

# The Monthly Employment Report

December 2024

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On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show nonfarm employment in Washington increased by 11,800 in December 2024.<sup>a</sup>

Employment in the private sector increased by 12,000 jobs over the month and employers in the public sector shed 200 jobs.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for December 2023 through December 2024 show an increase of 30,600 jobs for the state. The private sector added 13,000 jobs while the public sector added an estimated 17,600 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2024 decreased from 4.6% to 4.5%. The unemployment rate in December 2023 was 4.2%.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision. The November 2024 preliminary estimated gain of 30,900 jobs was revised up to a gain of 31,800 jobs.

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<sup>a</sup> Most of the employment numbers in this report refer 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 unemployment section, these positions refer to individuals, not jobs. In this case, a person holding two jobs is counted only once.

# 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 older.

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.

Figure 1: Resident civilian labor force and unemployment, seasonally adjusted, United States and Washington state, November and December 2023, November and December 2024

	December 2024 preliminary	November 2024 revised	December 2023 revised	November 2023 revised
<b>United States</b>				
Unemployment rate	4.1%	4.2%	3.8%	3.7%
<b>Washington</b>				
Unemployment rate	4.5%	4.6%	4.2%	4.0%
Resident labor force	3,988,999	3,990,031	4,059,627	4,057,720
Unemployed	181,451	185,298	170,380	161,573
<b>Seattle/Bellevue/Everett</b>				
Unemployment rate	4.0%	4.2%	3.6%	3.6%
Resident labor force	1,815,980	1,803,967	1,820,891	18,020,884
Unemployed	73,151	76,188	66,198	64,745

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

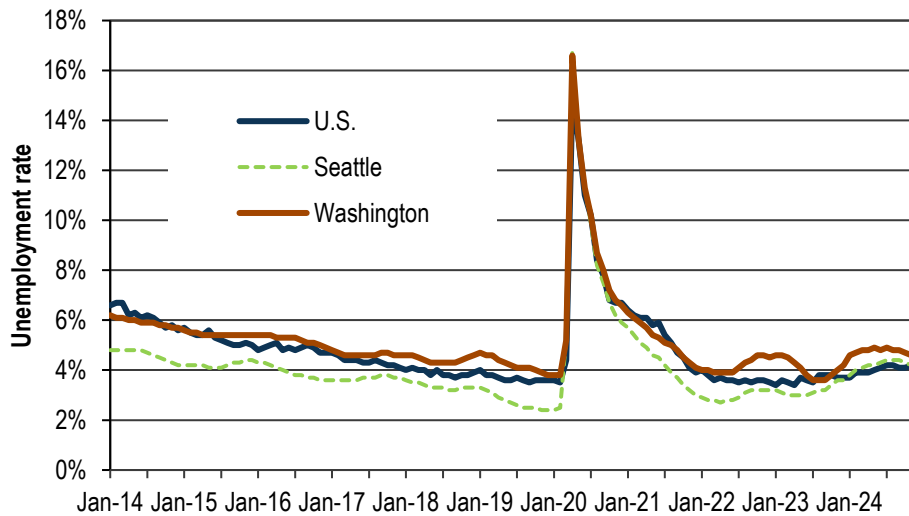
## Unemployment, seasonally adjusted

The BLS estimates Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2024 was 4.5%, down one tenth of a percentage point from November. The revised estimate for December 2023 was 4.2%.

According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed Washington residents decreased by 3,847 over the month. The estimated number of employed Washington residents increased by 2,815. Overall, this amounted to a decrease of 1,032 workers in the labor force from November to December 2024. December 2024 preliminary unemployment rates:

- United States (preliminary) 4.1%
- Washington (preliminary) 4.5%
- Seattle area (preliminary) 4.0%

Figure 2: Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted, U.S., Washington and Seattle, January 2014 through December 2024



