



Grant County

Labor Area Summary

March 2014

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Overview

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

Unemployment rates

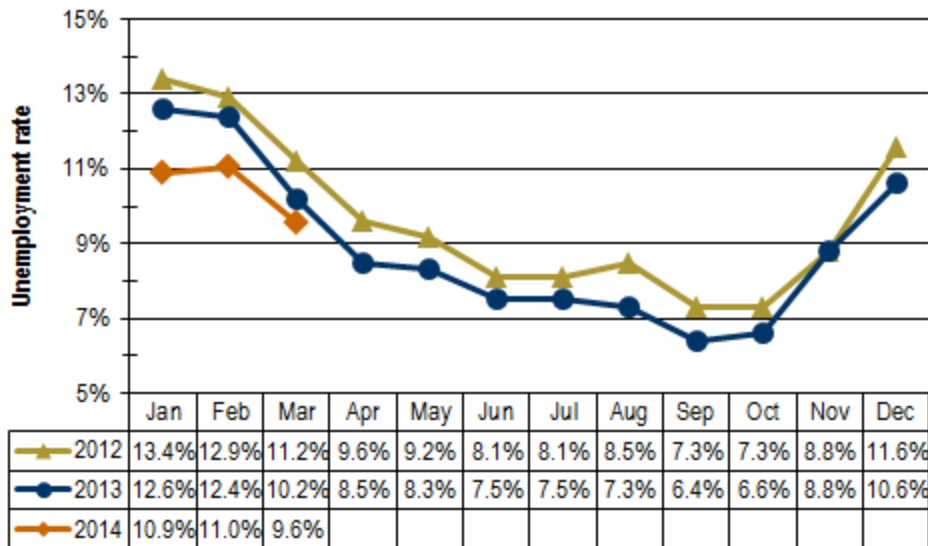
Washington state's annual average not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased one and one-tenths percentage points between 2012 and 2013, from 8.1 percent to 7.0 percent. Between the Marches of 2013 and 2014 the rate decreased from 7.5 to 6.9 percent, a six-tenths percentage point decline.

In Grant County, the annual average unemployment rate decreased eight-tenths of a percentage point between 2012 and 2013, from 9.6 to 8.8 percent. It decreased six-tenths of a percentage point this March to 9.6 percent from the 10.2 percent reading in March 2013 (as shown in *Figure 1*). Countywide, the number of residents unemployed fell from 4,120 in March 2013 to 3,860 in March 2014.

Figure 1. Unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted

Grant County, January 2012 through March 2014

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



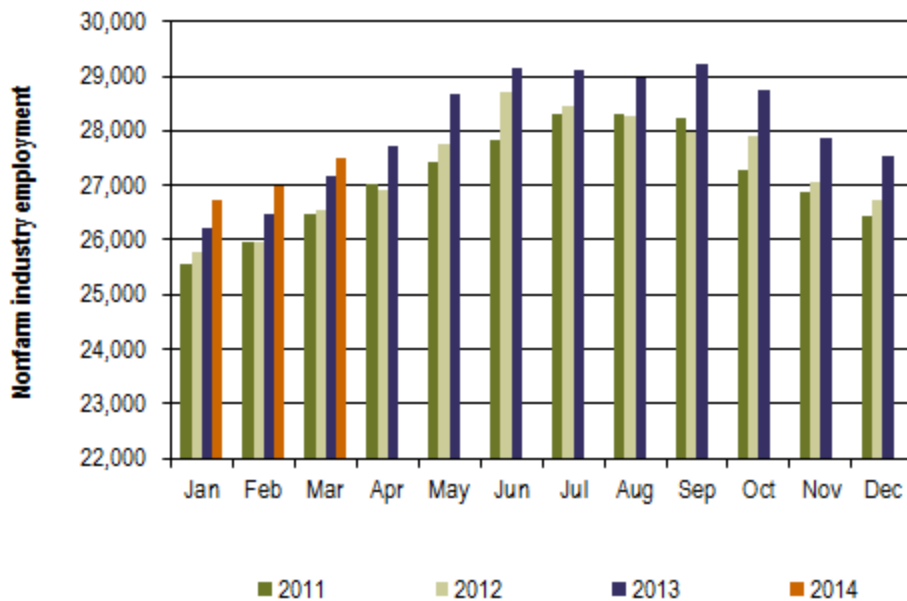
The Grant County unemployment rate decreased six-tenths of a percentage point between March 2013 and March 2014.

