

**Figure 15-2:** Covered employment in urban counties by industry  
 Washington state, 2012 through 2016  
 Source: ESD/WITS, Unemployment Insurance Data Warehouse; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Urban areas* – annual average employment							
NAICS 2-digit	Industry sector	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Annualized percent change 2012-2016
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	16,299	15,868	16,501	17,950	19,133	4.1%
21	Mining	1,043	1,025	1,106	1,159	1,149	2.4%
22	Utilities	12,407	12,485	12,599	12,821	12,419	0.0%
23	Construction	110,486	119,413	128,050	139,849	149,987	7.9%
31 - 33	Manufacturing	238,494	243,364	244,793	247,194	246,097	0.8%
42	Wholesale trade	100,470	103,080	105,239	107,028	106,858	1.6%
44 - 45	Retail trade	258,368	267,660	279,471	290,257	302,419	4.0%
48 - 49	Transportation and warehousing	94,019	94,956	98,437	101,533	105,194	2.8%
51	Information	103,478	104,682	107,811	111,682	118,498	3.4%
52	Finance and insurance	76,804	79,058	80,215	81,288	82,040	1.7%
53	Real estate, rental and leasing	40,556	41,764	42,777	44,192	45,128	2.7%
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	157,662	161,934	168,276	173,322	180,801	3.5%
55	Management of companies and enterprises	33,902	36,451	37,589	39,490	40,829	4.8%
56	Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	127,207	131,742	134,738	141,611	145,836	3.5%
61	Educational services	193,367	196,825	201,086	206,462	211,724	2.3%
62	Healthcare and social assistance	311,090	318,444	362,087	363,349	372,104	4.6%
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	55,517	56,039	56,639	57,655	59,933	1.9%
72	Accommodation and food services	187,395	196,213	203,579	212,416	220,924	4.2%
81	Other services	109,219	109,132	77,687	80,347	82,917	-6.7%
92	Public administration	120,796	119,108	119,284	120,816	123,453	0.5%
Unknown	Unknown	-	-	3	6	9	0.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,348,579</b>	<b>2,409,243</b>	<b>2,477,967</b>	<b>2,550,427</b>	<b>2,627,452</b>	<b>2.8%</b>

\*Urban areas include Benton, Clark, King, Kitsap, Snohomish, Spokane, Pierce, Thurston and Yakima counties.

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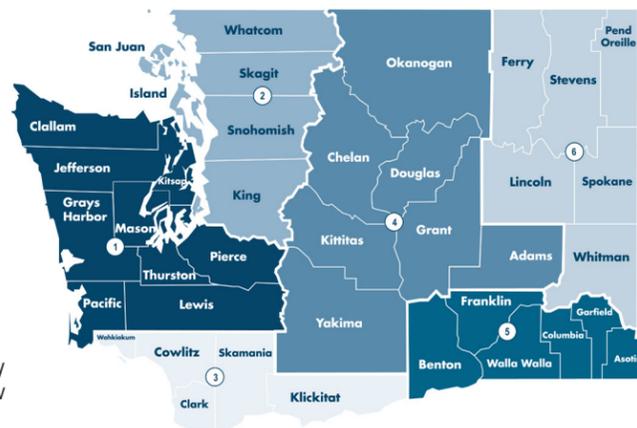
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## Rural recovery lags urban

November 2017

Washington's employment levels have reached all-time highs with statewide unemployment at 4.5 percent as of June 2017. Much of the current economic expansion is being driven by job growth in the state's major urban centers. While most of rural Washington saw faster job growth than the U.S. average, a few rural counties still have fewer jobs today than they did five years ago. Twenty-one percent of Washington's counties have yet to recover the jobs lost from the Great Recession – all of them rural counties.

- Nationally, the recession lasted from December 2007 to June 2009, but recovery continues today in many rural counties.
- After seven years of uneven economic recovery, 8 out of 39 counties in Washington remain below 2012 employment levels.
- Rural areas have higher unemployment rates than urban areas which leaves them more vulnerable to economic shocks and recessions.
- The Great Recession was worse in many rural counties than in urban counties in Washington.

**Unemployment rate:** Rural counties in Washington have historically had higher unemployment rates than urban counties. The average unemployment rate for urban counties between 2012 and 2016 was 6.0 percent; compared to an 8.2 percent unemployment for rural counties over the same time-period. The gap between the unemployment rate of urban and rural counties has remained relatively the same between 2012 and 2016. Figure 1 shows rural and urban counties and the differences in annual unemployment rates for 2016.

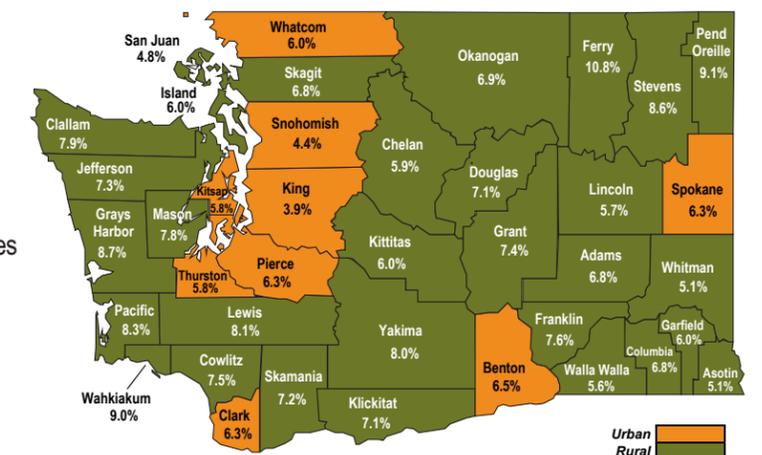
**Figure 1:** Urban versus rural counties\* and 2016 annual average unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted Washington state, 2016  
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

### Why is the pace of recovery slower in rural Washington?

A variety of factors have led to a slower recovery in rural Washington. Less industry diversity in the rural economy increases exposure to prolonged periods of recession. The rural population and workforce are also aging more quickly than in urban areas, with those over the age of 55 making up a larger share of the overall workforce as compared to urban areas, 25.5 percent in rural areas versus 21.5 percent in urban areas in 2016.

