



PRESS RELEASE

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Arkansas' labor force participation hits 14 year high in February

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (April 22, 2026) Today, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, in conjunction with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, announced Arkansas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained stable at 4.4% between January and February. The United States' jobless rate rose one-tenth of a percentage point, from 4.3% in January to 4.4% in February.

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force Summary:

- Arkansas' civilian labor force increased by 3,245 in February, setting another record high. Employment also reached a record high level, growing by 3,519 over the month, while the number of unemployed Arkansans actively seeking work declined by 274. The state's labor force participation rate, the percentage of Arkansas' working-age population that is either employed or seeking employment, increased to 59.2%, a level not seen since October 2012.
- Compared to February 2025, the number of employed is up 19,785. There are 8,465 more Arkansans unemployed and actively seeking work. Both the unemployment rate and the labor force participation rate are up over the year.

Arkansas Nonfarm Payroll Job Summary:

- Arkansas' nonfarm payroll jobs rose by 4,200 in February. Six major industry sectors added jobs over the month. The largest gains occurred in Leisure and Hospitality (+2,200), Government (+1,900), Professional and Business Services (+1,300), and in Private Education and Health Services (+1,300). Jobs in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities declined by 1,900.
- Compared to February 2025, nonfarm payroll jobs in the state are up 5,100. Notable annual growth was posted in Trade-Transportation-Utilities (+3,400), Private Education and Health Services (+3,300), Leisure and Hospitality (+2,900), and Professional and Business Services (+1,900). The largest annual losses occurred in Manufacturing (-2,500) and Government (-2,000).

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force (Seasonally Adjusted)

	February 2026	January 2026	February 2025	Change from January 2026	Change from February 2025
Civilian Labor Force	1,454,559	1,451,314	1,426,309	3,245	28,250
Employment	1,391,197	1,387,678	1,371,412	3,519	19,785
Unemployment	63,362	63,636	54,897	-274	8,465
Unemployment Rate	4.4%	4.4%	3.8%	0.0%	0.6%
Labor Force Participation Rate	59.2%	59.1%	58.5%	0.1%	0.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. More information about the data is available at <https://www.bls.gov/cps/definitions.htm>

Arkansas Nonfarm Payroll Jobs (Not Seasonally Adjusted, In Thousands)

