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## **County Employment and Wages in Washington – Third Quarter 2019**

Employment increased in Washington's 10 large counties from September 2018 to September 2019, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are those with annual average employment levels of 75,000 or more in 2018.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that employment increases ranged from 3.5 percent in Benton County to 0.6 percent in Whatcom County. (See [table 1.](#))

Nationally, employment increased 1.1 percent over the year with 283 of the 355 largest U.S. counties reporting increases. New Hanover, N.C, had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 5.8 percent over the year. Bay, FL, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment with a loss of 5.9 percent.

Among the 10 largest counties in Washington, employment was highest in King County (1,445,300) in September 2019. Pierce and Snohomish Counties had employment levels of 320,300 and 293,300, respectively. Together, the 10 largest Washington counties accounted for 85.4 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 355 largest counties made up 73.4 percent of total U.S. employment.

All 10 large Washington counties reported average weekly wage gains from the third quarter of 2018 to the third quarter of 2019, with the fastest rates of increase in Thurston and Pierce counties, up 5.5 percent and 5.3 percent, respectively. King County had the highest average weekly wage (\$1,814), followed by Snohomish County (\$1,167) and Benton County (\$1,099). Nationally, the average weekly wage advanced 3.6 percent over the year to \$1,093 in the third quarter of 2019.

Employment and wage levels (but not over-the-year changes) are also available for the 29 counties in Washington with employment below 75,000. All of these smaller counties had average weekly wages below the national average in the third quarter of 2019. (See [table 2.](#))

### **Large county wage changes**

Thurston County's 5.5-percent wage gain placed 18<sup>th</sup> among the nation's 355 large counties. Two other Washington counties ranked in the top 50 nationwide: Pierce (5.3 percent, 22<sup>nd</sup>) and Clark (4.8 percent, 47<sup>th</sup>).

Nationally, 350 of the 355 largest counties had over-the-year increases. Boulder, CO, had the largest percentage wage increase (+18.4 percent). The remaining five large counties registered wage declines during the period. Linn, IA, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease (-2.6 percent).

### **Large county average weekly wages**

Average weekly wages in three of Washington's large counties placed in the top third of the national ranking. King County (\$1,814, 6<sup>th</sup>), Snohomish County (\$1,167, 68<sup>th</sup>), and Benton County (\$1,099, 92<sup>nd</sup>) had weekly wages that exceeded the national average in the third quarter of 2019. Yakima County (\$790, 339<sup>th</sup>) had the lowest average weekly wages in Washington and was the only county ranked in the bottom third of the largest U.S. counties.

Nationally, 98 large counties reported average weekly wages above the U.S. average in the third quarter of 2019. Santa Clara, CA, had the highest weekly wage at \$2,447. Average weekly wages were below the national average in 257 counties. At \$659 a week Cameron, TX, had the lowest average weekly wage.

### **Average weekly wages in Washington's smaller counties**

All 29 counties in Washington with employment below 75,000 had average weekly wages lower than the national average of \$1,093. Among these counties, Pend Oreille County had the highest average weekly wage at \$1,044. Okanogan County reported the lowest weekly wage among all counties in the state, averaging \$684 in the third quarter of 2019.

When all 39 counties in Washington were considered, only Okanogan County had wages below \$700. Eleven counties had average weekly wages ranging from \$700 to \$799, 11 had wages from \$800 to \$899, 7 had wages from \$900 to \$999, and 9 had wages at or above \$1,000. (See [chart 1.](#))

### **Additional statistics and other information**

QCEW data for states have been included in this release in [table 3](#). For additional information about quarterly employment and wages data, please read the [Technical Note](#) or visit [www.bls.gov/cew](http://www.bls.gov/cew).

*Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2018 edition of this publication, which was published in September 2019, contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2019 version of this news release. Tables and additional content from the 2018 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* are now available online at [www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2018/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/cew/publications/employment-and-wages-annual-averages/2018/home.htm). The 2019 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2020.

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**The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2019 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 20, 2020. The County Employment and Wages full data update for fourth quarter 2019 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, June 3, 2020.**

### **Technical Note**

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from summaries of employment and total pay of workers covered by state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) legislation and provided by State Workforce Agencies (SWAs). The average weekly wage values are calculated by dividing quarterly total wages by the average of the three monthly employment levels of those covered by UI programs. The result is then divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter, then divide the result. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among

counties, metropolitan areas, or states for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/cew](http://www.bls.gov/cew); however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised and may not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

QCEW data are not designed as a time series. QCEW data are simply the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. Establishments can move in or out of a county or industry for a number of reasons—some reflecting economic events, others reflecting administrative changes.

The preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. These potential differences result from the states' continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

**Table 1. Covered employment and wages in the United States and the 10 largest counties in Washington, third quarter 2019**

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	September 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2018-19 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level <sup>(3)</sup>	Percent change, third quarter 2018-19 <sup>(2)</sup>	National ranking by percent change <sup>(3)</sup>
United States <sup>(4)</sup> .....	148,556.5	1.1	--	\$1,093	--	3.6	--
Washington.....	3,489.8	2.1	--	1,335	3	4.3	5
Benton.....	94.3	3.5	10	1,099	92	2.4	276
Clark.....	165.5	1.7	93	1,060	122	4.8	47
King.....	1,445.3	3.1	21	1,814	6	3.6	157
Kitsap.....	92.4	2.1	64	1,014	154	3.4	182
Pierce.....	320.3	1.7	93	1,039	141	5.3	22
Snohomish.....	293.3	2.0	69	1,167	68	3.8	132
Spokane.....	231.0	1.8	84	953	205	4.4	78
Thurston.....	119.4	1.2	142	1,051	130	5.5	18
Whatcom.....	91.5	0.6	217	932	232	3.8	132
Yakima.....	127.1	1.4	122	790	339	3.1	212

Footnotes:

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for noneconomic county reclassifications.

(3) Ranking does not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(4) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

**Table 2. Covered employment and wages in the United States and all counties in Washington, third quarter 2019**

Area	Employment September 2019	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2)	148,556,525	\$1,093
Washington	3,489,774	1,335
Adams	10,102	740
Asotin	6,533	777
Benton	94,284	1,099
Chelan	46,530	815
Clallam	23,723	826
Clark	165,478	1,060
Columbia	1,594	954
Cowlitz	39,573	1,011
Douglas	13,336	739
Ferry	1,676	827
Franklin	36,733	839
Garfield	688	995
Grant	42,563	858
Grays Harbor	23,321	855
Island	17,063	815
Jefferson	9,479	794
King	1,445,252	1,814
Kitsap	92,355	1,014
Kittitas	15,869	835
Klickitat	7,689	946
Lewis	26,903	865
Lincoln	2,807	794
Mason	14,353	847
Okanogan	18,226	684
Pacific	6,721	739
Pend Oreille	3,001	1,044
Pierce	320,276	1,039
San Juan	6,611	734
Skagit	53,301	996
Skamania	2,226	745
Snohomish	293,292	1,167
Spokane	231,043	953
Stevens	11,006	798
Thurston	119,433	1,051
Wahkiakum	752	724
Walla Walla	28,890	888
Whatcom	91,484	932
Whitman	18,990	967
Yakima	127,063	790

Footnotes

(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

NOTE: Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs. Data are preliminary.

**Table 3. Covered employment and wages by state, third quarter 2019**

State	Employment		Average weekly wage <sup>(1)</sup>			
	September 2019 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2018-19	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2018-19	National ranking by percent change
United States <sup>(2)</sup>	148,556.5	1.1	\$1,093	--	3.6	--
Alabama	1,989.5	1.1	919	36	3.8	18
Alaska	338.0	1.2	1,105	14	3.7	21
Arizona	2,913.4	2.6	1,018	22	4.5	4
Arkansas	1,222.8	0.0	841	49	3.8	18
California	17,713.1	1.4	1,309	5	3.8	18
Colorado	2,749.0	2.4	1,170	8	6.1	1
Connecticut	1,676.6	-0.3	1,236	6	2.3	50
Delaware	453.2	1.1	1,078	15	3.3	32
District of Columbia	776.4	0.6	1,851	1	2.5	49
Florida	8,838.2	1.7	955	29	3.4	27
Georgia	4,509.7	1.4	1,026	20	3.4	27
Hawaii	654.1	-0.3	1,012	23	3.9	15
Idaho	765.2	2.9	838	50	4.1	10
Illinois	6,023.1	0.0	1,125	10	3.6	23
Indiana	3,083.5	0.3	914	37	3.5	26
Iowa	1,556.9	0.1	914	37	3.0	39
Kansas	1,395.9	0.4	893	43	2.9	43
Kentucky	1,910.8	0.7	884	45	3.4	27
Louisiana	1,913.5	-0.3	923	35	2.6	47
Maine	632.6	0.9	887	44	4.2	7
Maryland	2,696.9	0.2	1,169	9	3.6	23
Massachusetts	3,642.5	0.9	1,359	2	4.2	7
Michigan	4,375.8	0.2	1,021	21	3.0	39
Minnesota	2,917.8	0.4	1,107	13	3.0	39
Mississippi	1,135.8	0.1	768	51	2.7	46
Missouri	2,826.5	0.6	942	31	3.9	15
Montana	478.9	1.2	848	48	3.9	15
Nebraska	984.7	0.3	908	39	4.0	13
Nevada	1,412.2	2.1	973	26	4.1	10
New Hampshire	667.9	0.8	1,075	16	3.4	27
New Jersey	4,104.0	0.9	1,217	7	3.0	39
New Mexico	842.1	1.7	899	40	5.1	2
New York	9,575.4	1.1	1,314	4	3.3	32
North Carolina	4,501.3	2.2	972	27	3.6	23
North Dakota	428.4	0.9	1,028	19	3.3	32
Ohio	5,443.3	0.3	976	25	3.1	37
Oklahoma	1,628.8	0.5	897	41	2.6	47
Oregon	1,970.7	1.4	1,037	18	3.2	35
Pennsylvania	5,947.9	0.8	1,064	17	3.2	35
Rhode Island	491.3	0.6	991	24	2.8	44
South Carolina	2,132.4	2.2	866	46	3.7	21
South Dakota	433.4	0.4	855	47	3.4	27
Tennessee	3,060.8	1.9	966	28	2.8	44
Texas	12,603.2	2.1	1,109	12	4.1	10
Utah	1,535.2	2.8	954	30	4.8	3
Vermont	311.0	0.0	927	34	4.3	5
Virginia	3,931.4	1.0	1,125	10	4.0	13
Washington	3,489.8	2.1	1,335	3	4.3	5
West Virginia	694.4	-1.8	897	41	0.3	51
Wisconsin	2,893.8	0.1	929	33	3.1	37
Wyoming	283.1	1.5	942	31	4.2	7
Puerto Rico	878.9	1.9	528	(3)	-0.8	(3)
Virgin Islands	37.8	9.6	1,012	(3)	12.8	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

