



# Grant County

## Labor Area Summary

### May 2015

Donald W. Meseck, Regional Labor Economist  
 Employment Security Department  
 Yakima WorkSource, 306 Division Street, Yakima, WA 98902  
 Phone: (509) 573-4564; E-mail: [dmeseck@esd.wa.gov](mailto:dmeseck@esd.wa.gov)  
 Website: <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/>

## Overview

This report provides an update on the Grant County economy incorporating current, not seasonally adjusted, nonfarm employment and civilian labor force data. Analysis focuses on year-over-year (between the Mays of 2014 and 2015) and average annual (between 2013 and 2014) labor market changes.

## Unemployment rates

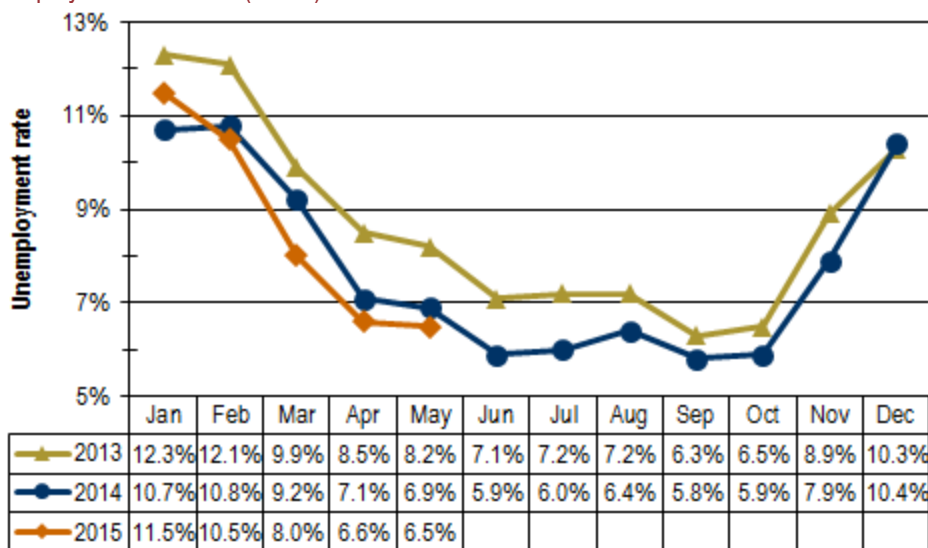
Preliminary labor force data show that Washington state's average annual not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased eight-tenths of a percentage point between 2013 and 2014, from 7.0 percent to 6.2 percent. Between the Mays of 2014 and 2015 the rate declined seven-tenths of a point, from 6.0 to 5.3 percent.

In Grant County, the average annual unemployment rate decreased nine-tenths of a percentage point between 2013 and 2014, from 8.6 to 7.7 percent. The rate decreased four-tenths of a point this May to 6.5 percent from the 6.9 percent reading in May 2014 (see *Figure 1*) as the number of unemployed residents dropped and the labor force expanded (see *Figure 3*).

**Figure 1.** Unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted

Grant County, January 2013 through May 2015

Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)



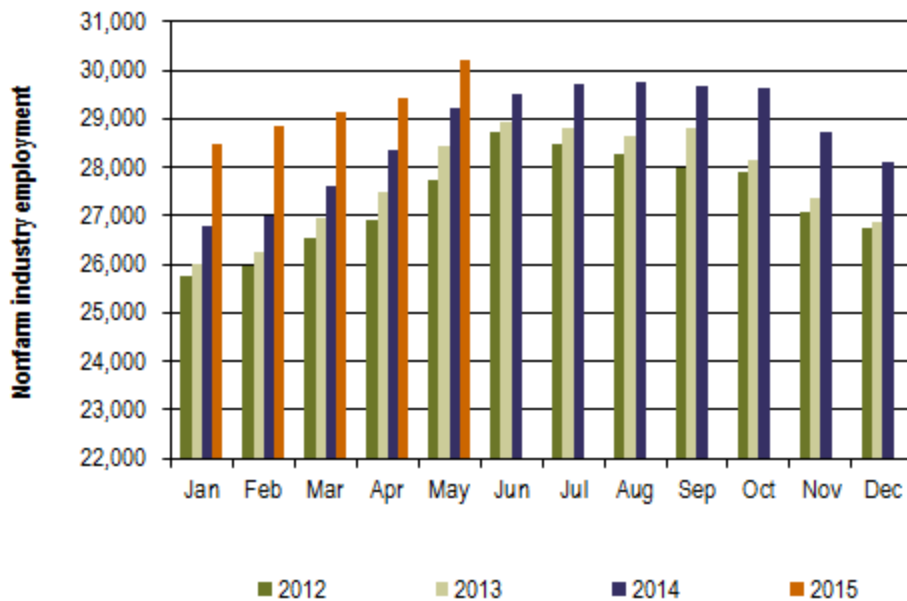
The Grant County unemployment rate decreased four-tenths of a point, from 6.9 percent in May 2014 to 6.5 percent in May 2015.

