



# King County Labor Area Summary November 2022



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\*Data used in this report available at the web address listed above.

This report compares the week containing the 12<sup>th</sup> of November with the corresponding week in the previous month and year. For all intents and purposes, this is the 32nd report that addresses the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Overview

- In November 2022, the not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in King County was unchanged over the month at 2.8 percent. The unemployment rate was a record-setting low 1.9 percent in April 2022 and was a record-setting high 15.3 percent in April 2020.
- The King County labor force expanded by 16,841 or 1.3 percent over the year.
- Nonfarm employment expanded by 9,900 from October to November 2022. There were an estimated 1,526,100 total nonfarm jobs in King County.
- Eight major industry sectors detailed in this report expanded employment over the month, 3 shed jobs, and one remained unchanged. The largest gains were attributable to hiring in education and health services and retail trade. The deepest one-month losses were attributable to drops in government and financial activities sector employment.
- Total nonfarm employment in November 2022 was 74,900 above the level observed 12 months earlier—following the peak Covid-19 related job losses in 2020. Compared to November 2021, employment was up 5.2 percent.
- Each major industry sector detailed in this report except retail trade and other services expanded employment over the year. The largest increases were attributable to hiring in professional and business services, leisure and hospitality, and information.

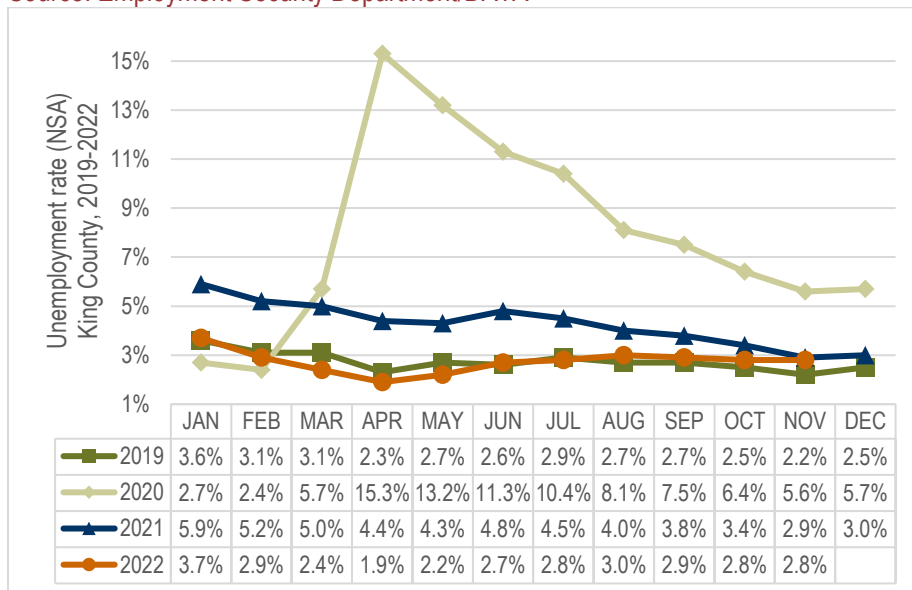
## Unemployment rates and labor force information

The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for King County was 2.8 percent (preliminary) in November 2022. This is unchanged over the month (revised). The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 2.9 percent, after having reached a record high 15.3 percent in April 2020 and before a record low unemployment rate of 1.9 percent in April 2022. Sustained low unemployment rates suggest that most job seekers are successfully connecting with employment.

