

Tacoma-Pierce County, WA Community Information

Income and Wages

Per capita income 2006-2010 (2010 dollars) - \$27,446

Median household income 2006-2010 - \$57,869

Source: Quickfacts.census.gov

Median earnings - \$32,357

Mean earnings - \$55,563

Source: American Community Survey

Cost of Living

The *Cost of Living Index* measures *relative* price levels for consumer goods and services in participating areas. The average for all participating places, both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan, equals 100, and each participant's index is read as a *percentage of the average*.

Tacoma, WA Metro Div. – 107.6

Seattle, WA – 116.2

Everett, WA - 112.8

Portland, Vancouver, Beaverton, OR-WA Metro – 118.7

Los Angeles-Long Beach CA – 131.3

Oakland-Fremont-Hayward CA Metro – 136.8

Sacramento, CA – 117.7

San Diego, CA – 134.4

San Francisco, CA – 168.3

Source: C2ER Cost of Living Index Data for Third Quarter 2012

Major Employers

Most of the jobs in Pierce County are private sector jobs, which make up 78% of all total nonfarm jobs. Government employment accounts for the remainder.

Joint Base Lewis-McChord is the largest single employer in the county with over 55,000 active duty military. In addition to the public sector (state and county government and schools), the top private employers include MultiCare Health System, Franciscan Health System, Emerald Queen Casino, Wal-Mart, Boeing, Costco, State Farm Insurance and Comcast Cable, each with over 1000 employees.

Industry Sectors

Business and professional services, transportation and logistics, information technology, health care and government represent our largest employers.

The Port of Tacoma and Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) comprise two traditional economic components of the local economy. Aerospace manufacturing plays a growing role in the county.

Population/Ethnicity/Languages

Tacoma-Pierce County is one of the major counties of WA State with a population of 808,200. The population of City of Tacoma is 199,600.

Census data (QuickFacts.census.gov) shows the following breakdowns for Pierce County for 2011:

Category	Percent
White persons	77.3%
Black persons	7.1%
American Indian and Alaskan Native persons	1.6%
Asian persons	6.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander persons	1.4%
Persons reporting two or more races	6.4%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin	9.4%
White persons not Hispanic	70.1%

Data shows over 79,000 Pierce County residents are foreign born. There are 106,752 who speak a language other than English at home. Of those, over 42,000 speak Spanish, 39,000 Asian and Pacific Islander languages, and about 3,500 speak “other languages”.

Source: American Community Survey

Education Levels

Bachelor’s degree or higher percent of persons age 25+

2006-2010 – 23.4%

High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+

2006-2010 - 89.8%

Source: Quickfacts.census.gov

Universities

Tacoma-Pierce County offers a wealth of educational opportunities with two public and two private universities and four community & technical colleges.

Universities:

- University of Washington Tacoma (<http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/>)
- University of Puget Sound (<http://www.ups.edu/>)
- Pacific Lutheran University (<http://www.plu.edu/>)
- Evergreen State College Tacoma (<http://www.evergreen.edu/tacoma/home.htm>)

Community and Technical Colleges:

- Bates Technical College (<http://www.bates.ctc.edu/>)
- Clover Park Technical College (<http://www.cptc.edu/>)
- Pierce College – Steilacoom and Puyallup campus (<http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/>)
- Tacoma Community College (<http://www.tacomacc.edu/>)

Public Transit

Public transportation choices in Tacoma include buses, light rail, commuter rail and a ferry. Pierce Transit provides public bus service and vanpools within Tacoma and Pierce County. Sound Transit operates the free 1.6-mile Link light rail service in downtown Tacoma. It also provides weekday Sounder commuter rail service and daily express bus service to and from Seattle. The Washington State Ferry System, which has a dock at Point Defiance, operates a ferry to Tahlequah at the southern tip of Vashon Island. Greyhound intercity bus service is located near the Tacoma Dome Station in the downtown.

