



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Institutional Research

The State of Washington: *The Labor Market*

Environmental Scan Series 2025

Understanding trends in Washington state to advance WSU

August 11, 2025

Environmental Scan Series

The State of Washington: The Labor Market

Washington State University strives to educate Washington's population and provide integral research, work that fuels the state's labor market and uplifts its people. To that end, it is essential that we examine Washington's labor market to identify its strengths and challenges.

In this report, we explore the labor market trends evolving within Washington state. By reviewing our labor force, the growth and decline of occupations, and the education gaps growing within our state, we can align our efforts to best fit the needs of Washington's peoples. Understanding the labor market allows us to identify key opportunities and address Washington state's workforce demands.

Labor Market Information

What is Labor Market Information and Why Does it Matter for Higher Education?

As a land-grant institution, WSU has a duty to educate Washington's peoples, contribute to the vitality of the state's economy, and to serve the evolving needs of our communities. Labor market data provides one of the clearest lenses through which we can assess how well we are meeting that mission. Labor Market Information (LMI) refers to data that describes the structure, dynamics, and trends of the labor market. This includes statistics on employment and unemployment, job openings, wages, occupational demand, labor force participation, and demographic breakdowns such as age, gender, and education level. LMI helps us see not only where jobs are today, but where they were yesterday and project where they're heading tomorrow.

By examining trends in employment, wages, and occupational demand we work to understand market signals which can help with:

- **Program insights and curriculum planning:** Aligning academic offerings with the skills and credentials that employers need.
- **Student advising and career services:** Helping students make informed decisions about their education based on opportunities and risks in the labor market.
- **Workforce opportunities:** Identifying where demographic differences exist and where postsecondary education can play a role in addressing challenges to employment.
- **Strategic partnerships:** Building collaborative relationships with employers, industry associations, and public agencies to co-develop talent pipelines that serve both student success and economic development.

In an environment where changes in labor force participation, automation, and economic uncertainty are reshaping the future of work, universities cannot

Quick Summary

Labor Force Demographics:

Washington's labor market is diversifying, but participation and unemployment still vary significantly among demographic groups. Young adults, women with caregiving responsibilities, and Black and Hispanic communities face the most persistent barriers. Individuals with bachelor's degrees or higher continue to have the lowest unemployment rates and were least affected by the pandemic.

Labor Force Shifts:

Demand for high-skill occupations is growing, especially in business operations, healthcare, and engineering — fields aligned with WSU's most productive bachelor's degree programs. However, administrative and clerical jobs are declining.

Looking Forward:

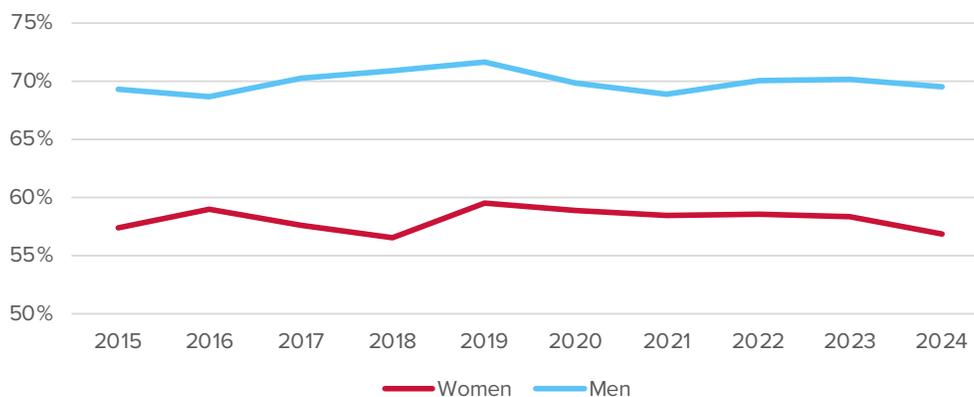
Program alignment with the changing workforce is essential. Reskilling and upskilling, nontraditional credentials, and employer partnerships offer WSU high-impact strategies to meet both student needs and regional labor demands.

afford to operate in isolation. Staying attuned to labor market trends ensures that WSU remains relevant, responsive, and rooted in the needs of the peoples and places it serves.