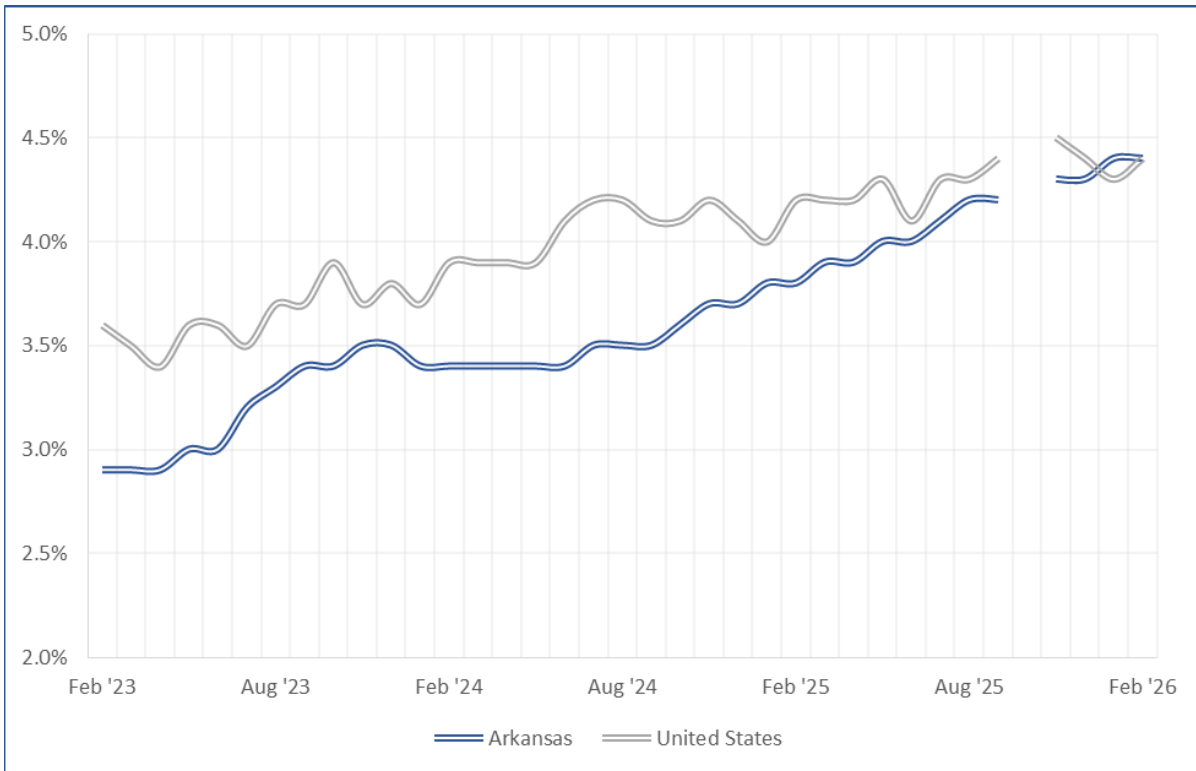
Industry Sector based on 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	February 2026	January 2026	February 2025	Change from January 2026	Change from February 2025
Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	1337.1	1332.9	1332.0	4.2	5.1
Goods Producing	228.2	227.7	231.0	0.5	-2.8
Mining, Logging, & Construction	69.8	69.5	70.1	0.3	-0.3
Mining & Logging	4.8	4.8	4.9	0.0	-0.1
Construction	65.0	64.7	65.2	0.3	-0.2
Specialty Trade Contractors	40.6	40.2	41.3	0.4	-0.7
Manufacturing	158.4	158.2	160.9	0.2	-2.5
Durable Goods	74.2	74.2	75.8	0.0	-1.6
Nondurable Goods	84.2	84.0	85.1	0.2	-0.9
Service Providing	1108.9	1105.2	1101.0	3.7	7.9
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	272.1	274.0	268.7	-1.9	3.4
Wholesale Trade	54.1	54.1	53.6	0.0	0.5
Retail Trade	143.2	144.1	142.1	-0.9	1.1
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	74.8	75.8	73.0	-1.0	1.8
Information	11.7	11.9	12.4	-0.2	-0.7
Financial Activities	58.8	59.3	59.7	-0.5	-0.9
Finance & Insurance	43.6	44.0	44.5	-0.4	-0.9
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	15.2	15.3	15.2	-0.1	0.0
Professional & Business Services	165.0	163.7	163.1	1.3	1.9
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	53.9	53.7	52.9	0.2	1.0
Management of Companies	43.1	43.2	41.5	-0.1	1.6
Administrative & Support Services	68.0	66.8	68.7	1.2	-0.7
Private Education & Health Services	212.8	211.5	209.5	1.3	3.3
Educational Services	21.2	20.6	20.1	0.6	1.1
Health Care & Social Assistance	191.6	190.9	189.4	0.7	2.2
Ambulatory Health Care	69.8	70.0	68.8	-0.2	1.0
Social Assistance	41.0	40.2	40.2	0.8	0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	129.8	127.6	126.9	2.2	2.9
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	13.6	13.2	13.0	0.4	0.6
Accommodation & Food Services	116.2	114.4	113.9	1.8	2.3
Accommodation Services	10.4	10.3	10.3	0.1	0.1
Food Services	105.8	104.1	103.6	1.7	2.2
Other Services	52.2	52.6	52.2	-0.4	0.0
Government	206.5	204.6	208.5	1.9	-2.0
Federal Government	20.4	20.3	21.8	0.1	-1.4
State Government	70.7	69.2	71.3	1.5	-0.6
State Government, Educational Services	26.6	25.2	26.7	1.4	-0.1
State Government, Excluding Education	44.1	44.0	44.6	0.1	-0.5
Local Government	115.4	115.1	115.4	0.3	0.0
Local Government, Educational Services	70.3	70.1	70.5	0.2	-0.2
Local Government, Excluding Education	45.1	45.0	44.9	0.1	0.2

Source: Monthly Survey of Employers, based on 1st Quarter 2025 benchmark.

