

**LEWIS COUNTY SALARY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2022  
5:30 P.M.**

County Courthouse Commissioner Meeting Room      I      Chehalis, WA 98532

**I.      Call to Order**

Robert Berg called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m., Tuesday, June 7, 2022. Those in attendance were:

Salary Commission Members:

Robert Berg (in person)	Matt Brock (in person)
Rick Kuykendall (in person)	Kelly Bell (via Zoom)
Eric Carlson (in person)	Ted McC Carson (in person)
Martha Hunt (in person)	
<del>Brandon Campbell (in person)</del>	
<del>Donna Moody (via Zoom)</del>	

Other attendees:

Becky Butler (in person)	
Lara McRea (in person)	
Kevin Mc Dowell (in person)	

**II.      Verification of a Quorum**

There is a quorum of seven (7) salary commission members at the beginning of the meeting. Donna Moody did not respond to the meeting notice; Brandon Campbell did respond, however could not attend.

**III.     Introductions**

There were no introductions.

**IV.     Approval of Meeting Agenda**

Bob Berg called for a motion to approve the meeting agenda. **Matt Brock made a motion to approve the agenda for June 7, 2022. Kelly Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7 to 0.**

**V. Approval of Minutes for March 24, 2022**

Bob Berg called for a motion to approve the minutes, as submitted, for the meeting on May 7, 2022. **Matt Brock made a motion to approve the minutes. Kelly Bell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 7 to 0.**

**VI. Public Comment - Limit of 3 minutes**

Bob Berg called for any public comments; there were no public comments.

**VII. Review of Agenda Packet Materials**

Bob Berg reviewed the agenda packet for the meeting. *See Meeting Agenda for June 7, 2022, which is incorporated herein by reference.*

**VIII. Discussion / Decisions**

**1. County Commissioner Salaries (Per Capita Income):**

Mr. Berg reminded the salary commission members of the *per capita* income data change. He referenced the report Eric Carlson submitted a couple of years ago. Mr. Berg explained the federal data collects data on all personal income.

Mr. Carlson explained the federal data included pension income, whereas the Washington State Employment Security data is for employed workers and excludes pension income in order to compare any increases in income with employed workers to employed workers.

Rick Kuykendall offered that if the salary commission were to be consistent, then there should be a 9.7% increase in salaries for the three BOCC members. Mr. Kuykendall explained that an amount of 8% is not consistent with the 9.7% rate in the new federal report. He also added that [county] revenues are going up and the commission had said we would wait and see, but now we have not done that.

Mr. Berg offered that the BOCC jobs were always valued to be higher paid than the others because some jobs just pay more by reason of what the job is, or entails. He said it was wrong to say the positions make too much because that is akin to class envy.

Ted McCarson inquired about the salary commissions work / votes during the first year (2019/2020) of this commission's work in order to understand the basis for the differing opinions/disagreement on which data to consider. Mr. Carlson gave a brief overview of why the commission decided to use the Employment Security Data because that data includes only employed (working) incomes and excludes pension incomes. The reason that is significant is the BOCC are employed people (not pensions). That means it is more exact percentage of how much the average Lewis County employed worker's wage has increased over any period.

Kelly Bell commented that she did not feel it was appropriate to reward the BOCC members by giving any raises this year.

Martha Hunt echoed Ms. Bell's comment and added that she was not in favor of any more raises. She also added that the BOCC salaries of \$90,886 (not including benefits) are on track with what she believes is a reasonable salary.

Mr. Berg redirected the conversation to highlight the issue before the commission today was to decide on any raises for the BOCC members only. He added that the BOCC already made the decision to raise the other elected officials' salaries and that issue was no longer part of the salary commission's work.

Ms. Hunt rejoined by commenting that the other elected officials have – in effect – received huge raises [18% in total] when the BOCC raised their salaries against the salary commission's recommendations.

Mr. Berg commented that he too was upset about how the BOCC threw the salary commission "under the bus" when the BOCC gave the other elected officials a raise of 10% on top of the 8% the salary commission had just given – after the BOCC had asked the salary commission to do the job of deciding when it constituted the salary commission in October, 2019.

