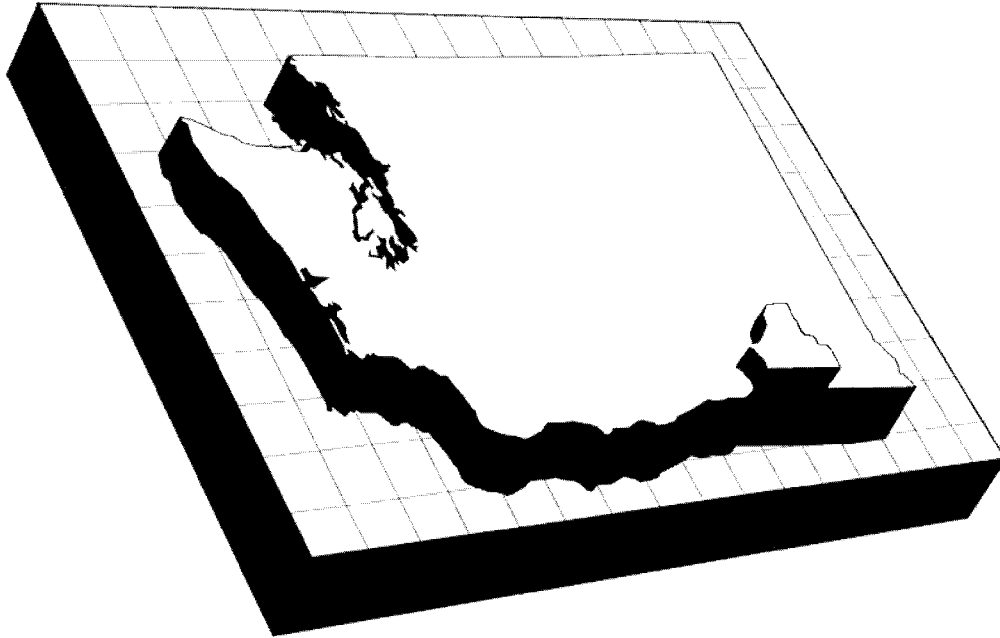


# WALLA WALLA COUNTY PROFILE



**October 2000**  
Labor Market and  
Economic Analysis Branch  
Greg Weeks, *Director*

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**WALLA WALLA COUNTY PROFILE  
OCTOBER 2000**

Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch  
Employment Security Department

This report has been prepared in accordance with  
*RCW 50.38.050.*

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

INTRODUCTION .....	1	Agriculture	
GEOGRAPHY .....	2	Construction and Mining	
ECONOMIC HISTORY .....	3	Manufacturing	
POPULATION .....	6	Transportation, Communications, Utilities	
Trend		Trade	
Towns and Cities		Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	
Age Groups		Services	
Demographics		Government	
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE .....	10	OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE .....	25
Demographics		PERSONAL INCOME.....	29
UNEMPLOYMENT .....	12	Total Personal Income	
Trend		Components of Personal Income	
Industrial Typology		JOB TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT	
Demographics		SERVICES, AND ECONOMIC	
Unemployment Insurance Claims		DEVELOPMENT .....	32
INDUSTRIES, EMPLOYMENT,		Workforce Development	
AND WAGES .....	16	Economic Development	
Employment Trend		SUMMARY .....	37
Location Quotients		APPENDIX - Walla Walla County	
Average Covered Wage		Selected Economic Data.....	A-1

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# INTRODUCTION

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This report profiles the labor market and economic characteristics of Walla Walla County to date. The Labor Market and Economic Analysis (LMEA) Branch of the Washington State Employment Security Department prepared this report, which is one in a series that profiles labor market and economic conditions in each of Washington's 39 counties.

The profile is designed to assist state and local planners in developing local economic strategies. It is also an effective tool for answering labor market and economic questions frequently asked about the county. Readers with specific information needs should refer to the *Table of Contents* or to the *data appendix* to more quickly access those sections of particular interest to them.

Like the earlier *Walla Walla County Profiles* of March 1990 and of November 1995, the purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive labor market and economic analysis of Walla Walla County. Characteristics profiled include the following:

- physical geography, economic history, and demographics
- labor force composition and trends
- industries, employment, income, and earnings
- skills and occupations
- economic development, job training, and employment services

The data for this profile are derived from various state and national sources. All dollar figures are in current or nominal dollars, except where real values are specified. Real dollars are inflation adjusted, using the Personal Consumption Expenditures deflators with 1998 equal to 1.0. The data used are the most recently updated, even though some data are up to 2 years old.

Much of the information included in this report is regularly updated on the LMEA Internet homepage. The homepage contains labor market information that can be accessed by area or by type of information. The site address is:

**<http://www.wa.gov/esd/lmea>**

Any inquiries or comments about information in the profile should be directed to the Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch or the regional labor economist.

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# GEOGRAPHY

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Located in southeast Washington, Walla Walla County comprises a total land mass of 1,271 square miles. As such, it ranks 26th in size among Washington's 39 counties.

Walla Walla County is bounded to the north by Franklin County (along the Snake River), to the west by Benton County (along the Columbia River), and to the east by Columbia County. The county's southern boundary forms part of the Washington-Oregon border.

The county's topography is more diverse than one might imagine. The western part of the county is one of flat grasslands, while the central part of the county is dominated by gentle, rolling hills. The lowest elevations in the county can be found in its western extremes, where the land descends to 340 feet above sea level at

the banks of the Columbia River. The west and central terrains have both proven particularly suitable for agricultural cultivation.

The local terrain becomes one of increasingly steeper foothills in the eastern part of the county as it runs up against the Blue Mountains. Elevations in this part of the county reach as high as 4,540 feet above sea level.

The Walla Walla and Touchet rivers are the principal tributaries within the county. Both originate high in the Blue Mountains (in Columbia County) and flow west across the county before emptying into the Columbia River. In fact, the rivers converge with Mill and Dry creeks near the town of Touchet in the southwest county before emptying into the Columbia.

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# ECONOMIC HISTORY

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The following was excerpted from *History of Old Walla Walla County* by W.D. Lyman.

Native American tribes occupied what is now Walla Walla County long before white exploration and settlement. The region's principal tribes were the Walla Walla, Cayuse, Umatilla, and, to a lesser extent, Nez Perce. They were the first people of the region to engage in commerce, which included trade in beads, shells, elk teeth, grizzly claws, and other ornate items.

White exploration of the region began in October 1805 when the Lewis and Clark Expedition canoed down the Snake River (originally named the Lewis River) along what is now the northern border of Walla Walla County. On their return trip in April 1806, the expedition left the Columbia River near present-day Wallula and headed east across the middle of the county.

Fur traders were the first to arrive in the region after Lewis and Clark. The (British) Northwest Fur Company and (American) Pacific Fur Company were the first major players with the (Canadian) Hudson's Bay Company entering later. At the industry's height, Walla Walla was one of the premier fur trading regions in what is now Washington. Competition was fierce, leading to the Joint Occupation Treaty of 1818 which compelled the British and Americans to respect each other's ventures in the territory. By that time, however, financial problems all but eliminated the Pacific Fur Company as a player. Later in 1818, the Northwest Fur Company built Fort Walla Walla (first called Fort Nez Perce) near the fork of the Walla Walla and Columbia rivers and carried on a profitable trade from that site. In 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company merged with the Northwest Fur Company under the former's banner, virtually monopolizing the region's fur trade. Americans Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and Benjamin de Bonneville attempted in the 1830s to break the British monopoly, but it survived to the end.

Missionaries began entering the territory in the mid-1830s. On an 1835 reconnoiter of the Walla Walla Valley, Dr. Marcus Whitman saw the possibilities of establishing a mission. He returned to New York and assembled a party led by William Gray, which included Whitman and his wife Narcissa Prentiss and Reverend Henry Spalding and his wife Eliza Hart. Their 4,000-mile journey ended at Fort Walla Walla on September 1, 1836. Both established missions: Whitman at Waiilatpu (6 miles

west of present-day Walla Walla) and Spalding at Lapwai (12 miles from present-day Lewiston, Idaho). Whitman and his party also started new industries, cultivating 300 acres of land between the Walla Walla River and Mill Creek and building a saw and grist mill.

The Whitman Massacre on November 29, 1847 effectively ended white settlement of the region until the first Indian War was ended by the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1855. The treaty forced tribes onto reservations in what, since 1853, had become Washington Territory, thus clearing the way for renewed white settlement. This time, however, settlers were protected by newly created U.S. Fort Walla Walla (as distinguished from the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Walla Walla at Wallula). Cattle ranchers, drawn by ranges of bunch grass, were among the first pioneers in the valley. Other settlers secured fertile land that was near water.

Meanwhile, Washington Territory was established on March 3, 1853 with Walla Walla as one of its 16 original counties. The county encompassed all of present-day eastern Washington, Idaho, and the western quarter of Montana. Ironically, the only white settlements in this huge area were Waiilatpu and Frenchtown, both of which were near the present-day city of Walla Walla.

Walla Walla in the 1860s was similar to other towns of the West as cowboys, gunslingers, gamblers, outlaws, and the like passed through the town of Walla Walla. More importantly, this period saw the rise of cattle ranching. Historic cattle drives cut a path between Walla Walla Valley and the ranges of Montana and Wyoming. Moreover, a fledgling grain industry emerged after Charles Russell, an early county commissioner, successfully harvested a crop of barley and oats to get around transporting grain from the Willamette Valley to U.S. Fort Walla Walla.

The 1860s gold rush in what is now northeastern Washington also fueled growth in the county's grain industry. Prospectors and other newcomers stimulated demand for grain, prompting many to give it a try. Grain output increased over the next two decades, but exploded in the 1880s as rail transportation made grain an exportable commodity.

The growth of grain production led to flour milling. The county's first flour mill was built in 1859 with others following in the ensuing decade. Sawmills also sprang up. The largest, Whitehouse-Crawford Company

(1888), was followed by the likes of Walla Walla Lumber Company, Oregon Lumber Company, and Bridal Veil Lumber Company.

Grain production also spawned an agricultural machinery industry. Established in 1888, the Hunt Threshing Factory was the largest with its Pride of Washington Separator. Another key player was Holt Harvester Works, which helped develop and refine the popular side-hill harvester. Others included Brown-Lewis Corporation, Ringhoffer Brothers, Washington Weeder Works, Walla Walla Iron Works, and Cox-Bailey Manufacturing Company.

Fruit and vegetable crops also flourished in Walla Walla County beginning in the 1860s. The orchards produced apples, peaches, and apricots while the fields produced potatoes, corn, squash, radishes, lettuce, onions, rutabagas, and even tobacco. Despite the disastrous winter of 1883, crops rebounded so successfully that Walla Walla became known as the Garden City.

Proprietors in the town of Walla Walla also benefited greatly from the gold rush as thousands of prospectors stopped for supplies before heading north. The gold rush was singularly responsible for the rapid pace of settlement and development in Walla Walla County. In addition to stores, saloons, and banks, the decade saw the establishment of the *Washington Statesman*, Walla Walla's first paper, as well as the first paper west of the Missouri River and east of the Cascades.

Transportation was also critical to the development of Walla Walla County. Stagecoaches were introduced in 1859 by J.F. Abbott (later the Rickey and Thatcher Line) and operated between Walla Walla and Wallula. In 1860, the Miller & Blackmore Line began running between Walla Walla and The Dalles. Established in 1871, the Northwestern Stage Company was the last great stage line to operate in the region before giving way to the railroads in the late 1880s.

The railroad came to Walla Walla County in 1883 via the Northern Pacific Railroad Company line that extended from Walla Walla to Wallula and on to its western terminus at Tacoma. The Washington and Columbia River Railroad (WCRR, known as the Hunt Road) branched from Northern Pacific's main line. The WCRR lines connected the larger towns in southeast Washington and across the border in northeast Oregon. Most influential in Walla Walla County, though, was the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company (ORNC). The ORNC's transcontinental line connected major trade centers like Spokane, Yakima, and Lewiston. It secured a monopoly on the local transportation network when

it acquired the Walla Walla and Columbia River Railroad (known as Dr. Baker's Road) after acquiring the Oregon Steamboat Navigation Company.

Steamers began plying the Columbia and Snake rivers in the 1870s, adding another dimension to the region's commercial transportation network. Steamer use was enhanced by locks and dams, which by 1915 allowed continuous passage from Lewiston to the Pacific Ocean.

Strong demand for grain and beef during World Wars I and II led to more intensive agricultural efforts in Walla Walla County. These events permanently established agriculture's dominance in the local economy and set the pattern of local economic development. Walla Walla County is currently the fourth largest wheat producer among Washington counties with roughly 10 percent of the state's output. The county also has fruit, seed, and vegetable crops. Agriculture also contributes both directly and indirectly to other major Walla Walla County industries like the wholesale trading of agricultural commodities and equipment as well as food processing.

Walla Walla Cannery, the county's first, was established in 1932. Its success cleared the way for major processors like Libby, McNeill & Libby in 1935 and the Bird's Eye Division of General Foods in 1946 (later D&K Frozen Foods Inc. and now Stokley USA). Food processing remains a goodly part of the local economy, and is presently dominated by IBP Inc., a beef processor.

Higher education has long been a vital part of the local economy. Founded in 1859, Whitman Seminary was the first higher education institution in Washington Territory before it was chartered by the territorial legislature in 1883 and became private, secular Whitman College. Walla Walla College was established by the Seventh Day Adventist Church in 1892. Yet another institution emerged when state-funded Walla Walla Community College was founded in 1967.

Health care is another major aspect of the local economy. Established in 1882, the county's first major medical institution was St. Mary's Hospital. Walla Walla Veterans Hospital (now Veterans Administration Medical Center) opened in 1922. Walla Walla General Hospital followed in 1924 (purchased by the Seventh Day Adventist Church in 1931). Each facility has undergone expansion and renovation over the years. Today, convalescent centers and nursing homes are rapidly joining the list of local health care providers.

Public sector employment maintains a high profile. The military, of course, played a major role in local history. U.S. Fort Walla Walla was integral to territorial de-

velopment. The fort was also used for infantry training during World War I. Walla Walla County hosted a bomber air base during World War II, training roughly 8,000 officers and enlisted men. After the war, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers transferred its regional office from Portland to the air base (now Walla Walla Regional Airport) before relocating to downtown Walla Walla in 1994.

State government employment in the county is largely from the Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla. Built as a territorial prison in 1887, the facility was operated as a women's prison from 1935-71. It reopened in 1981 as a minimum security complex and was expanded to include a maximum security com-

plex in 1984. Part of the minimum security complex was fenced off in 1985 and reopened as a medium security complex. Education-based state employment is also present through both the public K-12 system and Walla Walla Community College.

These industries helped transform Walla Walla from a cattle town in the late 1800s to a city of trade, services, and government. Moreover, Walla Walla County has become a regional center of trade and services (especially health care) for all of southeast Washington. Manufacturing continues to play a strong role through food processing, lumber and paper processing, printing and publishing, and other goods-producing activities.