## Total nonfarm employment

Between 2013 and 2014, Washington's labor market provided 82,900 new nonfarm jobs, an annual average increase of 2.8 percent. This May, businesses and government organizations across Washington supplied 3,179,000 nonfarm jobs (not seasonally adjusted), compared to 3,067,500 jobs in May 2014, a 3.6 percent year-over-year employment increase. The state's economy has posted nonfarm employment increases for the past 56 consecutive months (October 2010 through May 2015).

Between 2013 and 2014, Grant County's labor market provided 950 new nonfarm jobs, an average annual increase of 3.4 percent, more robust than the state's 2.8 percent job growth rate in 2014. In May 2015, local nonfarm employers provided 30,220 jobs; a 3.4 percent and 1,000 job expansion from the 29,220 recorded in May 2014 (see *Figure 2*). The Grant County economy has registered year-over-year nonfarm employment increases for the past 32 months (from October 2012 through May 2015).

**Figure 2. Nonfarm industry employment**  
Grant County, January 2012 through May 2015  
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA



*Nonfarm employers in Grant County provided 30,220 nonfarm jobs in May 2015, a 3.4 percent upturn from May 2014.*

## Employment and unemployment

Washington's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) expanded by 28,140 residents (a 0.8 percent upturn) from 2013 to 2014. The state's labor force has increased for the past 16 months (February 2014 through May 2015).

Between the Mays of 2014 and 2015 the state's labor force grew by 2.1 percent. This May, Washington's CLF tallied 3,545,440 residents versus 3,472,300 in May 2014 equating to 73,140 more Washingtonians in the labor force.

The Grant County CLF increased 1.7 percent in 2014. The labor Force (CLF) has expanded for the past 13 months (May 2014 through May 2015). It increased 3.9 percent between the Mays of 2014 and 2015, from 44,310 to 46,040 residents (meaning that 1,730 more residents were in the labor force). The number of unemployed residing in Grant County declined from 3,060 in May 2014 to 3,000 in May 2015 (meaning that 60 fewer residents were out of work). The net result was the county's unemployment rate fell by four-tenths of a percentage point between the Mays of 2014 and 2015 (see *Figure 3*) – a good sign for the local economy.

**Figure 3. Labor force and industry employment, not seasonally adjusted**  
 Grant County, May 2014, April and May 2015  
 Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA

Grant County	Preliminary May-15	Revised Apr-15	Revised May-14	Change		
				Apr-15	May-14	May-14
				May-15	May-15	May-15 %
<b>Labor force and unemployment</b>						
Civilian labor force	46,040	44,680	44,310	1,360	1,730	3.9%
Resident employment	43,040	41,740	41,250	1,300	1,790	4.3%
Unemployment	3,000	2,940	3,060	60	-60	-2.0%
Unemployment rate	6.5	6.6	6.9	-0.1	-0.4	
<b>Industry employment</b>						
Total nonfarm <sup>1</sup>	30,220	29,420	29,220	800	1,000	3.4%
Total private	21,580	20,950	20,690	630	890	4.3%
Goods producing	6,390	6,220	5,980	170	410	6.9%
Mining, logging and construction	1,500	1,420	1,240	80	260	21.0%
Manufacturing	4,890	4,800	4,740	90	150	3.2%
Durable goods	2,280	2,280	2,250	0	30	1.3%
Nondurable goods	2,610	2,520	2,490	90	120	4.8%
Service providing	23,830	23,200	23,240	630	590	2.5%
Trade, transportation and utilities	6,060	5,970	5,750	90	310	5.4%
Wholesale trade	1,600	1,600	1,600	0	0	0.0%
Retail trade	3,380	3,340	3,200	40	180	5.6%
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	1,080	1,030	950	50	130	13.7%
Information and financial activities	1,200	1,200	1,250	0	-50	-4.0%
Professional and business services	1,900	1,840	1,640	60	260	15.9%
Education and health services	2,950	2,870	2,890	80	60	2.1%
Leisure and hospitality	2,510	2,320	2,610	190	-100	-3.8%
Government	8,640	8,470	8,530	170	110	1.3%
Federal government	760	770	750	-10	10	1.3%
State and local government	7,880	7,700	7,780	180	100	1.3%
State and local government education	3,700	3,700	3,640	0	60	1.6%
Workers in labor/management disputes	0	0	0	0	0	
<sup>1</sup> Excludes proprietors, self-employed, members of the armed services, workers in private households and agriculture. Includes all full- and part-time wage and salary workers receiving pay during the pay period including the 12th of the month. Columns may not add due to rounding.						