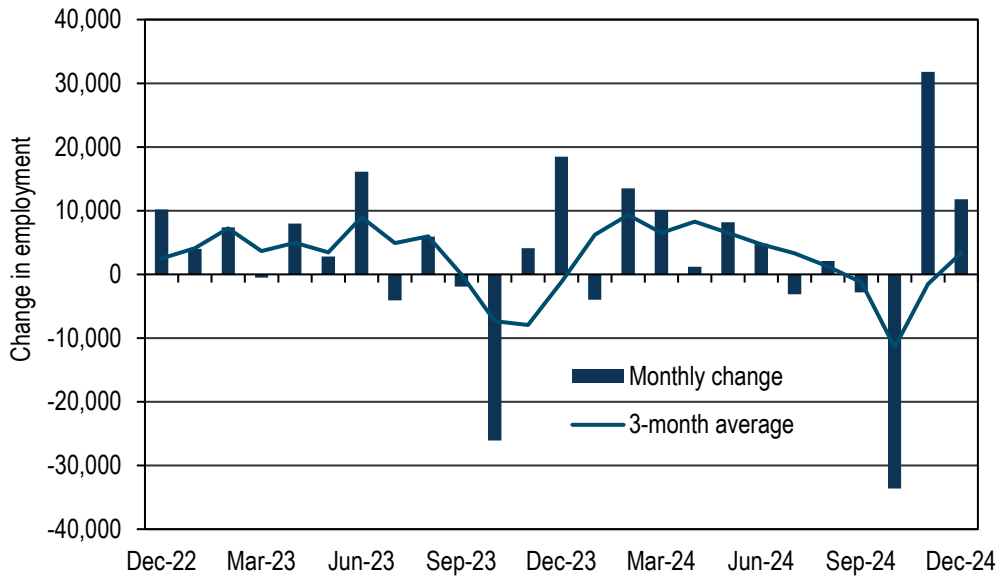
Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

## Employment change, seasonally adjusted

Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment increased by 11,800 from November to December 2024. Recent employment change:

- October 2024: down 33,600 (revised)
- November 2024: up 31,800 (revised)
- December 2024: up 11,800 (preliminary)

Figure 3: Monthly employment change, seasonally adjusted, Washington state, December 2022 through December 2024



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

## Employment and unemployment, seasonally adjusted

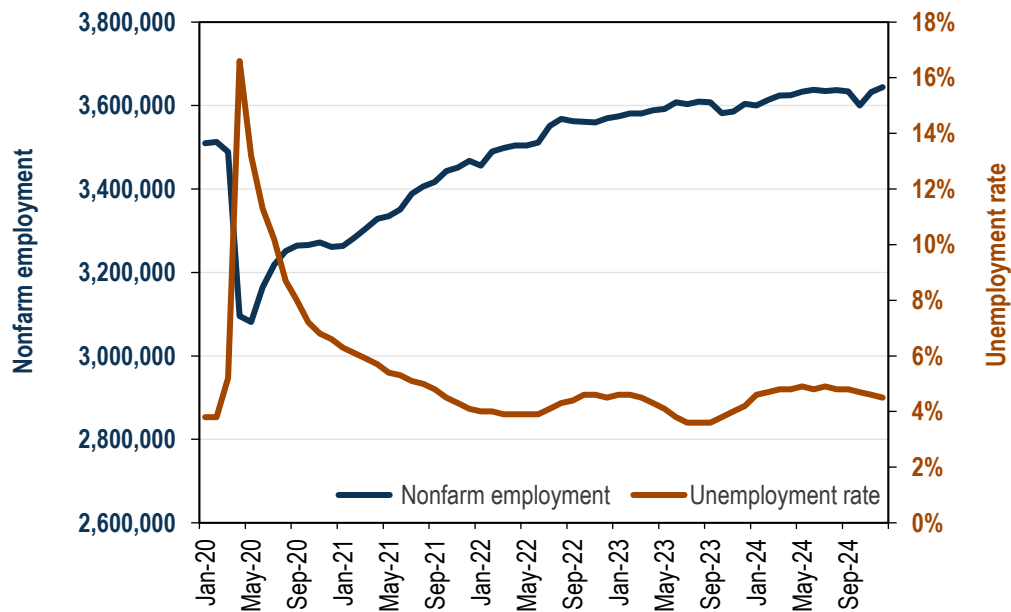
### February 2020 (start of 2020 employment recession in Washington)

- Nonfarm employment: 3,512,700
- Unemployment rate: 3.8%

### December 2024 (preliminary)

- Nonfarm employment: 3,644,100
- Unemployment rate: 4.5%

Figure 4: Nonfarm employment and unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, Washington, January 2020 through December 2024