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# POPULATION

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The Office of Financial Management has estimated Walla Walla County's population at 54,200 in 2000, ranking it 19th among Washington's 39 counties. With an area covering 1,271 square miles, Walla Walla County's population density stands at 42 people per square mile. Although the 2000 Census is underway, the last Census results available at this writing were in 1990, when it counted 48,439 residents.

Population is viewed as a key economic indicator of an area's vitality. With the exception of retirees and a

minority of "footloose" workers, people tend to migrate to areas that have economic opportunities. In short, people follow jobs. However, changes in population are lagging, not leading, indicators. It takes time for people to arrive in an area where jobs are prevalent, and it takes time for them to leave once the demand for labor lessens. Nevertheless, population changes provide good insight into how the economy is performing, and how the economy has performed over time.

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## Trend

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In the last thirty years, Walla Walla County's population has increased 29 percent (*see Figure 1*). The state's population, by comparison, rose 70 percent. This period can be dissected into three separate growth intervals, 1970-1980, 1980-1990, and 1990-2000. The first period started out with a slight decline in 1972. Following this decline were several years of growth. From 1973 until 1980, the annual growth rate ranged from 0.5 percent to 2.9 percent, placing the county's population at 47,435 in 1980.

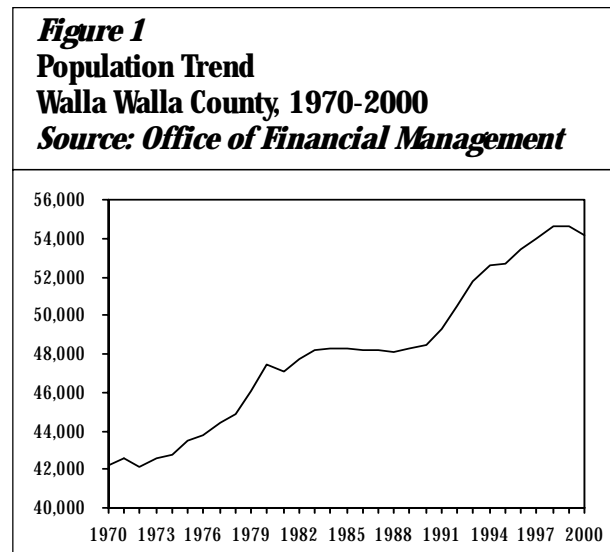
The 1980s opened, like the previous decade, with a small decline occurring during the first two years. The decline ended in 1982 but, unlike the preceding period, growth never really began. Over the entire decade, Walla Walla County's population grew by 1,004 residents, only

2.1 percent. For the same time period, the state's population grew 17.8 percent.

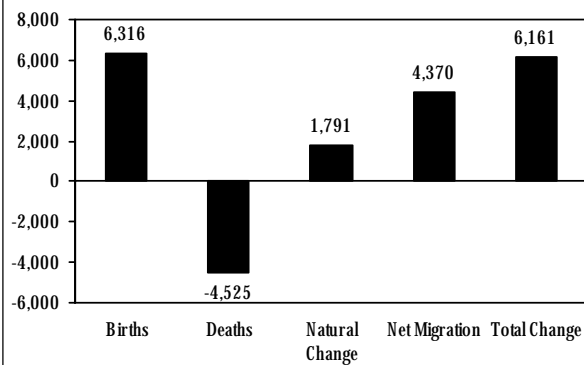
During the most recent period, 1990-2000, Walla Walla County added an average of 576 residents per year. Growing 11.9 percent (from 48,439 to 54,200), the county's population came as close as it ever has to matching the overall state average (19.3). This unusually higher rate of growth can be attributed to older, retired people moving into the county not for jobs but for the wonderful environment and relatively cheap housing. As a result, the housing market grew faster than the job market.

Two things cause population change. One is natural change; births and deaths. Only major socioeconomic occurrences alter the pattern of natural change (both the Great Depression and the aftermath of World War II resulted in significant changes in the nation's birth rate). The second cause of population change is migration, which can give insight into an area's current economic trend.

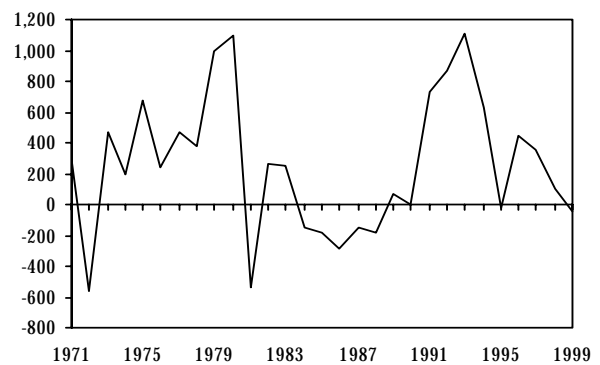
The migration trend is quite revealing in Walla Walla County. From 1990-99, Walla Walla County has gained 6,161 residents (*see Figure 2*). Of that number, 1,791 were the result of a natural population increase (6,316 births and 4,525 deaths) and 4,370 resulted from net in-migration. This migratory element has changed drastically over the years. During the 1980s, out-migration dominated, decreasing the population by 911 residents. From 1990-99, in-migration has added 4,257 citizens. *Figure 3* shows the changing migratory element of Walla Walla County.



**Figure 2**  
**Components of Population Change**  
**Walla Walla County, 1990-1999**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*



**Figure 3**  
**Net Migration**  
**Walla Walla County, 1971-1999**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*



## Towns and Cities

In 2000, about one-third (30 percent) of Walla Walla County's residents lived in unincorporated areas of the county. The remaining 70 percent of the 54,200 county residents lived in one of the four incorporated cities: Walla Walla, College Place, Waitsburg, or Prescott. Both

the incorporated and unincorporated areas grew 9 percent since 1990. Statewide, the growth was 13 percent in incorporated areas and 10 percent in unincorporated regions. *Figure 4* shows the population of all cities in Walla Walla County between 1990 and 2000.

**Figure 4**  
**Population of Cities and County**  
**1990-2000**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*

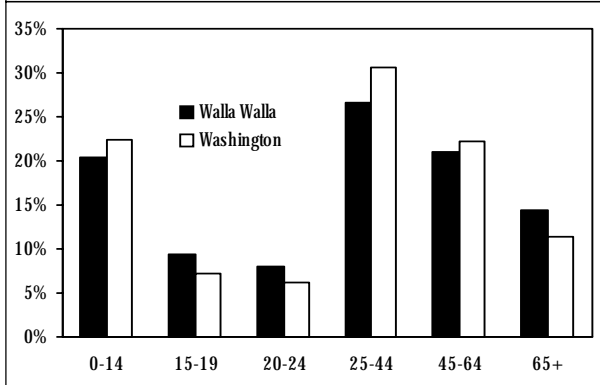
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	%Chg 90-00
<b>Walla Walla</b>	48,439	49,300	50,500	51,800	52,600	52,700	53,400	54,000	54,600	54,600	54,200	11.9%
Unincorporated	14,384	14,616	14,661	15,154	15,725	15,645	16,061	16,375	16,490	16,470	16,300	13.3%
Incorporated	34,055	34,684	35,839	36,646	36,875	37,055	37,339	37,625	38,110	38,130	37,900	11.3%
College Place	6,308	6,390	6,410	6,530	6,710	6,735	6,865	6,980	7,110	7,395	7,430	17.8%
Prescott	275	275	280	280	305	305	320	335	335	335	335	21.8%
Waitsburg	990	995	1,015	1,016	1,130	1,145	1,224	1,210	1,225	1,200	1,195	20.7%
Walla Walla	26,482	27,024	28,134	28,820	28,730	28,870	28,930	29,100	29,440	29,200	28,940	9.3%

## Age Groups

The distribution of the population among various age groups as well as the changes in this distribution over time shows aspects of the population not revealed by the overall numbers. *Figure 5* on the next page categorizes the population of Walla Walla County and Washington State by age group share size. These age groups are significant if we make the following assumptions:

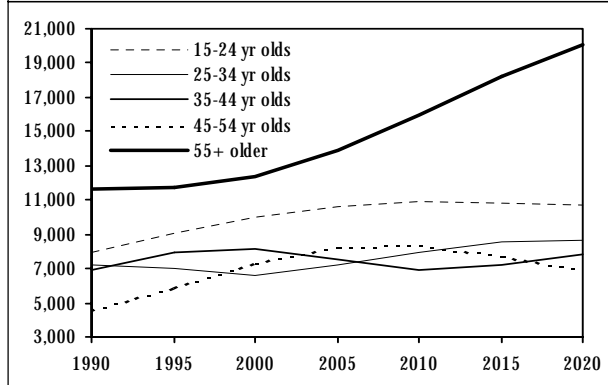
- 0-14 = Infants or adolescents a decade or two removed from the labor force
- 15-19 = Prospective new entrants into the labor force, except college students
- 20-24 = New entrants into the labor force
- 25-44 = Young workers in their prime years of productivity
- 45-64 = Mature workers with years of accumulated skills and experience
- 65+ = Retirees

**Figure 5**  
**Population by Age Groups**  
**Walla Walla County & Washington, 1999**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*



A major similarity between Walla Walla County and Washington State is that both populations are aging. In the county and the state, the median age (the age at which there is an equal number above and below) increased from 33 in 1990 to 35 in 1999. The primary factor behind this overall trend is the aging of the baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964 when the birth rate of the nation dramatically increased). This aging will accelerate in upcoming years as the baby boomers enter retirement age.

**Figure 6**  
**Population Trends by Age Groups**  
**Walla Walla County, 1990-2020**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*



In 1990, those aged 55 or older accounted for 24 percent of the county's population as seen in *Figure 6*. The Office of Financial Management estimates that the aged 55 or older group will make up 30 percent of the total in 2020. This may have a large effect on many institutions: medical services, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and a host of other services may be greatly enhanced. This, of course, is not unique to Walla Walla County. The nation and the state are both graying.

## Demographics

The gender makeup of Walla Walla County's population did not change appreciably between 1990 and 1999. In 1990, males and females both accounted for 50 percent of the population. In 1999, males became a slight statistical majority in the county as their share size increased by 0.8 percent to 50.8 percent with females at 49.2 percent. Statewide, the figures remained at 50 percent for both males and females over the decade.

Racial characteristics have shifted over the years in Walla Walla County. The white population constituted 96 percent of the total population in 1990. Over the next nine years, the estimated share size of whites decreased slightly to 95 percent. Although whites decreased in share size, they increased 11 percent in actual numbers. Statewide, whites constituted 89 percent of the population in 1999. *Figure 7* shows that although blacks represented

the next largest group with 2 percent of the county's population in 1990, Asians and Pacific Islanders moved up to second with their 3 percent share size in 1999. The county figures further show blacks represented only 2 percent and Native Americans, 1 percent. The respective percentages for the state as a whole are 3 percent and 2 percent.

While whites increased by 11 percent in actual numbers, from 1990-99, the non-white population grew 139 percent. The highest increase from 690 to 1,355 was among Asians and Pacific Islanders (96 percent). With a positive growth for all racial classes during this time, people of Hispanic origin, who can be of any race, are tallied separately at 17 percent. During 1990-99, Hispanics increased from 4,703 to 9,417 (100 percent), making them the dominant ethnic population.

**Figure 7**  
**Population Estimates by Race and Hispanic Origin**  
**Walla Walla County and Washington State, 1990 and 1999**  
*Source: Office of Financial Management*

	1990 Census		1999 Estimates		1990-99 % Change
<b>Walla Walla</b>					
Total	48,439	100.0%	54,600	100.0%	12.7%
White	46,551	96.1%	51,840	94.9%	11.4%
Black	762	1.6%	805	1.5%	5.6%
Indian/Aleut	436	0.9%	600	1.1%	37.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	690	1.4%	1,355	2.5%	96.4%
Hispanic	4,703	9.7%	9,417	17.2%	100.2%
<b>Washington</b>					
Total	4,866,692	100.0%	5,757,400	100.0%	18.3%
White	4,411,407	90.6%	5,107,571	88.8%	15.8%
Black	152,572	3.1%	198,670	3.4%	30.2%
Indian/Aleut	87,259	1.8%	109,509	1.9%	25.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	215,454	4.4%	341,650	5.9%	58.6%
Hispanic	214,570	4.4%	356,464	6.0%	66.1%

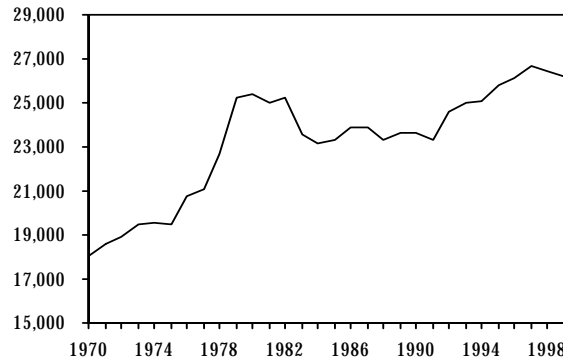
# CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE

Since there is no county-level equivalent to gross domestic product or gross state product, labor force and other available measures are used as substitutes for those economic indicators. The resident civilian labor force is defined as all persons 16 years of age and older within a specified geographic area who are either employed—excluding those serving in the armed forces—or unemployed and actively seeking work. Like the general population, the labor force can be seen as a key economic indicator. Patterns of growth and decline in the county's labor force are largely driven by economic cycles as well as activities in the local construction, government, and agricultural sectors. In 1999, the labor force in Walla Walla County was estimated at 26,220.

*Figure 8* displays the trend of the county's labor force from 1970 to 1999. Over the course of the 1970s, Walla Walla County's civilian labor force grew nearly 40 percent. In fact, its 1980 level (25,430) was a record high back then for Walla Walla. This was due to the large immigration of construction workers supporting the Lower Snake River Development. During the early 1970s, labor force growth in the county ranged from 2 to 3 percent annually. A national economic recession in 1974, however, left labor force levels stagnant for a two-year period. By the late 1970s, the labor force size picked up considerably, rising 7.4 percent and 11.4 percent in 1978 and 1979, respectively.

The decade of the 1980s was one of relative stagnation and decline in the county's labor force. Economic recessions early in the decade caused a net loss of nearly 9 percent in the county labor force between 1980 and

**Figure 8**  
**Resident Civilian Labor Force**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



1984. By 1984, its level had fallen to 23,180. The size of the labor force stagnated in the latter half of the 1980s, fluctuating between 23,300 and 23,880. In 1989, Walla Walla County's civilian labor force tallied 23,650.

The 1990s opened with the same stagnation the county had been accustomed to. But in 1992, a significant expansion occurred, bringing the labor force to the levels of the early 1980s. The county's labor force went from 24,610 in 1992 to 26,660 in 1997, an 8.3 percent growth and the highest level Walla Walla has ever experienced. This peak was due in part to one large manufacturing plant, which was relocated from northeast Oregon to Walla Walla. In 1999, the county's labor force slightly declined to 26,220.