Who Is (and Isn't) Participating in the Labor Market?

Labor force participation reflects the share of the civilian working-age population that's either employed or is actively looking for work. Calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, they derive the labor force by taking the US or state population and from it excluding those who are younger than 16, agricultural workers, in the military, pursuing education, retired, disabled, institutionalized (such as in a prison or nursing home), and those who are otherwise not seeking work. In general, the labor market participation rate across the US has been declining since it hit a high of 71.3% in 1999. In 2024, Washington's labor force participation rate was 63.2%, slightly higher than the national rate of 62.6%. While this rate is often discussed as a total percentage, understanding the distinctions among demographic groups within the total helps us see the overall health of Washington's labor market. By recognizing the gaps in labor force participation, WSU can better align its access and outreach strategies to support a more resilient Washington workforce.

Figure 1: Washington State Labor Market Participation Rate by Gender, 2015 to 2024



Source: BLS

Over the last decade, we see that the labor market participation rate for both men and women has remained fairly stable, with a 70.0% average for men and a 58.2% average for women. The rates for both peaked around 2019 and have generally declined since. In 2022, the BLS found that nearly 62% of women aged 25 to 54 who were not in the labor force reported this was because of home responsibilities, as opposed to only 14% of men.

As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

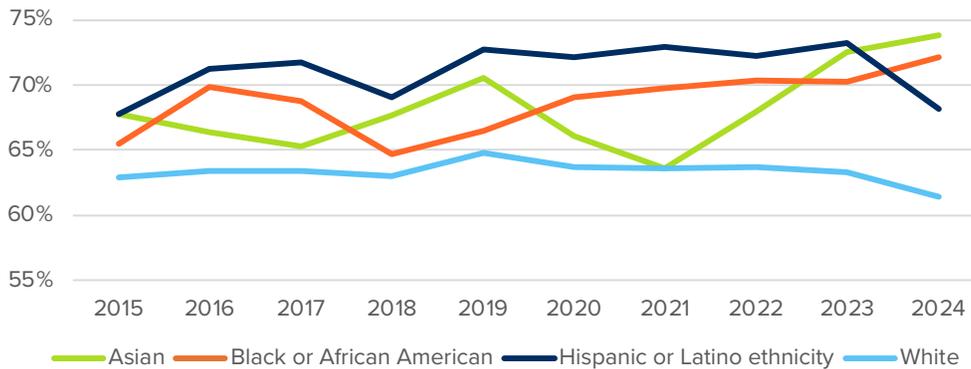
What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

Questions to Consider

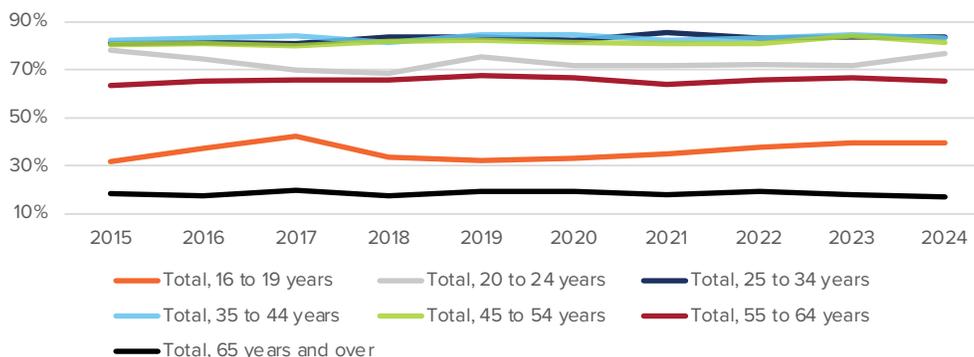
Figure 2: Washington State Labor Market Participation Rate by Race and Ethnicity, 2015 to 2024



