

Workforce - Washington

- Washington State workers boast above-average education levels.
- Unemployment rate is 4.3%(September 2007).
- The Workforce Explorer website, produced by the [Washington State Employment Security Department](#), offers extensive data at the state, local, and industry levels

Workforce Size and Availability

Statewide, the annual average unemployment rate in August 2007 was 4.9%. County averages range from 3.0% to 9.5%. Industry- and location-specific information about labor availability, including recent plant closures, is available at the Workforce Explorer site.

- [Workforce Explorer: Economy](#)(Washington State Employment Security Dept.)
- [Workforce Explorer: Workforce Data](#) (Washington State Employment Security Dept.)
- [Workforce Explorer: Workforce Information for Businesses](#) (Washington State Employment Security Dept.)

Educational Level

Washington has a higher concentration of adults with at least 12 years of education than any Western state, and it ranks sixth among all states (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). The state also ranks well above average for adults with bachelor's degrees, particularly in the counties with a heavy concentration of highly technical occupations.

- [Educational Attainment - State Comparisons, Various Educ. Levels](#) (US Census Bureau)
- [Educational Attainment - State Ranking Data, High School or Higher](#) (US Census Bureau)
- [Higher Education](#)

Labor Costs

Wages for Washington workers are becoming increasingly competitive. Employment opportunities in the state attract out-of-state workers, which tend to hold down wage increases while assuring a plentiful labor supply. Washington State minimum wage is \$7.93 as of January 1st, 2007. The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries makes an annual cost of living adjustment to the minimum wage as the result of an initiative approved by Washington voters in 1998. Workers' Comp Rates rank among the lowest in the nation (see the [Taxes page](#) for a full discussion).

- [Employment Security Department](#) (Washington State Employment Security Dept.)
- [Workforce Explorer: Employee Benefits Survey](#) (Washington State Employment Security Dept.)
- [Workforce Explorer: Wage Rates](#) (Washington State Employment Security Dept.)
- [Workers' Comp Industrial Rates](#) (Washington State Dept. of Labor and Industries)

Related Information

- [Hiring and Training](#)
- [Centers of Excellence](#)

Centers of Excellence are colleges designated as statewide leaders in specialized workforce education and training for industries throughout the state. Centers serve as a point-of-contact and

resource hub for industry trends, best practices, innovative curriculum and professional development.

- Workforce Education, [Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board](#).
- [Workforce College](#). "Creating Opportunities" offers Washington businesses an efficient and high-value source of employee training at 34 Community and Technical Colleges across the state.

For further assistance with your Washington business requirements, please visit the [Learn about Doing Business in Washington](#). Updated June 2009.

Source:

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<http://www.choosewashington.com/index.asp>