### Defining rural and urban

There are different definitions on what is considered rural. For the purpose of this analysis, counties in Washington state were broken out by rural or urban, with a rural county defined as a county with a population density of less than 100 people per square mile, or a county smaller than 225 square miles (defined under RCW 82.14.370). Using this definition, there are 30 rural and 9 urban counties in Washington state as of 2016.



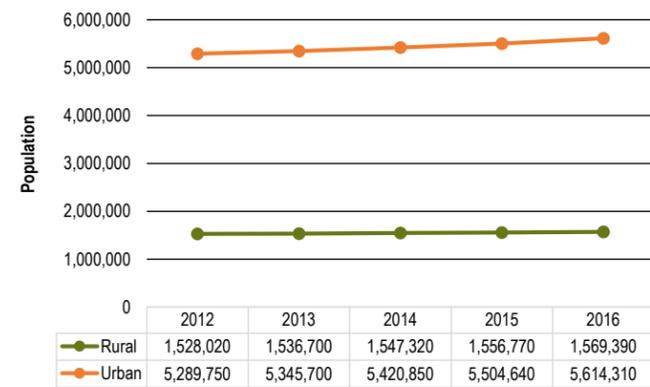
Note: \*Rural counties defined under RCW 82.14.370

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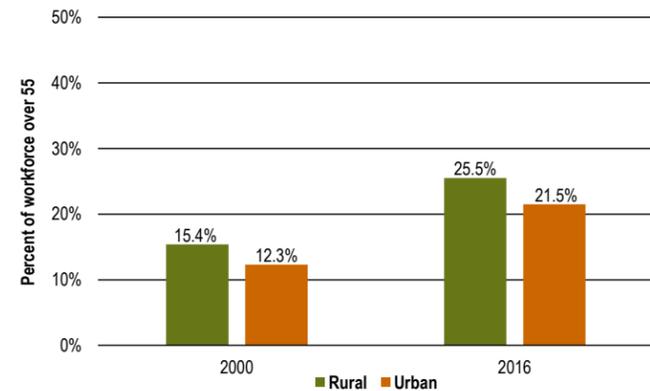
**Population:** Washington's rural counties are growing at a much slower pace than in urban counties. Overall population growth in rural counties over the last five years (2012-2016) averaged 0.7 percent, compared to 1.5 percent annualized growth in urban counties. **Figure 2** shows the population change between urban and rural counties in Washington state. The low rate of population growth in rural counties is partly due to the loss of jobs during the recession, which aided in more people seeking employment or educational opportunities in urban counties. Dealing with aging populations and the need to replace many workers reaching retirement are major challenges for some of the rural counties.

**Figure 2:** Urban versus rural population Washington state, 2012 through 2016  
Source: Office of Financial Management



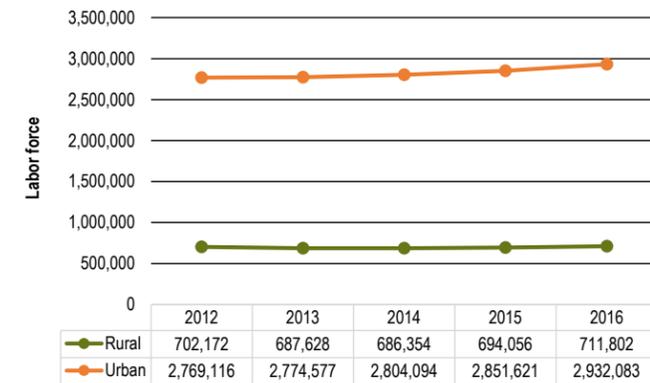
As shown in **Figure 3**, both urban and rural counties experienced an aging workforce. In 2000, only 15.4 percent of the workforce in Washington's rural counties was 55 or older. That share has increased to 25.5 percent of the workforce in 2016. There are more than 72,000 additional workers age 55 and older in rural counties in 2016 than in 2000. In urban counties, in 2000, 12.3 percent of the workforce was 55 years or older compared to 21.5 percent in 2016.

**Figure 3:** Urban versus rural workforce over 55 years of age, Washington state, 2000 versus 2016  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Local Household Employment Dynamics



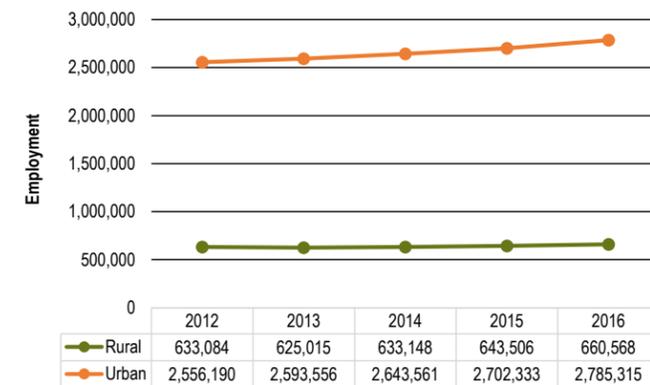
**Labor force:** The labor force trends mirrored the population trends. Annualized labor force growth in rural areas was 0.3 percent between 2012 and 2016 as compared to 1.4 percent growth in urban areas. **Figure 4** shows the labor force change between rural and urban counties between 2012 and 2016.