Ted McCarson commented that the salaries the BOCC members (with benefits) now make is an extraordinary amount of money.

Mr. Berg then called for a motion on the question of whether the salary commission would approve a raise in salary for the BOCC members.

**MOTION. Mr. Carlson made a motion that the salary commission deny (\$0.00) any compensation adjustment/increase for the BOCC members. Matt Brock seconded the motion. Kelly Bell also seconded the motion.**

**Discussion:** Ms. Hunt inquired if this motion was a vote for the next year. Mr. Berg confirmed the commission was setting policy until June, 2023 – but that the salary commission could meet in March 2023 to begin work two months before any new salary setting vote would take place.

Mr. Kuykendall said he thought this motion was incredibly punitive and petulant. Even so, he conceded he understood nobody on the commission liked how the BOCC handled the other elected salaries as Mr. Berg had explained earlier in the discussion.

Mr. Berg called the roll. Those members in favor of denying any compensation / salary increase to the BOCC members: Kelly Bell; Matt Brock; Eric Carlson; and

Martha Hunt. Those members opposed were: Bob Berg; Rick Kuykendall; and Ted McC Carson.

**The motion to deny the BOCC members any salary adjustment / increase passed, 4 to 3.**

**IX. Announcements / Assignments**

There were no announcement and/or assignments.

**X. Next Meeting, Thursday, March 9, 2023 @ 5:30 PM**

**XI. Adjournment**

**MOTION. Bob Berg asked for a motion to adjourn. Matt Brock made a motion to adjourn. Kelly Bell seconded it. The commission approved the motion 7 to 0. The meeting ended at 6:20 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



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Eric G. Carlson  
Attorney at Law;  
Clerk, Lewis County Salary Commission

# Lewis County Citizens' Salary Commission

## Per Capita Income - Lewis County Washington

Data - WA State ESD\*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
United States	\$ 48,489	\$ 51,401	\$ 51,811	\$ 52,969	\$ 54,446	\$ 56,490	\$ 59,510	
Washington	\$ 54,180	\$ 56,504	\$ 58,059	\$ 59,774	\$ 62,026	\$ 64,758	\$ 67,126	
Lewis County	\$ 39,033	\$ 40,777	\$ 41,184	\$ 41,959	\$ 43,453	\$ 44,569	\$ 47,752	
		4.5%	1.0%	1.9%	3.6%	2.6%	7.1%	
					10.9%		9.7%	
					10.0%		???	

Data - St. Louis Federal Reserve\*\*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Lewis County	\$ 38,060	\$ 38,470	\$ 38,470	\$ 39,687	\$ 41,618	\$ 44,091	\$ 47,752	
							8.3%	

\* Source (2014 - 2019) Washington State Employment Security Department, Lewis County Profile  
<https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/county-profiles/lewis#wages>

\*\* Source (2014 -2020) St. Louis Federal Reserve Per Capita Income by County; Annual: Washington  
<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/release/tables?rid=175&eid=269081#snid=269102>

The outlined box is the information this committee presented in our salary report of August 2020

**! IMPORTANT UPDATES AND ALERTS (1) (HTTPS://ESD.WA.GOV/ALERTS)**

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# Lewis County profile

by Jim Vleming, regional labor economist - *updated May 2022*

*Overview | Geographic facts | Outlook | Labor force and unemployment | Industry employment | Wages and income | Population | Useful links | PDF Profile copy*  
 (<https://media.esd.wa.gov/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/labor-market-info/Libraries/Regional-reports/County-Profiles/Lewis%20County%20Profile%202022.pdf>)

**Overview***Regional context*

Lewis County, located in southwestern Washington, is the sixth largest county in the state. The Chehalis and Cowlitz rivers are the two major rivers in the county. Lewis, named for Meriwether Lewis, was created as a county in 1845. Its original borders encompassed half of Washington state and British Columbia. The Chehalis and Meshall tribal people inhabited this area prior to white explorers and settlers, but their numbers were decimated by disease. Many of these settlers worked in the trading posts as well as the Hudson Bay commercial farm that provided the trading posts.

