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County Employment and Wages in Washington – Third Quarter 2018

Employment increased in 9 of Washington's 10 large counties from September 2017 to September 2018, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. (Large counties are defined as those with employment of 75,000 or more as measured by 2017 annual average employment.) Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations Richard Holden noted that employment increases ranged from 3.4 percent in Thurston County to 1.4 percent in Whatcom County. Employment decreased 0.1 percent in Yakima County. (See [table 1](#).)

Nationally, employment advanced 1.6 percent from September 2017 to September 2018 as 295 of the 349 largest U.S. counties gained jobs. Midland, Texas, had the largest percentage increase in the country, up 11.9 percent over the year. New Hanover, N.C., had the largest over-the-year decrease in employment with a loss of 2.0 percent.

Among the 10 largest counties in Washington, employment was highest in King County (1,404,000) in September 2018, while Kitsap County had the smallest employment level (90,500). Together, Washington's large counties accounted for 85.0 percent of total employment within the state. Nationwide, the 349 largest counties made up 73.0 percent of total U.S. employment, which stood at 146.8 million in September 2018.

Average weekly wages increased in all of Washington's 10 largest counties from the third quarter of 2017 to the third quarter of 2018. King County had the largest wage gain at 7.9 percent, followed by Whatcom County at 5.3 percent and Thurston County at 5.1 percent. King County had the highest average weekly wage (\$1,752), followed by Snohomish County (\$1,132) and Benton County (\$1,063). (See [table 1](#).) Nationally, the average weekly wage advanced 3.3 percent over the year to \$1,055 in the third quarter of 2018.

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 2018. (See [table 2](#).)

Large county wage changes

All 10 large counties in Washington had increases in average weekly wages from the third quarter of 2017 to the third quarter of 2018. King County's 7.9-percent wage gain placed second among the nation's 349 large counties. Two other Washington counties ranked in the top 25 nationwide, Whatcom (5.3 percent, 21st) and Thurston (5.1 percent, 23rd). (See [table 1](#).)

Nationally, 336 of the 349 largest counties had over-the-year increases in average weekly wages in the third quarter of 2018. Chatham, GA, had the largest third quarter over-the-year wage gain at 8.5 percent, followed by King, WA, and Santa Clara, CA, and Stanislaus, CA, each at 7.8 percent.

Of the 349 largest U.S. counties, 11 had over-the-year decreases in average weekly wages. Elkhart, IN, had the largest over-the-year percentage decrease with a loss of 4.2 percent. Elkhart was followed by Union, NJ (-3.7 percent); Providence, RI (-3.4 percent); and Forsyth, NC (-3.0 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 (\$1,752, 6th); Snohomish (\$1,132, 61st); and Benton (1,063, 92nd) had weekly wages that exceeded the national average in the third quarter of 2018. The two counties with the lowest average weekly wages—Whatcom (\$898, 237th) and Yakima (\$764, 332nd)—placed in the bottom third of the largest U.S. counties.

Nationally, 94 large counties had average weekly wages above the U.S. average of \$1,055 in the third quarter of 2018. Santa Clara, CA, held the top position with an average weekly wage of \$2,460. San Mateo, CA, was second at \$2,363, followed by San Francisco, CA (\$2,097); New York, NY (\$1,997); and Washington, DC (\$1,807).

Among the largest U.S. counties, 255 had weekly wages below the national average in the third quarter of 2018. Cameron, TX, had the lowest wage (\$632), followed by Horry, SC (\$635); Hidalgo, TX (\$662); and Webb, TX (\$698).

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 \$1,055. Among these counties, Cowlitz County had the highest average weekly wage at \$969. Okanogan County reported the lowest weekly wage among all counties in the state, averaging \$650 in the third quarter of 2018. (See [table 2](#).)

When all 39 counties in Washington were considered, 3 had wages below \$700. Fourteen counties had average weekly wages ranging from \$700 to \$799, 8 had wages from \$800 to \$899, 10 had wages from \$900 to \$999, and 4 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.

Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. The 2017 edition of this publication contains selected data produced by Business Employment Dynamics (BED) on job gains and losses, as well as selected data from the first quarter 2018 version of the national news release. Tables and additional content from *Employment and Wages Annual Averages 2017* are now available online at www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn17.htm. The 2018 edition of *Employment and Wages Annual Averages Online* will be available in September 2019.

The County Employment and Wages release for fourth quarter 2018 is scheduled to be released on Wednesday, May 22, 2019.

QCEW Publication Acceleration and Conversion to Two Data Releases

The QCEW publication process is accelerating for a more timely release. Beginning with the fourth quarter 2017 release, QCEW data will be published in two parts. The current County Employment and Wages news release and associated data will be accelerated and published first. The full QCEW data release will occur two weeks later, accompanied by a data release notice.

