



Strong Economy

Objective:

Support a strong, diverse, and sustainable economy

What is happening in King County?

Overall, King County is a good place to work. Unemployment in King County as a whole has followed state and national trends, but remained slightly below those levels. For almost all racial/ethnic groups in King County, median income has increased in the decade between 1999 and 2010.

Between 2009 and 2012, the number of jobs in King County has grown to 1,171,900, an increase of 5 percent. With the exception of the Financial Activities and Construction sectors, all sectors have grown since 2009. The largest of these sectors--the Trade, Transportation, Utilities sector provides 19 percent of the jobs in King County in 2012.

King County, as part of the Seattle-Bellevue-Everett metropolitan area, is ranked 16th on Forbes 2012 list of Best Places for Business and Careers.

When looking at different groups of King County residents, however, there are significant disparities in income and unemployment. Income for African Americans and Native Americans is the lowest in King County, nearly half the median income for White and Asian residents. And median income for African American and Native American residents has grown much less than income for other groups.

In March, 2013, the latest period with data, unemployment in King County was 5.1 percent, similar to levels in 2008. Despite an improvement in the unemployment rate and reduced disparities in unemployment by city, there are still areas in South King County with unemployment rates higher than the County average. Similarly, median household income in King County has improved, but here too we see disparities between race/ethnicity that have persisted during the recent recession.

For a single adult, most jobs in King County pay a wage that supports self-sufficiency. However, less than 40 percent of King County jobs pay enough to support one adult with one or two young children. The self-sufficiency wage was developed by researchers working with the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County, and includes the funds needed to support an individual or family without requiring any governmental or other financial assistance. For some individuals supporting families, it may be difficult to gain employment that covers living expenses.

What role does King County play?

King County supports business development efforts through partnerships as well as county initiatives and through King County contracts. Workforce development efforts are integrated into both human service programs provided through the Department of Community and Human Services, as well as King County's direct contracting in construction and other trade areas.

In addition, King County maintains infrastructure to support economic growth and vitality.

What can you do?

Many factors contribute to a vibrant and sustainable economy, including a favorable business climate, a trained workforce, adequate public infrastructure, land supply, predictable regulations, advancing technology, affordable housing, available capital, and a healthy natural environment.

Several factors contribute to the employment and earning potential of King County residents. Educational and training opportunities are crucial to developing a highly skilled professional and technical workforce.

Related Links

[Forbes List of Best Places for Business and Careers](#)

[The Prosperity Partnership](#)

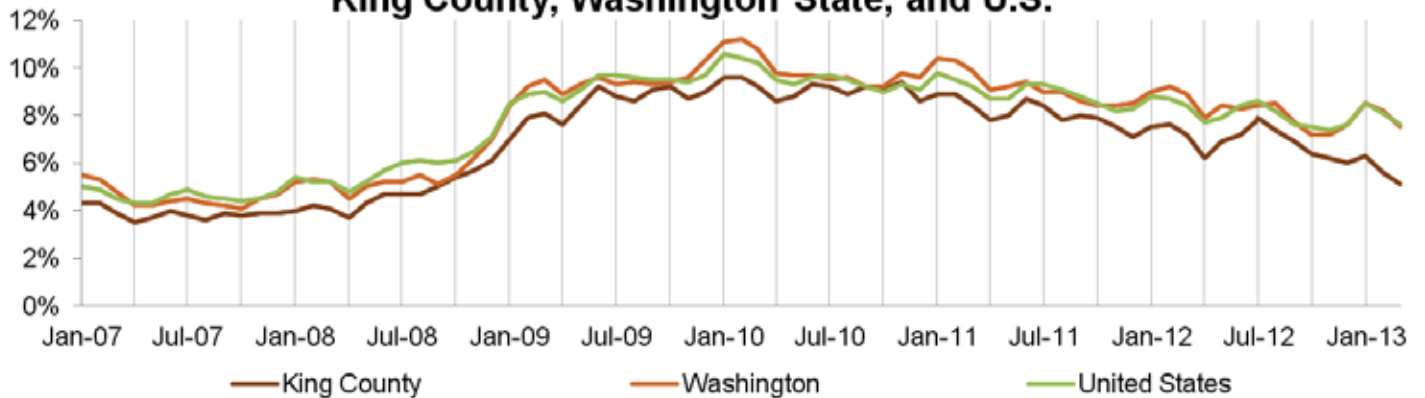
[Self-Sufficiency Standard](#)