Circumstances surrounding Covid-19, specifically social distancing measures, took hold in the Seattle area before expanding statewide and much of the nation. A swift and steep spike in unemployment declined rapidly from April 2020 to the present. November 2022 labor force estimates follow:

- King County labor force: 1,302,627
- Total employed: 1,266,338
- Total unemployed: 36,289
- Unemployment rate: 2.8%

**Figure 1. Unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted**  
King County, January 2019 through November 2022  
Source: Employment Security Department/DATA



*The unemployment rate was 2.8 percent in November 2022.*

Month-to-month, King County's labor force contracted by 18,579 resident workers. The number counted among the employed decreased by 17,687 and the number of active job seekers contracted by 892. Over-the-year, the labor force expanded by 16,841 people or 1.3 percent. Within that, the number of employed workers increased by 18,389 or 1.5 percent and the number of unemployed workers decreased by 1,548 or 4.1 percent.

### **Washington state**

The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Washington State increased from 3.6 percent in October (revised) to 4.2 percent in November (preliminary). The statewide labor force decreased by 34,126 over the month. Within that, the estimated number of employed people decreased by 55,827 and the number of unemployed job seekers increased by 21,701. Altogether, these shifts pushed the unemployment rate up over the month. Over the year, the statewide labor force expanded by 22,632 or 0.6 percent. Beneath the surface, the employed labor force expanded by 9,614 or 0.3 percent and the count of unemployed workers increased by 13,018 or 8.4 percent. The unemployment rate 12 months ago was 3.9 percent.

The November forecast by Washington's Economic and Revenue Forecast Council estimates that the statewide unemployment rate will have averaged 4.4 percent in 2022 (unchanged relative to the June forecast) and drop to 4.1 percent in 2023. See [www.erfc.wa.gov](http://www.erfc.wa.gov) for more information.

### **Seattle-Bellevue-Everett Metropolitan Division (MD)**

The Seattle-Bellevue-Everett MD combines labor force information for Snohomish and King Counties. King County's unemployment rate consistently runs below that of Snohomish County. The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the combined MD remained unchanged at 2.9 percent (revised) in October and (preliminary) November 2022. Twelve months ago, the unemployment rate was 3.1 percent.

### **City level estimates**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics and Employment Security Department publish labor force information for cities with a population of 25,000 or more. Unemployment rates for selected cities can be found at [www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/labor-force](http://www.esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/labor-force)

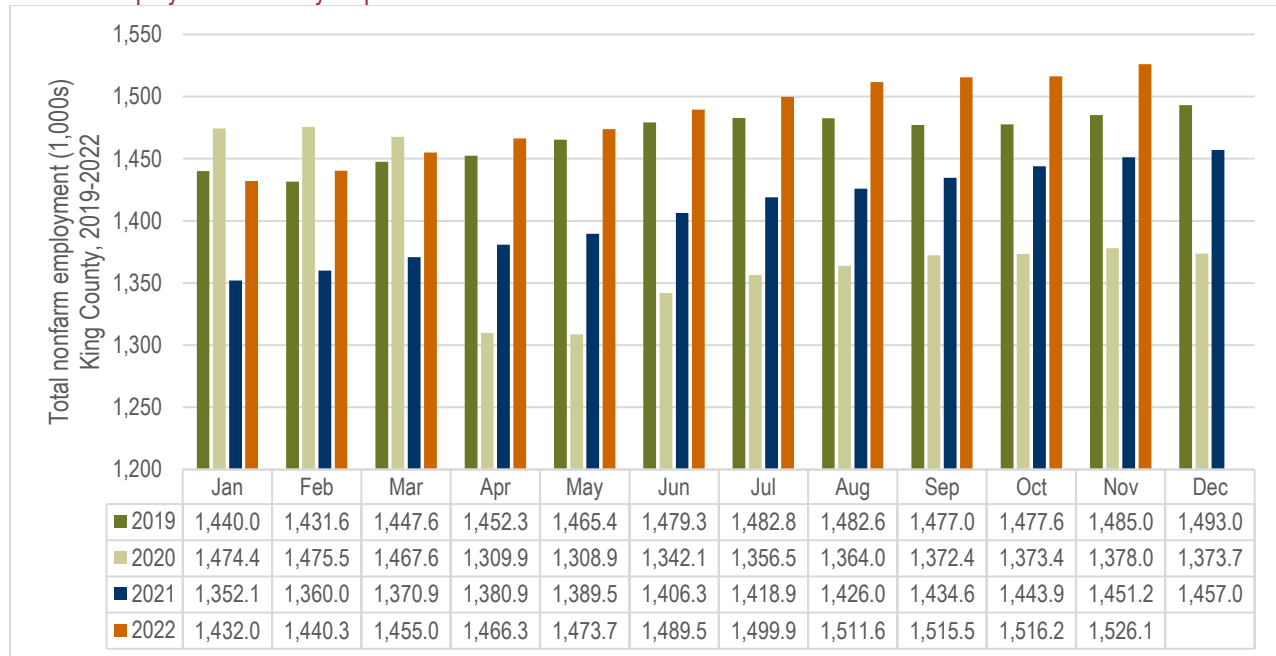
## **Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claims**

