,066	$56,778	5.8%
Grant County	$60,334	$55,925	7.9%
Grays Harbor County	$53,952	$51,186	5.4%
Island County	$55,071	$52,735	4.4%
Jefferson County	$54,891	$52,804	4.0%
King County	$120,463	$113,963	5.7%
Kitsap County	$67,613	$64,413	5.0%
Kittitas County	$51,268	$50,162	2.2%
Klickitat County	$60,283	$56,627	6.5%
Lewis County	$55,149	$52,579	4.9%
Lincoln County	$49,585	$46,786	6.0%
Mason County	$54,836	$51,380	6.7%
Okanogan County	$44,955	$42,411	6.0%
Pacific County	$47,089	$43,724	7.7%
Pend Oreille County	$58,210	$53,956	7.9%
Pierce County	$66,977	$64,361	4.1%
San Juan County	$51,918	$50,277	3.3%
Skagit County	$61,702	$59,821	3.1%
Skamania County	$50,512	$49,943	1.1%
Snohomish County	$78,847	$72,397	8.9%
Spokane County	$62,390	$59,553	4.8%
Stevens County	$50,324	$47,511	5.9%
Thurston County	$68,201	$65,544	4.1%
Wahkiakum County	$42,910	$41,767	2.7%

Walla Walla County	$53,635	$52,919	1.4%
Whatcom County	$61,929	$59,174	4.7%
Whitman County	$60,846	$57,638	5.6%
Yakima County	$49,831	$47,343	5.3%

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

State occupational average wage rates

Workers in Washington had a mean (average) hourly wage of $39.10 in 2023, about 24.2% above the U.S. average of $31.48. The statewide median hourly wage for all covered employment was $29.99 compared to the U.S. median of $23.11.

Figure 7-3 looks at hourly wage in major occupational groups of the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system in 2023. The largest median hourly wages were within management occupations ($70.86) followed by computer and mathematical occupations ($66.95). The lowest median hourly wage was within farming, fishing, and forestry occupations ($18.54).

Figure 7-3: Statewide 2023 average occupational wages

SOC code	Washington statewide occupational title	2023 median hourly wage	2023 mean hourly wage
00-0000	Total all occupations	$29.99	$39.10
11-0000	Management occupations	$70.86	$80.47
13-0000	Business and financial operations occupations	$44.09	$49.49
15-0000	Computer and mathematical occupations	$66.95	$68.66
17-0000	Architecture and engineering occupations	$50.96	$54.15
19-0000	Life, physical and social science occupations	$41.40	$45.49
21-0000	Community and social service occupations	$29.87	$32.19
23-0000	Legal occupations	NA	NA
25-0000	Educational instruction and library occupations	$32.65	$36.82
27-0000	Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media occupations	$32.97	$40.19
29-0000	Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	$50.81	$60.40
31-0000	Healthcare support occupations	$22.63	$23.55
33-0000	Protective service occupations	$29.35	$34.55
35-0000	Food preparation and serving related occupations	$19.24	$22.58

37-0000	Building, and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	$21.18	$22.67
39-0000	Personal care and service occupations	$21.90	$25.58
41-0000	Sales and related occupations	$22.60	$30.58
43-0000	Office and administrative support occupations	$25.28	$27.81
45-0000	Farming, fishing and forestry occupations	$18.54	$21.76
47-0000	Construction and extraction occupations	$35.55	$38.54
49-0000	Installation, maintenance and repair occupations	$31.62	$34.55
51-0000	Production occupations	$24.43	$28.23
53-0000	Transportation and material moving occupations	$24.01	$28.78

Note: NA stands for information not available.

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS).

Regional average OEWS wage rates

The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) program includes employment and wage estimates for metropolitan and non-metro statistical areas (MSAs). The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determines Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), and "non-metro" areas. They delineate geographical regions based upon population density and community patterns. Detailed information on the metropolitan and nonmetropolitan area definitions used by the OEWS survey in Washington is available on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website. The Seattle MSA had the highest overall average hourly wage in 2023 at $43.30. The Lewiston ID-WA MSA had the lowest at $28.32. Only the Seattle MSA had average and median wages higher than the statewide average and median (see *Figure 7-4*).

Figure 7-4: 2023 MSA average occupational wage rate

Area name	2023 estimated employment	2023 mean hourly wage	2023 median hourly wage
Washington state	3,495,500	$39.10	$29.99
Bellingham	90,560	$33.08	$25.60
Bremerton-Silverdale	92,720	$35.04	$29.14
Kennewick-Richland	125,070	$34.55	$25.52
Lewiston, ID-WA	28,220	$28.32	$22.96
Longview	41,130	$31.64	$25.58
Mount Vernon-Anacortes	49,990	$33.14	$26.70

Olympia-Tumwater	122,970	$34.48	$28.45
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	1,206,150	$36.21	$27.99
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue	2,079,090	$43.30	$32.66
Spokane-Spokane Valley	255,160	$32.20	$24.48
Walla Walla	27,080	$30.32	$23.98
Wenatchee	50,880	$29.70	$23.17
Yakima	97,050	$28.46	$22.76
Western Washington nonmetropolitan area	128,180	$30.04	$24.21
Eastern Washington nonmetropolitan area	103,840	$30.73	$24.20

Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)