Technical Notes

1. County, state, and national unemployment data from:
<https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/regional-reports/numbers-and-trends>. Prepared by PSB staff.
2. 2011 Average Unemployment data for King County and cities above 25,000 population from United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Labor force is sum of employed and unemployed. Number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force; not seasonally adjusted. Prepared by Public Health - Seattle & King County; Assessment, Policy Development & Evaluation Unit, 08/2012, with updates by PSB staff 10, 2012. For more information see: <http://www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm>
3. Livable Wages: Wage frequencies are created by weighting the average wage for each industry by the industry's proportion of overall jobs. Wage data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (Q4 data). 2011 livable wages come from The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Washington State 2011, a report prepared for the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County by the University of Washington School of Social Work Center for Women's Welfare. 2009 and 2010 Livable Wages used the US Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI estimates to modify the 2011 figure.

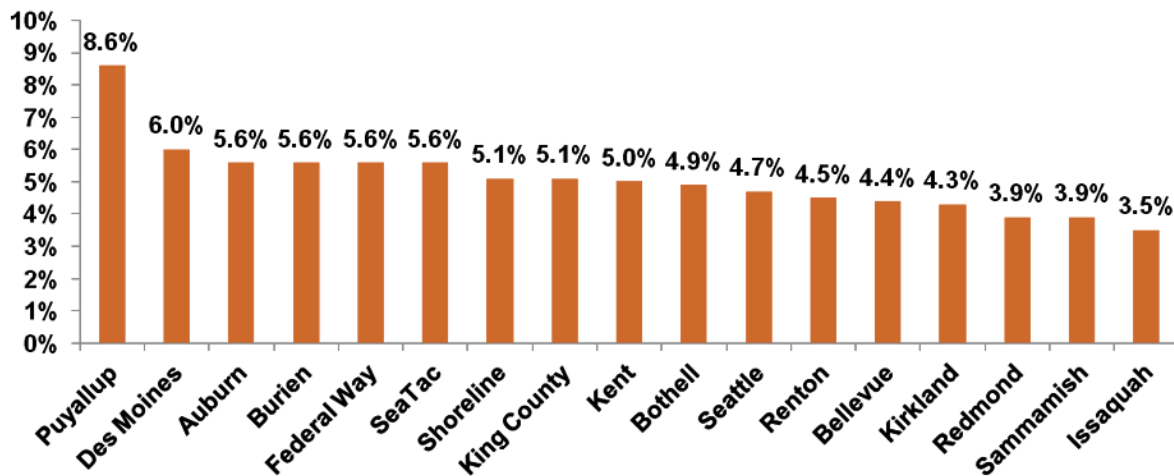
Charts and Maps

Unemployment Trend 2007-March, 2013 King County, Washington State, and U.S.