Total nonfarm employment

Businesses and government organizations across Washington supplied 3,005,300 nonfarm jobs this March (not seasonally adjusted), compared to 2,944,400 jobs in March 2013. This equated to a 2.1 percent year-over-year employment increase. The state's economy has posted nonfarm employment increases for the past 42 months (October 2010 through March 2014). In 2013, Washington's labor market provided 65,500 new jobs, an annual average increase of 2.2 percent.

Year over year, Grant County's nonfarm employment has increased for the past 18 months (October 2012 through March 2014). In March 2014 local nonfarm employers provided 27,510 jobs, a 1.2 percent and 320 job increase from the 27,190 jobs tallied in March 2013.

Figure 2. Nonfarm industry employment
Grant County, January 2011 through March 2014
Source: Employment Security Department/LMPA



Nonfarm employers in Grant County provided 27,510 nonfarm jobs in March 2014, a 1.2 percent upturn from March 2013.

Employment and unemployment

Washington's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) shrank by 23,600 residents (a 0.7 percent downturn) in 2013. In fact, Washington's CLF contracted from January 2013 through January 2014 (13 consecutive months) until it expanded 0.2 percent between the Februarys of 2013 and 2014 and 0.4 percent between the Marches of 2013 and 2014. In March of this year the state's labor force tallied 3,475,240 residents versus 3,461,510 in March 2013, equating to 13,730 more residents in the CLF (up 0.4 percent) – an encouraging sign.

The Grant County CLF expanded by 0.5 percent in 2013, but posted year over year losses in the first three months of 2014. This March, 40,350 residents were in the local labor force versus 40,440 in March 2013. The upside was that 260 fewer residents were unemployed in March 2014 compared with the corresponding month in 2013 (4,120 residents were unemployed in March 2013 versus 3,860 in March 2014). The labor force shrinkage between the Marches of 2013 and 2014 did not counter the more rapid decrease in the number of unemployed, hence the County's unemployment rate declined from 10.2 percent to 9.6 percent during this timeframe (as shown in *Figure 3*).

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

Grant County	Preliminary Mar-14	Revised Feb-14	Revised Mar-13	Change		
				Feb-14	Mar-13	Mar-13
				Mar-14	Mar-14	Mar-14 %
Labor force and unemployment						
Civilian labor force	40,350	39,380	40,440	970	-90	-0.2%
Resident employment	36,490	35,030	36,320	1,460	170	0.5%
Unemployment	3,860	4,350	4,120	-490	-260	-6.3%
Unemployment rate	9.6	11.0	10.2	-1.4	-0.6	
Industry employment						
Total nonfarm ¹	27,510	26,990	27,190	520	320	1.2%
Total private	19,250	18,790	19,000	460	250	1.3%
Goods producing	4,920	4,840	5,560	80	-640	-11.5%
Mining, logging and construction	1,070	980	1,160	90	-90	-7.8%
Manufacturing	3,850	3,860	4,400	-10	-550	-12.5%
Durable goods	1,800	1,800	1,920	0	-120	-6.3%
Nondurable goods	2,050	2,060	2,480	-10	-430	-17.3%
Service providing	22,590	22,150	21,630	440	960	4.4%
Trade, transportation and utilities	5,910	5,780	5,700	130	210	3.7%
Wholesale trade	1,530	1,490	1,460	40	70	4.8%
Retail trade	3,270	3,200	3,220	70	50	1.6%
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	1,110	1,090	1,020	20	90	8.8%
Information and financial activities	1,010	990	1,010	20	0	0.0%
Professional and business services	1,700	1,600	1,240	100	460	37.1%
Education and health services	2,620	2,580	2,820	40	-200	-7.1%
Leisure and hospitality	2,520	2,430	2,060	90	460	22.3%
Government	8,260	8,200	8,190	60	70	0.9%
Federal government	690	690	740	0	-50	-6.8%
State and local government	7,570	7,510	7,450	60	120	1.6%
State and local government education	3,650	3,620	3,610	30	40	1.1%
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 1.2 percent, a gain of 320 jobs, between March 2013 and March 2014.

