



2021 Whatcom County Top Employers List

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 12/31/21. While it may seem straightforward, this information can get complicated due to differences in defining 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 290 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. Additionally, not all respondents answered the question regarding the proportion of remote work anticipated for 2022, so these conclusions are purely estimates based on information collected during the surveys. Those companies that manufacture or conduct in-person transactions as a core function were most likely to report normal in-person working conditions whereas many companies stated that they were prepared to continue remote or hybrid arrangements into 2022 for an average of 4.5% of their workforce. The situations for companies in Whatcom County varied greatly, with the majority completely back in person, some allowing for remote working a percentage of the time, some accommodating to allow remote work depending on local covid case numbers, etc.

The response rate for the Top Employers report has increased from previous COVID-19 pandemic years but remains low compared to pre-COVID-19 pandemic response rates. The Top Employers report this year continued to include some COVID-19 related questions to better understand the impact of the pandemic on the businesses in Whatcom County. Our research suggests that most companies have returned to working in-person and that their workforce number has been reduced, likely because of the pandemic.



WHATCOM COUNTY TOP EMPLOYERS: 2021

2021 Rank	2020 Rank	Company Name	Total headcount
1	1	St. Joseph Hospital	3116**
2	2	Lummi Nation	2083**
3	3	Western Washington University	2060*
4	4	Bellingham Public Schools	1423
5	5	BP Cherry Point	975*
6	6	City of Bellingham	936
7	9	Whatcom County	918
8	7	Matrix Service	870**
9	8	Ferndale School District	847**
10	-	LTI, Inc.	557
11	13	Blaine School District	525**
12	14	Lynden School District	500*
13	15	Fred Meyer	486*
14	17	Peoples Bank	469*
15	18	Whatcom Community College	459
16	21	Anvil Corporation	442
17	-	Silver Reef Casino	400
18	19	Faithlife	400*
19	20	Lynden Door Company	399*
20	16	Family Care Network	389
21	22	Opportunity Council	349*
22	23	Aramark	339**
23	24	Bellingham Technical College	330*
24	25	Walmart	305**
25	26	Cascade Dafo	300*
26	27	Haskell Corporation	298*
27	-	Whatcom Transportation Authority	291

*Based on 2020 numbers, **Based on 2019 numbers

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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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