## Demographics

Ethnically, the labor force composition of Walla Walla County is equivalent to its general population (*see Figure 9*). According to estimates by Employment Security Department analysts, 79 percent of the county's labor force was white in 1997—amounting to 21,300 participants out of a total 26,880. The second largest racial category, Asians and Pacific Islanders, totaled 450. There were 210 blacks and 170 Native Americans. Those of Hispanic origin, who can be of any race, numbered 4,750 making up 18 percent of the county's labor force.

Looking at the male-female composition of Walla Walla County from 1980-90, it is clear that the composition of its labor force did not change much. In 1980, males were 58 percent of the county's labor force compared to 42 percent of females. During the past two decades, however, female participation in the labor force grew slightly higher than male participation. In 1997, fifty-five percent of the work force was male while 45 percent was female. Statewide, males also have the majority at 54 percent.

**Figure 9**  
**Resident Labor Force by Sex & Minor. Status**  
**Walla Walla County, 1997 Annual Average**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

<b>Sex and Minority Status</b>	<b>Labor Force</b>	<b>Percent Distribution</b>
Both Sexes Total	26,880	100.0
White	21,300	79.2
Black	210	0.8
Native American	170	0.6
Asian & Pacific Islander	450	1.7
Hispanic	4,750	17.7
Female Total	12,120	100.0
White	9,910	81.8
Black	40	0.3
Native American	60	0.5
Asian & Pacific Islander	190	1.6
Hispanic	1,920	15.8
Female Percent of Total	45.1	---

*Note: All races exclude those of Hispanic origin, as Hispanic is indicated as a separate group.*

*Race estimates are based on 1990 Census and 1997 population data from the Office of Financial Management.*

*Detail may not add to indicated totals because of rounding.*

# UNEMPLOYMENT

## Trend

The civilian labor force consists of both those who are working and those without a job who are looking for work. The unemployment rate is the percentage of the total labor force who are not working but who are actively seeking work. The unemployed do not include retirees, persons in institutions (including prisons and colleges), or those who have come to be known as “discouraged workers,” i.e., persons who would like to work but who are not actively searching for a job. None of these groups of people are included in the unemployment figures because they are not looking for work.

At the national level, the unemployment rate is determined by a monthly survey of households. At the local level, the state’s portion of this household survey is integrated with other information (e.g., unemployment insurance claims and surveys of business establishments) to produce unemployment rates at the state and county level.

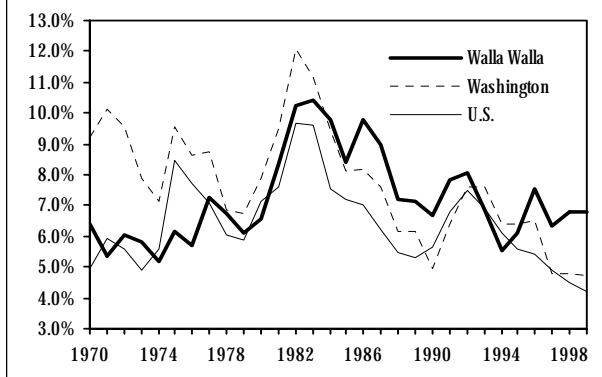
Figure 10 shows the unemployment rate in Walla Walla County, Washington, and the United States from 1970 to 1999. Through the 1970s and early 1980s, unemployment was always less in the county than in the state, sometimes significantly less. (In 1971, 5.4 percent of Walla Walla’s labor force was idle while 10.1 percent of the state’s could not find work.) What is known as the “double-dip” recessions struck in the early 1980s, driving up unemployment in both Washington and the county.

Unlike the recessions of the 1970s, these deeply affected employment in Walla Walla County. However, peak unemployment was still greater statewide (12.1 percent in 1982) than in the county (10.4 percent in 1983).

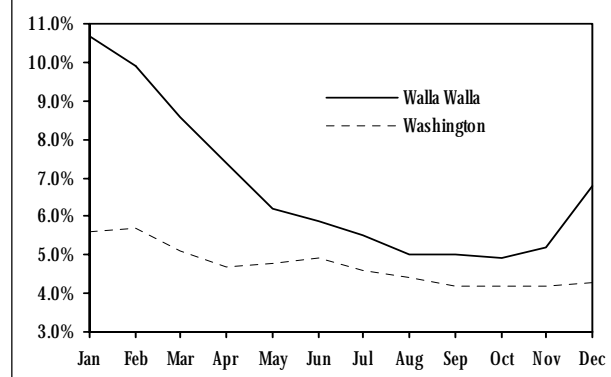
The economic recovery following the recession is where the pattern changed. In 1984, for the first time, unemployment in the county was greater than it was statewide. The years that followed continued this pattern. For the most part, the huge economic expansion that occurred nationwide during the 1980s bypassed eastern Washington in general and Walla Walla County in particular. While the nation and Washington west of the Cascades boomed, Walla Walla’s economy remained sluggish and unemployment remained high. This continued through the 1990-91 recession. Finally, 1993 saw unemployment in the county return to its historically lower-than-the-state rate. However, in 1996, the rate in the county went up to 7.5 percent, higher than the state’s 6.5 percent. Since then the higher-than-state rate has continued up to the last reported year of 1999, where the county’s unemployment rate recorded 6.8 percent compared to the state’s 4.7 percent.

Unemployment in Walla Walla County differs from the state in another aspect. Agricultural counties most often have a higher unemployment rate than the state. There is a much wider variation in unemployment throughout the seasons in the county than there is in the state. With

**Figure 10**  
**Unemployment Rates**  
**Walla Walla, Washington, & U.S., 1970-1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



**Figure 11**  
**Monthly Unemployment Rates**  
**Walla Walla County & Washington, 1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



a large agricultural labor force whose activity is dependent upon the season, unemployment will vary considerably. The farm workers are so numerous that their numbers have a considerable impact on the county's overall unemployment rate. However, non-seasonal movements in food processing or the agricultural harvest are factors that can move the county's unemployment rate relative to the state's.

Figure 11 shows unemployment in the county and the state by month for 1999. Note the wider variation in the county's unemployment rate, which ranged from a

high of 10.7 percent in January to a low of 4.9 percent in October. Aside from the different harvest seasons, the spike up in Walla Walla's unemployment rate was due to the demise of two manufacturing plants. Then a commuter help service center opened up south of the county in Oregon and sucked up a good share of Walla Walla's unemployment. The swings are not unique to 1999; the pattern recurs every year due to agricultural activities. While these large changes in unemployment put a heavy strain on unemployed workers, they also levy a heavy burden on social service providers. The statewide variation only ranged from 4.2 to 5.7 percent.

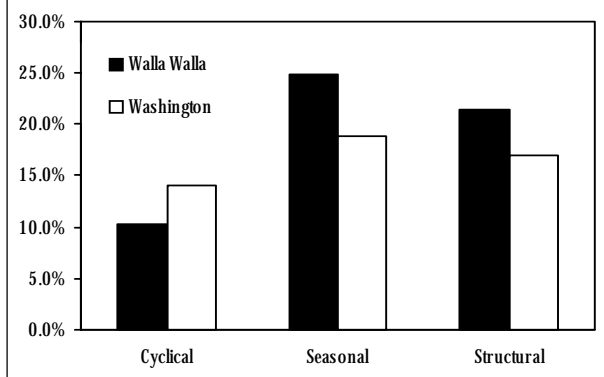
## Industrial Typology

A number of specific industries within Washington have been defined as being seasonal, cyclical, or structurally mature. These designations relate to the level of variation in employment or to a change in employment over specific time periods. Because all three categories are reflective of employment instability or change, the degree to which a county's economic base depends upon these industries reveals a tendency toward or away from unemployment. (Only private industries were included when producing the figures below, so the impact of government employment is excluded.)

Industries with *seasonal* employment patterns are characterized by large employment increases and decreases in particular months of the year. Industries with *cyclical* employment patterns are characterized by sharp increases and decreases in employment during periods of general economic growth and contraction, i.e., during the course of the business cycle. *Structurally mature* industries are characterized by long-term declines in total annual average employment, the result of increased productivity, automation, technological change, exhaustion of natural resources, or other factors.

The number of workers employed in these type industries in Walla Walla County was tabulated (see Figure 12). In 1999, seasonal industries accounted for 4,607 workers or 24.8 percent of all nongovernment employment. While another 3,974 workers, who comprised 21.4 percent of the total, were employed in structurally mature industries, only 1,907 workers or 10.3 percent were in cyclical industries. As the chart shows, this differs considerably from the statewide typology, particularly in the seasonal (18.8 percent) and structural (10.9 percent) shares. The county's cyclical share

**Figure 12**  
**Industrial Typology**  
**Walla Walla County & Washington, 1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



was lower than the state's 14.1 percent share. *Note: An industry can be recognized in more than one typology. Construction, for example, is very dependent upon weather and is also highly sensitive to fluctuations in overall economic activity, i.e., the business cycle. It has been categorized as both seasonal and cyclical.*

Because the typologies of Walla Walla County and the state differ, it is not unusual that the county has a higher unemployment rate than the state. The higher percentage of workers in seasonal type industries will cause a higher variation of unemployment throughout the year, as mentioned earlier. Although Walla Walla's concentration of workers in cyclical industries is less than the state, the chart reveals that Walla Walla's concentration of workers in seasonal and structural industries is considerably greater than the state.



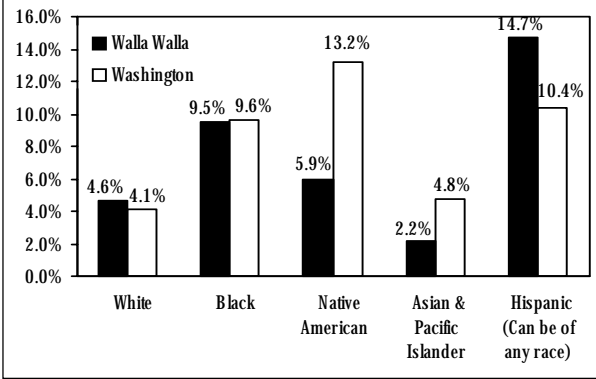
# Demographics

Figure 13 compares unemployment among the various racial groups and between the state and the county. The overall unemployment rate in Walla Walla County in 1997 was 6.4 percent.

Portraying unemployment by race or Hispanic origin shows pronounced differences. The unemployment rate for whites was 4.6 percent; for blacks, a high 9.5 percent; and for American Indians, 5.9 percent. Asians and Pacific Islanders, who are the largest minority race in the county, had a very low 2.2 unemployment percent rate. Those of Hispanic origin, who can be of any race, and whose numbers are quite large (18 percent of the labor force), suffered a very high 14.7 percent unemployment rate.

Even though unemployment rates for several of the minority races are lower than the county's overall rate, which is affected largely by the white unemployment rate, the differences are not as great in Walla Walla County as they are statewide. For example, unemployment among Native Americans in the county was half a percentage point lower than the county's overall rate; for Native Americans statewide, the rate was 8.4 percentage points greater than the state's overall rate. Clearly, unemployment does not affect all groups equally.

**Figure 13**  
**Unemployment by Race**  
**Walla Walla County & Washington, 1997**  
**Source: Employment Security Department**



Swinging largely by the seasonal component of agriculture, the unemployment rate among men is considerably higher than among women, by 2.0 percentage points. The rate for females was 5.3 percent in 1997; for males, 7.3 percent.

## Unemployment Insurance Claims

One of the key factors, and perhaps most reliable methods, in determining unemployment is the number of claims filed with the Employment Security Department for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. The accompanying Figure 14 shows the number of UI claims filed in Walla Walla County and Washington State during FY 1998-99 by occupation groupings. Occupation groupings differ from industry designations in that the former deal with the type of work performed regardless of industry and the latter deal with work performed within a given industry.

The concentration of UI claims in Walla Walla County occupation groupings appeared, by and large, to differ from the concentrations statewide. The differences between county and state were in the degree of UI concentration in each of these areas. Walla Walla County saw a much higher share of its UI claimants come from processing (21.7 percent), service (12.8 percent), and structural work (12.5 percent), comprising 47.0 percent of Walla Walla's claimants while the statewide share

was higher in structural work (18.8 percent), professional/technical/managerial (17.6 percent), and clerical (10.8 percent), totalling 47.2 percent of the state's claimants. Conversely, the county had lesser concentration in sale and packaging/materials handling than was seen statewide. The balance of occupational sectors saw roughly similar UI concentrations at the county and state levels.

There was a notable disparity between white- and blue-collar UI claimants in Walla Walla County, and between this ratio and the corresponding ratio at the state level. At the county level, 37.6 percent of UI claimants were white-collar, versus 44.4 percent at the state level. This, however, is no surprise given that employment is concentrated in typical blue-collar industries: agriculture, food processing, and structural work. The state white- to blue-collar UI claimant ratio is more evenly distributed—greatly influenced by the more diversified economic base of the Central Puget Sound.

**Figure 14****Unemployment Insurance Claimants****Walla Walla County and Washington State, July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999****Source: Employment Security Department**

	WallaWalla		Washington	
	Claimants	Percentage	Claimants	Percentage
Processing	791	21.7%	19,673	5.3%
Service	467	12.8%	38,823	10.5%
Structural work	455	12.5%	69,552	18.8%
Clerical	383	10.5%	39,843	10.8%
Professional, technical and managerial	371	10.2%	65,042	17.6%
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	347	9.5%	29,550	8.0%
Packaging and materials handling	261	7.2%	32,096	8.7%
Machine trades	183	5.0%	22,377	6.1%
Motor freight and transportation	147	4.0%	18,242	4.9%
Sales	143	3.9%	19,259	5.2%
Benchwork	81	2.2%	12,538	3.4%
Miscellaneous, NEC	16	0.4%	2,336	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,645</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>369,331</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
White-Collar*	1,364	37.6%	162,967	44.4%
Blue-Collar*	2,265	62.4%	204,028	55.6%

*\*Miscellaneous/NEC occupations excluded*

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# INDUSTRIES, EMPLOYMENT, AND WAGES

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Data in this section are derived from two different Bureau of Labor Statistics programs which are conducted in Washington by the Employment Security Department. The first, called CES (Current Employment Statistics), generates monthly nonagricultural employment figures; the second, the Quarterly Employment and Wages pro-

gram (ES-202), includes data on both agricultural and nonagricultural employment covered under the state unemployment insurance program. All wage data and agricultural employment data in this section stem from the Employment and Wages program; other employment information comes from the CES program.

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## Employment Trend

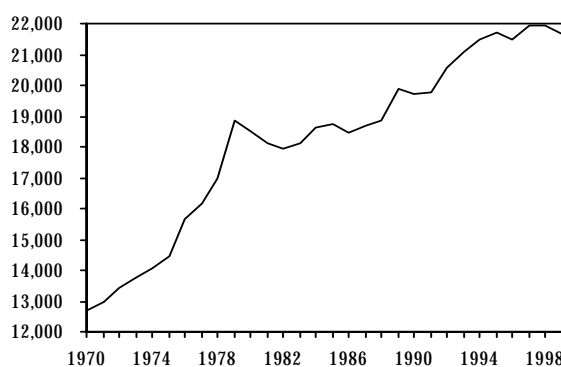
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The Employment Security Department estimated there were 21,640 nonfarm jobs in Walla Walla County in 1999. Overall, employment growth in the county has been moderate, expanding 71 percent from 1970 to 1999. Over the past ten years, however, this count has only grown by 8.8 percent going from 19,890 in 1989 to 21,640 in 1999. By way of comparison, employment gain for the state altogether was a heady 29 percent. *Figure 15* shows employment in the county from 1970 to 1999. As the chart shows, the growth has not been continuous or steady.