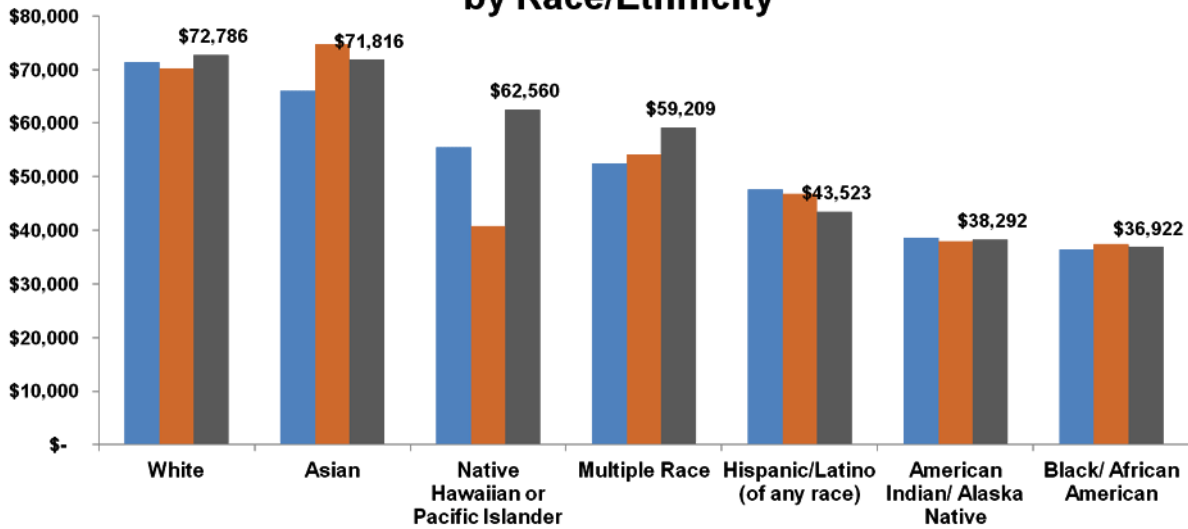
Data Source: Washington State Employment Security Department

King County Cities and County Average March, 2013 Unemployment Rates



Data Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, County and Cities above 25,000 population

King County Median Household Income 2007-2011 by Race/Ethnicity

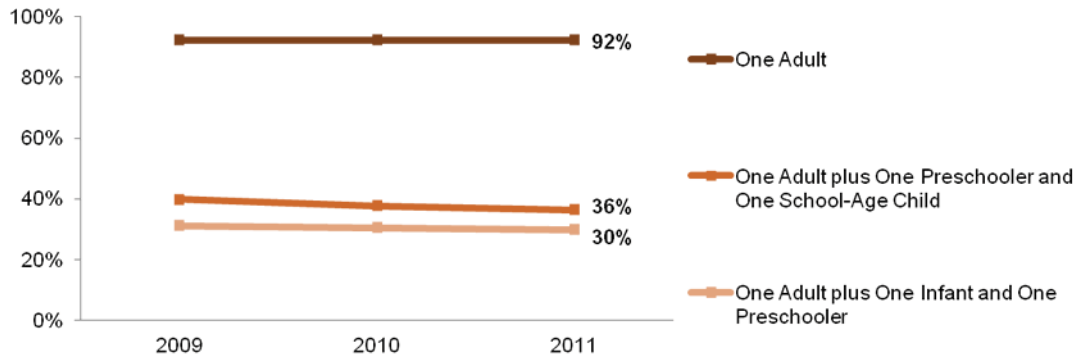


Data Source: American Community Survey

■ 2007 ■ 2010 ■ 2011 (labeled)

