



# Grant County

## Labor Area Summary

### November 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](mailto: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 November 2012 and November 2013) in unemployment and on year-over-year employment trends in major industries in Grant County.

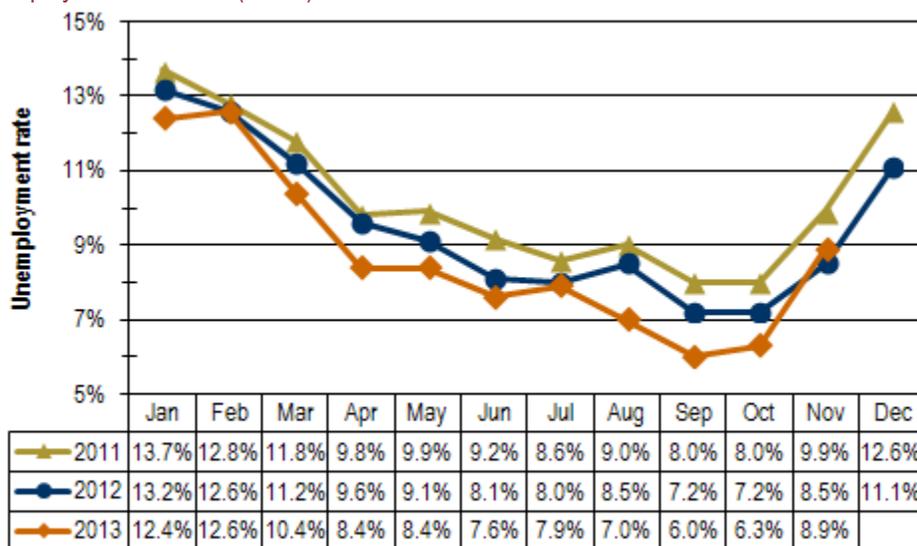
## Unemployment rates

Washington state's annual average not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased one full percentage point between 2011 and 2012, from 9.2 percent to 8.2 percent. Between the Novembers of 2012 and 2013 the rate fell from 7.2 to 6.5 percent, a decrease of seven-tenths of a percentage point.

Grant County's November 2013 unemployment rate of 8.9 percent (not seasonally adjusted) increased four-tenths of a percentage point above the 8.5 percent reading in November 2012. This November was first time in the past 38 months in which the rate rose year over year. The last time the county's monthly unemployment rate rose was in September 2010 when the reading was 8.3 percent, five-tenths of a point higher than the September 2009 rate of 7.7 percent.

**Figure 1.** Unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted  
 Grant County, January 2011 through November 2013

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



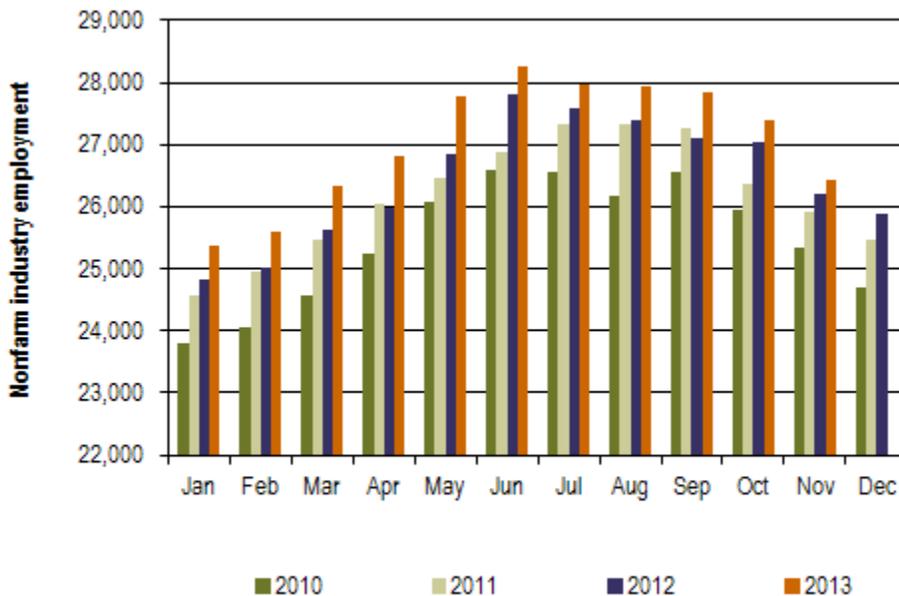
*The Grant County unemployment rate increased four-tenths of a percentage point between November 2012 and November 2013.*

## Total nonfarm employment

Businesses and government organizations across Washington supplied 2,960,900 nonfarm jobs this November (not seasonally adjusted), compared to 2,923,300 jobs in November 2012. This equated to a 1.3 percent year-over-year employment increase statewide. Washington's labor market has been growing for 38 months (from October 2010 through November 2013).

Grant County's nonfarm labor market has registered year-over-year gains from October 2012 through November 2013, fourteen consecutive months of job growth. This November, local nonfarm employers provided 26,440 jobs, a 0.8 percent and 220 job increase from the 26,220 jobs tallied in November 2012.

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



*Nonfarm employers in Grant County provided 26,440 nonfarm jobs in November 2013, a 0.8 percent upturn from November 2012.*

## Employment and unemployment

Washington's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) shrank by 1.0 percent in 2011, a 33,770 resident decrease. In 2012 the CLF virtually stabilized. However, during the first eleven months of 2013 the labor force posted year-over-year growth in just three months (i.e. in June, August, and November 2013). Washington's CLF was 3,462,430 residents in November 2013 versus 3,459,870 in November of last year, equating to 2,560 more residents in the labor force (up 0.1 percent).