Source: BLS

Looking at the four race and ethnicity categories regularly tracked by the BLS, we see there are some notable distinctions between the communities. Across the last decade, Hispanics have had the highest labor market participation rate, with an average of 71.1%, only surpassed by Asians in 2024. It appears that the Asian community was most impacted by the pandemic, though their participation rate has rebounded sharply since. White individuals typically have the lowest labor market participation rate over the last decade, with an average of 58.2%, a rate that has been declining since a soft peak in 2019.

Figure 3: Washington State Labor Market Participation Rate by Age Group, 2015 to 2024



Source: BLS

Looking across the age ranges tracked by the BLS, we see three functional clusters: young adults, ages 16 to 24; prime working age, ages 25 to 54; and nearing retirement, ages 55 and older. Those in the 25 to 54 age groups represent the prime working age ranges for our labor force and have the highest

As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

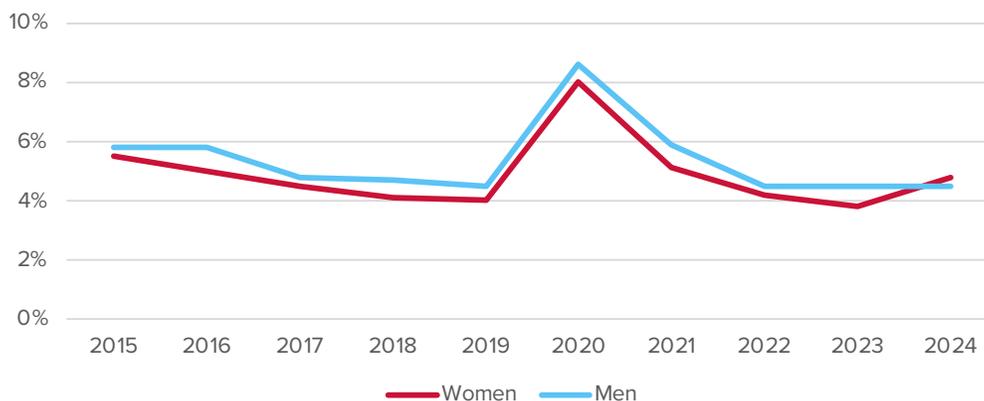
How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

participation rates. For those in the 16 to 24 age groups, a significant amount of their lower participation rate is due to their pursuit of education, though we do see that the participation rate for both has increased since the pandemic. Within the 55 and older age groups, much of their decreased participation rate is due to retirement or their health.

Unemployment

While the labor force participation rate tells us who is engaging with the workforce, unemployment rates help us identify who in that group is searching for work and not finding it. Washington's unemployment rate has historically been higher than the national unemployment rate but tracks closely with national trends. On average in 2024, Washington's unemployment rate sat at 4.7%, as compared to the national unemployment rate average of 4%. Similar to the participation rate, understanding the distinctions among demographic groups within the total unemployment rate helps us better see the challenges within Washington's labor market.

Figure 4: Washington State Unemployment Rate by Gender, 2015 to 2024



Source: BLS

Over the last decade, we see that the unemployment rate for both men and women has tracked similarly, with women typically having a slightly lower unemployment rate than men. The unemployment rates for both men and women have recovered since the pandemic spike. 2024 saw women's unemployment rate increase by 0.8% and marks the first time in the last decade that the unemployment rate for women has exceeded that of men.