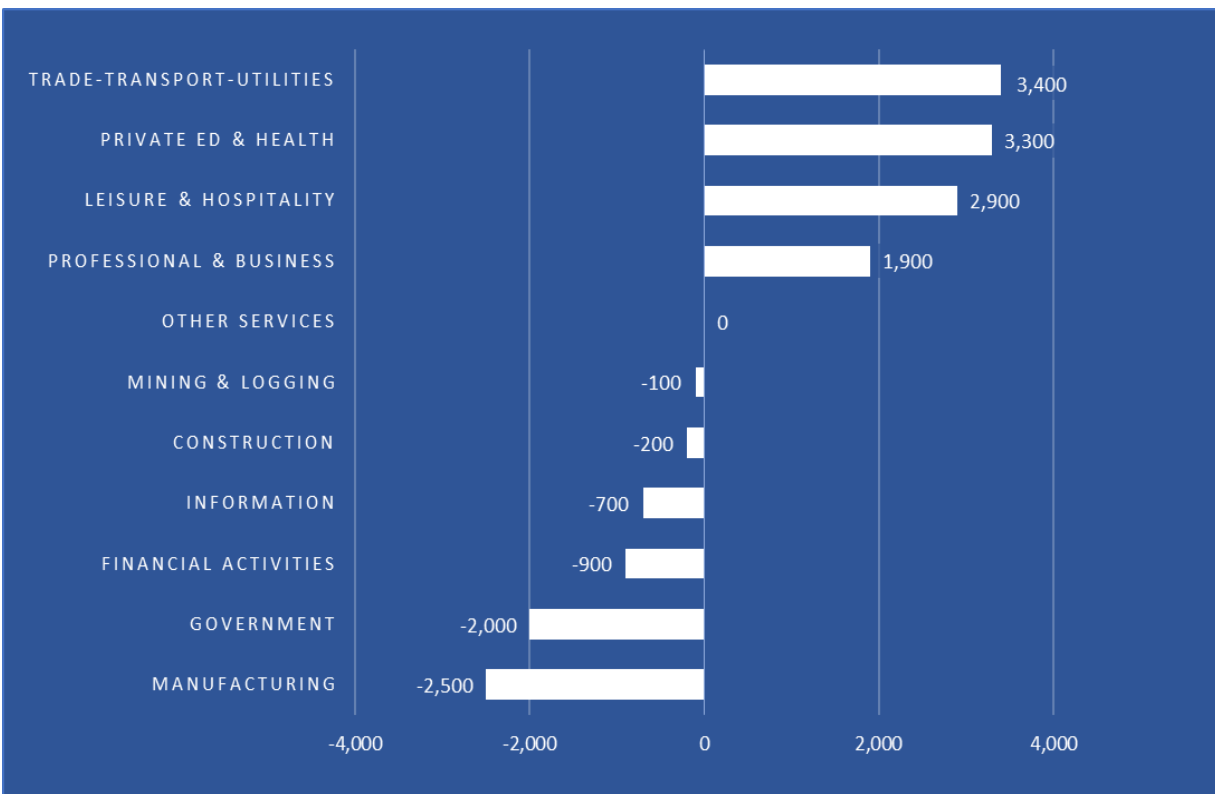
Notes: Current month's data are preliminary; previous month's data are revised.

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates Arkansas vs. United States (3-Year Comparison)

Data for October 2025 is not available due to a lapse in Federal appropriations



Job Gains/Losses by Major Industry Sectors February 2025 to February 2026 (Not Seasonally Adjusted)



For more Labor Market Data, visit our website at www.discover.arkansas.gov



About the Arkansas Department of Commerce

The Arkansas Department of Commerce is the umbrella department for workforce and economic development drivers. Its divisions and regulatory boards include the Division of Aeronautics, Waterways Commission, Wine Producers Council, Workforce Services, State Bank Department, Insurance Department, Securities Department, Economic Development Commission, and Development Finance Authority.



U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

About Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics measures labor market activity, working conditions, price changes, and productivity in the U.S. economy to support public and private decision making.

About Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

The LAUS program produces monthly and annual employment, unemployment, and labor force data for Census regions and divisions, States, counties, metropolitan areas, and many cities, by place of residence.

About Current Employment Statistics (CES)

The CES program produces detailed industry estimates of employment, hours, and earnings of workers on nonfarm payrolls. CES State and Metro Area produces data for all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and about 450 metropolitan areas and divisions.