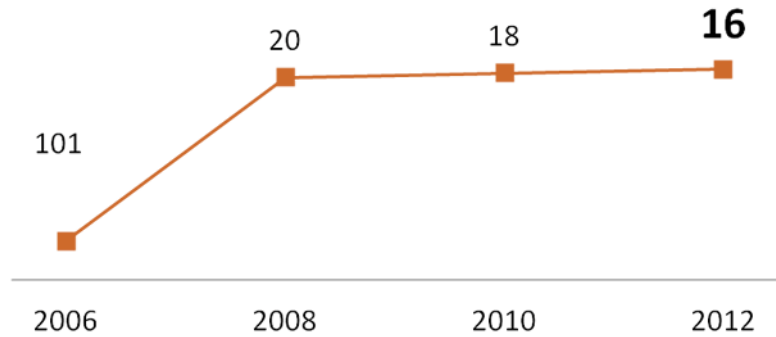
Livable Wages in King County

Proportion of King County Jobs Paying a Livable Wage



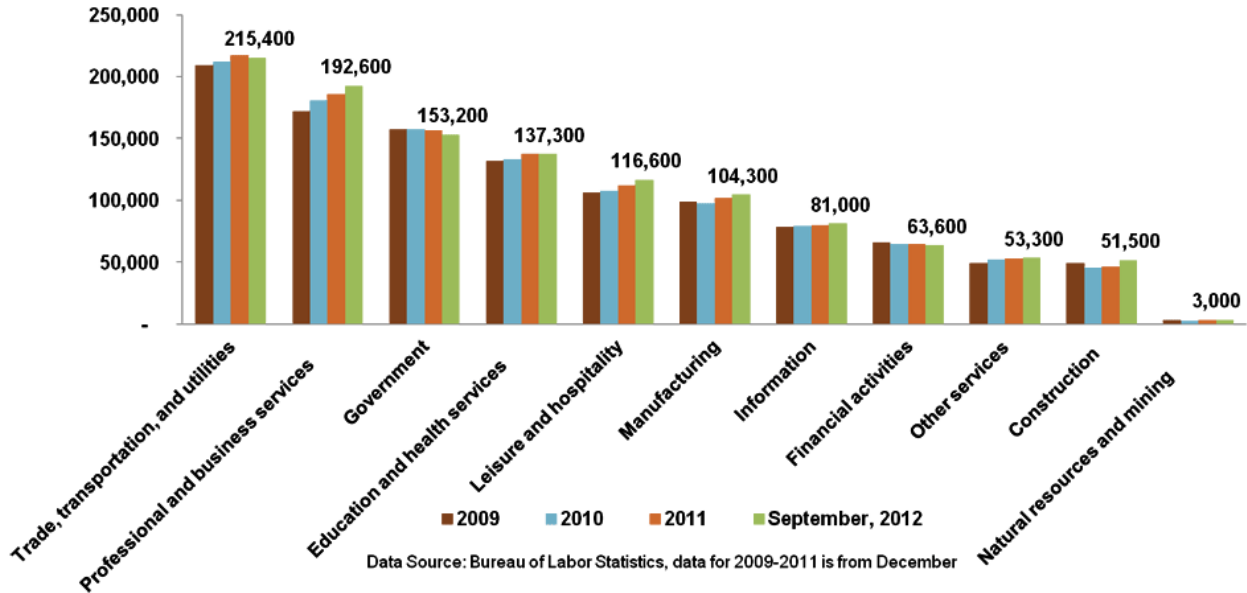
Data from *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Washington State, 2011*. See technical note for more details.

Seattle Metropolitan Area Ranked 16th Best Place for Business and Careers Nationally

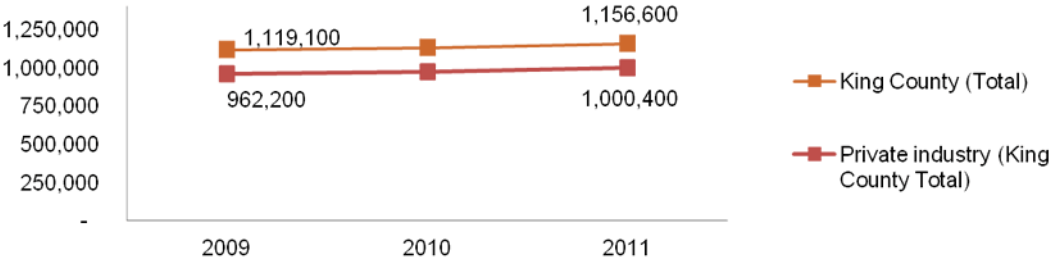


Seattle-Bellevue-Everett metro area rank in Forbes Magazine's rankings of *Best Places for Business and Careers* (out of 200 largest metro areas)