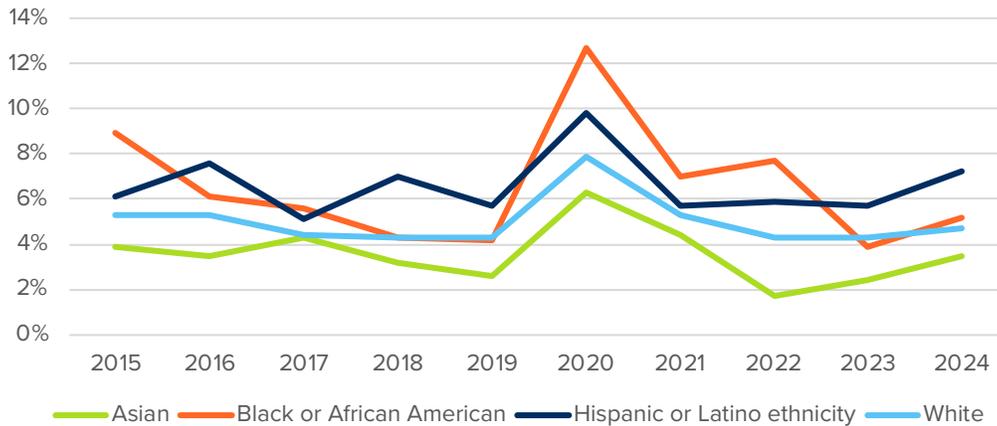
As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

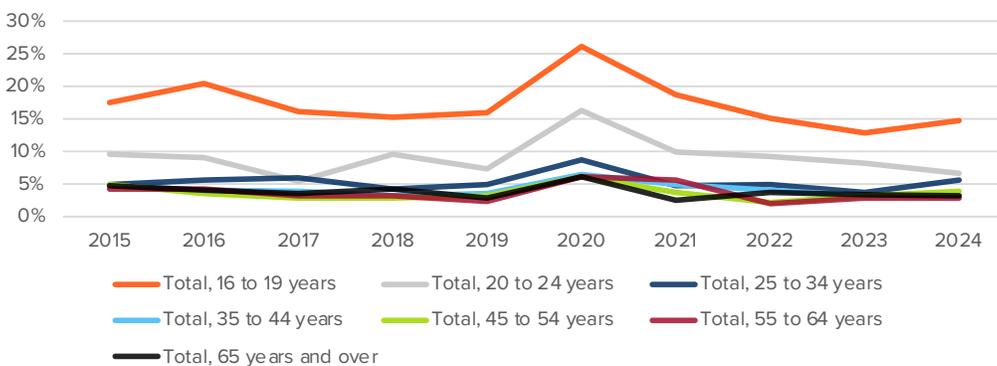
Figure 5: Washington State Unemployment Rate by Race and Ethnicity, 2015 to 2024



Source: BLS

Similar to the participation rate, the BLS tracks unemployment across four race and ethnicity categories. The unemployment rate does not vary across these Washington’s communities as much as the participation rate does, though the differences are still significant. Across the last decade, the highest unemployment rates have consistently been held by either the Black or Hispanic communities. Conversely, the Asian community has consistently held the lowest unemployment rate in the state. The Black community appears to have been hit hardest by the pandemic, their unemployment rate rising over 8% in 2020 and not returning to pre-pandemic levels until 2023.

Figure 6: Washington State Unemployment Rate by Age Group, 2015 to 2024



Source: BLS

Most age groups have similar unemployment rates, with the exception of those being 16 to 19 and 20 to 24. Over the last decade, those 16 to 19 have

As we review these facets of Washington’s labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

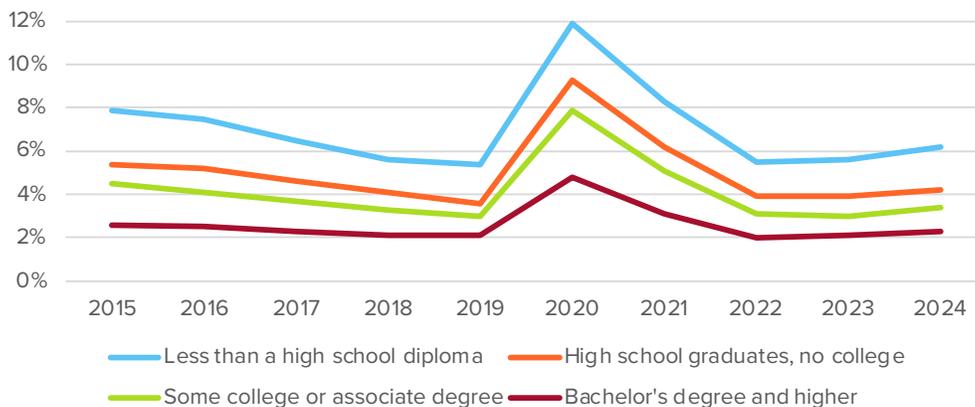
What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington’s labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