Bus Service

Pierce Transit - <http://www.piercetransit.org/> Public transit authority for Pierce County. It operates a bus system and assists employers with vanpooling and offers a ride matching data bases for those wishing to carpool

Sound Transit - www.soundtransit.org/ - Commuter train and bus service for Central Puget Sound

Tacoma Link Light Rail serves the downtown Tacoma area and transports commuters between the Tacoma Dome Park and Ride facility (2000+ free parking stalls) and the downtown core. All rides on the Tacoma Link Light Rail are free.

Airports

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport – 20 miles

Tacoma Narrows Airport in Pierce County

Thun Field Airport in Pierce County

General Business Costs

Tax Climate

Washington State

Washington State levies no personal or corporate income tax, has no capital gains tax, unitary tax or tax on intangibles. The Business and Occupation Tax (B&O) tax is a broad-based tax on gross receipts with low flat rates, which can be a great benefit for firms with high profit margins.

<http://www.dor.wa.gov/Content/FindTaxesAndRates/TaxIncentives/IncentivePrograms.aspx>

State and/or Local Incentives

There is no personal income tax in the City, County or State.

There is no corporate excise tax in the City, County or State.

There is no property tax on inventories.

There is no square footage tax.

There is no separate transit district tax.

There are no impact fees.

Tacoma Incentives

The City of Tacoma charges a Business & Occupation (B&O) tax, but it can be offset by tax credits. Businesses whose gross income is equal to or less than \$250,000 annually are exempt from the B&O tax. Companies with gross incomes between \$250,001 and \$300,000 pay according to a sliding scale.

Business license fees are modest (\$90 annual fee for businesses with annual gross incomes of \geq \$12,000).

City B&O Tax Credit for New Employment: \$500/employee added to the Tacoma workforce each year for 5 years (Total Value: \$2,500/job). Employees that qualify must earn at least \$17.59/hour (Pierce County's median wage) plus benefits in 2012. The City B&O tax credit is taken each year for every new job created with no specific employee retention requirement, only that the position be maintained for five years. The total City B&O tax credit is unlimited.

Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) Energy Efficiency Rebates/Incentives: Municipally-owned Tacoma Power has a variety of programs to encourage energy efficiency. Staff work with businesses to determine how best to optimize savings. Assistance is available as follows:

Tacoma Power can pay up to 70% of the total energy efficiency improvements costs.

There is complimentary technical assistance to identify and analyze potential energy efficiency improvements.

Tacoma Power has specialized programs for industrial customers, including incentives for project management.

Zero-interest loans of up to \$500,000 may be obtained to replace equipment.

City-Assisted Financing: The City has access to Federal financing, such as the SBA 504, 7A and Section 108 loan programs, which provide fixed asset and working capital funds on favorable terms.

Training Incentives

Washington's Job Skills Program (JSP) is training customized to meet employers' specific needs.

Training is delivered to new or current employees at the work site or in a classroom. The program provides funding for training in new and growing industries; locations where the local population does not have the skills needed to stay employed; and those regions impacted by economic changes that cause large-scale job loss. JSP awards grants to licensed educational institutions in Washington.

JSP funds half of the training cost and partner employers provide a cash or in-kind match to fund the other half. For more information, visit the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) at <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e-wkforcejobskillsprogram.aspx>

Washington's Customized Training Program (CTP) was created by the State Legislature to provide training assistance to businesses that provide employment opportunities in Washington. Training is provided by community, technical or private career colleges and can include formal training in:

- Basic education and skills
- English language for non-native speakers
- Technical skills and job-related instruction, plus
- Skills assessment and evaluation and
- Training equipment, materials, facilities and supplies.

