



Grant County

Labor Area Summary

December 2013

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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 December 2012 and December 2013) in unemployment and on year-over-year employment trends in major industries in Grant County.

Unemployment rates

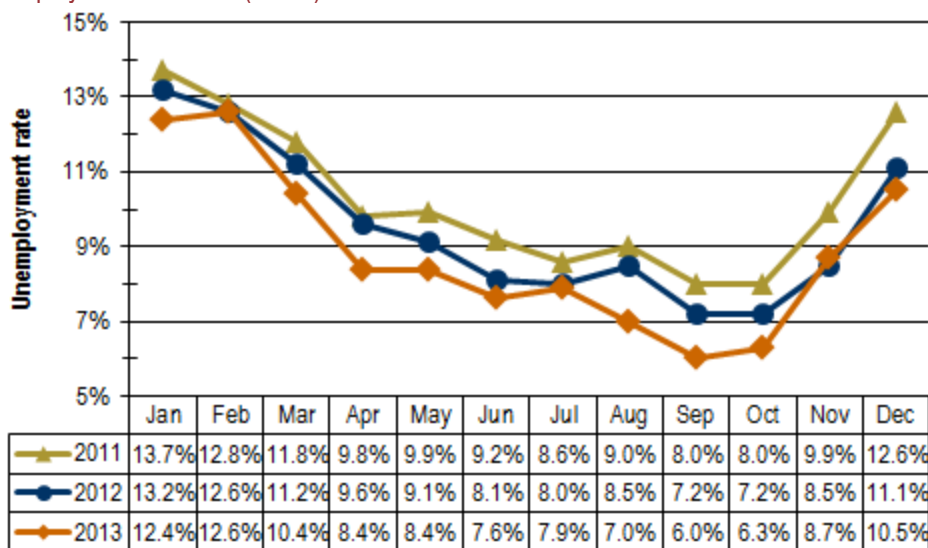
Washington state's annual average not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased one and two-tenths percentage points between 2012 and 2013, from 8.2 percent to 7.0 percent. Between the Decembers of 2012 and 2013 the rate decreased from 7.6 to 6.5, a one and one-tenth percentage points drop. Washington's unemployment rate has posted year-over-year declines for the past 37 months (since December 2010).

Grant County's December 2013 not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of 10.5 percent decreased six-tenths of a percentage point below the December 2012 reading of 11.1 percent. Although the rate rose two-tenths of a point (from 8.5 to 8.7 percent) between the Novembers of 2012 and 2013 and stabilized at 12.6 percent between the Februarys of 2012 and 2013, it decreased in the other ten months of 2013.

Figure 1. Unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted

Grant County, January 2011 through December 2013

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



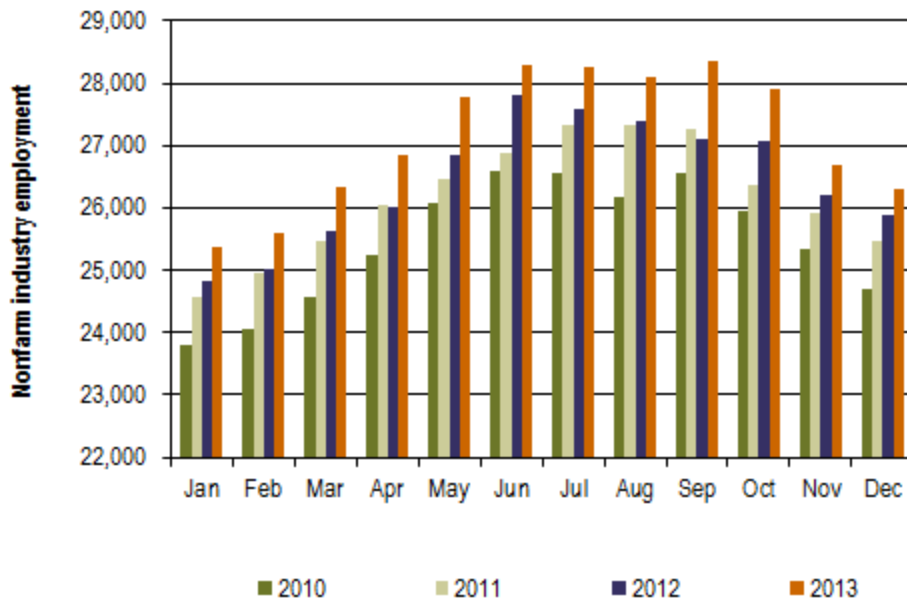
The Grant County unemployment rate decreased six-tenths of a percentage point between December 2012 and December 2013.

