

Stevens County profile

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Overview

Regional context

Stevens County is located near the northeast corner of Washington, bordering both Canada and Spokane County. The county is rural and ranks fifth in the state in terms of land area and 28th in the state for population density. Most of the Spokane Indian Reservation is in Stevens County on 237.5 square miles. Colville is the largest town in the county.

Local economy

From the 1850s through 1910, Stevens County was one of the state's top silver and copper producers. Forest products have also dominated the economy. Over the past 20 years, the economy has diversified from its dependence on resource extraction. This diversification has been the result of increasing service-providing jobs and increases in manufacturing.

Stevens County tends to have one of the highest unemployment rates as well as a lower labor force participation rate in the state.

Geographic facts

	Stevens County	Rank in state
Land area, 2010 (square miles)	2,477.76	5
People per square mile, 2010	17.96	28

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Outlook

For Stevens County, recovery from the last recession has been long and slow. Recently, jobs have increased. Recent demand in the housing and recreational markets along with machinery manufacturing have helped the county recover foundation-type jobs.

With an increase in retirees within the region and changing demographics, total health care employment has grown, especially in assisted care centers. However, consolidation of hospitals, clinics and labs will keep increases modest.

Government is the largest employment sector in the county, accounting for more than 30 percent of total jobs. Federal Border Protection and Forest Service (firefighting) are likely to increase government employment in 2022. In addition, education, a subsector of government, did post employment increases in 2021.

Labor force and unemployment

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

In 2021, the Stevens County civilian labor force averaged 18,998. A slight decrease from 2020. Stevens, a rural county, was one of the first counties in the state to enter the phase 3 business re-openings because of the low incidence of the virus (COVID-19) in the county. Which facilitated Stevens County's economy during the pandemic. However, the county has a high average worker age, retirements have accelerated which is reducing the labor force.

Source: Employment Security Department/DATA Division

Industry employment

Stevens County averaged 10,675 jobs in 2020, which was a slight decrease from 2019 (10,806). Current data for 2021 is not yet available. Stevens is part of the Spokane MSA, data is delayed to breakout out the county from the MSA. But we expect that 2021 will show a decrease in jobs due to retirements, decreases in manufacturing and government and the generally downward trend since 2019.

- Goods-producing employment decreased slightly in 2020. Most of the decrease was posted in the construction and manufacturing sectors.
- Service-providing employment in 2020 decreases from 2019 levels. Almost all of the decrease was in local government and retail trade.

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.

Stevens County highlights:

The largest job holder age group in Stevens County in 2020 was the 55+ age cohort with 28.7 percent of the workforce. This percentage was followed by job holders aged 45 to 54 at 20.6 percent of the workforce.

In 2020, men held 50.3 percent and women held 49.7 percent of the jobs in Stevens County. There were substantial differences in gender dominance by industry.

- Male-dominated industries included agriculture (77.5 percent), construction (83.7 percent), manufacturing (80.3 percent) and utilities (73.7 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included health care and social assistance (79.9 percent), educational services (70.7 percent) and finance and insurance (76.7 percent).

Source: The Local Employment Dynamics

Wages and income

In 2020, there were approximately 10,676 jobs covered by unemployment insurance, with a total payroll of over \$460.2 million.

The 2020 average annual wage was \$43,105 well below the state’s average annual wage of \$76,801.

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 Stevens County was \$42,740 and ranked 37th among Washington counties.

According to the U.S. Census QuickFacts, the county’s median household income was \$54,426 in the period 2016 through 2020. The county’s median was less than the state’s (\$77,006).

Over the period 2016 to 2020, 15.0 percent of the population was living below the poverty level, higher than the state at 9.5 percent.

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

Population

Stevens County’s population was 47,426 in 2021, with 78 percent of the residents living in unincorporated areas. The population increased 2.1 percent from 2020 to 2021, compared to the state’s growth rate of 0.4 percent. The largest city in Stevens County is Colville.

Population facts

	Stevens County	Washington state
Population 2020	46,445	7,705,281
Population 2021	47,426	7,738,692
Percent change, 2020 to 2021	2.1%	0.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Age, gender and ethnicity

Proportionately, more of Stevens County's population was 65 years and older compared with the state. Stevens County showed much less diversity in 2021 than the state in all racial/ethnic categories except American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Demographics

	Stevens County	Washington state
Population by age, 2021		
Under 5 years old	5.2%	6.0%
Under 18 years old	21.2%	21.8%
65 years and older	23.9%	15.9%
Females, 2021	50.1%	49.9%
Race/ethnicity, 2021		
White	89.2%	78.5%
Black	0.6%	4.4%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	5.8%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	1.0%	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	3.8%	13.0%

Educational attainment

Most of Stevens County residents aged 25 and older (91.7 percent) were high school graduates, which is consistent with the state average of 91.7 percent over the period 2016 through 2020.

Those with a bachelor's degree or higher made-up 20.5 percent of Stevens County residents aged 25 and older compared to 36.7 percent of state.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Useful links

- [County data tables](#)
- [Census Bureau Profile](#)
- [Self-sufficiency calculator for Washington state](#)
- [Stevens County](#)
- [Stevens County on ChooseWashington.com](#)
- [Stevens County History](#)
- [Stevens County on ofm.wa.gov](#)
- [Tri County Economic Development District](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts](#)
- [Washington Ports](#)
- [Workforce Development Areas and WorkSource Office Directory](#)
- [Northeast Washington Trends](#)

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