Under the Customized Training Program, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) pays the costs up front for customized training. After training is completed, the business repays the costs to the SBCTC interest free. The first payment will be equal to 25% of the full cost of the training program and is due upon completion of the training. The remaining 75% is spread over the next 18 months. As each payment is made the business may take a state Business and Occupation tax credit equal to 50% of the payment. Thus, the total tax credit will be equal to 50% of the full cost of the training program. CTP training is a tool for enhancing the growth of Washington's economy, increasing employment opportunities, and adding to the state's quality of life. For more information about the Customized Training Program Tax Credit Resources, visit: <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e-wkforcecustomizedtraining.aspx>

On-the-job training (OJT) can be subsidized for new hires that qualify for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds. Through this program, companies hire workers and WorkForce-Central subsidize a percentage of their wages during training provided by company in the workplace.

Tax credits. Companies can earn between \$2,400 and \$9,600 in tax credits for hiring unemployed and disabled veterans. For details about the tax credits check the fact sheet at <http://www.esd.wa.gov/hireanemployee/resources/taxcredits/index.php>.

Real Estate Availability and Costs

Strategically-located buildings and development sites are available to meet your business growth and expansion needs. A customized site search can be conducted based on your needs.

Workforce

Unemployment Rates/comparisons

In October 2012, the Pierce County unemployment rate was 8.0% compared to a statewide average of 7.2%.

Current industry employment statistics are available on the WA State Employment Security website: <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/regional-reports/labor-area-summaries> . (Select Pierce County from the menu).

Available Job Seekers/Annual Wages

As of October 2012, there were 31,250 workers listed as unemployed. Total labor force is 391,280. The average annual wage in 2011 was \$43,039.

Very recently, WorkForce Central assisted with seasonal recruiting for a local contact center. Positions were advertised on the company website, Craig's List, Workforce flyers to a distribution list, and the state's job board August 3 through August 23. A total of 104 job seekers responded for these seasonal part-time positions. Wages were \$12 per hour + benefits (medical, dental, vision). State employment data shows the average hourly wage for all Customer Services Representatives in Pierce County is \$16.77.

Demographic and Income Profile

Pierce County has proportionately more young people (below the age of 18) and fewer older residents (65 and older) than the state.

Pierce County had 7 percent of its population under the age of 5 years compared to the state's share of 6.5 percent.

Those under the age of 18 made up 24.9 percent of Pierce County's population compared to 23.5 percent of the state's population.

The oldest age group, those 65 and older, made up 11 percent of Pierce County's population compared to 12.3 percent of the state's population. The Baby Boomers are projected to continue to increase for the next 20 years.

Females made up 50.6 percent of the population in Pierce County compared with 50.2 percent of the population in Washington state.

Pierce County has been becoming more diverse along racial and ethnic lines. Black residents made up 6.8 percent of Pierce County's total population compared to 3.6 percent of the state's population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

Personal income includes earned income, investment income, and government payments such as Social Security and Veterans Benefits. Investment income includes income imputed from pension funds and from owning a home. Per capita personal income equals total personal income divided by the resident population.

In 2010, the per capita personal income was \$40,500, less than the state (\$42,589), but above the nation (\$39,937).

The median household income in Pierce County was \$56,510 in 2010. This figure was above the median household income of the state (\$55,631) and above that of the nation (\$50,046).

In 2006 - 2010, 11.6 percent of the population of Pierce County was living below the poverty level, compared to the state at 12.1 percent and the nation (13.8 percent).

Source: Employment Security Department; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

Other Business Services

WorkForce Central - Business Connection

WorkForce-Central (WFC) offers free core services such as employee recruitment and prescreening of applicants. Their other fee based services include computerized job matching and referral of quality applicants, electronic job posting and resume banks, help with recruitment and layoffs, customized training packages to upgrade worker skills, information on wages, occupations, and business trends, and access to tax incentives.

WFC has the capability to plan and coordinate job fairs for employers seeking to hire significant numbers of new workers. Events are customized to meet each employer's requirements.

Services include scheduling, arranging facilities, advertising, screening applicants, performing orientations, administering tests, and managing the flow of applicants among stations.

For more information, contact Dan Grisham at dgrisham@workforce-central.org or. (253) 254-7670.