experienced between 3.1 and 3.8 times the average unemployment rate, with an average of 17.3%. Those 20 to 24 have experienced between 1.2 and 2.2 times the average unemployment rate, with an average of 9.2%. These two groups have historically experienced higher unemployment rates due to their limited work experience, limited skill sets, and competition with older individuals more established within the workforce.

Figure 7: National Unemployment Rate by Education Level, 2015 to 2024



Source: BLS

Looking to the national level, we can examine the unemployment rate by education level. Over the last decade, we see that those with some college education have consistently had a lower unemployment rate than those without. This is particularly pronounced for individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher, who have averaged an unemployment rate of 2.6% — just over half the 4.7% average seen across all education levels over the past decade. They also experienced a much smaller spike in unemployment during the pandemic, with rates rising by only 2.7 percentage points compared to the 5.7 percentage point increase seen on average among other education groups.

Labor Market Mismatch

The US calculates six unemployment measurements, which range from narrow to broad calculations and are called U-1 through U-6. The official US measurement for unemployment is U-3, though the full U-6 captures discouraged, marginally attached, and underemployed workers. While Washington's average unemployment rate (U-3) in 2024 sat at 4.7%, its U-6 rate was nearly double that at 9.0%. U-6 helps us understand more than just unemployment; it offers us a fuller picture of labor market mismatch. In a mismatched labor market, available workers and available jobs exist, but they are not in alignment. This can occur when workers are overqualified,

As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

underqualified, located in the wrong region, or trained for occupations that are no longer growing. This concept is particularly important for institutions of higher education.

Postsecondary programs play a vital role in aligning the knowledge and skills of Washington's residents with the demands of a changing economy. When that alignment breaks down, the result is a workforce that is both underutilized and underserved. By using occupational demand data (such as job growth, median wages, and annual openings), universities can identify areas where program review and revision can have the greatest impact. Ensuring programs remain responsive to labor market trends is essential not just for student success, but for regional economic resilience.

Occupations in Washington

Defining Occupations

When discussing the labor market, it's important that we distinguish between industries and occupations — two related but distinct ways of looking at work and economic activity. Industries describe the types of businesses or organizations providing goods or services (e.g., healthcare, information, manufacturing), while occupations describe the type of work people are doing, regardless of the industry (e.g., registered nurse, software developer, welder). For instance, a software developer may work in tech, healthcare, or at a university. While the industry context can tell us about sectoral growth and business activity, the occupation view helps us understand the skills, training, and education required across these different sectors.

To analyze occupations consistently across regions and time, economists and policymakers rely on the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system. This framework organizes all jobs in the U.S. economy into a hierarchical structure, with 2-digit SOC codes representing the most high-level occupational groups (e.g., 29-0000: Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations) and 6-digit SOC codes offer the most specific level of detail, identifying individual occupations (e.g., 29-1141: Registered Nurses).

For this scan, we use 3-digit SOC codes to balance clarity and depth, offering enough specificity to identify meaningful trends while avoiding an overwhelming level of granularity. This approach allows us to group similar roles together (health practitioners, engineering professionals, etc.) and analyze broad workforce trends across Washington.

