



Grant County

Labor Area Summary

May 2013

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
 Website: <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/>

Overview

This report provides current updates on the Grant County economy. It incorporates the most recent, not seasonally adjusted, nonfarm and agricultural employment and civilian labor force data. Analysis focuses on year-over-year changes (between May 2012 and May 2013) in unemployment and on year-over-year employment trends in major industries in Grant County.

Unemployment rates

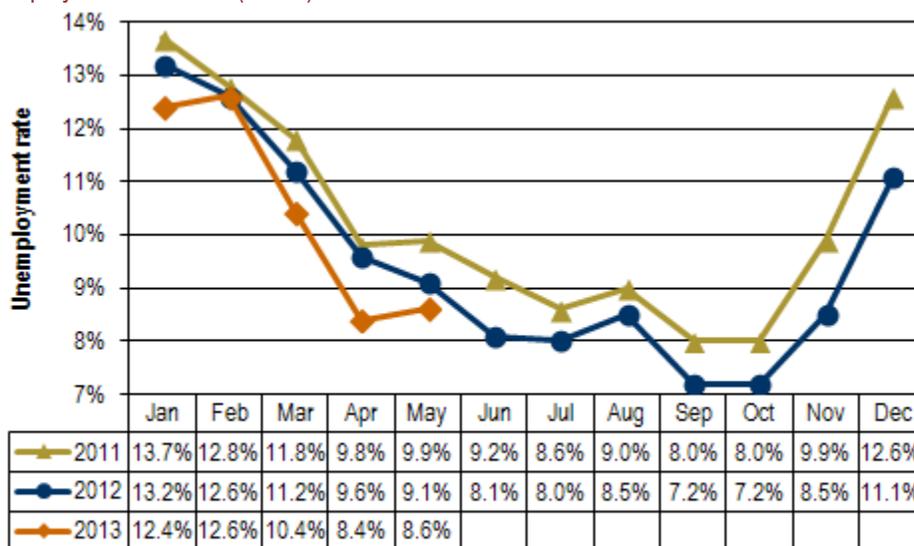
Washington state's annual average unemployment rate decreased one full percentage point between 2011 and 2012, from 9.2 percent to 8.2 percent. Between the Mays of 2012 and 2013 the rate fell from 8.3 to 6.6 percent, a one and seven-tenths percentage point drop.

The May 2013 unemployment rate of 8.6 percent (not seasonally adjusted) in Grant County decreased five-tenths of a percentage point from the 9.1-percent reading in May 2012. This May was the 32nd consecutive month of year-over-year decreases, or of no change, in the monthly unemployment rate (i.e. from October 2010 to May 2013).

Figure 1. Unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted

Grant County, January 2011 through May 2013

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



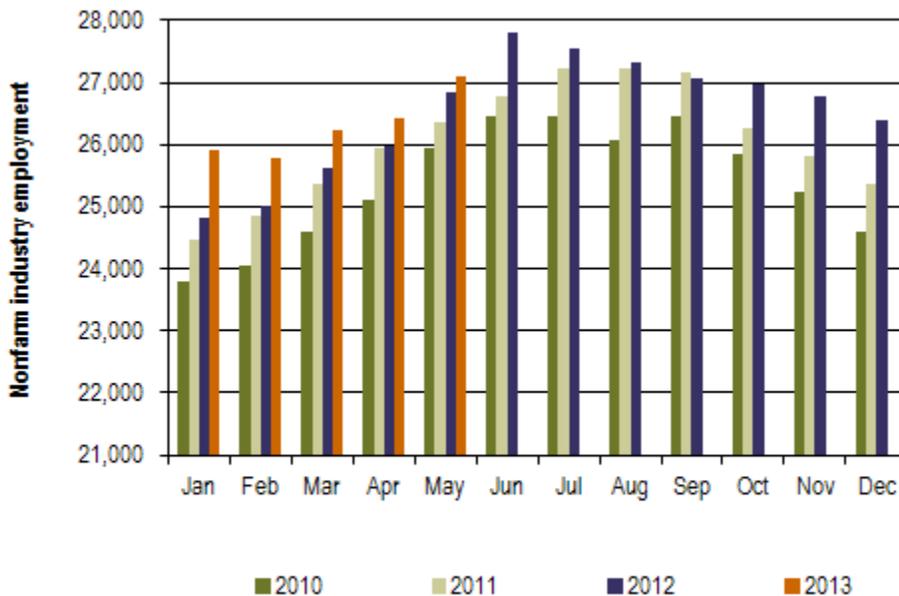
The Grant County unemployment rate declined five-tenths of a percentage point between May 2012 and May 2013.

Total nonfarm employment

Businesses and government organizations across Washington supplied 2,939,600 nonfarm jobs this May (not seasonally adjusted), compared to 2,878,800 jobs in May 2012. This equated to a 2.1 percent over-the-year statewide employment increase. Washington's labor market has been growing for 32 months (from October 2010 through May 2013).

Grant County's economy has posted year-over-year job growth since September 2010 (except for a downturn between the Septembers of 2011 and 2012). In May 2013, local nonfarm employers provided 27,090 jobs, a 0.9-percent and 240-job increase from the 26,850 jobs tallied in May of last year.

Figure 2. Nonfarm industry employment
Grant County, January 2010 through May 2013
Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA



Nonfarm employers in Grant County provided 27,090 nonfarm jobs in May 2013, a 0.9-percent upturn since May 2012.

