

Whatcom County Top Employers: 2020

The Center for Economic and Business Research at Western Washington University asks businesses for permanent full-time employees based in Whatcom County each year – the following table is for employment counts as of 12/31/20. Getting this information is harder than you might think due to differences in how companies define full-time, how to count people who work in different locations during the year, etc. Numbers in the table should be used for discussion purposes and reference, with an understanding of the uncertainty surrounding the numbers.

In conducting this research, we have included those companies reporting a headcount of more than 250 to help limit the overall size of the list.

Not all companies contacted agree to have their employment numbers published. If an omission is believed to have occurred, please contact the Center for Economic and Business Research at Western Washington University by phone at 360 -650-3909 or by e-mail at cebr@wwu.edu.

Due to COVID-19 we asked those responding to the survey for the experience and expectations involving remote work and a return to office environments. While recognizing that this is subject to change based on the course of the pandemic it provides a lens into the potential landscape changes that await the county's workforce. Those companies that manufacture or conduct in-person transactions as a core function were most likely to report near normal working conditions whereas many companies that could offer remote working for positions stated that they were prepared to continue such arrangements into 2021 for an average of 30% of the workforce.

The response rate for the Top Employers report has been especially low this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Top Employers report this year also included some COVID-19 related questions in order to better understand the impact of the pandemic in the businesses in Whatcom county. Our research suggests that most companies still have non-essential personnel working remotely and that their workforce number has been reduced due to the pandemic.

This past year marked a significant change with the announcement regarding Intalco which would have appeared at 11 on this list with an estimated headcount, pre-closure of approximately 720.

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2020 Rank	2019 Rank	Company Name	Total headcount
1	1	St Joseph Hospital	3116*
2	3	Lummi Nation	2083*
3	2	Western Washington University	2060
4	4	Bellingham Public Schools	1606
5	8	BP Cherry Point	975**
6	5	The City of Bellingham	917
7	7	Matrix Service Inc	870*
8	9	Ferndale School District	847*
9	6	Whatcom County	825.5
10	10	Haggen	750
11	-	Fred Meyer	603
12	-	Smith Gardens	550**
13	14	Blaine School District	525*
14	15	Lynden school district	500
15	16	Family Care Network	470
16	19	Peoples Bank	469
17	13	Whatcom Community College	409
18	21	Faithlife (Formerly Logos)	400
19	17	Lynden Door Company	399
20	26	Anvil Corporation	375
21	37	Opportunity Council	349
22	22	Aramark	339*
23	18	Bellingham Tech. College	330
24	25	Walmart	305*
25	28	Cascade DAFO	300*
26	-	Haskell Corp	298
27	29	Phillips 66 Refinery	280

*Based on 2019 numbers

**Estimated from 3rd party sources (these estimates are likely to be pre-COVID)

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The Center for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) at Western Washington University works in partnership with businesses, non-profits, government/quasi-governmental entities and tribal communities to respond to data and analysis needs.

The Center brings students and faculty together with each client to find solutions that inform, engage and encourage innovation. Our work includes a variety of analysis documents, presentations and facilitated discussions backed by both primary and secondary research that is supported by academic standards and best practices.

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