**Figure 4:** Urban versus rural labor force Washington state, 2012 through 2016  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



**Employment:** Rural counties accounted for 19.2 percent of Washington's jobs in 2016. Rural counties make up a smaller share of overall employment in 2016 than in 2012, 19.2 percent in 2016, versus 19.9 percent in 2012. As shown in **Figure 5** between 2012-2016, Washington's employment growth in urban counties was nearly double the employment growth that occurred in rural counties over the same time-period – 2.2 percent versus 1.1 percent.

**Figure 5:** Urban versus rural employment Washington state, 2012 through 2016  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



**Unemployment:** The change in the number of unemployed people between 2012 and 2016 in rural and urban counties was similar, with the number of unemployed people in urban counties declining slightly faster than the number of unemployed in rural counties (-8.9 percent versus -7.2 percent respectively).

**Industry employment change – rural versus urban:**

Over 50 percent of rural Washington employment is concentrated in healthcare and social assistance, retail trade, agriculture and educational services. Together those sectors only make up around 34 percent of the employment in urban Washington. Many of the major industry sectors in rural communities are just returning to pre-recessionary employment levels, while the expanding industries across the state, professional and business services and information, are more heavily concentrated in urban areas.

Between 2012 and 2016, the industry with the largest annualized percent change in employment in rural counties was construction at 5.6 percent. Annualized employment growth in construction employment in urban counties was up 7.9 percent, the highest amongst all industry super sectors during that time. The industry sectors with the largest employment differences between 2012 and 2016 in rural and urban areas occurred in professional, scientific and technical services and management of companies and enterprises. Professional, scientific and technical services in urban areas increased annually by 3.5 percent, compared to a decrease of -0.8 percent in rural areas. Annual employment growth in management of companies and enterprises in urban areas was up 4.8 percent in urban areas compared to -0.2 percent decline in rural areas.

**Figure 15-1:** Covered employment in rural counties by industry Washington state, 2012 through 2016  
Source: ESD/WITS, Unemployment Insurance Data Warehouse; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

		Rural areas* – annual average employment					
NAICS 2-digit	Industry sector	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Annualized percent change 2012-2016
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	79,235	78,925	83,355	84,611	85,621	2.0%
21	Mining	1,027	1,075	1,084	1,181	1,219	4.4%
22	Utilities	6,157	6,170	6,233	6,268	6,243	0.3%
23	Construction	19,975	20,936	22,631	23,489	24,884	5.6%
31 - 33	Manufacturing	50,162	51,753	52,871	54,258	54,337	2.0%
42	Wholesale trade	17,763	18,343	18,891	19,367	19,180	1.9%
44 - 45	Retail trade	59,339	59,579	60,292	61,790	63,151	1.6%
48 - 49	Transportation and warehousing	16,119	16,154	16,625	17,746	17,594	2.2%
51	Information	5,236	5,334	5,369	5,139	5,216	-0.1%
52	Finance and insurance	9,809	9,848	9,482	9,304	9,396	-1.1%
53	Real estate, rental and leasing	5,565	5,616	5,690	5,998	6,056	2.1%
54	Professional, scientific and technical services	12,097	11,775	11,735	11,429	11,732	-0.8%
55	Management of companies and enterprises	1,490	1,497	1,458	1,487	1,480	-0.2%
56	Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	11,122	12,008	12,792	13,016	13,913	5.8%
61	Educational services	55,875	56,486	56,920	57,874	59,284	1.5%
62	Healthcare and social assistance	67,581	67,999	80,610	79,718	80,375	4.4%
71	Arts, entertainment and recreation	10,814	10,863	11,242	11,368	11,668	1.9%
72	Accommodation and food services	41,553	42,654	43,998	45,662	47,873	3.6%
81	Other services	23,010	22,771	11,948	11,977	12,165	-14.7%
92	Public administration	37,716	37,341	37,410	37,402	37,993	0.2%
Unknown	Unknown	-	2	2	9	11	0.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>531,645</b>	<b>537,129</b>	<b>550,638</b>	<b>559,093</b>	<b>569,391</b>	<b>1.7%</b>

\*Rural includes Adams, Asotin, Chelan, Clallam, Columbia, Cowlitz, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Skagit, Skamania, Stevens, Wahkiakum, Walla Walla, Whatcom and Whitman counties.



The industry with the largest annualized percent change in employment in rural counties was construction at 5.6 percent.