Total nonfarm employment

Businesses and government organizations across Washington supplied 2,956,500 nonfarm jobs this December (not seasonally adjusted), compared to 2,909,500 jobs in December 2012. This equated to a 1.6 percent year-over-year employment increase statewide. Washington's labor market has been expanding for 39 months (from October 2010 through December 2013).

Grant County's nonfarm labor market has registered year-over-year gains from October 2012 through December 2013, fifteen consecutive months of job growth. In December 2013, local nonfarm employers provided 26,290 jobs, a 1.5 percent and 400 job increase from the 25,890 jobs tallied in December 2012.

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



Nonfarm employers in Grant County provided 26,290 nonfarm jobs in December 2013, a 1.5 percent upturn from December 2012.

Employment and unemployment

In 2013 the state's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) shrank by 5,510 residents, a 0.2 percent downturn. In fact, Washington's labor force posted year-over-year growth in only three months during 2013 (in June, August, and November). The CLF tallied 3,432,770 residents in December 2013 versus 3,455,910 in December 2012, equating to 23,140 fewer Washingtonians in the labor force (down 0.7 percent).

Grant County's CLF expanded 0.8 percent during 2013 (from 42,370 residents in 2012 to 42,700 in 2013). The local labor force posted year-over-year growth from August through November 2013, but between the Decembers of 2012 and 2013 it contracted from 38,960 to 38,470 residents, a 470 person and 1.3 percent decrease. The upside was that fewer residents were unemployed this December than in the corresponding month in 2012 (4,330 residents were unemployed in December 2012 versus 4,020 in December 2013). The labor force shrinkage this December did not counter the more rapid decrease in the number of unemployed, hence the County's unemployment rate declined from 11.1 percent in December 2012 to 10.5 percent in December 2013 (as shown in *Figure 3*).

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

Grant County	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Change		
	Dec-13	Nov-13	Dec-12	Nov-13 Dec-13	Dec-12 Dec-13	Dec-12 Dec-13 %
Labor force and unemployment						
Civilian labor force	38,470	41,410	38,960	-2,940	-490	-1.3%
Resident employment	34,450	37,810	34,630	-3,360	-180	-0.5%
Unemployment	4,020	3,600	4,330	420	-310	-7.2%
Unemployment rate	10.5	8.7	11.1	1.8	-0.6	
Industry employment						
Total nonfarm ¹	26,290	26,700	25,890	-410	400	1.5%
Total private	18,180	18,470	17,970	-290	210	1.2%
Goods producing	5,030	5,260	5,490	-230	-460	-8.4%
Mining, logging, and construction	1,070	1,170	1,130	-100	-60	-5.3%
Manufacturing	3,960	4,090	4,360	-130	-400	-9.2%
Durable goods	1,810	1,810	1,950	0	-140	-7.2%
Nondurable goods	2,150	2,280	2,410	-130	-260	-10.8%
Service providing	21,260	21,440	20,400	-180	860	4.2%
Trade, transportation, and utilities	5,850	5,890	5,710	-40	140	2.5%
Wholesale trade	1,460	1,470	1,380	-10	80	5.8%
Retail trade	3,330	3,350	3,260	-20	70	2.1%
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	1,060	1,070	1,070	-10	-10	-0.9%
Information and financial activities	1,050	1,060	1,000	-10	50	5.0%
Professional and business services	1,610	1,520	1,150	90	460	40.0%
Education and health services	1,540	1,560	1,940	-20	-400	-20.6%
Leisure and hospitality	2,540	2,600	2,080	-60	460	22.1%
Government	8,110	8,230	7,920	-120	190	2.4%
Federal government	710	700	740	10	-30	-4.1%
State and local government	7,400	7,530	7,180	-130	220	3.1%
State and local government education	3,520	3,630	3,340	-110	180	5.4%
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 1.5 percent, a gain of 400 jobs, between December 2012 and December 2013.

