

# The Monthly Employment Report

April 2026

Prepared by Anneliese Vance-Sherman, chief labor economist

On a seasonally adjusted basis, preliminary estimates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show nonfarm employment in Washington decreased by 4,500 from March to April 2026 after decreasing by 1,700 the previous month.<sup>a</sup> Employment in the private sector decreased by 1,500 in April. Public sector employment decreased by 3,000.

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, estimates for April 2025 through April 2026 show a decrease of 8,300 jobs statewide. Employers in the private sector collectively shed 2,900 jobs while employers in the public sector shed an estimated 5,400 jobs over the year.

Washington's preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2026 was 5.2%, up one tenth of one percentage point above the observed rate in March. For comparison, the unemployment rate in April 2025 was 4.5%.

BLS estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. Preliminary estimates are subject to revision.

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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, April and March 2026 and April and March 2025

United States	April 2026 preliminary	March 2026 revised	April 2025 revised	March 2025 revised
Unemployment rate	4.3%	4.3%	4.2%	4.2%

Washington	April 2026 preliminary	March 2026 revised	April 2025 revised	March 2025 revised
Unemployment rate	5.2%	5.1%	4.5%	4.5%
Resident labor force	4,062,961	4,064,363	4,047,911	4,047,126
Unemployed	212,533	208,996	183,272	181,390

Seattle/Tacoma/Bellevue	April 2026 preliminary	March 2026 revised	April 2025 revised	March 2025 revised
Unemployment rate	5.5%	5.4%	4.4%	4.4%
Resident labor force	2,318,947	2,321,061	2,320,530	2,324,447
Unemployed	126,493	125,967	102,234	101,888

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

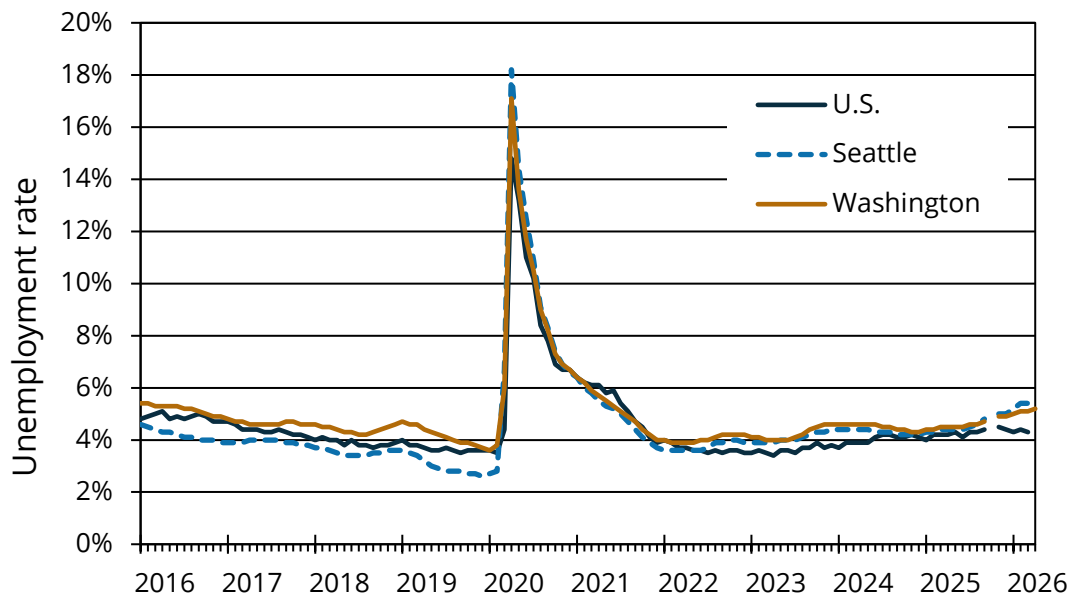
## Unemployment, seasonally adjusted

The BLS estimates Washington’s preliminary seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April 2026 was 5.2%, slightly above 5.1% reported in March 2026. October observations were not calculated as the survey that informs the unemployment rate did not occur during the federal government shutdown. The revised estimate for April 2025 was 4.5%.