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; 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 2018

Area	Employment			Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	September 2018 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2017-18 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level ⁽³⁾	Percent change, third quarter 2017-18 ⁽²⁾	National ranking by percent change ⁽³⁾
United States ⁽⁴⁾	146,824.1	1.6	--	\$1,055	--	3.3	--
Washington.....	3,425.6	2.4	--	1,280	3	6.2	2
Benton, Wash.....	91.3	2.0	95	1,063	92	2.9	169
Clark, Wash.....	162.8	2.9	53	1,015	128	4.6	38
King, Wash.....	1,404.0	2.8	55	1,752	6	7.9	2
Kitsap, Wash.....	90.5	3.1	43	982	158	4.1	59
Pierce, Wash.....	312.9	2.1	85	989	150	4.2	52
Snohomish, Wash.....	289.2	2.2	78	1,132	61	3.8	86
Spokane, Wash.....	225.9	2.0	95	913	218	2.7	196
Thurston, Wash.....	118.8	3.4	38	996	141	5.1	23
Whatcom, Wash.....	91.3	1.4	139	898	237	5.3	21
Yakima, Wash.....	125.4	-0.1	307	764	332	3.9	73

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 2018

Area	Employment September 2018	Average Weekly Wage(1)
United States(2)	146,824,093	\$1,055
Washington	3,425,553	1,280
Adams	9,694	736
Asotin	6,609	760
Benton	91,268	1,063
Chelan	49,420	746
Clallam	23,781	785
Clark	162,798	1,015
Columbia	1,324	828
Cowlitz	39,417	969
Douglas	13,911	682
Ferry	1,756	794
Franklin	35,751	816
Garfield	721	962
Grant	44,019	793
Grays Harbor	23,508	805
Island	16,818	770
Jefferson	9,058	752
King	1,404,005	1,752
Kitsap	90,484	982
Kittitas	15,561	818
Klickitat	7,633	945
Lewis	26,629	830
Lincoln	3,001	749
Mason	14,323	802
Okanogan	19,998	650
Pacific	6,628	720
Pend Oreille	3,233	936
Pierce	312,905	989
San Juan	6,406	709
Skagit	53,171	944
Skamania	2,157	682
Snohomish	289,213	1,132
Spokane	225,851	913
Stevens	10,743	778
Thurston	118,823	996
Wahkiakum	729	718
Walla Walla	29,264	842
Whatcom	91,306	898
Whitman	19,235	918
Yakima	125,443	764

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 2018

State	Employment		Average weekly wage ⁽¹⁾			
	September 2018 (thousands)	Percent change, September 2017-18	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, third quarter 2017-18	National ranking by percent change
United States ⁽²⁾	146,824.1	1.6	\$1,055	--	3.3	--
Alabama.....	1,966.0	1.2	885	38	3.1	25
Alaska.....	334.0	-0.4	1,065	13	3.7	12
Arizona.....	2,838.6	2.8	974	23	2.9	31
Arkansas.....	1,222.1	0.7	811	49	2.9	31
California.....	17,457.5	1.8	1,260	5	3.8	9
Colorado.....	2,684.0	2.1	1,104	9	3.5	18
Connecticut.....	1,681.5	0.3	1,209	6	2.5	41
Delaware.....	447.8	0.6	1,046	15	2.4	42
District of Columbia.....	770.7	0.7	1,807	1	2.8	36
Florida.....	8,690.7	4.6	924	29	3.1	25
Georgia.....	4,448.8	2.3	993	20	3.3	21
Hawaii.....	654.7	0.0	975	22	2.4	42
Idaho.....	743.5	3.0	805	50	3.2	23
Illinois.....	6,029.2	0.8	1,087	10	3.0	28
Indiana.....	3,072.3	0.9	883	39	2.4	42
Iowa.....	1,555.0	0.6	887	37	3.7	12
Kansas.....	1,390.4	1.0	867	42	3.5	18
Kentucky.....	1,898.7	0.5	855	43	2.2	47
Louisiana.....	1,915.4	0.5	901	33	3.7	12
Maine.....	626.5	0.6	851	45	3.7	12
Maryland.....	2,683.9	0.7	1,130	8	2.4	42
Massachusetts.....	3,598.1	0.7	1,305	2	3.2	23
Michigan.....	4,366.5	0.8	991	21	2.8	36
Minnesota.....	2,904.3	0.8	1,074	12	4.2	5
Mississippi.....	1,133.7	0.2	754	51	3.4	20
Missouri.....	2,812.0	0.4	907	31	3.3	21
Montana.....	473.3	1.0	815	48	2.8	36
Nebraska.....	980.3	0.6	873	41	2.8	36
Nevada.....	1,382.9	3.4	936	28	2.4	42
New Hampshire.....	662.3	0.5	1,040	16	1.7	49
New Jersey.....	4,072.6	0.8	1,181	7	2.1	48
New Mexico.....	826.2	1.2	855	43	3.9	7
New York.....	9,467.5	1.4	1,272	4	4.2	5
North Carolina.....	4,398.0	1.1	938	26	3.8	9
North Dakota.....	424.3	1.1	995	19	4.4	3
Ohio.....	5,424.4	0.7	947	25	2.9	31
Oklahoma.....	1,616.8	1.2	874	40	3.6	16
Oregon.....	1,939.8	1.5	1,005	18	3.8	9
Pennsylvania.....	5,894.8	1.0	1,031	17	3.0	28
Rhode Island.....	489.4	1.0	963	24	-1.3	51
South Carolina.....	2,088.2	2.8	834	46	0.8	50
South Dakota.....	431.5	1.3	827	47	3.0	28
Tennessee.....	3,005.6	1.7	938	26	3.9	7
Texas.....	12,327.0	2.6	1,064	14	3.1	25
Utah.....	1,494.4	3.4	911	30	3.6	16
Vermont.....	310.9	0.0	892	36	2.6	40
Virginia.....	3,889.6	1.1	1,082	11	2.9	31
Washington.....	3,425.6	2.4	1,280	3	6.2	2
West Virginia.....	706.0	1.7	894	35	8.1	1
Wisconsin.....	2,888.9	0.7	901	33	2.9	31
Wyoming.....	278.2	0.6	905	32	4.3	4
Puerto Rico.....	862.5	0.2	534	(3)	5.3	(3)
Virgin Islands.....	33.4	-8.0	888	(3)	18.6	(3)