Grant County's Civilian Labor Force (CLF) grew by 1,240 residents (up 3.0 percent) in 2012. However, the local labor force logged year-over-year losses in five of the first seven months of 2013 before posting increases in August, September, October, and November 2013. Between the Novembers of 2012 and 2013 the Grant County CLF expanded from 40,860 to 42,290 residents, a 3.5 percent increase. The downside was that more residents were unemployed this November than in the corresponding month in 2012 (3,470 residents were unemployed in November 2012 versus 3,780 in November 2013). The labor force expansion this November was not strong enough to counter the more rapid increase in the number of unemployed, hence the County's unemployment rate rose from 8.5 percent in November 2012 to 8.9 percent in November 2013 (as shown in *Figure 3*).

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

Grant County	Preliminary	Revised	Revised	Change		
	Nov-13	Oct-13	Nov-12	Oct-13 Nov-13	Nov-12 Nov-13	Nov-12 Nov-13 %
<b>Labor force and unemployment</b>						
Civilian labor force	42,290	46,250	40,860	-3,960	1,430	3.5%
Resident employment	38,510	43,350	37,390	-4,840	1,120	3.0%
Unemployment	3,780	2,900	3,470	880	310	8.9%
Unemployment rate	8.9	6.3	8.5	2.6	0.4	
<b>Industry employment</b>						
Total nonfarm <sup>1</sup>	26,440	27,380	26,220	-940	220	0.8%
Total private	18,100	19,150	18,270	-1,050	-170	-0.9%
Goods producing	5,270	5,950	5,720	-680	-450	-7.9%
Service providing	21,170	21,430	20,500	-260	670	3.3%
Transportation, warehousing and utilities	5,850	5,840	5,690	10	160	2.8%
Information and financial activities	1,060	1,060	1,040	0	20	1.9%
Government	8,340	8,230	7,950	110	390	4.9%
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 0.8 percent, a gain of 220 jobs, between November 2012 and November 2013.*

## Nonfarm industry employment

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

- Slipped from 26,980 in 2007 to 26,890 in 2008, a 90 job and 0.3 percent decline.
- 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.
- Increased from 26,170 in 2011 to 26,450 in 2012, a 280 job and 1.1 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 even hiring during 2011 and 2012 could not bring employment back to its 2007 level. So, the question is: “Was hiring during 2013 strong enough to bring annual average nonfarm employment back to where it was in 2007?” The state Employment Security Department will release nonfarm employment estimates for December 2013 on January 28, 2014, so twelve months of employment estimates for 2013 are not yet available. But preliminary data indicate that Grant County’s nonfarm market grew modestly from October 2012 through November 2013 (fourteen consecutive months of expansion). Hence, annual average nonfarm employment in Grant County will rise in 2013 and the short answer to the previous question is: “Most likely.”

Preliminary estimates (see *Figure 3*) illustrate that Grant County's nonfarm employers tallied 220 more jobs in November 2013 than in November 2012, a 0.8 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. It experienced dismal economic times during 2009 and 2010. Specifically, Grant County's goods producing firms lost 800 jobs (down 12.8 percent) in 2009 and another 230 jobs in 2010 (down 4.2 percent). This category then expanded by 420 jobs in 2011, an impressive 8.1 percent annual average employment increase. It averaged 130 new jobs in 2012, rising from 5,620 in 2011 to 5,750 last year (up by 2.3 percent). However, goods producing employment in Grant County has decreased year over year in four out of the last five months (i.e., in July, August, October and November 2013) following nine consecutive months of job growth from October 2012 through June 2013. In November 2013, goods producing employers tallied 5,270 jobs versus 5,720 in November 2012, a 450 job and 7.9 percent downturn.
- Over-the-year job growth occurred at service providing businesses and organizations between the Novembers of 2012 and 2013. This category increased from 20,500 jobs in November 2012 to 21,170 in November 2013 (up 3.3 percent), accounting for all of the year-over-year gain in Grant County's total nonfarm employment this November, as shown in *Figure 3*. The County's service providers have added jobs from October 2012 through this November (for 14 consecutive months). Statewide, service providing organizations have been growing for 40 months (from August 2010 through November 2013). Hence, local service providing businesses and organizations recovered later than service providing businesses and organizations across Washington, and it is these businesses and organizations that are currently keeping local nonfarm job market growth in the "plus-column."

## **Agricultural employment**

LMEA's Agricultural Employment and Wage report for November 2013 showed the total number of agricultural jobs rose 4.7 percent over the year in the Columbia Basin Area 4, an agricultural reporting area that includes Adams and Grant counties. Total agricultural employment was 10,840 in November 2012 versus 11,350 in November 2013, a 510-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 6,180 in November 2012, to 5,540 in November 2013 – a 10.4-percent downturn. Why? According to the Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages report, "Columbia Basin (Area 4) seasonal employment decreased 10.4 percent due to decreased apple work (-1,690)."

In other agricultural news, weather conditions were warmer and drier than normal during the reporting period. This year has been the worst on record for the hay harvest in the Columbia Basin. Rain damage to both Timothy hay and alfalfa hay caused there to be only three cuttings instead of the usual four. Primary agricultural activities were apple harvest, general apple work, miscellaneous onion warehouse work and potato warehouse work.