By framing our occupational analysis at this level, we can identify not only where employment is growing or shrinking, but also which occupational families

As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

are emerging as priorities for workforce development and higher education planning. From a higher education perspective, understanding the occupation landscape within Washington can provide sharper insights into:

- What skills and credentials are in demand;
- Where students might find employment after graduation; and
- How programs and curricula may need to evolve.

By pairing industry trends with occupational data, we can identify high-impact opportunities for alignment between educational offerings and workforce needs across the state. For this analysis, we'll be discussing occupations within Washington, while our next scan on the Washington Economy will focus on industry.

Growing Occupations

Washington's labor market shows strong employer demand in several high-skill occupation groups, particularly in the professional, technical, and healthcare fields. By identifying and understanding these groups, WSU can align its program offerings to deepen its impact on the state labor force and improve graduate outcomes.



As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

Table 1: Top Ten 3-Digit Occupations in Washington by 2022-2024 Job Growth

SOC	Description	2024 Jobs	2022-2024 Change	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
13-1000	Business Operations Specialists	219,078	11,559	\$89,126.31	25,161
35-3000	Food & Beverage Serving Workers	168,341	9,349	\$36,600.41	40,096
29-1000	Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners	134,996	7,096	\$118,409.43	11,269
11-3000	Operations Specialties Managers	50,762	4,061	\$164,442.82	5,564
11-1000	Top Executives	66,469	3,729	\$128,382.27	7,079
21-1000	Counselors, Social Workers, and Other Community & Social Service Specialists	60,767	3,713	\$59,920.89	7,022
37-2000	Building Cleaning & Pest Control Workers	69,858	3,424	\$39,817.25	11,519
11-9000	Other Management Occupations	71,468	3,132	\$125,785.08	7,841
29-2000	Health Technologists & Technicians	56,290	2,998	\$62,403.49	6,064
35-9000	Other Food Preparation & Serving Related Workers	28,856	2,781	\$37,113.68	6,960

Source: Lightcast

As shown in Table 1, Business Operations Specialists (13-1000) added over 11,500 jobs from 2022 to 2024. Many other business occupations make the top ten list, showing growing demand for analytical, project management, and strategic planning skills in the market. Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners (29-1000) also saw strong growth, adding over 7,000 jobs while boasting a strong median annual salary of just over \$118,000. This growth reinforces the ongoing need for advanced clinical training across Washington.

A majority of these top-growth occupation groups often demand bachelor's degrees or higher and have median wages well above the state median. Given this, these programs have a high value as potential targets for enrollment growth and academic investment. Notably, even some lower-wage groups like Food & Beverage Serving Workers (35-3000) and Building Cleaning & Pest Control Workers (37-2000) had large job growth in this period. The high annual

As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

Questions to Consider

openings relative to their job growth can be an indicator of high turnover within these fields, but these may still be relevant occupations to investigate for prospective workforce partnerships and career ladder programs.

Declining Occupations

While most occupation groups within Washington expanded from 2022 to 2024, several contracted. As shown in Table 2, Financial Clerks (43-3000) saw the largest decline among occupation groups in Washington, losing nearly 4,000 jobs during this period. We see multiple other office support roles declined from 2022 to 2024, including Information & Record Clerks (43-4000) and Other Office & Administrative Support Workers (43-9000), even as they saw high annual openings (likely due to turnover). This may be due to digital systems reducing the need for manual administrative work.

Table 2: Top Ten 3-Digit Occupations in Washington by 2022-2024 Job Reduction

SOC	Description	2024 Jobs	2022-2024 Change	Median Annual Earnings	Avg. Annual Openings
43-3000	Financial Clerks	65,108	(3,819)	\$51,432.62	8,045
35-1000	Supervisors of Food Preparation & Serving Workers	32,006	(2,169)	\$47,636.75	5,114
41-4000	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing	45,589	(2,151)	\$85,533.95	4,523
43-9000	Other Office & Administrative Support Workers	63,905	(1,938)	\$47,362.40	8,611
27-1000	Art and Design Workers	15,176	(1,355)	\$68,248.96	1,829
43-4000	Information & Record Clerks	113,689	(1,355)	\$45,813.70	16,670
43-5000	Material Recording, Scheduling, Dispatching, & Distributing Workers	54,538	(1,218)	\$54,477.60	7,021
45-2000	Agricultural Workers	47,386	(1,151)	\$33,533.16	8,767
41-1000	Supervisors of Sales Workers	32,048	(999)	\$59,210.87	3,177
51-7000	Woodworkers	5,441	(500)	\$46,716.86	693

