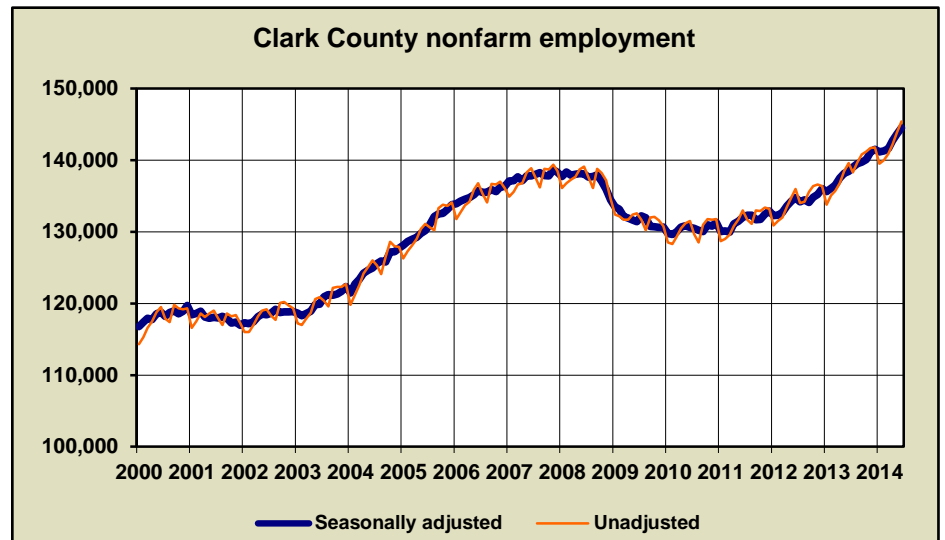


## Clark County

Clark County employment growth hit warp speed in June. The county added 800 jobs on a seasonally-adjusted basis, according to preliminary estimates. That follows gains of 1,100 in April and 1,000 in May, making the quarter one of the best ever for job creation. A small asterisk: some of the new jobs were due to the relocation of Integra from Portland, and so were not really new.

Just about every major sector has joined the party: construction, trade & transportation, information services, financial services, professional & business services, education & health care, leisure and hospitality. The only two looking wistfully at the punchbowl: manufacturing and government.



In June, unadjusted employment was up 1,500 jobs. Construction, manufacturing and retail trade all added 200 jobs, while information services jumped by 400 and leisure & hospitality by 300.

Over the year:

- Job growth over the year was 5,800, or 4.2 percent. Comparison rates: U.S., 1.8 percent; state of Washington, 2.8 percent; state of Oregon, 2.4 percent, Portland Metro, 3.3 percent.
- Hotter than July: Information services (which includes telecommunications) has added 500 jobs, growing 18 percent over the year. Blazing: construction (+900/10 percent), professional & business services (+1,200/7 percent), and health & education services (+1,400/6 percent).
- Merely torrid: trade, transportation & utilities (+1,100 jobs/4 percent).
- Not bad at all: leisure & hospitality (+300/2 percent).
- The laggards: finance (+100/1 percent), government (+200/1 percent) and manufacturing (-100/-1 percent).

When the recession started back in November 2007, the county had 138,700 jobs. Since then:

- The total job count has increased by 5,800.
- The county has 2,800 fewer construction jobs, 900 fewer manufacturing jobs, and 4,100 more jobs in health care and social assistance. Of those 4,100, most (2,500) were in health care, and of the 1,600 increased jobs in social assistance, almost all were family caretakers.

The preliminary May unemployment rate of 6.6 percent was revised upward by 0.7 points to 7.3 percent. The June preliminary rate of 6.4 percent will likely be revised upward as well.

Initial unemployment claims dipped lower over the month, while continued unemployment claims eased downward, both consistent with an improving job market.

## Cowlitz County

According to estimates prepared by the federal government, Cowlitz County employment was unchanged over the month after adjustment for seasonal factors. Job counts have shown little change since last September.

Unadjusted employment stayed put at 37,200 jobs. There were small increases in a number of industries—construction, manufacturing, retail trade, and leisure & hospitality—that were offset by a large drop in state government employment.

The county has gained 800 jobs (2.2 percent) over the past year, but again, most of that happened last summer. Construction was higher by 300 jobs, trade & transportation by 300 and leisure & hospitality by 400. Government payrolls were down 300 jobs.

Employment has been stable, as have unemployment claims. After seasonal adjustment, the underlying trend for more than a year has been in a slight downward direction. The unemployment rate, on the other hand, has shown an unusual see-saw pattern over the past few months, contrary to these other more direct measures. First there was an unusually large decline in April, then a large increase in May, and more recently a big drop in June. From 9.4 percent down to 7.7, back to 8.5, now down to 7.1. Unemployment rates at the county level are not directly measured but instead are derived from the state rate using a model. Sometimes they behave in an erratic fashion that doesn't match the reality on the ground, and this appears to be one of those cases.

## Wahkiakum County

Wahkiakum County nonfarm employment declined slightly in June, falling by 10 jobs. Usually June would bring a small increase of jobs. The total of 720 jobs was the same as in June 2013.

The official unemployment rate dropped sharply in June to 6.9 percent, and was almost five points lower than last June.

As with Cowlitz County, the rate has been somewhat erratic, and probably presents an overly optimistic picture of the local labor market. There has likely been some improvement, with more Wahkiakum residents finding jobs in adjacent counties, but not that much. Both initial and continued unemployment claims have trended slightly downward over the year.