**Figure 14:** Urban versus rural labor market information by county  
Washington state, 2016

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

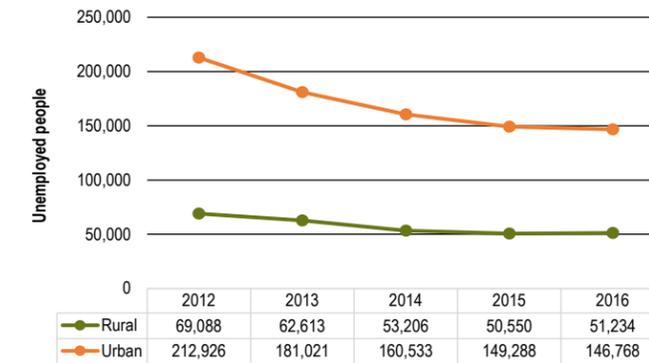
2016

County	Urban	Rural	Population	Labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment rate
Adams		✓	19,510	8,699	8,107	592	6.8%
Asotin		✓	22,150	9,993	9,482	511	5.1%
Benton	✓		190,500	94,454	88,269	6,185	6.5%
Chelan		✓	75,910	43,917	41,339	2,578	5.9%
Clallam		✓	73,410	27,450	25,278	2,172	7.9%
Clark	✓		461,010	220,608	206,811	13,797	6.3%
Columbia		✓	4,050	1,732	1,614	118	6.8%
Cowlitz		✓	104,850	44,859	41,501	3,358	7.5%
Douglas		✓	40,720	20,661	19,192	1,469	7.1%
Ferry		✓	7,700	2,497	2,227	270	10.8%
Franklin		✓	88,670	39,969	36,913	3,056	7.6%
Garfield		✓	2,200	922	867	55	6.0%
Grant		✓	94,610	44,807	41,486	3,321	7.4%
Grays Harbor		✓	72,820	27,373	24,989	2,384	8.7%
Island		✓	82,910	32,821	30,844	1,977	6.0%
Jefferson		✓	31,090	11,509	10,673	836	7.3%
King	✓		2,105,100	1,208,334	1,160,734	47,600	3.9%
Kitsap	✓		262,590	117,931	111,115	6,816	5.8%
Kittitas		✓	43,710	21,648	20,344	1,304	6.0%
Klickitat		✓	21,270	9,663	8,980	683	7.1%
Lewis		✓	76,890	32,094	29,499	2,595	8.1%
Lincoln		✓	10,640	4,885	4,605	280	5.7%
Mason		✓	62,320	23,597	21,748	1,849	7.8%
Okanogan		✓	41,730	21,548	20,055	1,493	6.9%
Pacific		✓	21,180	8,334	7,642	692	8.3%
Pend Oreille		✓	13,290	4,723	4,294	429	9.1%
Pierce	✓		844,490	405,717	380,255	25,462	6.3%
San Juan		✓	16,320	7,902	7,521	381	4.8%
Skagit		✓	122,270	58,138	54,193	3,945	6.8%
Skamania		✓	11,500	5,081	4,715	366	7.2%
Snohomish	✓		772,860	412,178	394,217	17,961	4.4%
Spokane	✓		492,530	234,518	219,653	14,865	6.3%
Stevens		✓	44,100	17,931	16,395	1,536	8.6%
Thurston	✓		272,690	130,653	123,049	7,604	5.8%
Wahkiakum		✓	4,000	1,296	1,180	116	9.0%
Walla Walla		✓	60,730	28,890	27,261	1,629	5.6%
Whatcom	✓		212,540	107,690	101,212	6,478	6.0%
Whitman		✓	47,940	23,069	21,885	1,184	5.1%
Yakima		✓	250,900	125,794	115,739	10,055	8.0%

As shown in **Figure 6**, urban counties experienced a much larger decline in the number of unemployed between 2012 and 2013, but have since followed a similar pattern as rural counties.

**Figure 6:** Urban versus rural unemployment  
Washington state, 2012 through 2016

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



**Median hourly wages:** Rural counties in Washington have historically had lower median hourly wage rates than urban counties. **Figure 7** shows median hourly wage rates in rural counties have been on average \$7.18 lower between 2011 and 2016 than in urban counties. Rural areas of Washington have a larger share of agriculture and resource based economies, which typically pay lower wage rates.

**Figure 7:** Urban versus rural median hourly wage rates, inflation adjusted  
Washington state, 2011 through 2016

Source: Employment Security Dept./WITS

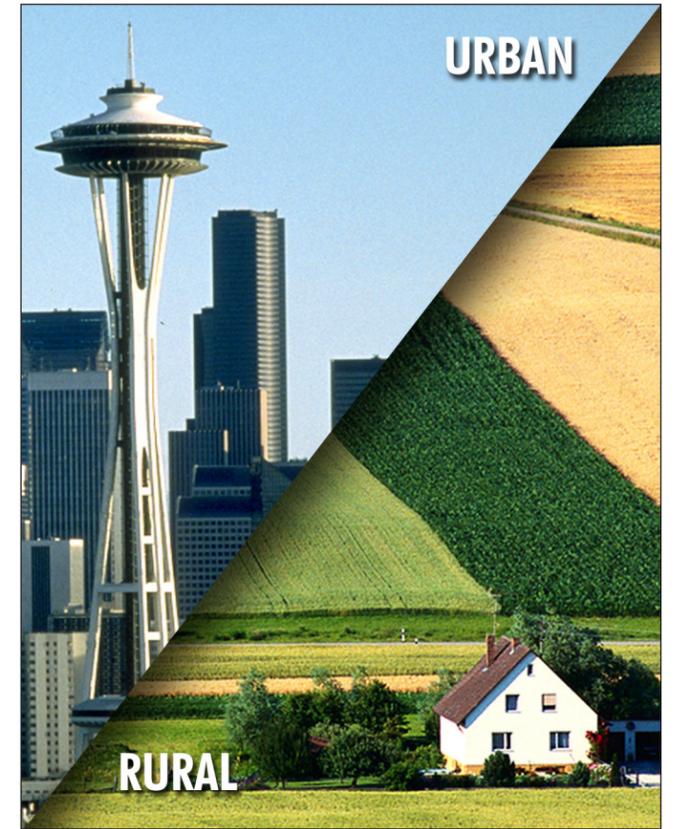


**Figure 8-1:** Ratio of UI claimants to number of total job postings\*  
Washington state, 2016

Source: Employment Security Department/WITS; Help Wanted OnLine®, Unemployment Insurance Wage File

Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual Average
Rural	2.14	1.49	1.34	1.08	0.78	0.58	0.68	0.61	0.54	0.67	0.99	1.45	0.96
Urban	0.56	0.44	0.42	0.36	0.31	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.28	0.29	0.31	0.39	0.34

\*Ratios depict the number of UI claimants receiving benefits during the month compared to the number of open online job postings – 2.00 means there are twice as many claimants as openings, 0.50 means there were twice as many openings as claimants. Local area and occupational-specific details of supply and demand are available in the following online tool at: <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/supply-demand-report>.



**Supply/demand:** In our monthly supply/demand report, the Employment Security Department (ESD) compares the number of job seekers to job openings. In the case of job seekers, we consider all unemployment insurance (UI) claimants as the supply. Employer demand is estimated by counting all online job postings. While neither of these data sources are perfect, in concert they provide an illustration of the number of available jobs to the number of job seekers.