Nonfarm industry employment

Preliminary estimates (see *Figure 3*) illustrate that Grant County's nonfarm employers totaled 320 more jobs in March 2014 than in March 2013, a 1.2 percent upturn. Following is a summary of these recent over-the-year changes by industry:

- Mining, logging, and construction declined from 1,160 jobs in March 2013 to 1,070 in March 2014, a 90 job and a 7.8 percent downturn. Most jobs in this combined “mining, logging, and construction” category are in construction. Grant County's construction industry has stagnated or contracted for the past nine months (from July 2012 through March 2014). Washington's construction industry has been expanding for 25 months (from March 2012 through March 2014).
- Manufacturing decreased between the Marches of 2013 and 2014, from 4,400 to 3,850, a 550 job and 12.5 percent contraction. Approximately 120 jobs were lost in durable goods manufacturing while 430 fewer jobs were available this March in nondurable goods manufacturing (primarily at food processing companies).
- Retail trade stores provided 3,220 jobs in March 2013 and 3,270 in March 2014, a 1.6 percent increase and a gain of 50 part- or full-time jobs.
- Transportation, warehousing, and private utilities netted 90 more jobs in March 2014, an 8.8 percent year-over-year expansion. Trucking firms account for the lion's share of employment in this combined “transportation, warehousing and utilities” category.
- Professional and business services gained 460 jobs, a strong 37.1 percent increase, between the Marches of 2013 and 2014. On an annual average basis this category increased from 1,250 in 2012 to 1,440 in 2013, a 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. It should be noted that temporary placement agency positions are tallied under this broad professional and business services category in Grant County, regardless of the industry in which work is performed.
- Education (private) and health services lost 200 jobs from March 2013 to March 2014, a 7.1 percent downturn. On an annual average basis education and health services provided 2,870 jobs across Grant County in 2012 and 2,800 in 2013, a 70 job and 2.4 percent contraction.
- Leisure and hospitality (primarily hotels and restaurants) rose from 2,060 in March 2013 to 2,520 one year later, a substantial 460 job and 22.3 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 expanded from 7,450 positions in March 2013 to 7,570 in March 2014, a 1.6 percent upturn. Conversely, federal government agencies tightened their belts during this period as payroll employment contracted from 740 to 690, a 6.8 percent downtrend.

Agricultural employment

LMEA's Agricultural Employment and Wage report for March 2014 showed the total number of agricultural jobs rose 9.7 percent over the year in the Columbia Basin Area 4, an agricultural reporting area that includes Adams and Grant counties. Total agricultural employment was 9,850 in March 2013 versus 10,810 in March 2014, a 960-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 decreased from 4,750 in March 2013, to 3,520 in March 2014, 25.9-percent downturn. Why? According to the Agricultural Employment and Wage report, “Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased 25.9 percent due to decreased other seasonal work (-1,000).”

In other agricultural news, weather conditions were colder and wetter than normal during the reporting period. All of Mexico may be open to importing fresh U.S. potatoes before June; based on a final rule the Mexican government recently published setting protocols for fresh potato trade between the two countries. The announcement is the culmination of a decade of work. Industry sources estimate the announcement should eventually result in \$100 million in additional annual fresh U.S. table and chipping spud sales.