UI claims activity during the Great Recession peaked in May 2009 (49,117 continued claims were counted that month) and were on downward trend that had more-or-less settled out to about 12,000 per month until the arrival of the Coronavirus economy. The wave of claims in April 2020 reached unprecedented levels; 137,755 King County residents filed initial claims and a record-setting 154,384 individuals collected unemployment insurance in May 2020. In November 2022, 4,527 new claims were filed by King County residents and a total of 9,971 King County residents collected benefits from the state UI system. Despite increasing claims activity over the past couple months, the count of initial and continued unemployment insurance claims in King County continues to fall well below "normal" levels observed before the pandemic.

## Total nonfarm employment

Total nonfarm employment (not seasonally adjusted) expanded by 9,900 from October (revised) to November 2022 (preliminary). Over the year, employers in King County collectively recovered 74,900 jobs—up 5.2 percent relative to November 2021 and up 148,100 jobs (10.7 percent) from November 2020. The tally of nonfarm jobs in King County was estimated at nearly 1.53 million in November 2022.

**Figure 4. Total nonfarm employment**  
King County, January 2019 through November 2022  
Source: Employment Security Department/DATA



*King County employment in November 2022 was 5.2 percent higher than employment in November 2020.*

The Puget Sound area was impacted before other areas in the state and nationally. This report reveals the impacts of Covid-19 and related measures on the local labor market. Specifically, data in this report coincides with the week of November 6-12, 2022.

**Figure 5. Nonfarm industry employment, not seasonally adjusted**  
**King County, November 2021 and October and November 2022**  
Source: Employment Security Department/DATA

