

Washington Employment Numbers Surge in January

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Washington's employment picture brightened in January, as the unemployment rate fell to a seasonally adjusted, estimated rate of 8.3 percent and the state enjoyed an estimated gain of 13,200 jobs, according to the state Employment Security Department. Employment Security also announced that December's previous estimate of 11,700 job losses has been reversed to a gain of 100 jobs, and the previously announced unemployment rate of 8.5 percent has been revised to 8.6 percent. Earlier this week, the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics completed its annual benchmarking effort, which uses employers' wage reports and other data sources to firm up the previously estimated unemployment rates and job numbers for each month of 2011. That research shows Washington gained more jobs last year than previously estimated, and unemployment rates in the latter half of 2011 were slightly better than initially estimated.

For example, benchmarked data show that Washington gained about 53,500 jobs in 2011, compared to the 26,600 jobs previously reported. "These numbers show that our economy is gaining strength, and that's great news to start to the new year," said Employment Security Commissioner Paul Trause. Industry sectors that had the most job growth in January were professional & business services, which added 5,500 jobs; retail trade, up 2,700 jobs; education & health services, up 2,300; wholesale trade, up 1,100; leisure & hospitality, up 1,100; construction, up 900; information, up 500; and financial activities, up 500 jobs. Industries with the most job losses included government, down 1,100; other services, down 200; and mining & logging, down 200. Since the low point in the recession, the state has regained about 98,000 jobs. An estimated 291,400 people (seasonally adjusted) in Washington were unemployed and looking for work in January. As of Feb. 25, 74,616 workers in Washington had run out of all unemployment benefits.