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BLS

Unemployment in the Seattle Area by County - December 2013
All Counties Posted Lower Unemployment Rates than in the Previous Year

In December, King County reported the lowest unemployment rate, 4.7 percent, in the Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia, Wash. Combined Statistical Area (CSA), 1 of 3 counties to register a rate below the national average of 6.5 percent, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Richard J. Holden, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that the remaining five counties had jobless rates ranging from 6.7 percent to 9.0 percent. (See chart 1. The Technical Note at the end of this release contains the metropolitan area definition. All data in this release are not seasonally adjusted; accordingly, over-the-year analysis is used throughout.)

Chart 1. Unemployment rates for the United States and counties in the Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia, Wash. Combined Statistical Area, December 2013, not seasonally adjusted

County	Rate
Mason County	9.0
Skagit County	8.1
Pierce County	7.5
Island County	7.3
Thurston County	6.7
United States	6.5
Kitsap County	6.1
Snohomish County	5.3
King County	4.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
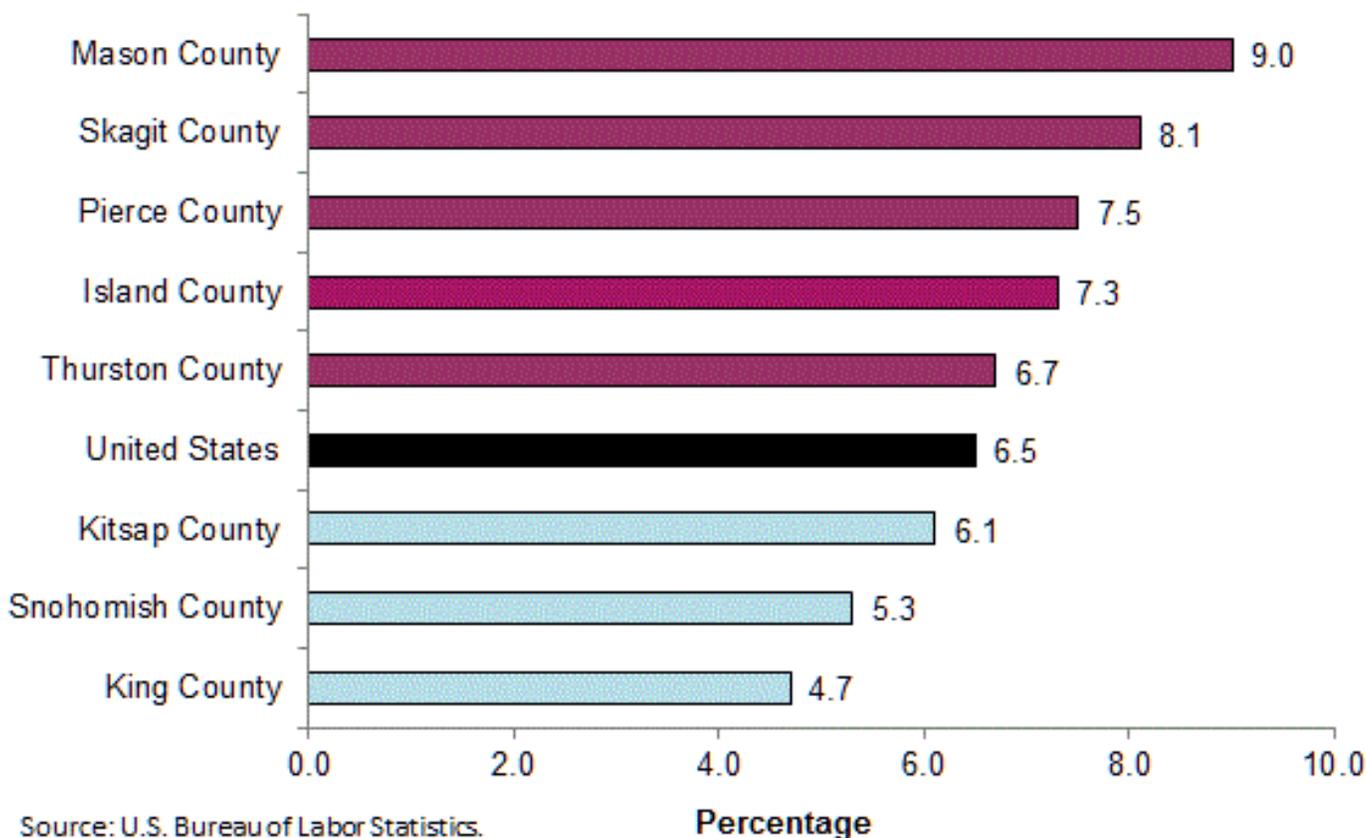
Percentage