According to BLS estimates, the number of unemployed Washington residents increased by 3,537 from March to April and the estimated number of employed Washington residents decreased by 4,999. These one-month shifts were sufficient to nudge the statewide unemployment rate up one tenth of one percentage point. Over the year, the estimated number of unemployed workers increased by 29,261 and the number of employed workers decreased by 14,211. The total labor force increased by 15,050 or 0.4% over the year. April 2026 preliminary unemployment rates:

- United States (revised) 4.3%
- Washington (preliminary) 5.2%
- Seattle area (preliminary) 5.5%

Figure 2: Unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted, U.S., Washington and Seattle, January 2016 through April 2026



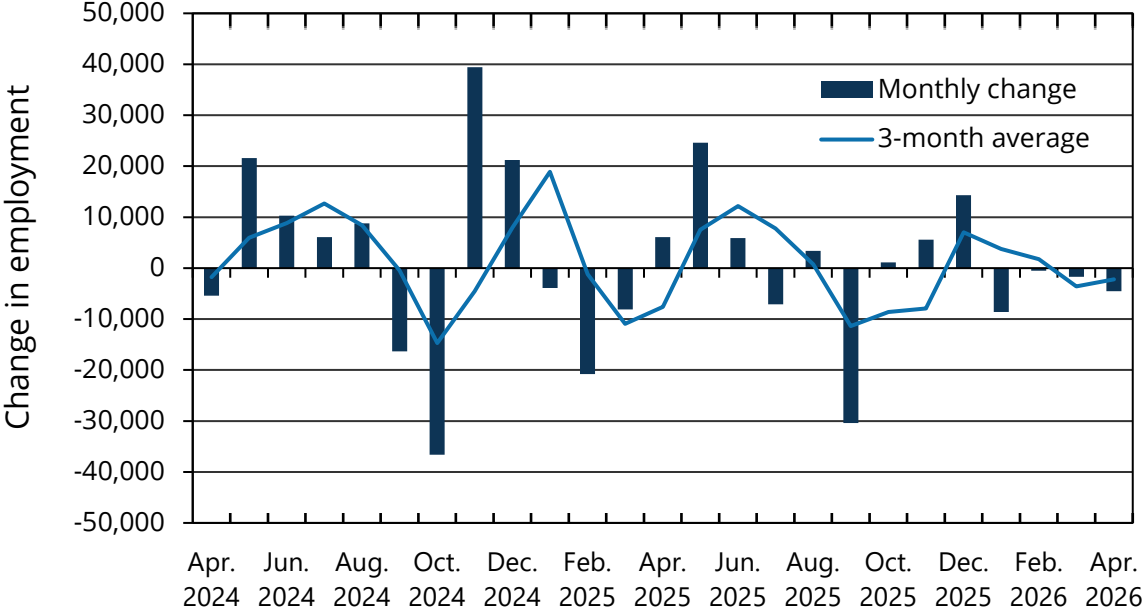
Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR Division; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

# Employment change, seasonally adjusted

Based on BLS estimates, Washington state nonfarm employment decreased by 4,500 from March to April 2026. Recent employment change:

- February 2026: down 500 (revised)
- March 2026: down 1,700 (revised)
- April 2026: down 4,500 (preliminary)

Figure 3: Monthly employment change, seasonally adjusted, Washington state, April 2024 through April 2026



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

## Employment and unemployment, seasonally adjusted

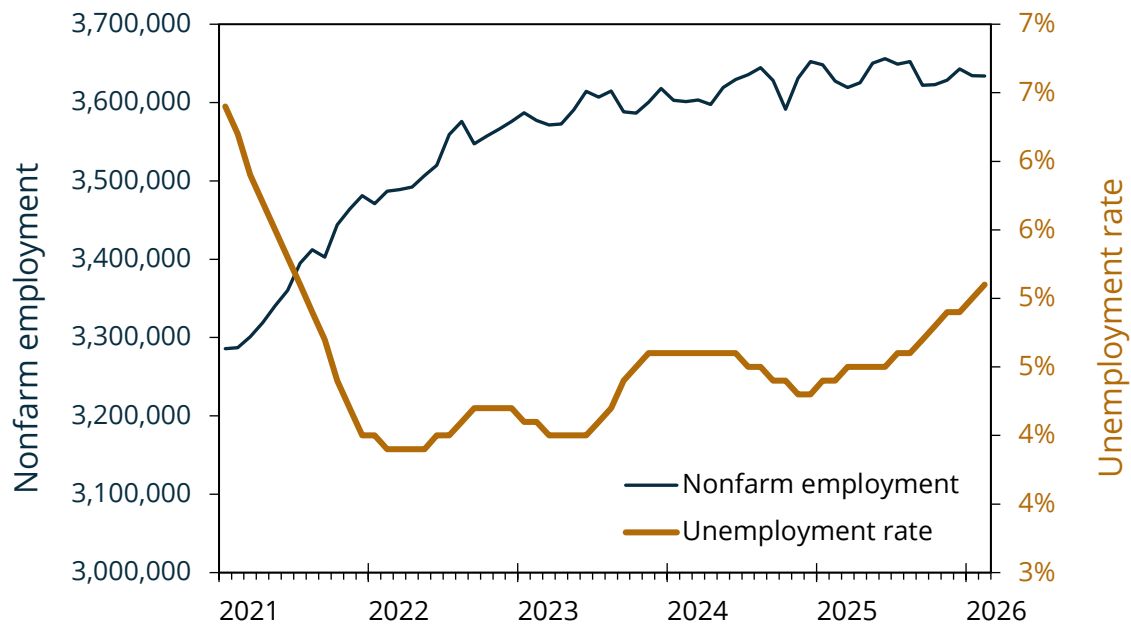
January 2021 (revised)