During the 1970s, the county experienced strong growth. In fact, the majority of the growth for the entire period shown occurred during this decade. The number of jobs climbed from 12,660 (1970) to 18,840 (1979), a 49 percent increase. Growth was fueled primarily by large increases in the construction, services, and manufacturing sectors. The increases, though, halted abruptly in 1980. Construction work on the dams and locks of the Lower Snake and Columbia rivers, which had driven construction employment sky-high, tapered off and then ended. Almost simultaneously, the national “double-dip” recessions began in early 1980 and didn’t end until late 1982. As the chart shows, county employment decreased every year from 1979 through 1982.

Following these two recessions, the national economy, including that of western Washington, boomed. The hallmark of the national economic recovery and expansion during the 1980s was very strong growth—except in

**Figure 15**  
**Nonagricultural Wage & Salary Employment**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



eastern Washington. Walla Walla County, along with most of eastern Washington, did not fully participate in the upward momentum of the rest of the nation. As the chart indicates, growth was sluggish and sporadic, and did not take a strong upward spike until 1989, and then only to be greeted by the 1990-91 national recession. Since 1991, though, employment has grown sharply each year, resulting in over 1,700 new jobs since the end of the latest recession. The best year for the county was 1998 when the total nonfarm jobs were 21,950. The downward change from 1998 to 1999 was due to the loss of some important manufacturing firms.

# Location Quotients

One way to determine how an area's economy is shaped is to compare it to another area. The following section shows fairly specifically, by industry sector, how Walla Walla County's employment patterns both differ from and coincide with Washington State's. When comparing an industry's share of all employment at the county level to the same industry's share at the statewide level, it becomes apparent that some county employment is distributed differently than statewide employment. The *location quotient* compares the share of total employment in a particular industry division in the county with the share it represents in Washington State.

The quotient is determined by dividing the statewide industry employment share into the county industry share. A quotient of 1.0 denotes an industry in which the county is typical to the state as a whole; a value above 1.0 shows an industry with a higher concentration of employment; and a value below 1.0 marks a county industry with a lesser concentration of employment than in the same industry statewide.

A quotient above 1.0 suggests that the good or service produced by an industry is exported from the area; a quotient below 1.0 is a sign that, hypothetically, goods or services must be imported into an area to provide the same consumption patterns found at the state level. The greater the value above or below 1.0, the stronger the suggestion of exporting or importing becomes.

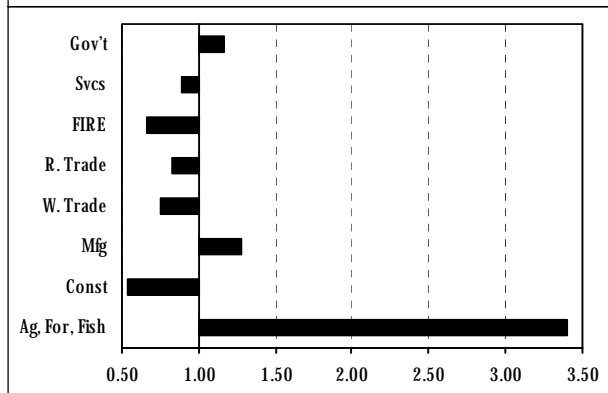
Figure 16 shows the location quotients of the major industry sectors in Walla Walla County. Agriculture/forestry/fishing, manufacturing, and government all have quotients sufficiently above 1.0 to indicate significant exporting occurs. While the reasons are obvious in agriculture/forestry/fishing (3.4) and manufacturing (1.3), it is not so apparent in government (1.2). The county

has a much higher concentration of government employment than does the state as a whole and it is particularly concentrated at the federal and state level. The government services offered (education, corrections, hydroelectric power, etc.) serve an entire region rather than just the county, so in a sense these services are exported outside the immediate area.

Services and retail trade, though their quotients are less than 1.0, are not significantly lower: the pattern of consumption is probably similar to the statewide pattern. The other sectors, relatively small ones, are sufficiently beneath 1.0 to suggest that a fair amount of services or goods must be obtained outside the county.

In general, this comparison casts Walla Walla County in a good light. The exporting sectors are the ones with large numbers of employees while the importing sectors have relatively small numbers of employees.

**Figure 16**  
**Location Quotients**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

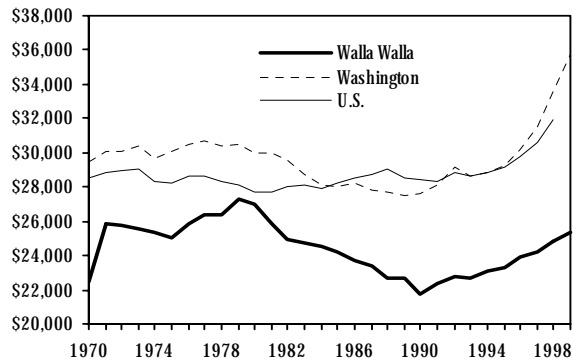


# Average Covered Wage

The annual average wage is derived by dividing the total wages paid in an area by the annual average employment in that area. Jobs not covered by the unemployment insurance program are excluded; however, approximately 90 percent of all employment in the state is covered under the program. (*Note: all amounts here have been inflation adjusted to 1999 dollars.*) The average wage does not include any benefits (e.g., insurance or retirement plans) other than actual wages.

Figure 17 on the next page shows the average wage for Walla Walla County, the state, and the nation since 1970. At that time the wage in Walla Walla County was \$22,500. Although the nation's average wage available is up to 1998 only, the county and state run up to 1999, based on ESD's preliminary data. In 1999, Walla Walla's average wage was \$25,339. It was as high as \$27,339 in 1979 and as low as \$21,754 in 1990.

**Figure 17**  
**Average Covered Wage**  
**Walla Walla, Washington, & U.S., 1970-1999**  
**Source: Employment Security Department**



The peak in the average wage (1979) was caused by the large but temporary increase in construction employment associated with work on the dams and locks of the Snake and Columbia rivers. The federally funded construction projects paid high wages to the project

workers and drove up the county's entire average wage. Also occurring in the mid- to late-1980s was a tremendous increase in manufacturing jobs, which are normally among the higher-paid jobs. Once the construction jobs disappeared and manufacturing growth leveled out, the wage began a decade-long downward slide, which continued until the nadir of the 1990-91 recession. It has regained some, but not much, of the lost ground in the most recent years.

This overall decline of the average wage has been a subject of considerable discussion for it is a national trend. Some of the explanations proffered are listed below; undoubtedly, each is a contributing factor.

- Pay declines within industries caused by international competition, restructuring, the decreased power of unions to set wages, and other factors.
- An overall decline in high paying goods-producing jobs accompanied by a large increase in lower paying trade and services jobs.
- The substitution of employee benefits for direct pay increases.
- Increase in part-time workers.

**Figure 18**  
**Average Covered Wages**  
**Walla Walla County and Washington State, Preliminary 1999**  
**Source: Employment Security Department**

SIC	Total	Walla Walla		Washington	
		Employment	Average	Employment	Average
		23,154	\$25,339	2,644,241	\$35,724
	<b>Agriculture, Forestry &amp; Fishing</b>	2,674	\$14,688	89,789	\$17,181
01	Agricultural production crops	2,306	\$14,013	54,124	\$13,644
02	Agricultural production livestock	*	*	5,735	\$20,136
07	Agricultural services	*	*	24,882	\$18,995
08	Forestry	*	*	2,373	\$26,069
	<b>Construction</b>	672	\$24,956	143,452	\$35,656
15	General building contractors	197	\$24,617	39,084	\$34,412
16	Heavy construction, ex. building	46	\$25,714	18,981	\$44,229
17	Special trade contractors	429	\$25,030	85,387	\$34,320
	<b>Manufacturing</b>	4,020	\$31,791	359,101	\$44,425
20	Food and kindred products	*	*	40,598	\$31,185
22	Textile mill products	*	*	1,008	\$34,866
23	Apparel and other textile products	*	*	7,098	\$21,469
24	Lumber and wood products	*	*	33,149	\$37,785
25	Furniture and fixtures	*	*	4,608	\$27,877
26	Paper and allied products	662	\$53,720	15,767	\$51,205
27	Printing and publishing	355	\$25,018	23,566	\$33,488
28	Chemicals and allied products	*	*	6,050	\$71,530
30	Rubber and misc. plastics products	*	*	10,015	\$31,227
32	Stone, clay, and glass products	*	*	8,634	\$35,525
33	Primary metal industries	*	*	11,593	\$44,041
34	Fabricated metal products	*	*	14,187	\$32,865

**Figure 18 (continued)****Average Covered Wages****Walla Walla County and Washington State, Preliminary 1999****Source: Employment Security Department**

		Walla Walla		Washington	
		Employment	Average	Employment	Average
35	Industrial machinery and equipment	632	\$43,146	24,396	\$46,538
37	Transportation equipment	*	*	114,619	\$55,598
38	Instruments and related products	*	*	14,553	\$54,855
39	Miscellaneous manufacturing industries	*	*	8,543	\$33,987
	<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	985	\$25,896	149,243	\$40,646
50	Wholesale trade durable goods	304	\$28,916	84,828	\$44,229
51	Wholesale trade nondurable goods	681	\$24,548	64,415	\$35,928
	<b>Retail Trade</b>	3,423	\$14,787	472,680	\$19,352
52	Building materials & garden supplies	109	\$23,288	21,934	\$25,028
53	General merchandise stores	492	\$13,094	49,296	\$21,016
54	Food stores	626	\$19,804	69,488	\$20,311
55	Automotive dealers & service stations	401	\$25,460	48,056	\$30,520
56	Apparel and accessory stores	53	\$10,180	25,426	\$21,021
57	Furniture and homefurnishings stores	94	\$15,336	21,500	\$27,525
58	Eating and drinking places	1,222	\$8,412	176,041	\$12,259
59	Miscellaneous retail	426	\$15,885	60,939	\$22,973
	<b>Finance, Insurance, &amp; Real Estate</b>	775	\$30,192	134,076	\$40,700
60	Depository institutions	444	\$35,179	38,174	\$36,300
61	Nondepository institutions	24	\$64,619	11,528	\$52,613
62	Security and commodity brokers	8	\$33,644	7,975	\$88,127
63	Insurance carriers	62	\$32,649	26,893	\$45,843
64	Insurance agents, brokers, & service	61	\$22,524	13,322	\$39,468
65	Real estate	169	\$14,716	33,597	\$24,876
67	Holding and other investment offices	*	*	2,587	\$88,133
	<b>Services</b>	5,493	\$23,261	709,303	\$41,639
70	Hotels and other lodging places	82	\$14,416	28,223	\$16,642
72	Personal services	85	\$11,780	22,501	\$17,467
73	Business services	360	\$15,243	165,396	\$88,785
75	Auto repair, services, and parking	127	\$19,302	25,904	\$24,833
76	Miscellaneous repair services	*	*	7,567	\$29,775
78	Motion pictures	*	*	9,922	\$13,456
79	Amusement & recreation services	135	\$13,420	40,810	\$19,873
80	Health services	2,538	\$28,126	184,107	\$31,556
81	Legal services	82	\$23,794	17,509	\$44,889
82	Educational services	833	\$30,896	22,693	\$27,123
83	Social services	399	\$15,448	59,045	\$17,094
84	Museums, botanical, zoological gardens	*	*	1,535	\$21,463
86	Membership organizations	332	\$11,211	24,556	\$22,151
87	Engineering & management services	125	\$27,196	64,019	\$46,620
88	Private households	349	\$8,374	33,355	\$8,787
89	Services, nec	*	*	2,161	\$46,039
	<b>Government</b>	4,605	\$32,683	450,427	\$34,727
	Federal Government	868	\$43,506	67,631	\$42,858
	State Government	1,497	\$34,616	116,916	\$35,085
	Local Government	2,240	\$27,197	265,880	\$32,501
	<b>Not Elsewhere Classified</b>	507	\$49,403	136,170	\$43,076

\* Employment and wages not shown to avoid disclosure of data for individual employers

Figure 18 displays the average wages of the major industry sectors and a number of particular industries within the sectors for the county and the state. Overall,

the wage for Walla Walla County as a whole was less than that of the state. Most industry sectors, accordingly, were less than the statewide same-sector averages.

## Agriculture

The agricultural sector is a large one in Walla Walla County. The county's 745 farms rank first in the state in the production of onions and alfalfa seed, and fourth in the state in the production of wheat. Corn for grain, potatoes, hay, fruits, and sweet corn are also major crops.

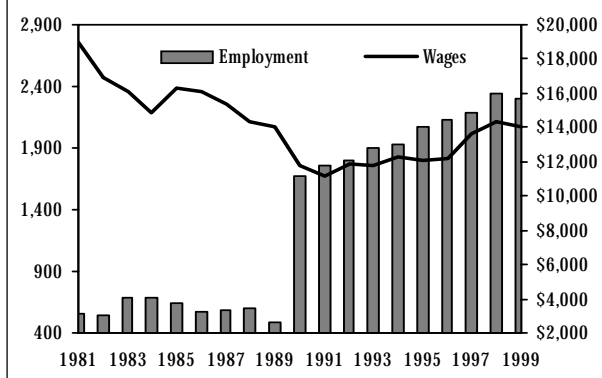
While wheat is the primary crop in Walla Walla County, it is a heavily capital-intensive operation that does not require a large number of hired workers. At peak, in August, wheat production in the valley generated 588 jobs in 1999 out of nearly 3,000 agricultural workers employed that month. For the year altogether, the industry employed 321 workers on an annual average basis with a total payroll of \$4,996,802. Please note that these figures only include farm workers and not farm owners and perhaps a good number of unpaid family members.

The big agricultural employer for the county is the cultivation and harvesting of fruits including apples and grapes. In 1999 the industry employed 1,468 workers on an annual average basis with a total payroll of \$20,392,660 and an average yearly pay of \$13,892. Apple production is the dominant crop with two peaks of employment. One is in July with 1,856 workers and also in October and November with 2,102 and 2,500 respectively.

The accompanying chart (Figure 19) shows the employment level and annual average covered wages for all workers involved in crop production in Walla Walla County. The sharp increase in 1990 stems from legislation bringing in most farm workers under UI coverage and subsequent enumeration by the Employment Security Department, not from an increase in actual employment.

With the average age of farm operators in the county at 53.1 years, many proprietary opportunities may soon open for those willing to take on the special risks and opportunities inherent to farming. In 1933, when farmers were suffering from low market prices during the Great Depression, the Agricultural Adjustment act was passed. This act set price floors on many agricultural products including wheat. To increase the income of farmers, the government guaranteed a minimum price and agreed to buy any quantity the farmers were unable to sell when the market price fell below the support. The act helped to sustain the lifestyle of the family farm, provided economic stability for farmers and helped to ensure a plentiful supply of food for consumers.