Rural counties in Washington maintain a higher number of job seekers compared to job openings than urban counties. This means there are more people looking for work than there are available jobs. In 2016, rural counties had more job seekers than job openings in five out of the twelve months and the rural supply/demand annual average were more than double that of urban areas. **Figure 8-1** shows rural versus urban ratios of claimants to job postings followed by the annual average. **Figure 8-2** shows rural versus urban ratios of claimants to job postings by county followed by an annual count.

**Figure 8-2:** Ratio of UI claimants to number of total job postings\* by county

Washington state, 2016

Source: Employment Security Department/WITS; Help Wanted OnLine®, Unemployment Insurance Wage File

County	Urban	Rural	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Adams		✓	4.52	2.28	2.17	2.51	1.08	0.47	0.60	0.40	0.52	0.94	1.81	2.51	1.41
Asotin		✓	1.11	0.81	0.79	0.64	0.47	0.41	0.44	0.32	0.38	0.57	0.62	0.76	0.59
Benton	✓		1.01	0.68	0.64	0.52	0.46	0.40	0.44	0.41	0.39	0.45	0.57	0.91	0.56
Chelan		✓	1.69	1.27	1.04	0.86	0.65	0.38	0.47	0.44	0.30	0.38	0.58	0.94	0.68
Clallam		✓	1.82	1.23	1.03	0.77	0.72	0.51	0.54	0.47	0.55	0.65	0.76	1.05	0.78
Clark	✓		1.24	0.88	0.84	0.79	0.53	0.46	0.49	0.47	0.44	0.44	0.45	0.62	0.59
Columbia		✓	0.91	0.73	0.73	0.44	0.38	0.25	0.31	0.30	0.36	0.42	0.80	0.94	0.51
Cowlitz		✓	2.20	1.71	1.46	1.33	0.93	0.73	0.80	0.70	0.71	0.80	1.05	1.13	1.04
Douglas		✓	7.72	6.85	4.57	4.08	3.39	2.39	2.70	2.21	1.67	1.91	3.07	4.95	3.52
Ferry		✓	3.94	2.67	3.28	1.63	0.70	0.61	0.65	0.94	0.68	1.15	1.50	1.65	1.40
Franklin		✓	2.41	1.65	1.98	1.36	0.91	0.65	0.67	0.52	0.53	0.67	1.26	2.02	1.15
Garfield		✓	2.20	0.93	1.67	1.83	1.43	0.67	0.63	0.48	0.45	0.52	0.52	0.37	0.84
Grant		✓	3.27	1.99	1.73	1.23	0.76	0.54	1.14	0.63	0.69	0.62	1.25	2.14	1.22
Grays Harbor		✓	2.21	1.63	1.54	1.41	0.99	0.76	0.80	0.80	0.77	0.95	1.13	1.28	1.13
Island		✓	1.92	1.40	1.45	1.21	0.89	0.72	0.76	0.63	0.68	0.72	0.76	0.85	0.92
Jefferson		✓	2.21	1.81	1.57	1.31	0.97	0.77	0.76	0.81	0.95	1.27	1.06	1.24	1.15
King	✓		0.27	0.22	0.22	0.20	0.17	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.17	0.19	0.18
Kitsap	✓		0.78	0.66	0.66	0.61	0.53	0.46	0.48	0.47	0.50	0.54	0.57	0.63	0.56
Kittitas		✓	1.31	1.04	0.86	0.62	0.43	0.33	0.34	0.34	0.36	0.48	0.71	1.13	0.62
Klickitat		✓	1.95	1.27	1.04	0.88	0.69	0.57	0.43	0.40	0.39	0.62	0.86	1.38	0.78
Lewis		✓	2.00	1.36	1.36	1.16	0.81	0.79	0.77	0.68	0.62	0.71	0.91	1.17	0.97
Lincoln		✓	2.45	0.96	0.83	0.46	0.35	0.39	0.35	0.29	0.32	0.52	0.73	1.22	0.65
Mason		✓	1.68	1.29	1.23	1.07	0.70	0.67	0.75	0.82	0.89	1.05	1.04	1.37	1.01
Okanogan		✓	5.82	5.40	4.63	3.20	1.17	0.80	0.73	0.81	0.67	0.88	1.41	2.32	1.73
Pacific		✓	2.74	2.04	1.96	2.02	0.91	0.58	0.65	0.62	0.54	0.78	1.08	1.68	1.11
Pend Oreille		✓	5.97	3.92	3.00	1.87	1.24	0.97	1.30	1.14	0.95	1.16	1.43	1.72	1.77
Pierce	✓		1.04	0.83	0.80	0.69	0.57	0.52	0.54	0.51	0.56	0.61	0.65	0.78	0.66
San Juan		✓	2.12	1.58	1.35	0.95	0.77	0.71	0.47	0.53	0.48	0.77	0.87	1.42	1.01
Skagit		✓	1.10	0.78	0.73	0.59	0.50	0.45	0.47	0.43	0.45	0.54	0.66	0.89	0.60
Skamania		✓	3.78	2.40	1.73	1.34	0.94	0.78	0.77	0.96	1.12	1.38	2.90	3.00	1.53
Snohomish	✓		1.13	0.92	0.88	0.77	0.65	0.61	0.64	0.61	0.64	0.68	0.72	0.93	0.75
Spokane	✓		1.14	0.89	0.75	0.58	0.44	0.41	0.39	0.35	0.37	0.40	0.49	0.78	0.55
Stevens		✓	2.68	2.38	2.53	1.73	0.93	0.66	0.76	0.61	0.55	0.79	1.23	1.70	1.26
Thurston	✓		0.68	0.55	0.55	0.49	0.38	0.35	0.33	0.31	0.33	0.38	0.43	0.52	0.43
Wahkiakum		✓	2.14	1.59	1.94	1.39	1.17	0.93	0.92	1.16	1.47	2.55	3.36	4.86	1.63
Walla Walla		✓	1.24	0.80	0.76	0.56	0.39	0.32	0.29	0.31	0.30	0.30	0.48	0.81	0.51
Whatcom	✓		1.06	0.77	0.67	0.54	0.45	0.42	0.43	0.38	0.39	0.41	0.49	0.78	0.54
Whitman		✓	0.19	0.14	0.13	0.10	0.09	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.16	0.10
Yakima		✓	2.97	2.02	1.60	1.45	1.15	0.77	1.02	1.01	0.63	0.89	1.57	2.43	1.40

