

# Washington's unemployment recovery among fastest in US

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Washington's unemployment rate continues to improve as it recovers from significant Covid-19 pandemic-related job losses.

A [report by WalletHub](#) found Washington's change in unemployment claim numbers for the week ending Aug. 2 was 75% less than it was the same week in 2020.

The state still hasn't fully returned to its 2019 level, however. There were about 1.5% more claims filed last week than were filed in the same period in 2019.

Source: [WalletHub](#)

From Aug. 1 to 7, 5,420 initial regular unemployment claims were filed, which is up 10.2% from the prior week, according to the Washington Employment Security Department. Layoffs in health care, social assistance and construction lead the increase.

The most recent monthly unemployment rate statistics from June 2021 show the state's unemployment rate sits at [5.3%](#). King County's unemployment rate was 5.2%, Pierce County's was 5.6% and Snohomish County's was 6.1%.

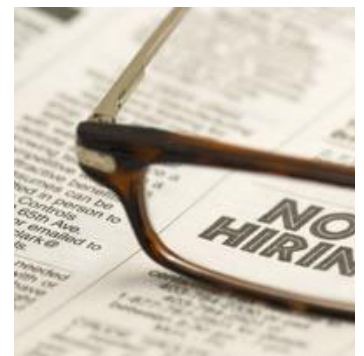
Nationwide, there were 375,000 new unemployment claims, compared with the 6.1 million filed in one week during the peak of the pandemic.

Florida's unemployment rate has recovered the most since the peak of the pandemic, followed by South Carolina, New Hampshire, South Dakota and Kansas. Washington is 9th.

In general, Republican-leaning states are recovering slightly faster than Democratic-leaning states, according to the report. Red states have an average recovery rank of 24, while blue states' average rank is 27.

The federal pandemic benefit programs, including the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation and the additional \$300 a week, are set to expire on Sept. 4.

Washington's restaurant industry has been particularly hard hit by a labor shortage. [Anthony Anton](#), president and CEO of the Washington Hospitality Association, recently said the [industry is short 80,000 workers](#).



BRYAN SIKORA

Twenty-two states ended the federal unemployment benefits early including Florida, Texas and Arizona, according to the [WalletHub report](#).

Jill Gonzalez, WalletHub analyst, said 25% to 40% of unemployed workers are making more unemployed than they did working, thanks to the federal \$300 unemployment stimulus.

“There is less incentive for people to get a job when unemployment pays more money, and as a result, many businesses want to hire more people but cannot find workers,” she said in a statement. “Expanded unemployment benefits were necessary during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic to keep families on their feet in the midst of massive layoffs. Now that the country has mostly reopened and there are a lot more job openings, the extra money is detrimental to economic progress.”

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