Source: Lightcast

As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

Questions to Consider

As important as it is that we understand what occupations are growing within Washington's labor market, it's similarly critical that we identify the programs that are contracting. These changes in our economy emphasize the importance of evaluating legacy programs, enhancing career services to help students pivot within or out of declining fields, and considering cross-training or certificate options that build resiliency during uncertain economic periods.



We must also highlight the limitations of the data presented here. These 3-digit SOC codes represent a cluster of occupations, and while some jobs within a cluster may be growing or stable, others may be in decline. Because academic programs often prepare students for a range of careers, not just a single occupation, this complexity can represent an opportunity. Programs can examine which occupations are in-demand and which aren't to adjust their emphasis and align more closely with shifting labor market demands. By identifying which occupations are most in demand, we can refine our course offerings to ensure our students are best fit to compete within the changing job market.



As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

Education for Occupations

Program Alignment

As we discussed in our previous enrollment trends report, the benefits of higher education are uneven. Students of different majors, genders, races and ethnicities, and even financial backgrounds experience differing benefits from their educations. While much of this is outside the control of a university, what we can do is ensure that the programs we offer and the skills we teach are in-step with the demands of employers. This process is called program alignment, and it primarily works to answer two core questions: Are we preparing students for jobs that exist, and are we equipping them with skills that will make them competitive in the market?

Effective program alignment draws on a combination of labor market data (like job growth, earnings, and annual openings data), employer engagement, alumni outcomes, and state workforce priorities. It often involves mapping instructional programs (using Classification of Instructional Programs, or CIP codes) to occupational categories (SOC codes), and comparing regional employment demand with institutional credential output. For public research universities like WSU, program alignment serves multiple strategic purposes:

- **Responsiveness:** It ensures programs stay relevant as industries change.
- **Stewardship:** It helps allocate resources efficiently and avoid duplication or oversaturation.
- **Stability:** It supports the design of pathways that lead to family-sustaining wages for students.
- **Impact:** It affirms the university's role in driving regional economic vitality and workforce competitiveness.

By focusing on alignment, we can better see where our programs are thriving and where education and skill gaps exist. Moreso, this alignment can help us identify where opportunities may lie for us to create new programs or expand our current offerings.

Education at WSU

To understand how WSU's current programs align with labor market needs, we need to examine where we're producing the greatest number of graduates and how those completions fit within both the state's educational output and the labor market's demand. The table below provides an overview of WSU's top ten bachelor's degree-level program groups by completions in 2023, along with key labor market indicators such as annual openings and median wages for related bachelor's degree-level occupations. This snapshot provides a useful lens for assessing the extent to which WSU is contributing to talent pipelines in high-opportunity fields.

As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

Table 3: Top Ten WSU Bachelor's Program Groups by Completers, 4-Digit CIP, 2024

4-Digit CIP Code	Description	WSU Completions 2023	WA state Completions 2023	WSU Proportion of State Education	Annual Openings 2024	Median Hourly Earnings 2024 (Thousands)
42.01	Psychology, General	513	1,830	28.0%	4,630	\$77.3
51.38	Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research & Clinical Nursing	351	1,586	22.1%	3,571	\$108.6
9.09	Public Relations, Advertising, & Applied Communication	262	300	87.3%	5,662	\$89.9
26.01	Biology, General	243	1,163	20.9%	2,908	\$81.8
45.01	Social Sciences, General	233	356	65.4%	3,835	\$97.3
52.14	Marketing	230	841	27.3%	6,103	\$99.9
14.19	Mechanical Engineering	221	584	37.8%	1,753	\$128.2
13.12	Teacher Education and Professional Development, Specific Levels & Methods	218	1,064	20.5%	8,484	\$63.7
52.02	Business Administration, Management & Operations	216	1,849	11.7%	41,943	\$92.7
52.08	Finance & Financial Management Services	200	715	28%	10,604	\$79.4