\*Ratios depict the number of UI claimants receiving benefits during the month compared to the number of open online job postings – 2.00 means there are twice as many claimants as openings, 0.50 means there were twice as many openings as claimants. Local area and occupational-specific details of supply and demand are available in the following online tool at: <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/supply-demand-report>.

**Figure 13:** Urban versus rural labor market information by county

Washington state, 2015

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

2015

County	Urban	Rural	Population	Labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment rate
Adams		✓	19,410	8,614	8,014	600	7.0%
Asotin		✓	22,010	9,674	9,207	467	4.8%
Benton	✓		188,590	91,712	85,546	6,166	6.7%
Chelan		✓	75,030	42,610	40,223	2,387	5.6%
Clallam		✓	72,650	26,796	24,609	2,187	8.2%
Clark	✓		451,820	214,314	200,438	13,876	6.5%
Columbia		✓	4,090	1,694	1,582	112	6.6%
Cowlitz		✓	104,280	44,104	40,678	3,426	7.8%
Douglas		✓	39,990	19,763	18,492	1,271	6.4%
Ferry		✓	7,710	2,475	2,222	253	10.2%
Franklin		✓	87,150	38,957	35,981	2,976	7.6%
Garfield		✓	2,260	930	872	58	6.2%
Grant		✓	93,930	44,679	41,407	3,272	7.3%
Grays Harbor		✓	73,110	26,914	24,461	2,453	9.1%
Island		✓	80,600	31,751	29,799	1,952	6.1%
Jefferson		✓	30,880	11,195	10,392	803	7.2%
King	✓		2,052,800	1,178,606	1,128,497	50,109	4.3%
Kitsap	✓		258,200	115,297	108,858	6,439	5.6%
Kittitas		✓	42,670	20,837	19,534	1,303	6.3%
Klickitat		✓	21,000	9,452	8,770	682	7.2%
Lewis		✓	76,660	31,217	28,574	2,643	8.5%
Lincoln		✓	10,720	4,873	4,587	286	5.9%
Mason		✓	62,200	23,010	21,197	1,813	7.9%
Okanogan		✓	41,860	21,226	19,743	1,483	7.0%
Pacific		✓	21,210	8,096	7,364	732	9.0%
Pend Oreille		✓	13,240	4,600	4,153	447	9.7%
Pierce	✓		830,120	392,178	366,814	25,364	6.5%
San Juan		✓	16,180	7,717	7,342	375	4.9%
Skagit		✓	120,620	56,678	52,816	3,862	6.8%
Skamania		✓	11,430	4,949	4,579	370	7.5%
Snohomish	✓		757,600	401,834	383,202	18,632	4.6%
Spokane	✓		488,310	227,775	212,844	14,931	6.6%
Stevens		✓	44,030	17,442	15,878	1,564	9.0%
Thurston	✓		267,410	125,688	118,146	7,542	6.0%
Wahkiakum		✓	3,980	1,293	1,176	117	9.0%
Walla Walla		✓	60,650	28,040	26,381	1,659	5.9%
Whatcom	✓		209,790	104,215	97,986	6,229	6.0%
Whitman		✓	47,250	22,743	21,630	1,113	4.9%
Yakima		✓	249,970	121,729	111,845	9,884	8.1%

**Figure 12:** Urban versus rural labor market information by county

Washington state, 2014

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

2014

County	Urban	Rural	Population	Labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment rate
Adams		✓	19,400	8,538	7,928	610	7.1%
Asotin		✓	21,950	9,692	9,171	521	5.4%
Benton	✓		186,500	89,766	83,050	6,716	7.5%
Chelan		✓	74,300	41,107	38,578	2,529	6.2%
Clallam		✓	72,500	26,697	24,455	2,242	8.4%
Clark	✓		442,800	209,023	194,315	14,708	7.0%
Columbia		✓	4,080	1,738	1,614	124	7.1%
Cowlitz		✓	103,700	43,549	40,039	3,510	8.1%
Douglas		✓	39,700	19,296	17,925	1,371	7.1%
Ferry		✓	7,660	2,449	2,170	279	11.4%
Franklin		✓	86,600	37,995	34,830	3,165	8.3%
Garfield		✓	2,240	958	895	63	6.6%
Grant		✓	92,900	44,772	41,446	3,326	7.4%
Grays Harbor		✓	73,300	27,159	24,412	2,747	10.1%
Island		✓	80,000	31,675	29,583	2,092	6.6%
Jefferson		✓	30,700	11,179	10,283	896	8.0%
King	✓		2,017,250	1,160,967	1,106,769	54,198	4.7%
Kitsap	✓		255,900	113,404	106,465	6,939	6.1%
Kittitas		✓	42,100	20,169	18,771	1,398	6.9%
Klickitat		✓	20,850	9,571	8,830	741	7.7%
Lewis		✓	76,300	30,498	27,737	2,761	9.1%
Lincoln		✓	10,700	5,029	4,739	290	5.8%
Mason		✓	62,000	23,097	21,169	1,928	8.3%
Okanogan		✓	41,700	21,286	19,764	1,522	7.2%
Pacific		✓	21,100	7,845	7,070	775	9.9%
Pend Oreille		✓	13,210	4,573	4,116	457	10.0%
Pierce	✓		821,300	384,953	357,923	27,030	7.0%
San Juan		✓	16,100	7,679	7,296	383	5.0%
Skagit		✓	119,500	56,393	52,317	4,076	7.2%
Skamania		✓	11,370	4,938	4,532	406	8.2%
Snohomish	✓		741,000	396,508	375,864	20,644	5.2%
Spokane	✓		484,500	225,105	209,443	15,662	7.0%
Stevens		✓	43,900	17,372	15,756	1,616	9.3%
Thurston	✓		264,000	123,207	115,210	7,997	6.5%
Wahkiakum		✓	4,010	1,274	1,151	123	9.7%
Walla Walla		✓	60,150	28,415	26,667	1,748	6.2%
Whatcom	✓		207,600	101,161	94,522	6,639	6.6%
Whitman		✓	46,500	22,119	20,965	1,154	5.2%
Yakima		✓	248,800	119,292	108,939	10,353	8.7%