Nonfarm Employment Estimates, Not Seasonally Adjusted

**King County**

Data benchmarked through December 2021

NAICS Industry Title	Prelim Nov-22	Revised Oct-22	Revised Nov-21	Change		
				Oct-22 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22	Nov-21 Nov-22
Total Nonfarm	1,526,100	1,516,200	1,451,200	9,900	74,900	5.2%
Total Private	1,353,200	1,342,600	1,279,700	10,600	73,500	5.7%
Goods Producing	190,000	188,000	171,100	2,000	18,900	11.0%
Mining and Logging	400	400	500	0	-100	-20.0%
Construction	90,000	89,200	80,300	800	9,700	12.1%
Construction of Buildings	26,200	26,100	23,500	100	2,700	11.5%
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	6,800	6,800	6,700	0	100	1.5%
Specialty Trade Contractors	57,000	56,200	50,100	800	6,900	13.8%
Manufacturing	99,600	98,400	90,300	1,200	9,300	10.3%
Durable Goods	72,400	71,300	64,900	1,100	7,500	11.6%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	6,100	6,000	5,800	100	300	5.2%
Computer and Electronic Product Mfg.	7,600	7,500	7,000	100	600	8.6%
Navgtl., Measuring, Electromed., & Control	4,700	4,700	4,400	0	300	6.8%
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	40,900	40,000	35,600	900	5,300	14.9%
Aerospace Product and Parts Mfg.	37,000	36,100	32,200	900	4,800	14.9%
Nondurable Goods	27,200	27,100	25,400	100	1,800	7.1%
Food Manufacturing	12,900	13,000	12,500	-100	400	3.2%
Service Providing	1,336,100	1,328,200	1,280,100	7,900	56,000	4.4%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	298,900	295,300	291,200	3,600	7,700	2.6%
Wholesale Trade	64,800	64,200	59,800	600	5,000	8.4%
Retail Trade	176,800	174,600	178,300	2,200	-1,500	-0.8%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	10,000	9,900	10,300	100	-300	-2.9%
Food and Beverage Stores	25,900	25,700	25,600	200	300	1.2%
General Merchandise Stores	17,500	16,900	18,700	600	-1,200	-6.4%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	57,300	56,500	53,100	800	4,200	7.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	55,200	54,400	51,100	800	4,100	8.0%
Air Transportation	15,800	15,500	14,200	300	1,600	11.3%
Truck Transportation	7,500	7,600	7,300	-100	200	2.7%
Support Activities for Transportation	12,100	11,900	11,300	200	800	7.1%
Warehousing and Storage	3,700	3,700	3,500	0	200	5.7%
Information	147,900	146,500	138,000	1,400	9,900	7.2%
Software Publishers	81,600	80,600	75,800	1,000	5,800	7.7%
Financial Activities	76,500	77,100	74,600	-600	1,900	2.5%
Finance and Insurance	44,500	44,500	43,600	0	900	2.1%

Credit Intermediation and Related	16,900	16,800	16,600	100	300	1.8%
Insurance Carriers and Related	19,000	19,100	18,800	-100	200	1.1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32,000	32,600	31,000	-600	1,000	3.2%
Professional and Business Services	269,400	267,700	254,700	1,700	14,700	5.8%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	156,000	155,600	148,900	400	7,100	4.8%
Legal Services	12,700	12,600	12,200	100	500	4.1%
Accounting, Tax Prep., Bookkpg., and Payroll	11,300	11,100	10,800	200	500	4.6%
Architectural, Engineering, and Related	21,200	21,100	19,300	100	1,900	9.8%
Computer Systems Design and Related	53,200	53,500	53,700	-300	-500	-0.9%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	30,700	30,200	30,400	500	300	1.0%
Admin., Support, Waste Mgmt., and Remediation	82,600	81,900	75,400	700	7,200	9.5%
Administrative and Support Services	78,500	78,000	72,100	500	6,400	8.9%
Employment Services	31,300	31,000	30,200	300	1,100	3.6%
Educational and Health Services	195,300	192,600	187,100	2,700	8,200	4.4%
Educational Services	33,600	33,500	31,600	100	2,000	6.3%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	64,300	63,200	61,700	1,100	2,600	4.2%
Hospitals	29,200	28,900	29,600	300	-400	-1.4%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	17,500	17,200	17,600	300	-100	-0.6%
Social Assistance	50,700	49,800	46,600	900	4,100	8.8%
Leisure and Hospitality	128,800	129,000	116,200	-200	12,600	10.8%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	21,400	22,800	20,500	-1,400	900	4.4%
Accommodation	11,700	11,800	10,100	-100	1,600	15.8%
Food Services and Drinking Places	95,700	94,500	85,600	1,200	10,100	11.8%
Other Services	46,400	46,400	46,800	0	-400	-0.9%
Repair and Maintenance	8,400	8,300	8,400	100	0	0.0%
Personal and Laundry Services	13,400	13,400	13,800	0	-400	-2.9%
Religious, Grantmkg., Civic, Professional, & Similar	24,600	24,700	24,500	-100	100	0.4%
Government	172,900	173,600	171,500	-700	1,400	0.8%
Federal Government	18,400	18,300	19,100	100	-700	-3.7%
State Government	49,200	51,200	50,100	-2,000	-900	-1.8%
State Government Educational Services	35,900	37,800	36,100	-1,900	-200	-0.6%
Local Government	105,300	104,100	102,300	1,200	3,000	2.9%
Local Government Educational Services	44,700	44,000	43,500	700	1,200	2.8%
Workers in Labor/Management Disputes	0	0	0	0	0	

