

Snohomish County profile



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Overview

Regional context

Snohomish County is situated between northern Puget Sound to the west and the crest line of the North Cascade Range to the east. It shares its northern border with rural Skagit County and borders King County to the south. Snohomish County is separated from Camano Island (part of Island County) by Davis Slough. The highest point in Snohomish County is Granite Peak (10,541 feet).

Due to its proximity to and shared labor market with King County, Snohomish County is incorporated into the Seattle-Bellevue-Everett Metropolitan Division and the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Metropolitan Statistical Area, as designated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other government agencies.

The geographic distribution of population, economic activity and land use in Snohomish County is diverse, with a mix of rural and urban zones. For the most part, population centers in the county are oriented south in proximity to the border with King County and west along Interstate 5. By contrast, north and east Snohomish County are characterized by smaller towns and cities, farmland and reservations.

The county ranks 13th statewide in terms of total land area (2,087.3 square miles) and is the 7th most densely populated county in Washington, with 401.53 people per square mile in 2021.

Local economy

Snohomish County has been and continues to be home to a number of Coast Salish Native American tribes since time immemorial. Early economic history of the county is characterized by an abundance of natural resources in a diverse ecological region. Local tribes continue to play a significant role in the governance and economy of the region.

European settlement of Puget Sound, including what is now Snohomish County, followed Captain George Vancouver's claim of much of western Washington for Great Britain in 1792. Snohomish County was carved out of Island County in 1861 and the late 19th century saw the establishment of several settlements in western Snohomish County. The Great Northern Railway reached the newly established city of Everett, bringing an economic boom to the area. Snohomish County's early industrial economy thus continued to be based on the availability of abundant natural resources – primarily timber and farming.

Following World War II, Snohomish County's economic growth expanded through the establishment of suburban cities oriented toward Seattle in the southwestern part of the county.

Home-grown multinational corporation, Boeing, traces its roots to the Seattle metropolitan area and continues to play a prominent role in Snohomish County’s economic make up. In the late 1960s, Boeing established its 747 manufacturing plant at Paine Field near Everett. The later development of other high technology industries in Snohomish County brought population increases and a shift from an economy based on logging and agriculture to one rooted in manufacturing and an expanding service sector.

Manufacturing continues to be a major economic driver in Snohomish County. About 50,000 jobs (18.1 percent of total Snohomish County nonfarm employment) in 2021 were in manufacturing industries. This is proportionally higher than any other county in Washington and above the national average. Although Snohomish County manufacturing is made up of many types of industries, aerospace products and parts manufacturing makes up the largest portion of employment. Aerospace manufacturers supplied 31,600 jobs in 2021. The manufacturing base, coupled with proximity to a major urban center, provides the foundation for a diverse local economy.

Other major industry sectors employing more than 20,000 included government (37,600), educational and health services (36,500), retail trade (34,000), professional and business services (28,300), leisure and hospitality (23,900) and construction (24,800).

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic-induced recession hit Snohomish County. Average annual total nonfarm employment dropped by 6.0 percent from 2019 to 2020, and began to recover as businesses, government and individuals navigated the new environment. In 2021, total nonfarm employment continued to fall an additional 0.4 percent: a reflection of layoffs in the manufacturing sector. As of April 2022 (preliminary), total nonfarm employment was estimated at 291,800 or 6.2 percent above the observed employment level 12 months earlier.

Geographic facts

	Snohomish County	Rank in state
Land area, 2010 (square miles)	2,087.3	13
People per square mile, 2020	397.289	7

Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management

Outlook

The leadup to the pandemic in Snohomish County was characterized by growth in most major industry sectors. During the 2020 pandemic, the industries that make up leisure and hospitality (e.g., restaurants, bars, hotels and entertainment venues) were the most severely impacted, while many of the region’s high tech and professional workers were able to shift their work environments temporarily, easing the impact.

The pandemic’s impact on manufacturing employment was delayed somewhat. From February 2020 to October 2021, Snohomish County’s manufacturing sector shed 13,700 jobs or 21.0 percent. Since October 2021, manufacturing employment has been expanding, however those losses put a damper on Snohomish County’s recovery relative to the rest of the state.

From 2020 to 2021, average annual employment continued to drop, falling by 600 jobs or 0.56 percent. Losses were concentrated in manufacturing, reflected in net losses to the goods-producing sector, partially offset by employment gains in the service-providing sector. Now, with manufacturing declines behind it, the county is poised to continue to recover, bolstered by neighboring King County.

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.

Snohomish County's 2021 labor force averaged 437,145, with an unemployment rate of 5.0 percent. Within this estimate, 415,354 county residents were counted among the employed and 21,791 were counted among the unemployed. In April 2020, Snohomish County's unemployment rate reached a peak of 19.5 percent. As of April 2022 (preliminary), the unemployment rate hit a record low 2.3 percent.

Source: Employment Security Department

Industry employment

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

Snohomish County averaged 277,300 nonfarm jobs in 2021, down from an estimated 277,800 in 2020. Over the year, total employment decreased by 600 or 0.2 percent. Washington state as a whole experienced the addition of 81,133 jobs over the same time period, an increase of 2.5 percent.

- Goods-producing industries supported an average of 74,800 jobs in 2021, down from 80,200 in 2020. Net losses were attributable to manufacturing (down 6,900) but partially offset by gains in construction (up 1,400).
- Service-providing industries supported an average of 202,500 jobs in 2021, up from 197,600 in 2020. Six major service-providing industry categories expanded employment over the year and three shed jobs.
 - The largest one-year gains were attributable to leisure and hospitality (up 1,900) and educational and health services (up 2,000). Losses were observed in information (down 400), financial activities (down 200) and government (down 200).