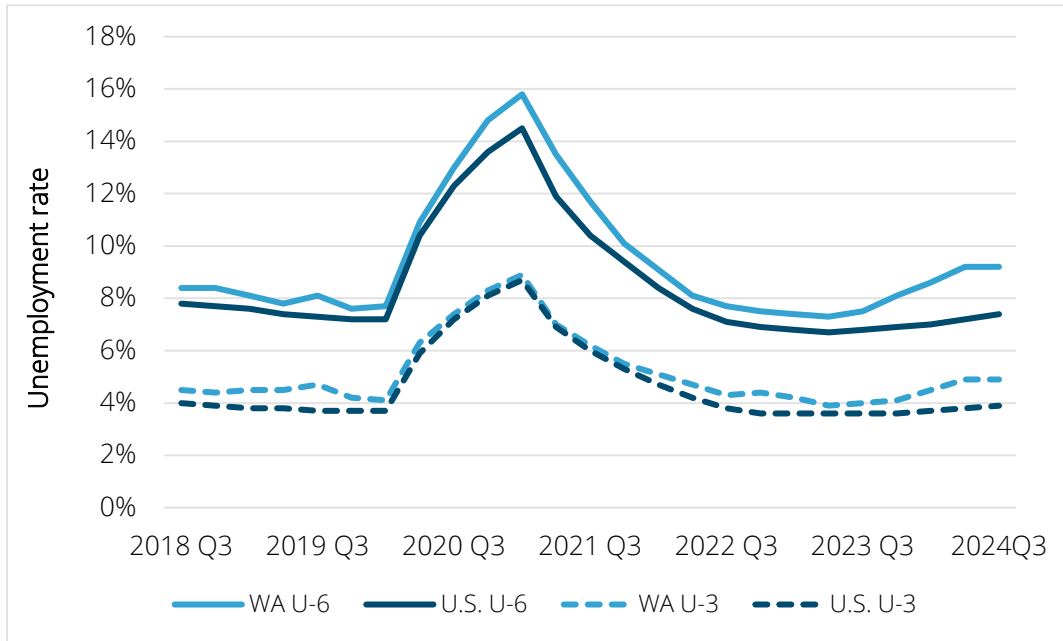
Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

## U-6: Broader annual average unemployment remained unchanged

BLS recently updated its alternative measures of labor underutilization for states to include four-quarter rates through the third quarter of 2024. 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 average unemployment rate for the four-quarter period through the third quarter of 2024 for Washington state was 9.2%. This is above the 7.5% average for the four-quarter period through third quarter 2023. The U.S. U-6 average for the four-quarter period through the third quarter of 2024 was 7.4%. Washington’s U-6 rate tends to run higher than the national rate.

Figure 5: Alternative measures of labor underutilization, four-quarter moving average, Washington state and U.S. U-6 unemployment rate



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

Figure 6: Alternate measures of labor underutilization, four quarter moving average, Washington state versus U.S. U-6 unemployment rate for 2009 through Q3 2024

Year	Location	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Annual average
2024	WA	8.6%	9.2%	9.2%	
	U.S.	7.0%	7.2%	7.4%	
2023	WA	7.4%	7.3%	7.5%	8.1%
	U.S.	6.8%	6.7%	6.8%	6.9%
2022	WA	9.1%	8.1%	5.0%	7.5%
	U.S.	8.4%	7.6%	7.1%	6.9%
2021	WA	15.8%	13.5%	11.7%	10.1%
	U.S.	14.5%	11.9%	10.4%	9.4%
2020	WA	8.1%	10.9%	13.0%	14.8%
	U.S.	7.7%	10.4%	12.3%	13.6%
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%
2011	WA	18.4%	18.7%	18.5%	17.8%
	U.S.	16.5%	16.3%	16.2%	15.9%
2010	WA	17.2%	17.4%	18.1%	18.4%
	U.S.	16.7%	16.8%	16.8%	16.7%

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

## Industry employment in Washington, seasonally adjusted

**One-month employment change by industry:** Based on a BLS survey of businesses and governments, Washington employers collectively added an estimated 11,800 jobs over the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- November 2024 estimates were revised up by 900 jobs.
- Overall, employment increased in ten major industry sectors and decreased in three.
- Private sector employment is estimated to have increased by 12,000 and government employment decreased by 200 in December. The largest one-month sector level gains in private industry were observed in construction (up 4,000) and leisure and hospitality (up 2,900).
- The largest one-month gains in construction were attributable to specialty trade contractors (up 2,400) and residential building construction (up 1,700). Nonresidential building was down 400 over the month.
- The largest one-month increases in the leisure and hospitality sector were observed in the accommodation and food services (up 3,200).
- One-month sector losses were observed in manufacturing (down 1,600) and retail trade and government (down 200 each).
- Manufacturing losses were concentrated in aerospace products and parts manufacturing (down 900).