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Footnotes:

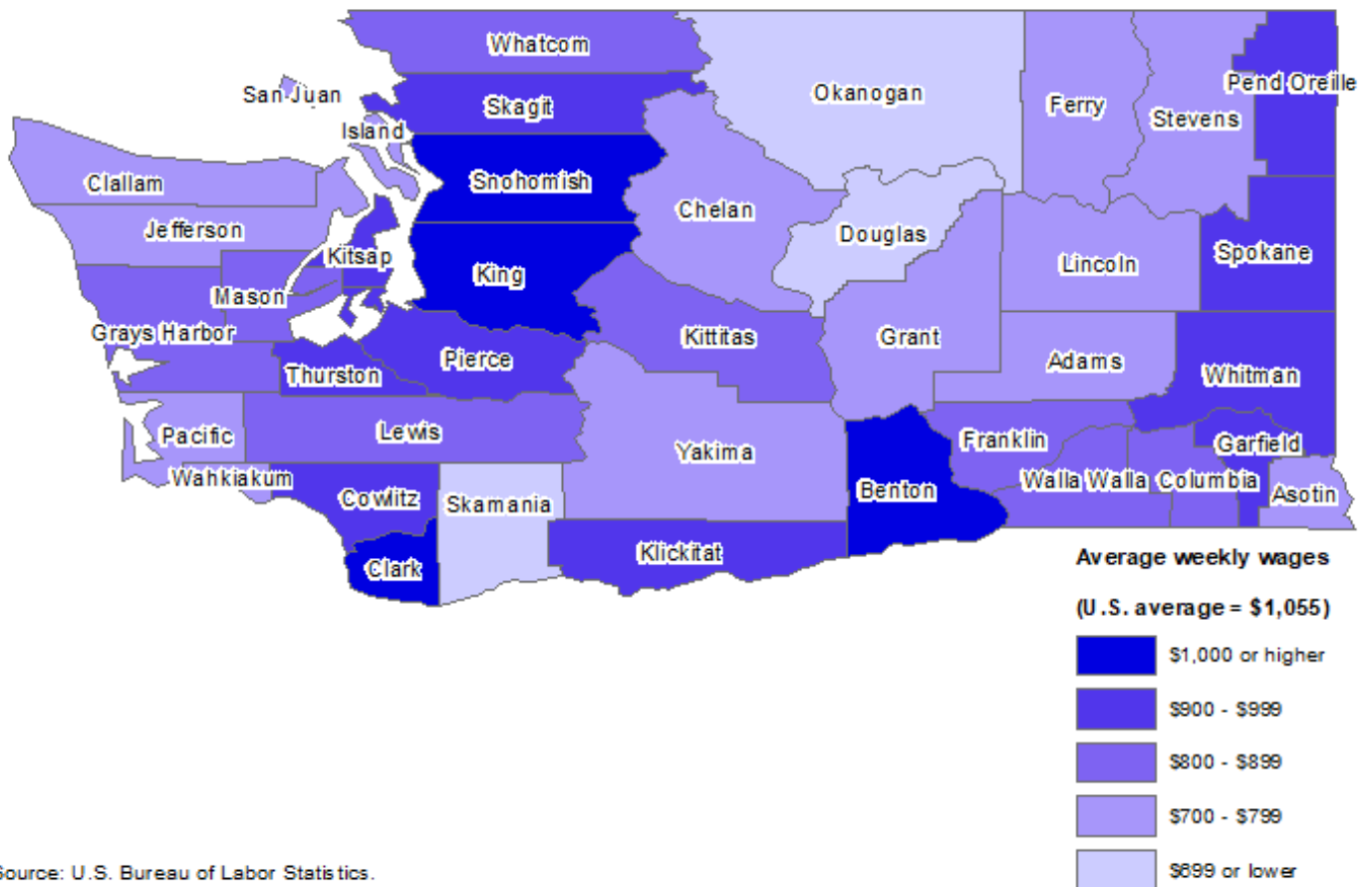
(1) Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

(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 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.