**Figure 19**  
**Agriculture Employment & Wages**  
**Walla Walla County, 1981-1999**  
**Source: Employment Security Department**



In 1996, Congress passed the Freedom to Farm Act thus ending a system of farm price supports and other subsidies in exchange for telling farmers how to use their land. The purpose of the act is to deregulate the farming industry by 2002. Instead of deregulating agriculture all at once, the government will phase out its subsidy programs with declining transition payments between 1997 and 2002. The phaseout of the government assistance will eventually save taxpayers billion of dollars a year but it will also put many farmers under added pressure.

In 1999, farm employment generated \$39,222,269 in total payrolls for Walla Walla County. In 1998, farm proprietary income totaled an estimated \$45,007,000 or roughly 4 percent of total personal income received in the county that year. Given the nearly \$900 million in estimated value of farmland and buildings, the return on investment is rather modest.

While the total amount of land under cultivation has remained relatively constant going from 710,546 acres in 1992 to 714,777 acres in 1997, farm proprietary income has been very mercurial. Over the past twenty years from 1979 to 1998, it has average roughly \$50 million with a high of \$78 million in 1996 and a low of \$29 million in 1989. None of these years compared to 1973 when total farm proprietary income was \$158 million. This was just after the demise of the Bretton Woods agreement which put the world on a fixed exchange rate sys-

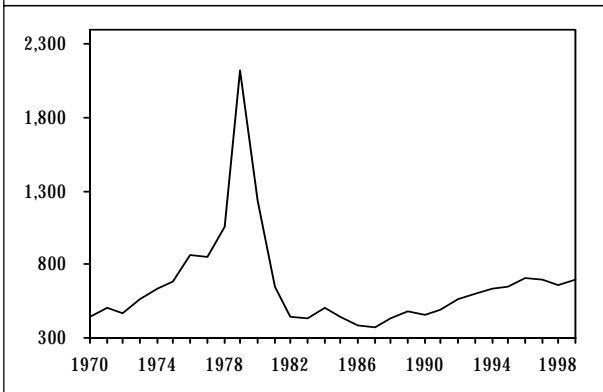
tem. This fixed exchange rate system lasted from roughly 1944 to the end of 1971. Since the early 1970s, the ups and downs of the dollar in international market has had a strong impact on agricultural regions which depend upon foreign markets. Flexible exchange rates have a very real impact on farm income.

Farm proprietary income share of personal income in the county has averaged 5.3 percent of total income since 1970. It has, however, gone from 11 percent in 1970, to a peak of 21 percent in 1973 to only 4 percent in 1998. Statewide, farm proprietary income averaged 1.3 percent of the total since 1970 with a peak of 4.3 percent in 1974 and 0.9 percent in 1998.

## Construction and Mining

Since 1970, employment in construction has averaged 660 jobs per year with a high of 2,130 in 1979 and a low of 380 in 1986 as shown in *Figure 20*. The peak was due to huge expansion of the Boise Cascade facilities in Wallula, which lasted for roughly three years. In recent years the industry has beaten the average with 700 jobs in 1999 and a total payroll of \$16,770,265. For that year, special trade contractors provided the majority of the employment with almost 64 percent of total construction payrolls. In that category, plumbing, heating, and air-conditioning showed a great deal of activity. Housing and general building contractors had the majority of the remaining construction workers at roughly 30 percent of total construction employment. Heavy construction had the rest at around 7 percent. Average construction pay was \$24,956 per year with heavy construction paying the most at \$25,714 followed by plumbing, heating, and air conditioning at \$24,972 and then general construction at \$24,617.

**Figure 20**  
**Construction & Mining Employment**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

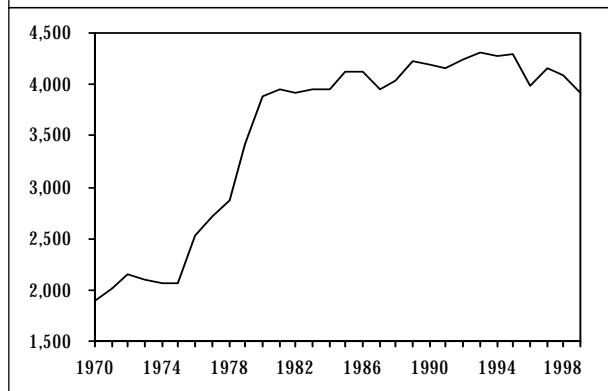


## Manufacturing

Despite some set backs, manufacturing still remains a driving force behind the county's economy and the county is a regional hub for manufacturing concerns. In an area that is not near major transportation routes, such as Interstates 5 or 90, or a major airport such as Sea-Tac or Spokane International, the amount of manufacturing in the county is almost phenomenal. The combined manufacturing payroll in 1999 was \$127 million, 22 percent of the county's entire farm and nonfarm payroll.

Manufactured products produced in the county include many diverse food products along with the largest meat packer in the state. Of the 3,920 manufacturing jobs in the county by 1999 (*see Figure 21*), a little less than half were in food processing. Twenty-two small to large food processing plants operated in the county in 1999 with a combined payroll of \$47,546,470 and a little over 2,000 jobs with an average yearly pay of \$23,399.

**Figure 21**  
**Manufacturing Employment**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*





Within food processing, Iowa Beef Processing dominates as this nonseasonal employer operates the largest beef packing facility in the state or perhaps the Pacific Northwest. Two more seasonal employers that stand out are Chiquita and Agripac.

Fifty-eight non-food manufacturers operated in Walla Walla County in 1999 providing the region with nearly 2,000 jobs and a total payroll of \$80,253,524 at an annual average pay of \$40,369. Paper production is large along with corrugated fiber containers. Lumber and wood production, though diminished, is still being produced. There are fabricated and plastic products, heating equipment, and a major foundry. Farm machinery and food product machinery are very large employers as well as other industrial and commercial machinery. Sporting and athletic goods add a distinctive flair. Specialty minerals are a new line of production for the county.

Companies that stand out in the county's manufacturing base include Boise Cascade, which produces paper, corrugated boxes, and has its own transportation division. Coffey Communications, Key Technology, Nelson Irrigation, and Neotech add to the base. Even with the demise of Louisiana Pacific, lumber and wood products still provides the county with some employment. In 1999, 57 jobs were reported with a payroll of \$1.3 million and an average pay of \$22,476.

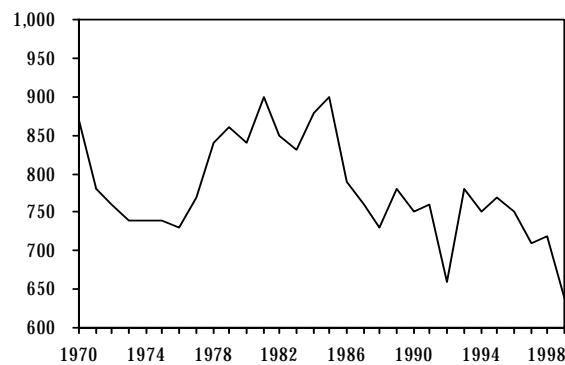
Added to the manufacturing base has been a dozen or more wineries that have located in the valley. In 1999, these facilities generated 117 jobs at a payroll of \$1,901,602. While the wineries of southeastern Washington do not directly employ great numbers of workers, they are becoming a significant draw for tourists, many of whom come from western Washington.

## Transportation, Communications, and Utilities (TCU)

Employment in this sector totaled 508 workers in 1999, about 2.2 percent of all nonfarm workers in the county. The number of workers and their relative contribution to the county's economy has fallen substantially over time, however. *Figure 22* shows that from a peak of 900 jobs in 1985 and contributing nearly 5 percent of all nonfarm jobs, the local industry may be a victim of transportation and communication deregulation. This has not been the trend statewide where employment in the sector has remained at roughly 5 percent.

Within the sector, the largest industries are trucking and warehousing (56 percent of sector employment), communications (25 percent), and electric, gas, and sanitary services (19 percent). The average wage in the sector was \$49,305 in 1999 with communication workers by far boosting the average wage. In total, this sector provided the county with \$25,047,163 in payroll in 1999.

**Figure 22**  
TCU Employment  
Walla Walla County, 1970-1999  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



## Trade

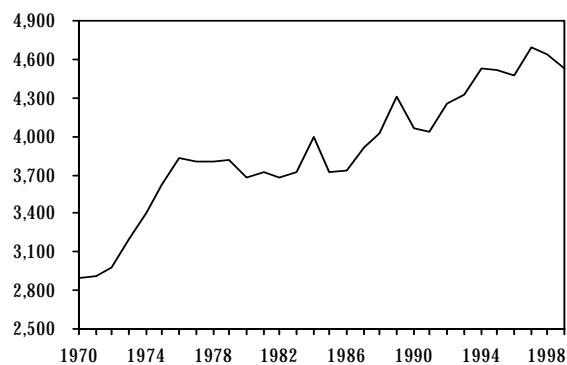
With nearly one out of every five nonfarm workers, the trade sector in Walla Walla County is the second largest employment sector following services. The average wage in 1999 was \$17,269 which was the lowest non-farm wage in the county. Wholesale trade of durable goods had the highest average pay in the trade sector at \$29,011 in 1999 followed by wholesale trade nondurable goods at \$24,548 and automotive dealers and ser-

vice stations at \$24,460. Restaurants paid the least at \$8,419 but this is before tips.

Roughly 20 percent of trade workers are in wholesale relative to retail with wholesale nondurable goods being twice the size of durable goods. Nondurable goods in Walla Walla County translates into the movement of locally grown produce to markets employing 681 workers on the average with a peak of 1,012 in June.

In retail trade, restaurant employment dominates with 1,221 workers and a total payroll of over \$10 million per year. The presence or absence of college students from the three institutions of higher education has no apparent impact on employment, which remains relatively steady throughout the year. The next largest retail sector is food stores with 629 workers, a payroll of \$12,397,175 and an average yearly pay of \$19,772. Altogether, wholesale and retail trade in 1999 generated a payroll of \$127,774,695 to 4,530 workers as shown in *Figure 23*.

**Figure 23**  
Trade Employment  
Walla Walla County, 1970-1999  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



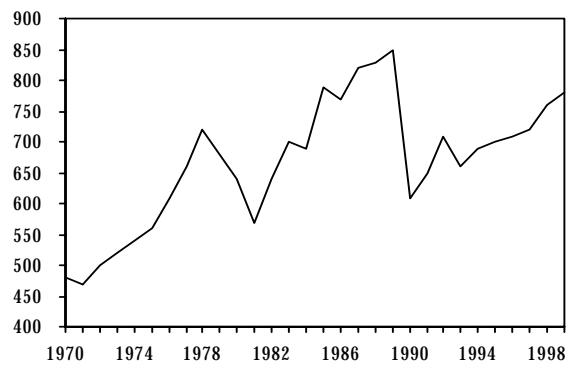
## Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate (FIRE)

The industries in this sector include banks, savings and loans, credit unions, insurance carriers, agents, and brokers, and real estate agents and brokers.

Like other areas of the Walla Walla economy, this sector has seen both positive and negative changes in recent years. Since 1970 the average employment in this sector has been 480, but in 1999 the industry provided the community with 780 jobs as shown in *Figure 24*.

Commercial banking makes up the majority of employment with 57 percent of all workers followed by real estate with 22 percent. The average wage in commercial banking is a very respectable \$35,258. In total, finance, insurance, and real estate provided the community with \$23,398,415 in total payroll in 1999.

**Figure 24**  
FIRE Employment  
Walla Walla County, 1970-1999  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



## Services

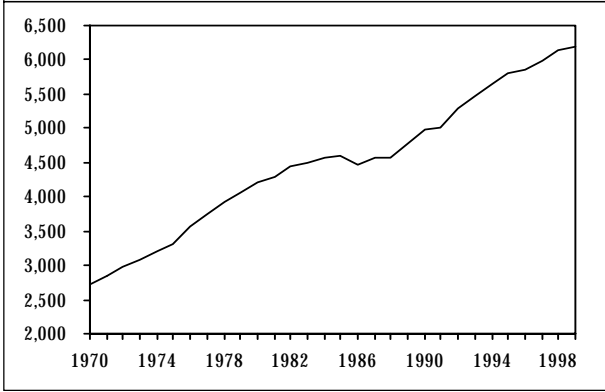
The services sector encompasses a number of vastly different industries ranging from hotels and lodging places to auto mechanics to doctors and lawyers and teachers. It is the fastest growing industry sector, in terms of employment, throughout the state and in Walla Walla County. *Figure 25* on the next page shows that the number of jobs in this sector has more than doubled since 1970, going from 2,730 to 6,180 in 1999. It is the largest employing sector in the county. More than one-fourth of all nonfarm jobs (29 percent) in the county are in this sector.

Health services is the largest employer with 2,538 workers in 1999. Total payroll is a very healthy \$71,384,785 with an average pay of \$28,126. Within health care, the largest segment is private hospitals with 1,037 jobs at an average pay of \$33,674, followed by nursing and personal care facilities with 633 jobs and an annual average pay of \$18,996. Local doctor's offices that year employed 460 at an average pay of \$37,708.

The next largest area of services employment is private education which is dominated by two major colleges: Walla Walla and Whitman. Whitman College is a

non-sectarian four-year liberal arts college founded in 1859 in honor of Marcus Whitman. Walla Walla College is also a four-year liberal arts institution offering graduate degrees and advanced studies operated by the Seventh Day Adventist Church. In total, educational services provided by the private sector generated 832 jobs in 1999, a total payroll of \$25.7 million and an annual average pay of \$30,933. In addition, Walla Walla Community College counted under government adding 463 jobs, a total payroll of \$11.8 million and an annual average pay of \$25,681. The three schools provide not only a large number of regular jobs but also generate a large number of student jobs, which contribute to overall purchasing power in the community.

**Figure 25**  
**Services Employment**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*

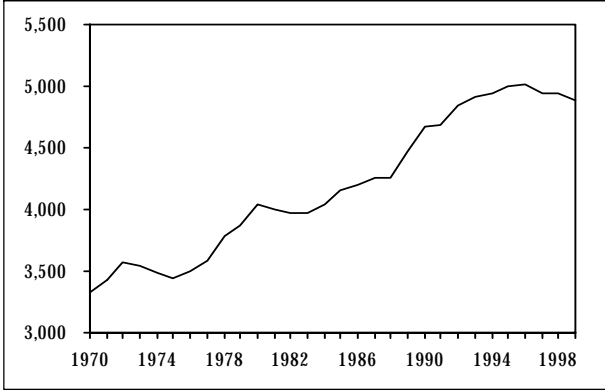


## Government

Public sector employment makes up the second largest source of jobs in the county following services. Roughly 23 percent of all nonfarm jobs are in government. The ratio statewide is about 18 percent. The reason for the difference is the location of five major government agencies in the county: the Army Corp of Engineers, the Veterans Hospital, the Washington State Department of Corrections, and Walla Walla Community College.