Number of Jobs in King County, by Industry September, 2012 Figures Labeled

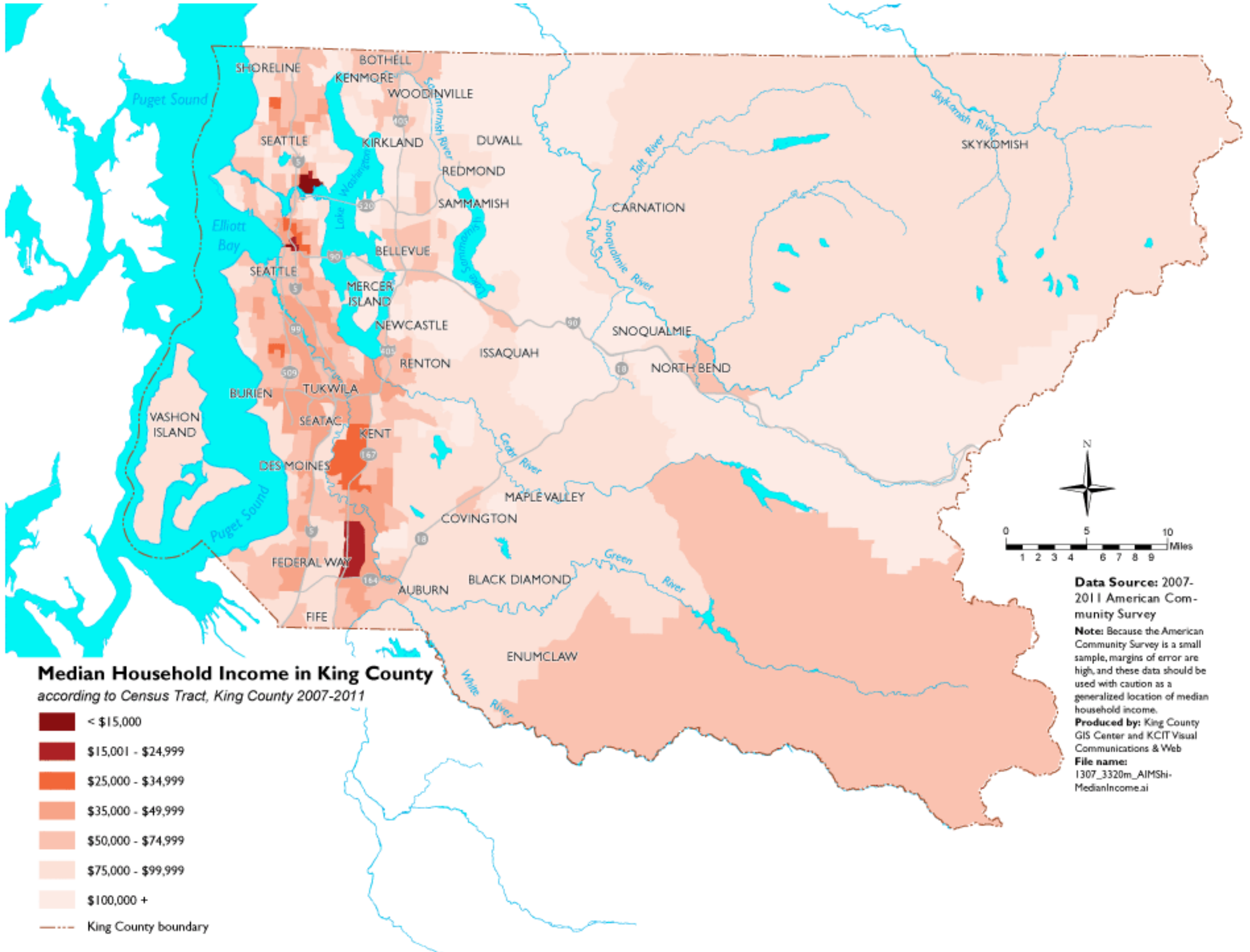


Jobs in King County



Data Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Median Household Income



Average Unemployment Rate

