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State says wages rose faster than inflation last year

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Workers' wages in Washington rose faster than the inflation rate -- more than 5 percent -- according to the state.

The average worker made \$42,881 last year, up 5.3 percent from 2005, while the inflation rate last year was 3.7 percent, according to the state Employment Security Department.

In June, the department **published a different report** that said the average wage last year was \$42,584. That average was different because it uses a different formula mandated by the state Legislature that excludes federal government salaries. The June report's average wage is important because it is used to compute unemployment insurance benefits.

The latest report breaks down salaries by county. King County workers earned the highest average annual wage in Washington at \$53,482 last year, followed by Snohomish County at \$42,906 and Benton County at \$42,140. Workers in Okanogan County earned the least, at \$22,479 last year.

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