Of the 4,890 government jobs in the county in 1999 as shown in *Figure 26*, federal employment contributed 19 percent; state government, 33 percent; and local government, 48 percent. The government sector contributed 23 percent of nonfarm jobs and nearly 28 percent of nonfarm payrolls. Average pay of government workers was \$32,669 in 1999. Compared to \$26,731 for all other nonfarm workers within government, there is considerable amount of dispersion with federal workers earning \$43,456, state workers, \$34,593, and local government workers, \$27,197. The higher average pay for

**Figure 26**  
**Government Employment**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1999**  
*Source: Employment Security Department*



federal workers reflects the impact of health care workers at the Veteran Hospital and engineers at the Army Corp of Engineers.

# OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

A different but informative way to view an area's work force is in terms of occupational categories rather than industrial divisions. Occupation data differ from industry data in that the former are categorized by job function regardless of output, whereas the latter are categorized by final product. In other words, an occupation category, such as marketing and sales, tracks employment and wages for all workers (16 and older) who perform a certain class of duties regardless of the industry. Such data, unfortunately, are not available solely for Walla Walla County. *Figure 27* shows employment in the major occupational categories as well as the share of each grouping of the combined counties of Walla Walla, Asotin, Garfield, and Columbia, and the state. These data are from the 1998 Occupational Projections that forecast to 2008.

The four-county occupational makeup reveals only a modest departure from the state's occupational structure. The four-county occupational shares exceed Washington State's in three categories: (1) services; (2) agriculture, forestry, fishing and related occupations; and (3) operators, fabricators, and laborers. The most visible difference between the counties and the state was in agricultural, forestry, fishing and related occupations, where the counties' 9.3 percent outpaced the state's 3.9 percent. Proportionally, more workers in these four counties are in the agricultural, forestry, fishing and related occupations than throughout the state. This difference was offset by the counties' lower 19.6 percent in professional, paraprofessional, and technical and by the lower 13 percent in clerical and administrative support, versus the state's 22.7 percent and

**Figure 27**

## Occupational Employment and Projections

Walla Walla, Asotin, Garfield, and Columbia Counties, and Washington State, 1998 and 2008

Source: *Employment Security Department*

	Walla Walla, Asotin, Garfield, & Columbia Counties					
	1998		2008		% Chg	Jobs
Total	40,565	100.0%	46,531	100.0%	14.7%	5,966
Managerial & Administrative	2,867	7.1%	3,339	7.2%	16.5%	472
Professional, Paraprof., & Tech	7,954	19.6%	9,501	20.4%	19.5%	1,547
Marketing & Sales	3,768	9.3%	4,350	9.4%	15.5%	582
Clerical & Admin. Support	5,260	13.0%	5,833	12.5%	10.9%	573
Services	7,296	18.0%	8,729	18.8%	19.6%	1,433
Ag., Forestry, Fishing & Related	3,782	9.3%	3,857	8.3%	2.0%	75
Prec. Production, Craft, & Repair	4,357	10.7%	4,965	10.7%	14.0%	608
Operators, Fabricators, & Laborers	5,281	13.0%	5,957	12.8%	12.8%	676
White-Collar	27,145	66.9%	31,752	68.2%	17.0%	4,607
Blue-Collar	13,420	33.1%	14,779	31.8%	10.1%	1,359
			Washington State			
Total	3,042,950	100.0%	3,583,190	100.0%	17.8%	540,240
Managerial & Administrative	236,687	7.8%	288,456	8.1%	21.9%	51,769
Professional, Paraprof., & Tech	689,989	22.7%	869,794	24.3%	26.1%	179,805
Marketing & Sales	345,850	11.4%	406,194	11.3%	17.4%	60,344
Clerical & Admin. Support	474,747	15.6%	519,647	14.5%	9.5%	44,900
Services	469,185	15.4%	574,817	16.0%	22.5%	105,632
Ag., Forestry, Fishing & Related	119,106	3.9%	122,271	3.4%	2.7%	3,165
Prec. Production, Craft, & Repair	336,198	11.0%	374,422	10.4%	11.4%	38,224
Operators, Fabricators, & Laborers	371,188	12.2%	427,589	11.9%	15.2%	56,401
White-Collar	2,216,458	72.8%	2,658,908	74.2%	20.0%	442,450
Blue-Collar	826,492	27.2%	924,282	25.8%	11.8%	97,790

15.6 percent, respectively. The differences are largely traced to the relative absence of large services-producing corporations, which tend to be concentrated in larger urban metropolitan areas around the central Puget Sound and Spokane regions.

In general terms, the counties' combined occupational profile is more "blue-collar" than the state's, and

the state's, more "white-collar" than the counties. Blue-collar work is defined loosely as work done for wages, as opposed to salary, and usually involves some form of manual labor. Based on this definition, the last three occupations listed in the figure are combined to generate the total share of all blue-collared workers. In 1998, blue-collar work represented a total of 33.1 percent of

**Figure 28**  
**Occupational Wages**  
**Walla Walla, Asotin, Garfield, and Columbia Counties, and Washington State, 1998**  
**Source: Employment Security Department**

Occupational Title	Wage*	Rank**	Occupational Title	Wage*	Rank**
<b>Managerial and Administrative</b>			Technical Assistant, Library	\$11.66	162
Financial Manager	\$23.10	59	Vocational & Educational, Counselor	\$19.23	112
Personnel, Train & Labor Relation Mgr	\$20.98	179	Teacher Aide, Paraprofessional	\$9.66	30
Purchasing Manager	\$18.82	141	Physician & Surgeon	\$54.72	96
Marketing, Advertising, Public Rel Mgr	\$21.94	118	Dentist	\$34.93	175
Administrative Service Manager	\$20.61	130	Chiropractor	\$31.12 /s	194
Engineering, Math, Natrl Science Mgr	\$32.07	186	Veterinarian, Veterinary Inspector	\$26.26	178
Education Administrator	\$29.27	50	All Other Hlth Diagnosing Practitioner	\$23.25	168
Medicine & Health Service Manager	\$26.00	89	Respiratory Therapist	\$17.91	146
Property & Real Estate Manager	\$10.62	107	Registered Nurse	\$20.81	10
Construction Manager	\$20.17	135	Licensed Practical Nurse	\$12.96	58
Food Service & Lodging Manager	\$11.87	32	Pharmacist	\$30.50	110
General Manager & Top Executive	\$24.09	7	Medical & Clinic Laboratory Technologist	\$18.85	155
All Other Manager & Administrator	\$21.87	5	Medical Records Technician	\$10.90	188
<b>Professional, Paraprof, &amp; Technical</b>			Radiologic Technologist	\$17.30	169
Loan Officer & Counselor	\$21.23	166	All Other Health Prof, Paraprof, Tech	\$15.73	97
Accountant & Auditor	\$18.35	39	Writer & Editor	\$14.31	111
All Other Financial Specialist	\$16.37	123	Artist & Related	\$11.26	101
Wholesale, Retail Buyer, except Farm	\$14.46	167	Designer, except Interior Design	\$11.75	68
Purchase Agent, exc Whlsl, Retail, Farm	\$17.82	153	Musician, Instrumental	\$44,370.00 /s	138
Personnel, Train & Labor Relation Spec	\$17.12	136	All Other Professional, Paraprof, Tech	\$17.56	62
Management Analyst	\$20.86	105	<b>Marketing &amp; Sales</b>		
Comply Officer & Inspector, exc Const	\$15.72	174	First Line Supervisor, Sales & Related	\$14.67	4
All Other Management Support Worker	\$17.53	95	Insurance Sales Worker	\$17.03	85
Civil Engineer, including Traffic	\$23.48	93	Broker, Real Estate	\$35.81	103
Mechanical Engineer	\$25.27	124	Sales Agent, Advertising	\$13.79	189
Electrical & Electronic Technician	\$18.18	164	Sales Rep, Science & Related, exc Retail	\$24.59	99
Drafter	\$15.86	187	Sales Rep, exc Retail, Sci, Related	\$16.81	80
Biological Scientist	\$21.08	125	Salesperson, Retail	\$9.31	2
Biologic, Agri, Food Tech, exc Health	\$10.74	176	Salesperson, Parts	\$11.08	120
Computer System Analyst, EDP	\$20.97	154	Counter & Rental Clerk	\$7.78	82
Computer Programmer	\$20.11	161	Stock Clerk, Sales Floor	\$8.37	35
Psychologist	\$21.70	144	Cashier	\$8.17	6
Social Work, Medical & Psychiatric	\$14.83	75	All Other Sales & Related Occupation	\$12.57	114
Social Work, exc Medical & Psychiatric	\$15.67	48	<b>Clerical &amp; Administrative Support</b>		
Residential Counselor	\$9.68	137	First Line Supervisor, Clerical	\$15.34	29
Human Service Worker	\$11.52	177	Bank Teller	\$8.86	46
Recreation Worker	\$8.90	180	Bill & Account Collector	\$10.89	165
Clergy	\$16.99	192	Court Clerk	\$11.69	181
Lawyer	\$30.81	57	Library Assistant & Bookmobile Driver	\$10.01	87
Art, Drama & Music Teacher, Postsec	\$40,860.00	113	Teacher Aide & Educational Asst, Clerk	\$8.72	49
All Other Postsecondary Teacher	\$32,530.00	44	Legal Secretary	\$11.30	170
Teacher, Elementary	\$37,420.00	22	Medical Secretary	\$10.24	190
Teacher, Secondary School	\$37,570.00	24	Secretary, except Legal & Medical	\$11.49	15
Teacher, Special Education	\$36,400.00	94	Receptionist, Information Clerk	\$8.92	34
Teacher, Vocational Education	\$16.44	102	Typist, including Word Processing	\$9.87	78
Instructor, Nonvocational Education	\$13.26	47	Bookkeeping, Accounting & Auditing Clerk	\$11.20	3
Instructor & Coach, Sport	\$13.70	73	Payroll & Timekeeping Clerk	\$13.08	182
All Other Teacher, Instructor	\$26,640.00	193	Billing, Cost & Rate Clerk	\$11.05	115
Librarian, Professional	\$19.20	109	General Office Clerk	\$9.69	11
			Computer Operator, exc Peripheral Eq	\$10.97	159

\*Wages are either hourly or annual

\*\*Ranking is by amount of employment per occupation, from highest (1) to lowest (194)

/s = State data, no county data available

the counties' combined economy, versus 27.2 percent for the state's. White-collar work, on the other hand, represented 66.9 percent of the counties' combined economy, versus 72.8 for the state's.

Occupational employment projections for the four-county region are based on estimated annual openings

over the 1998-2008 period. The results are displayed as a percentage of total jobs. Professional, paraprofessional, and technical jobs are expected to account for one-fifth of the new jobs in the counties by 2008 because of the foreseeable demand for highly skilled and technical jobs. Consequently, all other occupational

**Figure 28 (continued)**

**Occupational Wages**

**Walla Walla, Asotin, Garfield, and Columbia Counties, and Washington State, 1998**

**Source: Employment Security Department**

Occupational Title	Wage*	Rank**	Occupational Title	Wage*	Rank**
Data Entry Keyer, except Composing	\$9.93	183	All Other Agricultural, Forestry, Fish	\$12.19	69
Switchboard Operator	\$10.08	184	<b>Precision Production, Craft &amp; Repair</b>		
Postal Mail Carrier	\$16.04	104	First Line Supervisor, Mechanic & Repair	\$20.32	74
Messenger	\$6.66	156	First Line Supervisor, Constr & Extract	\$21.53	134
Dispatcher, Police, Fire & Ambulance	\$14.49	157	First Line Supervisor, Production	\$19.76	43
Stock Clerk, Stockroom or Warehouse	\$9.85	64	Production Inspector, Grade, Sort, Test	\$11.04	116
Order Filler, Sales	\$10.23	191	Machinery Maint Mechanic, Water & Power	\$21.49	150
Traffic, Shipping & Receiving Clerk	\$11.97	63	All Other Machinery Mechanic	\$21.52	98
All Other Clerical & Admin Support	\$9.93	28	Maintenance Repairer, General Utility	\$13.59	19
<b>Services</b>			Automotive Mechanic	\$14.19	37
All Other Service Supervisor	\$12.80	18	Automotive Body, Related Repairer	\$13.09	84
Fire Fighter	\$13.56	70	Bus & Truck Mechanic & Diesel Specialist	\$15.85	126
Police Patrol Officer	\$18.89	83	Farm Equipment Mechanic	\$12.03	61
Correction Officer & Jailer	\$16.91 /s	14	Heat, A/C, Refrigeration Mech & Install	\$14.30	92
Guard & Watch Guard	\$9.27	142	Carpenter	\$16.75	13
Bartender	\$7.23	66	Electrician	\$19.14	45
Waiter & Waitress	\$5.85	26	Concrete & Terrazzo Finisher	\$14.86	139
Dining Room, Cafeteria & Bartender Help	\$6.63	119	Painter & Paperhanger, Constr & Maint	\$16.09	56
Counter Attendant, Lunchroom, Cafeteria	\$6.51	90	Plumber, Pipefitter, Steamfitter	\$19.42	100
Baker, Bread & Pastry	\$9.84	131	Carpet Installer	\$15.62	127
Cook, Restaurant	\$8.21	52	Paving, Surfacing, Tamping Equipment Opr	\$17.36	172
Cook, Institution or Cafeteria	\$9.57	53	Highway Maintenance Worker	\$16.52 /s	88
Cook, Fast Food	\$6.36	67	Roofer	\$14.29	129
Food Preparation Worker	\$7.12	25	Machinist	\$16.39	147
Combined Food Preparation & Service	\$6.22	17	Cabinetmaker & Bench Carpenter	\$13.04	140
All Other Food Service Worker	\$7.64	108	Slaughterer & Butcher	\$9.68 /s	40
Dental Assistant	\$12.29	117	<b>Operators, Fabricators &amp; Laborers</b>		
Medical Assistant	\$10.54	152	Woodworking Mach Op/Tender, exc Sawing	\$11.53	79
Nursing Aide, Orderly & Attendant	\$7.67	20	Laund, Dry-clean Mach Op/Tend, exc Pres	\$7.58	133
Home Health Aide	\$7.26	38	Packaging & Filling Machine Op/Tend	\$11.69	54
All Other Health Service Worker	\$10.39	106	Welder & Cutter	\$15.33	55
Maid & Housekeeping Cleaner	\$7.20	33	Cannery Worker	\$8.52	21
Janitor & Cleaner, except Maid	\$8.99	9	Meat, Poultry, Fish Cut, Trim, Hand	\$8.96 /s	8
All Other Cleaning & Building Service	\$8.12	86	Assemble, Fabricate, ex Mach, Elec, Prec	\$10.05	71
Hairdresser & Cosmetologist	\$7.22	42	All Other Hand Worker	\$9.29	151
Amusement & Recreation Attendant	\$7.47	143	Truck Driver, Heavy or Tractor-Trailer	\$14.32	12
Personal Home Care Aide	\$7.69	145	Truck Driver, Light, incl Delivery & Rel	\$10.57	36
Child Care Worker	\$7.54	16	Bus Driver, except School	\$11.61	160
All Other Service Worker	\$8.07	132	Bus Driver, School	\$12.09	77
<b>Ag., Forestry, Fishing &amp; Related</b>			Driver/Sales Worker	\$11.21	72
First Line Supervisor, Agr, Forest, Fish	\$20.10	91	Service Station Attendant	\$7.57	122
Faller & Bucker	\$22.85	185	Excavating & Loading Machine Operator	\$16.18	173
Log-Handling Equipment Operator	\$17.38	171	Grader, Bulldozer & Scraper Operator	\$18.56	158
Forest & Conservation Worker	\$14.91	128	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operator	\$11.80	65
Grader & Sorter, Agricultural Product	\$7.23	41	Operating Engineer	\$18.00	149
Animal Caretaker, except Farm	\$8.48	121	Helper, Carpenter & Related Worker	\$11.76	163
Farm Equipment Operator	\$8.17	23	Machine Feeder & Offbearer	\$11.60	76
Laborer, Landscaping & Groundskeeping	\$9.41	27	All Other Freight, Stock, Mat Move, Hand	\$9.18	60
Farmworkers, Food/Fiber Crops	\$6.79	1	Hand Packer & Packager	\$7.93	51
Farmworkers, Farm/Ranch Animals	\$9.27	81	Vehicle Washer & Equipment Cleaner	\$7.80	148
			All Other Help, Labor, Mat Move, Hand	\$10.63	31

\*Wages are either hourly or annual

\*\*Ranking is by amount of employment per occupation, from highest (1) to lowest (194)

/s = State data, no county data available

groupings are expected to increase jobs more modestly, while clerical and administrative support; agriculture, forestry, fishing and related occupations; and operators, fabricators, and laborers show a decrease in its share of the employment total.