Figure 7: Estimated one-month employment change by industry, seasonally adjusted, Washington state, November 2024 to December 2024

<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>11,800</b>
<b>Construction</b>	4,000
<b>Leisure and hospitality</b>	2,900
<b>Education and Health Services</b>	2,400
<b>Information</b>	1,800
<b>Professional and Business Services</b>	1,500
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	600
<b>Other Services</b>	300
<b>Financial Activities</b>	100
<b>Mining and logging</b>	100
<b>Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities</b>	100
<b>Government</b>	-200
<b>Retail Trade</b>	-200
<b>Manufacturing</b>	-1,600

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

### Industry employment in Washington, not seasonally adjusted

**Change by industry over the year:** Based on a BLS survey of businesses and governments, Washington businesses collectively added an estimated 30,600 jobs from December 2023 to December 2024. This is a 0.9% increase in employment over the year.

- Over the past 12 months, employment in five major industries increased and six decreased; two remained unchanged.
- Private sector employment increased 0.4%, up an estimated 13,000 jobs.
- Public sector employment rose 3.0%, up an estimated 17,600 jobs. The largest number of public sector jobs was added in state government, with more than half attributable to hiring by the state’s public higher education system.
- The largest private sector gains were attributable to hiring in education and health services (up 19,400), transportation, warehousing and utilities (up 1,800) and professional and business services (up 1,400); the deepest one-year losses were observed in wholesale trade (down 4,700), manufacturing (down 1,600) and other services (down 1,400).
- Education and health services employment gains were primarily attributable to hiring in health and social services; within that, ambulatory health care services added the most jobs (6,700).
- Losses in wholesale trade were observed throughout the sector but were deepest in nondurable goods (down 1,900) and electronic markets and agents and brokers (down 1,600). Losses in manufacturing were concentrated in nondurable goods (down 1,600). Aerospace products and parts manufacturing was up over the year.

Figure 8: Estimated employment change by industry over the year, not seasonally adjusted, Washington state, December 2023 through December 2024

<b>Total nonfarm</b>	<b>30,600</b>
<b>Education and health services</b>	19,400
<b>Government</b>	17,600
<b>Transportation, warehousing and utilities</b>	1,800
<b>Professional and business services</b>	1,400
<b>Information</b>	700
<b>Financial activities</b>	0
<b>Mining and logging</b>	0
<b>Leisure and hospitality</b>	-100
<b>Construction</b>	-1,200
<b>Retail trade</b>	-1,300
<b>Other services</b>	-1,400
<b>Manufacturing</b>	-1,600
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	-4,700

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

### 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.

Figure 9: Normal seasonal change, estimated change and seasonally adjusted change, Washington state, December 2024

	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
Total Nonfarm	11,200	23,000	11,800
Construction	-11,400	-7,400	4,000
Leisure and Hospitality	-4,300	-1,400	2,900
Education and Health Services	-1,500	900	2,400
Information	-1,700	100	1,800
Professional and Business Services	-3,900	-2,400	1,500
Wholesale Trade	-2,600	-2,000	600
Other Services	-1,100	-800	300
Financial Activities	300	400	100
Mining and Logging	-100	0	100
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	100	200	100
Government	4,600	4,400	-200
Retail Trade	2,900	2,700	-200
Manufacturing	29,900	28,300	-1,600

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

## Contact us

For more Washington Labor Market Information, visit [Employment Security's website](#). Contact us at [lmir@esd.wa.gov](mailto:lmir@esd.wa.gov) with any questions. County level information will be available at 10 a.m., December 24, 2024. The 2024 publication schedule can be found on [Employment Security's website](#)

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