In December, all eight counties in the Seattle area registered over-the-year unemployment rate declines, with the declines ranging from 1.3 percentage points in King and Snohomish Counties to 0.6 point in Island County. Nationally, the unemployment rate fell 1.1 percentage points from December a year ago. (See table A).

Table A. Unemployment rates for the United States, the Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia, Wash. Combined Statistical Area, and its components, not seasonally adjusted

Area	Unemployment rate			Net change from	
	Dec 2011	Dec 2012	Dec 2013	Dec 2011 to Dec 2013[1]	Dec 2012 to Dec 2013[1]
United States	8.3	7.6	6.5	-1.8	-1.1
Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia, Wash. CSA	8.0	6.8	5.6	-2.4	-1.2
Island County	8.8	7.9	7.3	-1.5	-0.6
King County	7.2	6.0	4.7	-2.5	-1.3
Kitsap County	7.7	7.0	6.1	-1.6	-0.9
Mason County	11.1	10.1	9.0	-2.1	-1.1
Pierce County	9.4	8.4	7.5	-1.9	-0.9
Skagit County	10.4	9.2	8.1	-2.3	-1.1
Snohomish County	8.2	6.6	5.3	-2.9	-1.3
Thurston County	8.2	7.4	6.7	-1.5	-0.7

Footnotes:
(1) Data for the Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia, Wash. Combined Statistical Area and its compenents are preliminary for the most recent month.

Unemployment rates fell in all Seattle area counties from December 2011 to December 2013. The largest decreases occurred in Snohomish County, down 2.9 percentage points, followed by King County, 2.5 points. Skagit County (-2.3 percentage points), Mason County (-2.1 points), and Pierce County (-1.9 points) also registered decreases that were larger than the nationwide decrease of 1.8 percentage points. Mason County has had the highest unemployment rate, and King County the lowest, in December for each of the last three years.

Technical Note

This release presents unemployment rate data for states and counties from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program, a federal-state cooperative endeavor.

Definitions. The labor force and unemployment data are based on the same concepts and definitions as those used for the official national estimates obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a sample survey of households that is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the U.S. Census Bureau. The LAUS program measures employment and unemployment on a place-of-residence basis. The universe for each is the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and over. Employed persons are those who did any work at all for pay or profit in the reference week (the week including the 12th of the month) or worked 15 hours or more without pay in a family business or farm, plus those not working who had a job from which they were temporarily absent, whether or not paid, for such reasons as labor-management dispute, illness, or vacation. Unemployed persons are those who were not employed during the reference week (based on the definition above), had actively looked for a job sometime in the 4-week period ending with the reference week, and were currently available for work; persons on layoff expecting recall need not be looking for work to be counted as unemployed. The labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force.

Method of estimation. Estimates for the substate areas in this release are prepared through indirect estimation procedures using a building-block approach. Employment estimates, which are based largely on "place of work" estimates from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program, are adjusted to refer to place of residence as used in the CPS. Unemployment estimates are aggregates of persons previously employed in industries covered by state unemployment insurance (UI) laws and entrants to the labor force data from the CPS. The substate estimates of employment and unemployment, which geographically exhaust the entire state, are adjusted proportionally to ensure that they add to the independently estimated state or balance-of-state totals. A detailed description of the estimation procedures is available from BLS upon request.

Annual revisions. Labor force and unemployment data for prior years reflect adjustments made at the end of each year, usually implemented with January estimates. The adjusted estimates reflect updated population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, any revisions in the other data sources, and model reestimation.

Area definition. The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, dated December 1, 2009. A detailed list of the geographic definitions is available at https://www.bls.gov/lau/lausmsa.htm

The **Seattle-Tacoma-Olympia, Wash. Combined Statistical Area (CSA)** includes Island, King, Kitsap, Mason, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, and Thurston Counties in Washington.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: 1-800-877-8339.