*Local economy*

Once the railroad was established, logging and milling attracted immigrants and in-migrants. Labor organizers were outraged by the unsafe working conditions and low wages in this industry. In 1919, a gun battle erupted between members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and some World War I veterans and is known as the "Centralia Massacre".

The 1920s brought hard times to Lewis before the Great Depression took hold. World War II increased the demand for wood and farm products, lifting the Lewis County economy again. Its economy has continued boom and bust cycles over its recent history, as noted below.

### Geographic facts

	Lewis County	Rank in state
Land area, 2010 (square miles)	2,402.8	6
People per square mile, 2010	31.4	22

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

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### Outlook

The Great Recession was difficult on the Lewis County economy, as nonfarm payrolls dropped, and double-digit unemployment rates were the rule rather than the exception. In 2014, payrolls started to increase from that downturn. Then in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and payrolls dropped again. Nonfarm job growth stopped, and the unemployment rose sharply beginning in April. The year 2021 brought relief from the 2020 pandemic numbers as nonfarm employment and unemployment rates stabilized and began to turn the corner.

### Labor force and unemployment

Current labor force and unemployment statistics are available on the Labor area summaries page ([../..../labormarketinfo/labor-area-summaries](https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/labor-area-summaries)).

Average annual unemployment in Lewis County has been declining since the 13.3 percent rate posted in 2009. In 2020 that trend reversed, as the average annual unemployment rate rose from 6.3 percent in 2019 to a figure of 9.4 percent in 2020. The 2021 rate rebounded to mirror the 6.3 of 2019.

Since 2014, the labor force in the county has steadily grown, currently up over 4,200 above 2014 totals. This gain in the labor force may indicate a continued faith in the local economy as well as a more positive job market. Unemployment rates fought double digits for some of 2020, but 2021 saw a renewed labor market outlook and much more favorable rates.

Source: Employment Security Department

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### Industry employment

Current industry employment statistics are available on the Labor area summaries (<https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/labor-area-summaries>) page on ESD's labor market information website.

In Lewis County, 2020 nonfarm job numbers declined across the board. Specifically, there were on average 25,470 nonfarm jobs in the county in 2020, compared to 26,480 in 2019. The 2021 totals saw an increase of 370 over the 2020 totals.

The service-producing sector employed 20,740 in 2021, compared to 20,450 in 2020. The goods-producing sector employed 5,100 in 2021, compared to 5,020 in 2020. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns can be seen up and down nonfarm industry employment totals in 2020, but 2021 data shows the numbers stabilizing.

For historical industry employment data, contact an economist ([./.././labormarketinfo/economists](#)).

Source: Employment Security Department

### *Industry employment by age and gender*

The Local Employment Dynamics (LED) database, a joint project of state employment departments and the U.S. Census Bureau, matches state employment data with federal administrative data. Among the products is industry employment by age and gender. All workers covered by state unemployment insurance data are included; federal workers and non-covered workers, such as the self-employed, are not. Data are presented by place of work, not place of residence.

Lewis County highlights:

In 2020, the largest job holder age group in Lewis County was the 55 and older age category, making up 26.2 percent of employment across all industries. The next largest share was among people age 35 to 44 with 21.5 percent of employment.

- In 2020, the county's workers mirrored state patterns with workers age 14 to 24 dominating the accommodation and food services jobs in the county with over 32.3 percent of the positions. This age group was also well represented in arts, entertainment and recreation and retail trade.
- Workers in the 55 and older age category were prevalent in mining, educational services, transportation and warehousing, real estate and rental and leasing, public administration and utilities.

Females made up 48.4 percent of the labor force in Lewis County, with males making up the difference at 51.6 percent in 2020. Men were more often represented in higher-paying industries.

- Male-dominated industries included mining (88.4 percent), construction (81.3 percent), manufacturing (82.1 percent) and utilities (82.7 percent).
- Female-dominated industries included finance and insurance (78.4 percent), health care and social assistance (79.8 percent) and educational services (72.2 percent).