*Figure 28* is based on Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) wage and salary surveys conducted in the four-county region by the Employment Security Department in 1998. Though the surveys are somewhat dated, the list of occupations and wages offers a good perspec-

tive of what the various nonfarm jobs are in the region as well as the levels of pay. Wages are arrayed by hourly or monthly rates. Also included is a ranking based on the size of employment occupation. Thus, farmworkers (food/fiber crops) were the most numerous occupational workers in the four-county region, while physicians and surgeons are the most highly paid. For those occupations in which there are confidentiality issues or sampling difficulties, state or national wages are used instead.

# PERSONAL INCOME

This section deals with income rather than wages, which were discussed earlier and which are only one aspect of income. Data in this section are derived from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic

Analysis. All income data have been adjusted to constant 1998 dollars using the Implicit Price Deflator for Personal Consumption Expenditures.

## Total Personal Income

Personal income is generally seen as a key indicator of a region's economic vitality. Conceptually, personal income captures all types of income. Wages, salaries, government transfer payments, retirement income, farm income, self-employed income, proprietors' income, interest, dividends, and rent are all included in this measure. Because business and corporate incomes are not included, it is considered personal income.

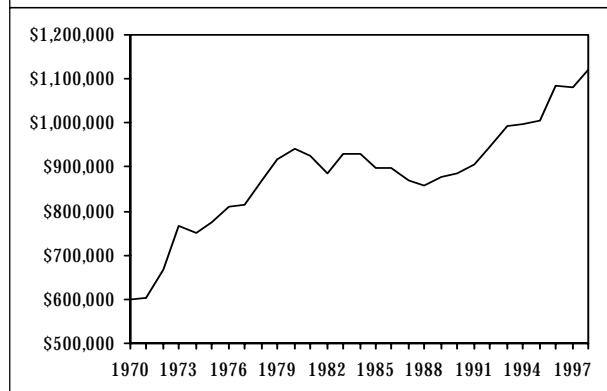
Figure 29 shows personal income since 1970. Personal income in Walla Walla County totaled roughly \$1.12 billion in 1998. Of that amount, nonfarm income accounted for 96 percent of total personal income with farm proprietary income contributing the remaining 4 percent. This dismal low for farming income reflects the too long, current doldrums in commodity prices and it is almost at a historical low for the county. Over the past three decades, farm income has average 8 percent of personal income with a high of nearly 21 percent in 1973 and a low of 3 percent in 1995.

Figure 30 shows per capita personal income (PCPI) for Walla Walla County, Washington, and the U.S. since 1970. It was at a period high in 1998 at \$20,845 and ranked thirtieth among Washington's 39 counties. The

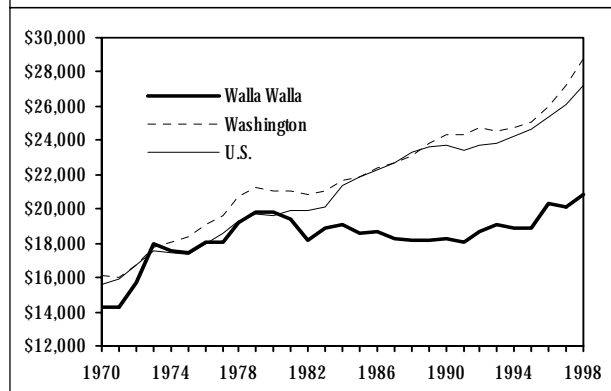
county's PCPI actually surpassed the state's in the early 1970s when the "Boeing Bust" profoundly affected the Puget Sound region but not eastern Washington. After the county's per capita income climbed to \$19,804 in 1979, however, it generally declined or remained stagnant for the next 15 years. That situation began to change slightly in the mid-1990s as the county's per capita income gradually started trending upward. Throughout the 1980s, the gap between the state's per capita income and Walla Walla County's widened substantially. The gap reached its widest point yet in 1998 as the state's per capita income has recently been expanding at a much higher rate than that in Walla Walla County.

Per capita personal income is a good measure of how personal income is growing relative to the population. However, it gives no indication of how income is distributed among the population. To a degree, *median household income* does that. It indicates the point in income where half of all households have a higher income and half have a lower income. The 1999 preliminary estimate for Walla Walla County is \$33,631 compared to \$48,289 for Washington, ranking it 22nd among all Washington counties.

**Figure 29**  
**Total Personal Income**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1998**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*



**Figure 30**  
**Per Capita Income**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1998**  
*Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis*





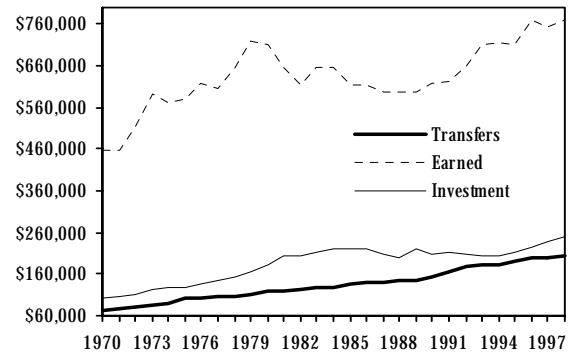
# Components of Personal Income

As mentioned earlier, personal income encompasses many different types of income. All the various types, however, can be subsumed under the three broad categories of earnings, transfer payments, and investment income. Earnings include wages, salaries, and proprietors' income; transfer payments include income maintenance, unemployment insurance, and retirement payments; investment income consists of interest, dividends, and rent.

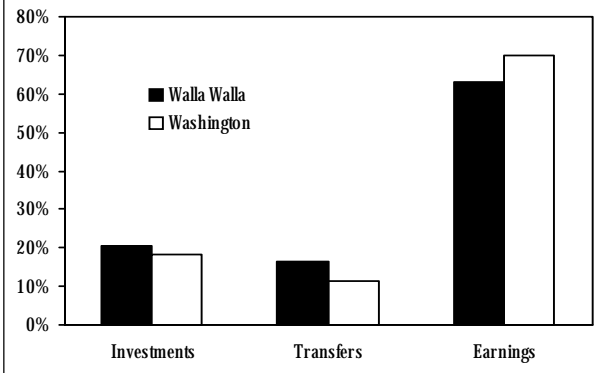
Figure 31 shows how the biggest components of personal income—earnings by place of work, transfer payments, investment income—have changed over time in Walla Walla County. Earned income in Walla Walla County went from \$458.6 million in 1970 to \$769.0 million in 1998. The trend over the period was not, however, smooth. The 1980s were challenging in Walla Walla County in terms of earned income, but the county's earned income base rebounded in the 1990s. On the whole, growth was 68 percent or 1.9 percent in annual terms compared to 176 percent or 3.7 percent in annual terms for Washington. Transfer payments in Walla Walla County rose on a relatively steady path from \$71.4 million in 1970 to \$202.7 million in 1998. This translated into overall growth of 184 percent or 3.8 percent in annual terms, which was notably lower than the 255 percent or 4.6 percent for Washington. Investment income in Walla Walla County climbed from \$103.1 million in 1970 to \$248.9 million in 1998, a period that saw significant erosion from the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s before turning upward in the latter half of the 1990s. All told, this reflected 141 percent growth or 3.2 percent in annual terms, which was significantly lower than the 295 percent or 5.0 percent statewide.

Investment income in the county in 1998 was 20 percent of total and this compared favorably with 1970 when the ratio was 17 percent but it was below the peak of nearly 25 percent in 1985. The flows of investment income for the county over time gives the appearance that residents of the county have a preference for more conservative bonds over more volatile equities. Compared to the state in 1998 as shown in Figure 32, investment income averaged a little higher and transfers payments considerably higher. Transfer payments are any expenditure by a government for which it receives no concurrent good or services in exchange. In the main, such payments involve transfers of income from one group of individuals (taxpayers) to other groups of individuals in the form of welfare benefits, unemployment benefits,

**Figure 31**  
**Components of Personal Income**  
**Walla Walla County, 1970-1998**  
**Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis**



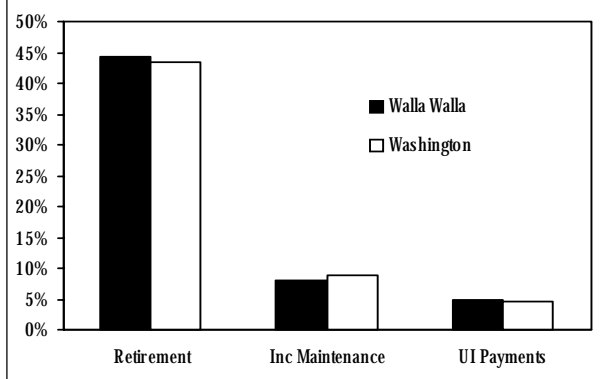
**Figure 32**  
**Personal Income Components**  
**Walla Walla County & Washington, 1998**  
**Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis**



social security, and government pensions. The majority of the flows of transfer payments are in the form of social security. In 1998, the higher-than-average county income from transfer payments as seen in Figure 33 reflects the older population of Walla Walla County relative to the state and the impact of having so many federal jobs in a community that so many would elect to work and retire in.

Proprietary income, which is earnings from operating one's own nonfarm business (as opposed to working for someone else), has been very volatile over the past three decades but the overall trend has been downward. While its share of total personal income averaged 11.1 percent since 1970, the percent of proprietary income was higher than the average in the mid-teens in the 1970s but it has

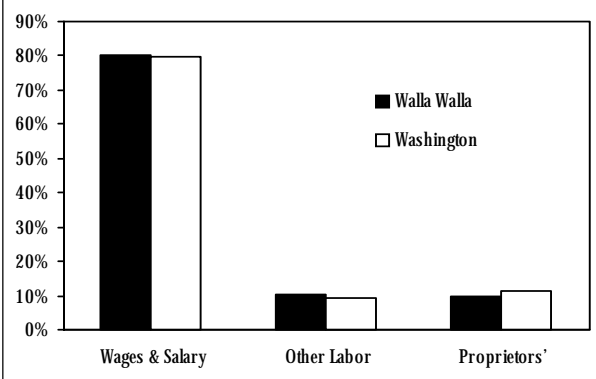
**Figure 33**  
**Transfer Payments Components**  
**Walla Walla County & Washington, 1998**  
**Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis**



moved below 10 percent in the 1990s and was 10 percent in 1998. This is the trend nationwide as well. Among the underlying factors may be that instead of going to small shops and mom and pop grocery stores, consumers are increasingly, as a nation, shopping for goods and services from corporations.

A 1998 state and county comparison of the earned income components is shown in *Figure 34*. Wage and salary income comprised 80 percent of total earned income with other labor income and proprietors' income holding equal shares (10 percent) of the balance. With respect to total personal income, wage and salary in-

**Figure 34**  
**Earned Income Components**  
**Walla Walla County & Washington, 1998**  
**Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis**



come in the county averaged 55 percent of total personal income received in 1998. Of those jobs residing in the county, farm labor (as opposed to farm proprietary) brought in 7 percent of wage and salary income and nonfarm 93 percent. Private sector jobs contributed 68 percent of farm and nonfarm while government bought in 26 percent. In the nonfarm sector, manufacturing and services tied in their contribution at 22 percent or roughly \$128 million each. The public sector bought in \$150 million with the payroll of the local governments being greater than the state, which was also bigger than the federal payroll.

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# JOB TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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## Workforce Development

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The *Workforce Investment Act (WIA)* of 1998 replaced the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982 on July 1, 2000. The purpose of WIA is to provide training, education, and other services that prepare all individuals, not just youth and unskilled adults, for current and future jobs. It is guided by several principles: universal access, individual empowerment, streamlined services, state and local flexibility, strong local role, increased accountability, and improved youth programs. It is upon this legislation that the Employment Security Department and other providers base their training and employment service programs.

**Walla Walla WorkSource Center.** A WorkSource Center is a facility characterized by the provision of collocated and integrated services offered through a variety of self-service, group, and one-on-one activities. WorkSource Centers will provide customers a one-stop location at which to access programs administered by multiple agencies. They will offer access to all WorkSource Center system services, most of which will be available on site. However, not all services will necessarily be provided on a full-time basis. Each area will have at least one full service Center. In terms of services, the Center must:

- provide all core services;
- provide all required services;
- serve as a “broker” for services not available on site such as training or support services;
- provide referrals for services not provided through the WorkSource system;
- coordinate services for customers; and
- provide access to the Internet and other electronic linkages.

The core services, which are available onsite or through electronic access and which are available to all customers (no eligibility required), include:

- initial assessment to evaluate job readiness based on job skills, experience, aptitudes, interests, and abilities;

- job counseling to help customers determine what services are available and best use of the information;
- job referral and placement providing access to available jobs and posting of resumes;
- employer services that provide access to labor market information, recruitment, screening, and referral of qualified applicants;
- information and referral to services such as housing, food, and medical assistance;
- information on training and retraining programs such as basic skills, literacy, occupational skills training, and apprenticeships;
- labor market information on current occupational supply and demand and occupational wages;
- computers with Internet access;
- access to a telephone to file for Unemployment Insurance benefits; and
- translation services to customers in their first language using AT&T services or the Internet.