Employment and unemployment

Washington's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) stabilized in 2012, following a 1.0 percent and 33,770-resident decrease in the labor force in 2011. However, the labor force decreased year over year during the last five calendar months of 2012 – a weak finish to the year. The CLF also downsized in the first three months of 2013, before stabilizing in April and May 2013. Washington's labor force was estimated to be 3,485,760 in May 2013, virtually identical to the 3,485,540 residents in the labor force in May of last year. The bottom line: the State's labor force has either stagnated or contracted year over year in each of the past ten months.

Grant County's CLF increased by 1,240 residents (up 3.0 percent) in 2012, but growth has virtually stalled in the past five months (i.e., from January through May 2013). Between the Mays of 2012 and 2013 the Grant County labor force contracted from 42,350 to 41,510 residents, respectively. A shrinking labor force is not good economic news. However, fewer residents were unemployed this May versus the same month in 2012 (3,870 residents were unemployed in May 2012 versus 3,560 in May 2013). Hence, although the labor force shrank between the Mays of 2012 and 2013, the number of unemployed decreased at a faster pace and the unemployment rate fell five-tenths of a percentage point in May 2013, as shown in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3. Labor force and industry employment, not seasonally adjusted
 Grant County, May 2013
 Source: Employment Security Department/LMEA

Grant County	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Change		
	May-13	Apr-13	May-12	Apr-13 May-13	May-12 May-13	May-12 May-13 %
Labor force and unemployment						
Civilian labor force	41,510	40,710	42,350	800	-840	-2.0%
Resident employment	37,950	37,270	38,480	680	-530	-1.4%
Unemployment	3,560	3,440	3,870	120	-310	-8.0%
Unemployment rate	8.6	8.4	9.1	0.2	-0.5	
Industry employment						
Total nonfarm ¹	27,090	26,410	26,850	680	240	0.9%
Total private	18,990	18,330	18,680	660	310	1.7%
Goods producing	5,500	5,390	5,570	110	-70	-1.3%
Service providing	21,590	21,020	21,280	570	310	1.5%
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	5,810	5,710	5,600	100	210	3.8%
Information and financial activities	1,280	1,180	1,040	100	240	23.1%
Government	8,100	8,080	8,170	20	-70	-0.9%
Workers in labor/management disputes	0	0	0	0	0	
¹ 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 0.9 percent, a gain of 240 jobs, between May 2012 and May 2013.

Nonfarm industry employment

On an annual average basis, nonfarm employment in the County grew by 450 jobs, a 1.7 percent increase between 2011 (26,060 jobs) and 2012 (26,510 jobs), and this uptrend is continuing into the first five months of 2013. Preliminary estimates (see *Figure 3*) illustrate that Grant County’s nonfarm employers netted 240 more jobs in May 2013 than in May 2012, a 0.9-percent upturn. The following is a summary of the most recent over-the-year changes, by major industry:

- The goods producing category is comprised primarily of construction and manufacturing firms. Goods producers averaged 150 new jobs in 2012, rising from 5,620 in 2011 to 5,770 last year (up by 2.7 percent). This category also expanded by 420 jobs in 2011, for an even more impressive 8.1-percent annual average employment increase. The upturns followed two years of dismal economic times. Specifically, Grant County’s goods producing firms lost 230 jobs in 2010 (down 4.2 percent) and another 800 jobs (down 12.8 percent) during 2009. Estimates indicate that year-over-year goods producing job growth stalled in the County during the last four reportable months of 2013 (i.e., from February through May 2013). In fact, this May there were 5,500 goods producing jobs versus 5,570 in May 2012 (see *Figure 3*). However it is likely the downturn is just a temporary “slump.” For example, one local goods producing business that has been faring well recently is Aviation Technical Services (ATS). This aircraft maintenance and repair firm is the local branch of Everett-based ATS and has recently occupied a 102,000-square-foot hangar at the Moses Lake airport, according to a 29 April 2013 article from *The Royal Register* entitled “Aerospace industry growing.” The article stated: “The expansion of ATS to Moses Lake created about 50 new jobs. The company plans to add an

additional 100 jobs over the next two years, depending on customer projects.” More encouraging economic news for this employment category: across Washington, goods producing firms have been hiring for 28 months (i.e. from February 2011 through May 2013) – and the Grant County economy is not immune to these statewide labor market trends.

- Service providing businesses and organizations increased from 21,280 jobs in May 2012 to 21,590 in May 2013. Year-over-year growth in Grant County's service providing industries has been positive for the last seven consecutive months (i.e. from October 2012 through May 2013). Statewide, service providing organizations have been expanding for 34 months (i.e. from August 2010 through May 2013). Within this service providing category however, government organizations throughout Grant County tallied 70 fewer jobs in May 2013 than in May 2012 (see *Figure 3*).

Agricultural employment

LMEA's *Agricultural Employment Labor and Wages* report for May 2013 showed the total number of agricultural jobs rose 17.1 percent over the year in the Columbia Basin Area 4, an agricultural reporting area that includes Adams and Grant counties. Total agricultural employment was 10,770 in May 2012 versus 12,610 in May 2013, a 1,840-job increase. A little more than 80 percent of agricultural jobs provided in this two-county area are on farms and orchards in Grant County. Weather conditions were cooler and wetter than normal during the reporting period. The first cutting of alfalfa was complete in some areas. Washington state, the country's number one producer of mint, expects a normal crop this year. Last year, Washington farmers grew mint on 30,800 acres, producing 3.6 million pounds of mint oil valued at \$75.6 million, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Services. Primary agricultural activities were apple hand thinning, general apple work, apple training, and potato warehouse work.