Source: The Local Employment Dynamics

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### **Wages and income**

In 2020, there were 25,922 jobs covered by unemployment insurance in Lewis County, with a total payroll of over \$1.2 billion dollars.

Lewis County's average annual wage in 2020 was \$48,214 below the state's average of \$73,504.



The median hourly wage in 2020 was \$23.64, below the state's median hourly wage of \$29.28 and the state excluding the King County median hourly wage of \$25.01.

### *Personal income*

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.

Personal income in 2020 lagged both the state and nation, as Lewis County's per capita personal income was \$47,752. The U.S. average was \$59,510 and the state average was \$67,126.

The median household income in Lewis County was \$58,911 in 2019. The county's median was less than the state's (\$78,687) and the nation's (\$65,712).

In 2019, 11.6 percent of Lewis County's population was living below the poverty level, compared to 9.8 percent in the state and 12.3 percent in the nation. The state and national rates are not directly comparable to the county rate because they each use different data sources.

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

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## **Population**

The Lewis County population was 82,700 in 2021, up over 7,000 from 2010. The largest city is Centralia, with a population of 18,280 in 2021.

Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management

### *Population facts*

	<b>Lewis County</b>	<b>Washington state</b>
Population 2021	82,700	7,766,975
Population 2010	75,455	6,724,540
Percent change, 2010 to 2021	6.35%	13.85%

### *Age, gender and ethnicity*

When compared with the state, the Lewis County population is somewhat older, although it has a similar gender ratio. Far more residents identify themselves as white when compared to the state and most other groups represent a lower proportion of the county population compared to the state as well.

### *Demographics*

	<b>Lewis County</b>	<b>Washington state</b>
<b>Population by age, 2020</b>		
Under 5 years old	5.9%	6.0%
Under 18 years old	21.3%	21.8%
65 years and older	21.3%	15.9%

	Lewis County	Washington state
<b>Females, 2020</b>	49.9%	49.9%
<b>Race/ethnicity, 2020</b>		
White	92.0%	78.5%
Black	0.9%	4.4%
American Indian, Alaskan Native	2.0%	1.9%
Asian, Native Hawaiian, other Pacific Islander	1.6%	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino, any race	10.5%	13.0%

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### *Educational attainment*

Most Lewis County residents age 25 and older (89.4 percent) were high school graduates, which compares with 91.7 percent of Washington state's residents and 88.5 percent of U.S. residents in the period 2016 to 2020.

Those with a bachelor's degree or higher made up 19.1 percent of Lewis County residents age 25 and older compared to 36.7 percent of state residents and 32.9 percent of U.S. residents during the same period.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts

### **Useful links**

- County data tables  
(<https://esdorhardstorage.blob.core.windows.net/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/labor-market-info/Libraries/Regional-reports/County-Data-Tables/Lewis%20County%20data%20tables.xlsx>)
- Census Bureau County Profile (<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?q=Lewis%20County,%20Washington&g=0500000US53041>)
- 2020 Census State Profile (<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/washington-population-change-between-census-decade.html>)
- Lewis County home page (<http://lewiscountywa.gov/>)
- Lewis County on ofm.wa.gov (<https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/county-and-city-data/lewis-county>)
- Lewis County History (<http://www.historylink.org/File/7449/>)
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts  
(<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lewiscountywashington/PST045216>)
- Lewis Economic Development Council (<http://www.lewisedc.com/>)
- Centralia - Chehalis Chamber of Commerce (<http://chamberway.com/>)
- Port of Centralia (<http://www.portofcentralia.com/>)
- Port of Chehalis (<http://www.portofchehalis.com/>)
- Self Sufficiency Calculator for Washington State (<http://www.thecalculator.org/>)
- Lewis County on ChooseWashington.com (<http://choosewashingtonstate.com/why-washington/our-region/>)
- Centralia College (<http://www.centralia.edu/>)

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Unemployment Handbook

(<https://esdorhardstorage.blob.core.windows.net:443/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/Unemployment-Handbook-for-Unemployed-Workers.pdf>)

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