**Median home prices:** While the pattern of rising home prices in Washington certainly differs by county, the overall trend does appear to signal a growing preference for urban living. As shown in **Figure 9** growth in the median home prices in urban areas have outpaced that of rural areas between 2012 and 2016. In Washington state, median home prices in urban areas are higher than home prices in rural areas. In 2016, the median home price in urban areas of Washington was over \$95,000 higher than rural areas. King County led all urban areas in median home price growth between 2012 and 2016 with a median home price of \$566,200 in 2016.

**Figure 9:** Urban versus rural median home prices

Washington state and all counties, 2012 through 2016

Source: Washington Center for Real Estate Research

Category	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Urban	\$231,656	\$250,689	\$263,644	\$284,856	\$314,200
Rural	\$173,310	\$180,250	\$183,977	\$200,913	\$219,047
County	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Adams	\$128,300	\$132,700	\$127,300	\$140,800	\$145,900
Asotin	\$150,600	\$161,800	\$160,100	\$170,300	\$178,000
Benton	\$183,300	\$186,600	\$190,400	\$201,200	\$222,800
Chelan	\$220,900	\$223,900	\$239,700	\$269,800	\$275,600
Clallam	\$191,500	\$193,400	\$207,000	\$219,300	\$250,700
Clark	\$197,900	\$229,700	\$247,600	\$263,200	\$294,600
Columbia	\$145,400	\$153,700	\$130,000	\$166,900	\$140,000
Cowlitz	\$136,600	\$150,500	\$162,000	\$179,100	\$199,900
Douglas	\$202,100	\$207,000	\$223,000	\$238,300	\$259,000
Ferry	\$95,000	\$134,000	\$130,000	\$127,500	\$95,000
Franklin	\$183,300	\$186,600	\$190,400	\$201,200	\$222,800
Garfield	\$150,600	\$161,800	\$160,100	\$170,300	\$178,000
Grant	\$154,900	\$156,900	\$160,200	\$165,400	\$182,400
Grays Harbor	\$113,000	\$118,800	\$123,200	\$138,800	\$151,600
Island	\$251,200	\$255,000	\$266,700	\$290,400	\$316,900
Jefferson	\$239,900	\$261,400	\$254,500	\$276,600	\$320,200
King	\$367,700	\$420,500	\$449,600	\$493,800	\$566,200
Kitsap	\$237,800	\$242,500	\$243,500	\$260,200	\$288,400
Kittitas	\$194,900	\$210,900	\$220,100	\$243,700	\$259,900
Klickitat	\$188,300	\$189,400	\$180,000	\$204,900	\$236,600
Lewis	\$142,100	\$141,600	\$150,500	\$158,700	\$174,000
Lincoln	\$82,000	\$67,500	\$127,500	\$80,000	\$80,000
Mason	\$157,100	\$152,300	\$158,500	\$170,800	\$194,100
Okanogan	\$153,200	\$159,700	\$151,400	\$167,400	\$182,900
Pacific	\$102,300	\$114,000	\$125,300	\$141,600	\$143,500
Pend Oreille	\$133,400	\$119,800	\$143,700	\$150,400	\$156,400
Pierce	\$194,700	\$217,700	\$231,900	\$251,900	\$279,000
San Juan	\$351,400	\$391,500	\$419,400	\$441,400	\$467,100
Skagit	\$209,400	\$228,600	\$236,500	\$258,100	\$287,300
Skamania	\$178,600	\$188,600	\$173,700	\$217,600	\$256,500
Snohomish	\$261,900	\$299,100	\$328,700	\$363,800	\$391,700
Spokane	\$170,100	\$174,500	\$178,400	\$192,200	\$207,300
Stevens	\$133,400	\$119,800	\$143,700	\$150,400	\$156,400
Thurston	\$219,100	\$224,000	\$231,400	\$247,000	\$266,100
Wahkiakum	\$127,500	\$145,000	\$75,000	\$167,500	\$212,500
Walla Walla	\$166,500	\$180,700	\$176,300	\$186,400	\$213,800
Whatcom	\$252,400	\$261,600	\$271,300	\$290,400	\$311,700
Whitman	\$196,700	\$212,900	\$201,600	\$204,100	\$228,700
Yakima	\$161,800	\$160,100	\$160,600	\$166,800	\$189,000
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>\$236,600</b>	<b>\$253,800</b>	<b>\$267,600</b>	<b>\$289,200</b>	<b>\$314,900</b>

The following five tables show urban versus rural labor market information for the most recent five years, by individual county in Washington state, and is updated annually.