Source: Lightcast

As we've discussed in our previous scans, the median annual earnings for an individual with a bachelor's degree in Washington was \$78.5 thousand in 2023. Nearly all of WSU's top ten program groups meet or exceed this benchmark, with standout fields like Mechanical Engineering (\$128.2 thousand) and Registered Nursing (\$108.6 thousand) offering particularly strong returns.

As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?

These programs also align with high employer demand fields like Public Relations, Marketing, and Finance, all of which show thousands of projected annual openings. Altogether, this table highlights WSU's role in supplying talent to Washington's high opportunity sectors and shows where continued investment, expansion, or curricular innovation could enhance outcomes for students and the state alike.

Reskilling and Upskilling

Automation, artificial intelligence, and global trade dynamics are restructuring our economies and transforming the skills employers need. These changes are putting pressure on workers to adapt, pivot, and grow their expertise throughout their careers. This shifting landscape has made reskilling (learning entirely new competencies for a different field) and upskilling (enhancing or expanding skills within a current field) central to both workforce policy and higher education strategy.

For WSU and other public institutions, the growing demand for reskilling and upskilling presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Traditional degree pathways remain important, but they are not always the best fit for working adults, career changers, or displaced workers. These learners often need flexible, modular, and career-focused educational options that can be completed while working or managing other life responsibilities. WSU could play a critical role in meeting these needs by exploring some or all of the following:

- Building stackable credentials that lead toward degree attainment but also have immediate labor market value.
- Partnering with employers and workforce boards to identify priority skill sets and co-develop training aligned to regional needs.
- Increasing access and support for nontraditional students, including adult learners, veterans, and workers in transition.
- Expanding non-degree pathways (e.g., certificates, microcredentials, bootcamps).

As labor markets become more complex, the ability to reskill and upskill will be key for individual and regional economic resilience. Institutions that proactively engage with this demand will be better positioned to support Washington's workforce and to sustain their own relevance in higher education's increasingly competitive environment.

As we review these facets of Washington's labor market, we should think about their effect on WSU and our ability to affect them in turn. Some initial questions to ask are:

What opportunities does WSU have to better engage with different demographic groups within Washington's labor force?

How should WSU utilize academic program development and realignment to better meet current and future workforce needs?

How can WSU better support nontraditional students needing to transition careers?



What's Next?

Coming Up

This report is the third in a series of environmental scans designed to enhance our understanding of critical forces shaping WSU and the broader Washington state landscape. Upcoming reports will explore the state economy in Washington and provide key market insights to inform institutional strategy and policy moving forward. Access more trend reports at data.wsu.edu.

For more information

This report was compiled by Institutional Research (IR), which plays a pivotal role at WSU by leveraging institutional data and analytics to support evaluation and transparent decision-making across the WSU system. IR works collaboratively with campuses, colleges, and units to achieve WSU's vision and priorities.

[Learn more about Institutional Research](#) or [contact us](#).

Sources

“Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization in Washington – 2024”

Western Information Office

Search Western Region, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025. https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/laborunderutilization_washington.htm

“Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, marital status, and detailed age, annual averages”

Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2025. <https://www.bls.gov/lau/ex14tables.htm>

Lightcast, 2024. <https://lightcast.io/>

“Why did labor force nonparticipation increase from 1999 to 2022?” Monthly

Labor Review, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2024/article/why-did-labor-force-nonparticipation-increase-from-1999-to-2022.htm>