- Nonfarm employment: 3,285,800
- Unemployment rate: 6.4%

April 2026 (preliminary)

- Nonfarm employment: 3,627,600
- Unemployment rate: 5.2%

Figure 4: Nonfarm employment and unemployment rates, seasonally adjusted, Washington, January 2021 through April 2026



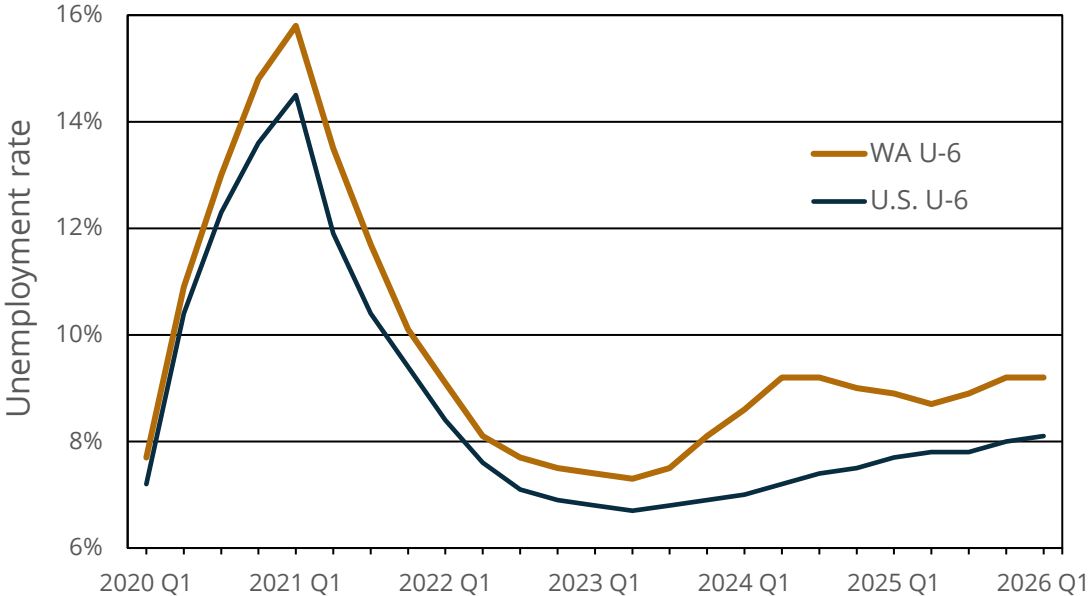
Source: Employment Security Department/LMIR; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.

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

BLS recently updated its alternative measures of labor underutilization for states to include four-quarter rates through the third quarter of 2025. 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 first quarter of 2026 for Washington state was 9.2%. This is unchanged relative to the previous four quarter moving average (9.2% through fourth quarter of 2025). The U.S. U-6 average for the four-quarter period through the first quarter of 2026 was 8.1%. 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-3 and U-6 unemployment rates



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

Year	WA/U.S.	Q1	Q2	Q3	Annual average
2026	WA	9.2%	-	-	-
2026	US	8.1%	-	-	-
2025	WA	8.9%	8.7%	8.9%	9.2%
2025	U.S.	7.7%	7.8%	7.8%	8.0%
2024	WA	8.6%	9.2%	9.2%	9.0%
2024	U.S.	7.0%	7.2%	7.4%	7.5%
2023	WA	7.4%	7.3%	7.5%	8.1%
2023	U.S.	6.8%	6.7%	6.8%	6.9%
2022	WA	9.1%	8.1%	5.0%	7.5%
2022	U.S.	8.4%	7.6%	7.1%	6.9%
2021	WA	15.8%	13.5%	11.7%	10.1%
2021	U.S.	14.5%	11.9%	10.4%	9.4%
2020	WA	8.1%	10.9%	13.0%	14.8%
2020	U.S.	7.7%	10.4%	12.3%	13.6%