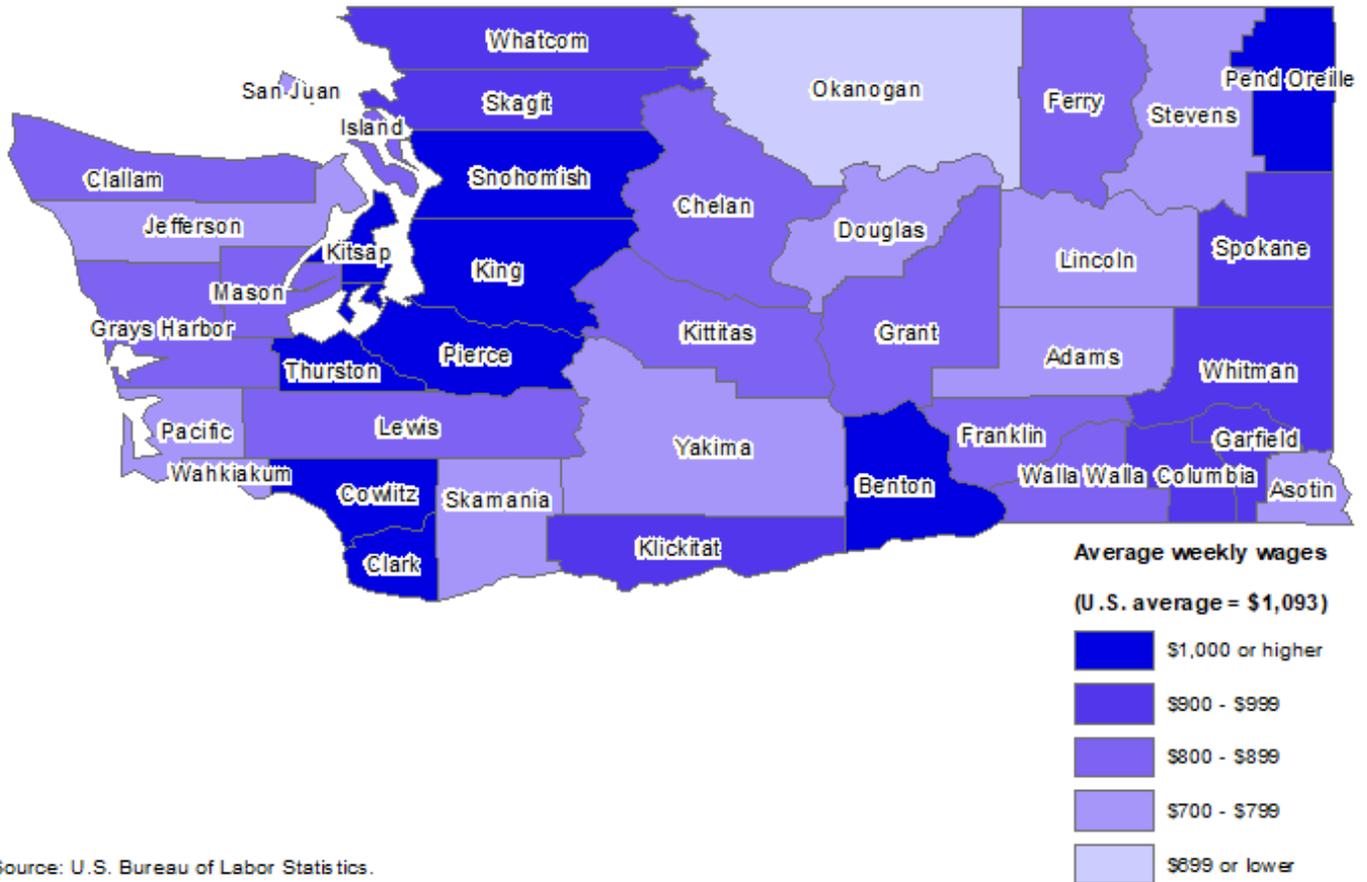
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(2) Totals for the United States do not include data for Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

(3) Data not included in the national ranking.

Note: Data are preliminary. Covered employment and wages includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

**Chart 1. Average weekly wages by county in Washington, third quarter 2019**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.