*King County employment expanded by 5.2 percent over the year.*

## Nonfarm industry employment

### Goods-producing Industries

From October to November 2022, total employment in goods-producing industries increased by 2,000, with net gains observed in both construction and manufacturing. Year-over-year, goods-producing employment was up 18,900 or 11.0 percent, reflecting a strong construction market and recent job recovery in King County's diverse manufacturing sector.

Employment levels in **construction-related industries** expanded by 800 over the month. The tally of jobs in construction was estimated at 90,000. Year-to-year, employment in construction was up 9,700 or 12.1 percent. Over the past 24 months, employment in construction has increased by 11,500 or 14.6 percent.

- Despite a major temporary setback due to physical distancing protocols in April 2020, King County based employment in construction quickly recovered and surpassed pre-pandemic levels. Recent growth has been concentrated in specialty trade contractors and construction of buildings.
- Construction is a highly-seasonal industry. Expect to see seasonal increases through the spring and summer months and layoffs in the winter.

**Manufacturing** represents a variety of activities in King County, with products ranging from aircraft, marine and electronic products to food manufacturing. In November, King County-located manufacturing employers collectively added 1,200 jobs. Over the year, total manufacturing employment was up 9,300 or 10.3 percent. Compared to November 2020, Snohomish County manufacturing employment was up 9,900 or 11.0 percent.

- The tally of aerospace products and parts manufacturing expanded by 900 over the month and by 4,800 over the year. The count of aerospace products and parts manufacturing *only* catches those employers that are directly and primarily responsible for manufacturing aerospace products. Other products and services in the supply chain are counted under their best fit industries.
- Employment in nondurable goods expanded by 100 over the month and by 1,800 jobs over the year.

### Service-providing industries

Service providers represent an extremely diverse collection of sectors. Taken as a whole, service-providing employers added 7,900 jobs in November. Over the year, service providers added 56,000 jobs. The largest one-month increases were observed in educational and health services and retail trade. The largest one-month losses were attributable to public sector employers. Over the year, professional and business services, leisure and hospitality and information added the largest number of jobs. Employment tallies in retail trade and other services were both down over the year.

**Wholesale trade** employment expanded by 600 in November and by 5,000 or 8.4 percent over the year. Wholesale trade accounted for 64,800 King County-based jobs in November 2022.

Net employment in **retail trade** expanded by 2,200 over the month. Over the year, retail trade employment was down by an estimated 1,500 jobs (0.8 percent). Retail trade was one of the first sectors to rebound from the pandemic recession of 2020. Employment in retail trade more-or-less leveled out. Compared to November 2020, employment in November 2022 was down 500.

- Since November 2021, employment by motor vehicles and parts dealers and general merchandise stores dipped by 300 and 1,200 jobs respectively. Employment at food and beverage stores expanded by 300 over the year.
  - Scaling up to the statewide level, monthly and annual losses were observed in "other retail trade" an aggregation that includes online retailers. Employment in other retail trade expanded by 1,200 in November but declined by 400 over the year.



Net employment in **transportation, warehousing and utilities** expanded by 800 over the month and by 4,200 over the year. This set of industries accounted for an estimated 57,300 King County jobs in November 2022, having recovered 7,900 jobs over the past 24 months.

- Over the year, air transportation added 1,600 jobs, truck transportation employment expanded by 200 and support activities for transportation expanded by 800.
- Employment in warehousing and storage increased by 200 over the year.