Nonfarm industry employment

Specifically, on an annual average basis, nonfarm employment in Grant County:

- Plummeted from 26,890 in 2008 to 25,700 in 2009, a 1,190 job and 4.4 percent decline.
- Decreased from 25,700 in 2009 to 25,470 in 2010, a 230 job and 0.9 percent decline.
- Jumped from 25,470 in 2010 to 26,170 in 2011, a 700 job and 2.7 percent increase.

- Elevated from 26,170 in 2011 to 26,450 in 2012, a 280 job and 1.1 percent upturn.
- Increased from 26,450 in 2012 to 27,150 in 2013, a 700 job and 2.6 percent upturn.

The Grant County nonfarm labor market peaked at 26,980 jobs in 2007, but job losses during 2008, 2009, and 2010 were so severe that hiring during 2011 and 2012 could not bring employment back to its 2007 level. So, the question was: “Will hiring during 2013 be strong enough to bring annual average nonfarm employment back to, or above, where it was in 2007?” The state Employment Security Department released nonfarm December 2013 employment estimates on January 28, 2014 that indicate Grant County’s nonfarm labor market grew substantially during 2013 (i.e. by 700 jobs). Hence, the short answer to this question is: “Yes. Nonfarm employment in Grant County in 2013 averaged 27,150 – above the 2007 peak of 26,980.”

Preliminary estimates (see *Figure 3*) illustrate that Grant County’s nonfarm employers tallied 400 more jobs in December 2013 than in December 2012, a 1.5 percent upturn. Following is a summary of these recent over-the-year changes and annual average changes (between 2012 and 2013) by industry:

- Professional and business services gained 460 jobs (up 40 percent) between the Decembers of 2012 and 2013. On an annual average basis this category increased from 1,250 in 2012 to 1,440 in 2013, a strong 190 job and 15.2 percent increase. Professional and business services is a broad category that includes legal offices, accounting and tax preparation firms, private security companies, temporary job placement agencies, etc.
- Private education and health services lost 400 jobs from December 2012 to December 2013, a 20.6 percent downturn. On an annual average basis, losses were not as severe. Education and health services provided 1,970 jobs in 2012 and 1,890 in 2013, an 80 job and 4.1 percent contraction.
- Leisure and hospitality (primarily hotels and restaurants) increased from 2,080 in December 2012 to 2,540 one year later, a substantial 460 job and 22.1 percent upturn. This Grant County industry averaged 2,310 full- and part-time jobs in 2012 and 2,520 in 2013 (up 9.1 percent).
- State and local government education expanded from 3,340 positions in December 2012 to 3,520 in December 2013, a 5.4 percent upturn. Annual average estimates indicate state and local government education provided 210 more jobs in 2013 (3,400) than in 2012 (3,190), a 6.6 percent uptrend.

Agricultural employment

LMEA’s Agricultural Employment and Wage report for December 2013 showed the total number of agricultural jobs rose 16.4 percent over the year in the Columbia Basin Area 4, an agricultural reporting area that includes Adams and Grant counties. Total agricultural employment was 8,060 in December 2012 versus 9,380 in December 2013, a 1,320-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. It should also be noted that seasonal agricultural employment in the Columbia Basin’s Area 4 increased from 2,640 in December 2012, to 4,170 in December 2013 – a 58.0-percent surge. Why? According to the Agricultural Employment and Wage report, “Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment increased 58.0 percent due to increased apple work (820).”

In other agricultural news, growers were concerned about winter wheat damage in early December due to sub-zero temperatures on crops with no snow cover. This summer’s hot, dry weather shrank this year’s chickpeas, though the volume of Washington’s crop grew. The smaller size of the chickpeas, also called garbanzos, contributed to a decline in price that may lead some farmers next year to plant dried peas instead. In the U.S, Washington is the nation’s top grower of chickpeas. By weight, Washington farmers harvested about 1.5 million hundredweight of chickpeas this year, according to the USDA. That was up about 12 percent from last year.