The programs (eligibility required) include:

- WIA Title I (adults, dislocated workers, youth, and national programs)
- Title V of the Older Americans Act
- Veterans’ Employment Programs
- Claimant Placement Program
- Worker Retraining
- Post Secondary Vocational-Technical Programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Welfare to Work
- Adult Basic Education Programs
- ESL Programs
- Worker Profiling
- Migrant Farm worker Services
- NAFTA/Trade Assistance Act
- HUD Employment & Training (not currently available in this area)
- Early Intervention services to potentially dislocated workers
- Rapid Response to plant closures
- WorkFirst (employment services only)

- Community Services Block Grant (not currently available in this area)

The Walla Walla WorkSource Center is located at 1530 Stevens, Walla Walla, Washington 99362. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Staff can be reached by phone at (509) 527-4393, by fax at (509) 527-1800 or visit the Walla Walla WorkSource Center and its Affiliates' website at [www.wa.gov/esd/ws/walla2/](http://www.wa.gov/esd/ws/walla2/).

**Walla Walla WorkSource Affiliates.** WorkSource Affiliates are designated service delivery sites that offer customers additional access to the one-stop system. A WorkSource Affiliate operates on a smaller scale than a WorkSource Center and is expected to be run by service providers who focus their efforts on specific populations or services. They will be able to provide linkages to core service to anyone entering the system at that site or through Internet linkage. WorkSource Affiliates might include community-based organizations, local offices of state agencies, and education and training institutions. In terms of service, WorkSource Affiliates must deliver one of the required programs and all the core services as listed above. Listed below are the Walla Walla WorkSource Affiliates:

*Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC)* provides the WIA Title 1B Program for Youth Services and all the core services. The BMAC is located at 34 Boyer Avenue, Walla Walla, Washington 99362. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Staff can be reached by phone at (509) 529-4980, by fax at (509) 529-4985 or visit the Walla Walla WorkSource Center and its Affiliates' website at [www.wa.gov/esd/ws/walla2/](http://www.wa.gov/esd/ws/walla2/).

*Walla Walla Community College (WWCC)* offers Worker Retraining, ESL (English as a Second Language) and Adult Basic Education Programs plus all the core services. The WWCC Campus WorkSource Affiliate is located at 500 Tausick Way in the Main Administration Building, Walla Walla, Washington 99362. WorkSource services are accessible between 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Staff can be reached at (509) 527-4279 or visit the Walla Walla WorkSource Center and its Affiliates' website at [www.wa.gov/esd/ws/walla2/](http://www.wa.gov/esd/ws/walla2/).

**Workforce Development Council.** The Eastern Washington Partnership Workforce Development Council (WDC) was established in accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act in 1999. It represents Region X, which encompasses Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Garfield, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties. Each WDC is responsible for strategic planning for employment and training related programs, oversight of the WorkSource system

within its specific geographic area, and service delivery to eligible dislocated workers, adults, and youth. The WDC is led by private business and has wide representation from labor, education, and other local organizations in the community. The WIA and Governor Locke's Executive Order 99-02 describe the functions of the WDC as follows:

- Provide input to the state Workforce Development Board (WDB) in the development of the state unified plan, which articulates their local strategies and needs.
- In partnership with the local elected officials, develop and maintain a local unified plan for the workforce development system including, but not limited to, the local plan required by law. The WDC submits a unified plan to the WDB for review and to the Governor for approval.
- Conduct oversight of the local one-stop system, including selection, certification, and de-certification of one-stop providers.
- Promote coordination of workforce development activities at the local level and ensure that they are linked with local economic development strategies.
- Establish youth councils, which are responsible for developing portions of the local plan relating to eligible youth, as well as implement and administer youth programs.
- Provide for a coordinated and responsive system of outreach to employers.
- Identify eligible providers using performance standards established by the WDB.
- On behalf of the Governor, negotiate with local elected officials and the WDB to develop performance measures for local programs.
- Assess the planning process to identify quality improvements.
- Implement a partnership agreement with local elected officials that establishes the working relationships and specific responsibilities of each body in the partnership.
- Collaborate in the development of WorkFirst service area plans.

The Eastern Washington Partnership Workforce Development Council is located at North 320 Main, Colville, Washington 99114. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Staff can be reached by phone at (509) 684-8421 or by fax at (509) 684-4740. The Director is Tom O'Brien who may be contacted by e-mail at [tobrien@ruralresources.org](mailto:tobrien@ruralresources.org).

**Blue Mountain Action Council (BMAC).** The BMAC is a nonprofit community action organization whose mission is to help low-income people achieve self-sufficiency by providing them with self-help techniques, personal advocacy, and some financial assistance. Al-

though the BMAC administers a number of different programs, ranging from food distribution to homeless assistance, its largest program is job training. The BMAC provides a variety of services to assist individuals in seeking employment. The BMAC also assists with on-the-job and classroom training. Other services include working with TANF recipients in job search, community work experience, business internships, and keeping a job. BMAC also administers the AmeriCorp program.

The BMAC is located at 34 Boyer Avenue, Walla Walla, Washington 99362. Staff can be reached by phone at (509) 529-4985 or by fax at the same number. Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**Educational Facilities.** There are three institutions of higher education in Walla Walla County: Whitman College, Walla Walla College, and Walla Walla Community College.

*Whitman College* is a private, four-year institution accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges. Founded in 1859 as Whitman Seminary, the college was converted into a four-year, degree-granting institution by the territorial legislature in 1883. The 47-acre campus is sited three blocks from downtown Walla Walla and houses 16 academic and administrative buildings and 19 residential facilities.

Whitman College has 31 departmental majors leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree. Among the more popular preprofessional tracks are Business Management, Dentistry, Dramatic Arts, Foreign Service, Journalism, Law, Library Science, Medicine, Ministry, Music, Physical Education, Public Service, Social Work, Teacher Education, and Veterinary Medicine.

Whitman College is located at 345 Boyer, Walla Walla, Washington 99362. The college can be reached by phone at (509) 527-5111 or visit their website at [www.whitman.edu](http://www.whitman.edu).

*Walla Walla College* was founded in 1892 by the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a private, four-year college. Walla Walla College's 55-acre main campus is located in College Place. The college also operates a branch campus in Portland, Oregon and a marine station at Rosario Beach near Anacortes. The school is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, Washington State Board of Education, and Seventh-day Adventists Board of Regents.

Walla Walla College has nearly 50 undergraduate majors leading to one of six Bachelor's degrees (Arts, Music, Science, Science in Business Administration, Science in Engineering, and Social Work). The College offers Master's degrees in Arts, Education, Science, and

Social Work. It also offers Associate of Arts degrees (two-year) and certificates (one-year) in various fields.

Walla Walla College is located at 204 South College Avenue, College Place, Washington 99324. The college can be reached by phone at (509) 527-2615 or visit their website at [www.wwc.edu](http://www.wwc.edu).

*Walla Walla Community College* is a state-supported, two-year institution founded in 1967 to serve residents in Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin counties. The school is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and State Board for Community College Education. The college's 86-acre main campus houses 12 permanent buildings (not including a downtown Walla Walla office used to facilitate class scheduling for employers and employees).

Walla Walla Community College also operates a branch campus known as Clarkston Center to better serve the residents in the towns of Clarkston, Asotin, Anatone, and Pomeroy. The college additionally offers educational programs and services to qualified inmates of the State Penitentiary at Walla Walla.

Program offerings at Walla Walla Community College are geared to three areas: college transfer, vocational-technical training, and continuing education. Transfer students, by earning an Associate in Arts degree, can satisfy general university requirements taken during the freshman and sophomore years. The earned credit can then be transferred if the student is accepted at a university. Vocational-technical programs help students to either acquire job skills or refresh or enhance those skills they already have. Continuing education covers a range of instructional programs, including the Small Business Management Program, the Center for Management Development, and Adult Basic Education. Adult Basic Education programs are for students 15 and older who have not completed high school and want to upgrade their basic reading, writing, math, and social science skills. Those who successfully complete the courses are awarded an Adult High School Diploma. The General Equivalency Degree is another option.

Walla Walla Community College is located at 500 Tausick Way, Walla Walla, Washington 99362. The community college can be reached by phone at (509) 522-2500 or visit their website at [www.wc.wa.us](http://www.wc.wa.us).

*Regional Colleges and Universities.* Major four-year colleges and universities in eastern Washington are (including their distances from Walla Walla): Washington State University in Pullman (114 miles), Eastern Washington University in Cheney (150 miles), Central Washington University in Ellensburg (156 miles), and Gonzaga University and Whitworth College in Spokane (158 miles).

# Economic Development

**Port of Walla Walla.** The Port of Walla Walla is a municipal corporation established by voters in 1952 to expand and improve the economic base in Walla Walla County. The Port is the principal local contact for state agencies involved in economic development efforts and is responsible for promoting economic development throughout the county. This promotion is achieved by:

- developing marine facilities, airports, and other facilities for handling cargo and passengers;
- providing capital improvements needed for industrial and manufacturing facilities within the port district;
- improving port district lands so they can be sold or leased for industrial and commercial purposes;
- undertaking and adopting comprehensive development plans for the port district;
- promoting tourism as an economic stimulus for the county; and
- levying taxes and selling bonds to develop properties and manufacturing facilities.

The Port of Walla Walla also houses the Small Business Center. The Center is guided by local business leaders and successful small business owners. At the Small Business Center one can receive a variety of services ranging from one-on-one business counseling to loan development and financial planning.

The Port of Walla Walla is located at 310 A Street, Walla Walla Regional Airport, Walla Walla, Washington 99362. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Staff can be reached by phone at (509) 525-3100, by fax at (509) 525-3101 or visit their website at [www.portwallawalla.com](http://www.portwallawalla.com).

**Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce.** The Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce is a private, nonprofit organization. Its membership made up largely of business and community leaders, the Chamber is committed to furthering the business interests of the greater Walla Walla area.

The Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce is located in the corner of Sumach and Colville at 29 East Sumach, Walla Walla, Washington 99362. The chamber can be reached by phone at (509) 525-0850 or visit their website at [www.wvchamber.com](http://www.wvchamber.com).

**Walla Walla Downtown Foundation.** This organization, which is comprised of downtown Walla Walla businesses and local government, is dedicated to revitalizing the downtown Walla Walla area.

The Walla Walla Downtown Foundation is located at 33 East Main Street, Suite 213, Walla Walla, Washington 99362. The foundation can be reached by phone at (509) 529-8755 or visit their website at [www.downtownwallawalla.com](http://www.downtownwallawalla.com).

**Infrastructure.** An area's infrastructure is an integral part of economic development. The following are primary infrastructural elements currently in place in Walla Walla County.

**Roads and Highways.** There are three major thoroughfares in Walla Walla County—U.S. Route 12 and State Routes 124 and 125. U.S. 12 runs east and west along a path that generally follows the county's southern boundaries. It ties Walla Walla to large population centers in the Tri-Cities, Yakima, and Clarkston-Lewiston.

State Route 124 runs east and west through the middle of Walla Walla County, intercepting U.S. 12 at the points where it (U.S. 12) is about to exit the county. As such, S.R. 124 and U.S. 12 form a rough oval through the lower half of the county. S.R. 125 provides a direct link between the city of Walla Walla and S.R. 124. U.S. 12 and S.R. 124 are connected at other points by a number of provincial roads. Similar provincial roads also connect towns in north Walla Walla County.

The Snake River—the county's westward sloping northern border—is a major shipping route for waterborne cargo being transported between Clarkston-Lewiston and the Pacific Ocean. Yet another major shipping route is the Columbia River which forms the county's eastern boundary.

**Air Transportation.** Walla Walla Regional Airport—located outside the city of Walla Walla—is the county's only such facility. Its longest runway is 7,186 feet. Passenger service is provided by Horizon Air and charter service through Mountain States Aviation and SkyRunners Corporation. Air freight service is provided by Horizon and United Parcel Service.

**Ports and Rail Service.** There are a number of barge slips operated along the Walla Walla side of the Columbia and Snake rivers (though there are no shipping berths). The barge slips are operated by the Walla Walla Grain Growers (3 slips), the Port of Walla Walla (2 slips), and Boise Cascade (1 slip). The first two companies handle mostly bulk grain; the last, wood products.

The Union Pacific Railroad and Burlington Northern Railroad both operate long-line services in Walla Walla

County. Both haul all types of commodities, but specialize in bulk grain, agricultural goods, and wood products. Short-line services between Wallula, Walla Walla, Waitsburg/Dayton, and Milton-Freewater are provided

by Blue Mountain Railroad. Blue Mountain hauls mostly bulk grain. Look in the future for Blue Mountain Railroad to operate a ski and dinner train between Walla Walla and Dayton.

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# SUMMARY

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Walla Walla is an Indian name meaning “many waters” or “small, rapid streams.” The county was one of the first areas in the region between the Rockies and the Cascades to be permanently settled and Walla Walla itself was one of the first communities in the Pacific Northwest to initiate a bank, a newspaper, and an institute of higher education. When Lewis and Clark first saw Walla Walla on their trek to the Pacific, they were impressed by its pleasant grass-covered hills and the tree-lined streams. Thanks to its abundant feed and mild winters made so by the Chinook winds drifting from the mountains, the Walla Walla region became the preferred site of early settlements. On the advice of the Hudson’s Bay Company, the Whitmans had established a mission there in 1836 that was to become an important stop on the Oregon Trail. Whitman Seminary, now Whitman College, was the first institution of higher learning in the Pacific Northwest, having received its charter in 1859, just five years after the Washington Territorial Legislature created Walla Walla County as the first county in the territory east of the Cascades.

The population of Walla Walla County has remained around 54,000 for the past several years but the total has increased by roughly 11.9 percent when 1990 is compared to 2000. Over this time frame, the state’s population grew by 19.2 percent. Of the four counties located in Southeast Washington—Columbia, Garfield, Asotin, and Walla Walla—only the latter two have shown any real population growth in the 1990s. More than half of the residents of the county resided in the city of Walla Walla whose population totaled 29,200. The minority population of the county

was estimated to be 20.1 percent in 1999 with the Hispanics the dominant ethnic population. In 1999, 14.4 percent of the population was age 65 and older as compared to 11.4 percent statewide.

A broad range of activities make up the economic base of the county. These include agriculture, manufacturing, wholesale trade, higher education, and some segments of government employment. The export base of a community is concentrated in those commercial activities that generate income into the area, helping to support employment and business expansion. While farming provided 3.4 percent of all jobs statewide in 1999, Walla Walla County has a ratio nearly 3.5 times higher at 11.5 percent. Manufacturing has shown surprising strength in the county with its 17.4 job share while the state only runs 13.6 percent. Roughly half of all jobs in manufacturing in the county were in food processing.

The labor force of Walla Walla County in 1999 totaled 26,220 with 24,450 employed and 1,770 unemployed for a local rate of unemployment of 6.8 percent. Statewide in 1999 the unemployment rate averaged a much lower 4.2 percent. In the past three decades, the local rate of unemployment has averaged 7.2 percent while the state has averaged 6.4 percent. The higher average of the county mainly reflects the seasonal nature of food processing and agriculture, which are dominant in the county. For both the county and the state, unemployment rates over the past several years have trended downward mainly due to an economy growing faster than the labor force.