**Figure 10:** Urban versus rural labor market information by county

Washington state, 2012

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

2012

County	Urban	Rural	Population	Labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment rate
Adams		✓	19,050	8,226	7,478	748	9.1%
Asotin		✓	21,700	9,758	8,998	760	7.8%
Benton	✓		180,000	92,001	83,429	8,572	9.3%
Chelan		✓	73,200	41,376	38,066	3,310	8.0%
Clallam		✓	72,000	28,140	25,198	2,942	10.5%
Clark	✓		431,250	209,315	189,618	19,697	9.4%
Columbia		✓	4,100	1,820	1,669	151	8.3%
Cowlitz		✓	103,050	44,534	39,773	4,761	10.7%
Douglas		✓	38,900	19,254	17,504	1,750	9.1%
Ferry		✓	7,650	2,443	2,060	383	15.7%
Franklin		✓	82,500	39,151	35,350	3,801	9.7%
Garfield		✓	2,250	1,020	942	78	7.6%
Grant		✓	91,000	43,896	39,723	4,173	9.5%
Grays Harbor		✓	73,150	28,864	25,118	3,746	13.0%
Island		✓	79,350	32,514	29,865	2,649	8.1%
Jefferson		✓	30,175	11,925	10,736	1,189	10.0%
King	✓		1,957,000	1,122,616	1,051,626	70,990	6.3%
Kitsap	✓		254,500	116,059	106,896	9,163	7.9%
Kittitas		✓	41,500	21,418	19,574	1,844	8.6%
Klickitat		✓	20,600	9,934	8,916	1,018	10.2%
Lewis		✓	76,300	32,219	28,359	3,860	12.0%
Lincoln		✓	10,675	5,243	4,861	382	7.3%
Mason		✓	61,450	23,542	20,974	2,568	10.9%
Okanogan		✓	41,425	21,138	19,132	2,006	9.5%
Pacific		✓	20,970	8,190	7,203	987	12.1%
Pend Oreille		✓	13,100	4,812	4,198	614	12.8%
Pierce	✓		808,200	386,802	350,748	36,054	9.3%
San Juan		✓	15,925	8,101	7,580	521	6.4%
Skagit		✓	117,950	57,087	51,575	5,512	9.7%
Skamania		✓	11,275	5,031	4,500	531	10.6%
Snohomish	✓		722,900	385,717	356,972	28,745	7.5%
Spokane	✓		475,600	230,321	209,410	20,911	9.1%
Stevens		✓	43,700	18,213	16,071	2,142	11.8%
Thurston	✓		256,800	123,153	112,761	10,392	8.4%
Wahkiakum		✓	4,025	1,376	1,201	175	12.7%
Walla Walla		✓	59,100	29,551	27,349	2,202	7.5%
Whatcom	✓		203,500	103,092	94,692	8,400	8.1%
Whitman		✓	45,950	22,406	20,931	1,475	6.6%
Yakima		✓	246,000	121,030	108,218	12,812	10.6%

**Figure 11:** Urban versus rural labor market information by county

Washington state, 2013

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

2013

County	Urban	Rural	Population	Labor force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment rate
Adams		✓	19,200	8,359	7,655	704	8.4%
Asotin		✓	21,800	9,773	9,121	652	6.7%
Benton	✓		183,400	90,130	82,044	8,086	9.0%
Chelan		✓	73,600	40,321	37,368	2,953	7.3%
Clallam		✓	72,350	27,286	24,650	2,636	9.7%
Clark	✓		435,500	207,983	190,235	17,748	8.5%
Columbia		✓	4,100	1,764	1,622	142	8.0%
Cowlitz		✓	103,300	43,246	38,979	4,267	9.9%
Douglas		✓	39,280	18,875	17,305	1,570	8.3%
Ferry		✓	7,650	2,481	2,145	336	13.5%
Franklin		✓	84,800	38,326	34,687	3,639	9.5%
Garfield		✓	2,250	983	910	73	7.4%
Grant		✓	91,800	43,927	40,106	3,821	8.7%
Grays Harbor		✓	73,200	28,077	24,730	3,347	11.9%
Island		✓	79,700	31,713	29,341	2,372	7.5%
Jefferson		✓	30,275	11,403	10,326	1,077	9.4%
King	✓		1,981,900	1,138,720	1,081,827	56,893	5.0%
Kitsap	✓		254,000	113,466	105,230	8,236	7.3%
Kittitas		✓	41,900	20,337	18,753	1,584	7.8%
Klickitat		✓	20,700	9,705	8,784	921	9.5%
Lewis		✓	76,200	31,296	27,977	3,319	10.6%
Lincoln		✓	10,675	5,080	4,730	350	6.9%
Mason		✓	61,800	23,321	20,979	2,342	10.0%
Okanogan		✓	41,500	20,961	19,149	1,812	8.6%
Pacific		✓	21,000	7,982	7,079	903	11.3%
Pend Oreille		✓	13,150	4,674	4,115	559	12.0%
Pierce	✓		814,500	383,593	351,362	32,231	8.4%
San Juan		✓	16,000	7,772	7,305	467	6.0%
Skagit		✓	118,600	56,646	51,749	4,897	8.6%
Skamania		✓	11,300	4,989	4,490	499	10.0%
Snohomish	✓		730,500	389,208	366,971	22,237	5.7%
Spokane	✓		480,000	226,958	208,331	18,627	8.2%
Stevens		✓	43,800	17,702	15,780	1,922	10.9%
Thurston	✓		260,100	122,555	113,216	9,339	7.6%
Wahkiakum		✓	4,020	1,291	1,136	155	12.0%
Walla Walla		✓	59,500	28,364	26,338	2,026	7.1%
Whatcom	✓		205,800	101,957	94,333	7,624	7.5%
Whitman		✓	46,000	22,166	20,825	1,341	6.0%
Yakima		✓	247,250	118,815	106,888	11,927	10.0%