*Nonfarm employment in Grant County increased 3.4 percent, a gain of 1,000 jobs, between May 2014 and May 2015.*

## Nonfarm industry employment

Preliminary estimates (see *Figure 3*) indicate that Grant County's nonfarm employers provided 1,000 more jobs in May 2015 than in May 2014, a 3.4 percent upturn, slightly less than Washington's 3.6 percent growth pace during this period. Following is a summary of these recent over-the-year changes by industry:

- Most jobs in the combined "mining, logging and construction" category in Grant County are in construction and this category has been increasing year over year for the past 12 months (June 2014

through May 2015). Between the Mays of 2014 and 2015 construction jumped 21.0 percent, a 260 job expansion. Statewide, the construction has been adding workers for the past 39 months (March 2012 through May 2015).

- Grant County's manufacturing industry has been growing for 21 months (from September 2013 through May 2015). Between the Mays of 2014 and 2015 manufacturing employment increased by 3.2 percent, from 4,740 to 4,890 jobs, a 150 job expansion. An example of a local firm contributing to the manufacturing upturn was given in a 16 May 2015 *Columbia Basin Herald* article entitled "AstaReal celebrates one year of success in Moses Lake." This firm celebrated its one-year anniversary in Moses Lake in May 2015. The article stated: "AstaReal Technologies is a subsidiary of the Fuji Chemical Industry group, which is headquartered in Japan. AstaReal cultivates microalgae to produce an antioxidant compound called astaxanthin." It was also reported that this company "has created 52 jobs in Moses Lake." The May 2014 to May 2015 expansion was led by Grant County's local nondurable goods manufacturers (primarily food processors) which rose from 2,490 jobs in May 2014 to 2,610 this May, a 120 job and 4.8 percent upturn (as shown in *Figure 3*).
- Retail trade provided 3,200 full- and part-time jobs in May 2014 versus 3,380 in May of this year, a 5.6 percent increase (up 180 jobs). This industry has been posting year-over-year advances for the past nine months (September 2014 through May 2015). Statewide, retail trade employment has grown for the past 56 months (October 2010 through May 2015).
- Professional and business services consists of a diverse set of niche industries, ranging from computer systems design and accounting/tax preparation services to management services, legal services and temporary employment services. In short, professional and business services is the umbrella industry of businesses that support other businesses. Professional and business services provided 1,640 jobs countywide in May 2014 versus 1,900 in May 2015, a strong 15.9 percent increase and an upturn of 260.
- Leisure and hospitality employment in Grant County had posted year-over-year gains for seven consecutive months (October 2014 through April 2015) before declining 3.8 percent and losing 100 jobs between the Mays of 2014 and 2015. Conversely, Washington's leisure and hospitality industry has been adding jobs for 56 months (from October 2010 through May 2015).

## Agricultural employment/production

On May 15, 2015 the Governor declared a statewide drought as snowpack shrank to historic lows, river flows began to dwindle and irrigation districts started cutting off water to some farmers. Washington's Department of Ecology provided the following information reference this drought on their website: "We're really starting to feel the pain from this snowpack drought," Inslee said. "Impacts are already severe in several areas of the state. Difficult decisions are being made about what crops get priority water and how best to save fish." The Washington Department of Agriculture is projecting a \$1.2 billion crop loss this year as a result of the drought. As things continue to dry out, the Department of Natural Resources expects more early-season and higher-elevation wildfires. "This drought is unlike any we've ever experienced," said Washington Department of Ecology Director Maia Bellon. "Rain amounts have been normal but snow has been scarce. And we're watching what little snow we have quickly disappear."

On 24 June 2015 the U.S. Department of Agriculture designated 18 counties in Washington state as natural disaster areas because of the statewide drought. Farmers in these counties will be eligible for low interest emergency loans to help defray crop and business losses incurred because of the drought. Eligible counties are: Adams, Benton, Columbia, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, King, Klickitat, Kittitas, Lewis, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pierce, Skamania, Walla Walla, Whitman and Yakima. For more information go to the Department of Ecology website at: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/drought/index.html>.