Employment in the **information** sector expanded by 1,400 in November (after shedding 6,800 jobs in October) but remained 9,900 or 7.2 percent above the level observed 12 months ago. This sector, which includes everything from software publishers to radio stations, newspapers and movie theaters had an estimated tally of 147,900 jobs in November 2022. As a whole, the sector was relatively stable amidst the tumult of the past year. In addition from the benefit of relative stability, employment expanded at a clip. Over the past 24 months, the information sector added 18,000 jobs (13.9 percent).

- The information sector includes software publishing activities. Employment in software publishing expanded by 1,000 over the month and by 5,800 (7.7 percent) over the year.

The **financial activities** sector includes the finance, insurance, real estate and rental and leasing industries. The overall employment level decreased by 600 over the month but expanded by 1,900 over the year.

- Over the year, employers in finance and insurance collectively expanded employment by 900 jobs. Real estate and rental and leasing employment expanded by 1,000 over the year.

**Professional and business services** includes a variety of professional and technical services such as accounting and engineering services. It also includes administrative support and management services and supports day to day business operations with services such as housekeeping and temporary employment services. In short, these are the businesses that provide operational support to others in the business community. In November, net employment in this diverse sector expanded by 1,700. Over the year, professional and business services employment grew by 14,700 (5.8 percent). Professional and business services has recovered 33,600 jobs (14.2 percent) since November 2020.

- From November 2021 to November 2022, employers in professional, scientific and technical services collectively added 7,100 jobs (4.8 percent), employment management of companies and enterprises expanded by 300, and administrative support, waste management and remediation expanded employment by 7,200 jobs (9.5 percent). Employment services was up 1,100 jobs over the year.

Employment levels in **educational and health services** expanded by 2,700 over the month. Over the year, this diverse sector recovered 8,200 jobs (4.4 percent). Educational and health services accounted for an estimated 195,300 King County-based jobs in November 2022. Since November 2020, educational and health services has recovered an estimated 14,200 jobs; a 7.8 percent increase in employment over the past 24 months.

- Healthcare and education is comprised of a diverse set of industries, each of which has been affected somewhat differently in this health crisis. Over the year, private educational services recovered 2,000 jobs. Ambulatory health care services added 2,600 jobs, hospitals shed 400 jobs, and nursing and residential care facilities lost 100 jobs. Social assistance added 4,100 jobs over the year.

**Leisure and hospitality** employment dipped by 200 over the month, following the deepest losses of any industry at the start of the pandemic. Over the year, the industries that entertain residents and visitors



recovered 12,600 jobs (10.8 percent). Since November 2020, this sector has recovered 37,100 jobs (a 40.5 percent increase).

- Over the year, arts, entertainment, and recreation added 900 jobs (4.4 percent), accommodation added 1,600 (15.8 percent) and food services added 10,100 (11.8 percent).

**Other services** represents a diverse collection of industries that do not fit elsewhere and include employers ranging from religious and grant-making organizations to hair dressers, auto mechanics and dry cleaners to membership clubs. Overall employment levels remained unchanged over the month but contracted by 400 over the year. Other services represented 46,400 King County jobs in November 2022. Over the past 24 months, employers in other services recovered 1,700 jobs.

**Government** employers collectively shed an estimated 700 jobs over the month but added 1,400 jobs over the year. Over the past 24 months, government employment expanded by an estimated 4,400 jobs or 2.6 percent.

- One-month losses were concentrated among state government educational institutions. Despite losses at the state level, local and federal government employers added jobs over the month.
- Year over year employment gains were concentrated at the local level. Federal and state government employers shed jobs over the year.

## Forecast information for Washington state:

The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council issues quarterly forecasts that address Washington's projected economic health. ERFc estimates indicate that Washington state employment will have expanded by 4.5 percent from 2021 to 2022, and will continue to expand, albeit at a slower pace (2.4 percent) in 2023. Employment growth estimates were revised down relative to the September forecast. November 2022 forecast and December revised forecast are published online at [www.erfc.wa.gov](http://www.erfc.wa.gov).

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