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 shed an estimated 4,500 jobs over the month, on a seasonally adjusted basis:

- The one-month drop in employment is the fourth consecutive month of falling employment. So far, every month in calendar year 2026 has been marked by net job losses in Washington. Quarterly benchmarks were applied to this report, leading to downward revisions.
- Employment from March to April 2026 increased in five major industry sectors and decreased in seven. Employment tallies in one sector remained unchanged over the month.
- Employment losses from March to April were observed in both the private and public sectors. The private sector shed 1,500 jobs in April and public sector employers shed 3,000 jobs.

- The largest one-month sector level gains in private industry were observed in financial activities (up 900) and manufacturing, transportation warehousing and utilities and other services (each added 400). Financial activities gains were observed throughout the sector, including finance and insurance and real estate, rental and leasing.
- The deepest one-month private sector losses were observed in construction (down 1,300) and professional and business services (down 900). Construction losses were concentrated in construction of buildings (down 1,000) and heavy and civil engineering (down 500). The deepest losses in professional and business services were attributable to other administrative services.

Figure 7: Estimated one-month employment change by industry sector, seasonally adjusted, Washington state, March to April 2026

Industry sector	One-month change
Total nonfarm	-4,500
Financial activities	900
Manufacturing	400
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	400
Other services	400
Leisure and hospitality	300
Mining and logging	0
Private education and health services	-300
Retail trade	-400
Wholesale trade	-500
Information	-500
Professional and business services	-900
Construction	-1,300
Government	-3,000

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 shed an estimated 8,300 jobs from April 2025 to April 2026. This is a 0.2% decrease in employment over the year – a tally that was virtually unchanged over the year.

- Over the past 12 months, employment in five major industry sectors increased and seven decreased; one remained unchanged.
- Private sector employment decreased by 2,900 jobs or 0.1%.

- Public sector employment decreased by 5,400 or 0.9%.
  - One-year losses were concentrated in state and federal government. Federal government was down 5,000 or 6.3% in April.
- The largest private sector gains were attributable to hiring in professional and business services (up 4,900), and transportation, warehousing and utilities (up 4,100). Private education and health services dropped to the third largest annual gains (2,700 or 0.5%) after a long stretch of leading Washington employment growth.
  - Professional and business services gains were concentrated among professional scientific and technical services (up 5,200) such as architectural and engineering services (900) and legal services (700).
- The deepest private sector losses were observed in retail trade (down 5,900) and information (down 4,700).
  - Losses in retail trade were widespread throughout the sector but pronounced in motor vehicle and parts dealers (down 2,200) and building materials and garden supply stores (down 1,600).

Figure 8: Estimated employment change by industry sector over the year, not seasonally adjusted, Washington state, April 2025 through April 2026

Industry sector	One year change
Total nonfarm	-8,300
Professional and business services	4,900
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	4,100
Private education and health services	2,700
Manufacturing	1,200
Leisure and hospitality	1,000
Mining and logging	0
Construction	-300
Other services	-300
Wholesale trade	-2,700
Financial activities	-2,900
Information	-4,700
Government	-5,400
Retail trade	-5,900

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:** expected monthly change in employment based on history.
- **Estimated change:** employment change over the month based on BLS survey data.
- **Seasonally adjusted change:** change in employment accounting for normal seasonal patterns.

Figure 9: Normal seasonal change, estimated change and seasonally adjusted change, Washington state, April 2026

Industry sector	Normal seasonal change	Estimated change	Seasonally adjusted change
Total nonfarm	14,200	9,700	-4,500
Financial activities	-100	800	900
Manufacturing	100	500	400
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	-400	0	400
Other services	700	1,100	400
Leisure and hospitality	6,300	6,600	300
Mining and logging	100	100	0
Private education and health services	-600	-900	-300
Retail trade	900	500	-400
Wholesale trade	200	-300	-500
Information	-200	-700	-500
Professional and business services	2,000	1,100	-900
Construction	2,400	1,100	-1,300
Government	2,800	-200	-3,000

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. on Apr. 21, 2026. The 2025 publication schedule can be found on [Employment Security's website](#)

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