For historical industry employment data, [contact an economist](#).

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division

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.

Snohomish County highlights:

In 2020, Snohomish County's labor force was slightly older than that of the state. While the statewide workforce had proportionally more workers age 25 to 34, Snohomish County's workforce was proportionally more represented among workers age 35 to 44. Nearly 31.0 percent of the manufacturing workforce in Snohomish County is age 55 or older.

In 2020, 53.4 percent of all jobs were held by men, while 46.6 percent were held by women.

- Industries with male-dominant workforces included mining (83.3 percent), construction (77.8 percent), transportation and warehousing (75.3 percent) and manufacturing (73.6 percent).
- Female-dominated included health care and social assistance (78.1 percent), educational services (74.3 percent) and finance and insurance (64.7 percent).

Source: The Local Employment Dynamics

Wages and income

In 2020, Snohomish County averaged 274,003 jobs covered by unemployment insurance, with a total payroll in excess of \$18.3 billion.

The average annual wage in Snohomish County was \$66,912 for all industries in 2020. This is below the statewide average wage of \$73,504, but significantly higher than the statewide average when King County is excluded (\$50,834). The average wage in Snohomish County is also higher than the national average (\$64,021).

The median hourly wage \$30.08 in 2021, compared to a statewide median wage of \$30.50 per hour.

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.

In 2020, the per capita personal income in Snohomish County was \$62,267, less than Washington state (\$67,126) but higher than the nation as a whole (\$59,510). Within Washington state, Snohomish County ranked third for per capita income.

According to the American Community Survey, the median household income in Snohomish County was \$89,273 in 2016 through 2020. Snohomish County's median was higher than both the state (\$77,006) and the nation (\$64,994).

In 2020, 7.1 percent of the resident population in Snohomish County was estimated to be living below the poverty level. Statewide and national poverty levels were higher (9.5 and 11.4 percent respectively).

In Snohomish County, 8.1 percent of all children under age 18 were reported as living below the poverty level in 2019.

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

Population

With an estimated 837,800 residents in 2021, Snohomish County has the third-highest county population in Washington. Only King and Pierce counties have higher resident populations.

Over the past couple of decades, Snohomish County's population growth rate has exceeded those of the state and the nation, and this higher-than-average population growth trend is projected to continue.

Migration trends tend to be linked closely with economic cycles. During the recent recession and recovery period, Snohomish County’s usual migration-related increase fell below the relatively constant rate of natural increase, and reached the lowest levels observed since the early 1970s. In 2021, Snohomish County welcomed an estimated 6,889 new residents.

The largest city in Snohomish County is Everett (112,300 residents in 2021). Other large cities include Marysville, Edmonds and Lynnwood.

Population facts

	Snohomish County	Washington state
Population 2021	837,800	7,766,975
Population 2011	718,874	6,781,551
Percent change, 2011 to 2021	16.5%	14.5%

Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management

Age, gender and ethnicity

The age distribution of Snohomish County residents compared to the state as a whole reveals the suburban and industrial nature of the county. It suggests that people move to Snohomish County to work and raise their families.

Snohomish County has a similar proportion of young people under age 18 compared to the state and nation, and a much lower proportion of teenagers and adults between ages 15 and 29. The population between age 30 and 64 proportionally exceeds that of the state and nation, and the population aged 64 and above is under-represented in Snohomish County relative to the state.

The racial and ethnic makeup of Snohomish County shows a relative under-representation of Black or African American (3.8 percent) and Hispanic or Latino residents (10.6 percent) compared to the state, and a higher representation of Asian residents (12.7 percent compared to 10.4 percent statewide).

Demographics

	Snohomish County	Washington state
Population by age, 2019		
Under 5 years old	6.3%	6.0%
Under 18 years old	22.4%	21.8%
65 years and older	14.0%	15.9%
Females, 2019		
	49.8%	49.9%
Race/ethnicity, 2019		
White	77.0%	78.5%
Black or African American	3.8%	4.4%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	1.6%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	12.7%	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	10.6%	13.0%

Educational attainment

Compared to Washington state and the U.S. as a whole, during the period 2016 through 2020, Snohomish County residents age 25 and above were more likely to have graduated from high school; 92.5 percent of Snohomish County residents over age 25 had earned a high school degree. This is proportionally higher than the state (91.7 percent) and the nation (88.5 percent).

There were proportionally fewer Snohomish County residents with four-year college degrees than statewide. Snohomish County residents age 25 and up had completed a bachelor's degree or higher (32.8 percent), compared to 36.7 percent for the state. Snohomish County residents were more likely to have attended some college or to have earned their associate degree compared to the state and the nation.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Useful links

- [County data tables](#)
- [Census Bureau Profile](#)
- [Snohomish County home page](#)
- [Snohomish County on ofm.wa.gov](#)
- [Snohomish County on ChooseWashington.com](#)
- [Snohomish County History](#)
- [Workforce Snohomish](#)
- [Economic Alliance Snohomish County](#)
- [Port of Edmonds](#)
- [Port of Everett](#)
- [Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State](#)
- [Puget Sound Regional Council](#)
- [Census Bureau QuickFacts](#)
- [Washington Ports](#)
- [WorkSource Snohomish County](#)

Employment Security Department is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Language assistance services for limited English proficient individuals are available free of charge. Washington Relay Service: 711.