



# PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Arkansas' labor force at all-time high in January

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (April 8, 2026)** Today, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, in conjunction with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, announced Arkansas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased one-tenth of a percentage point, from 4.3% in December 2025 to 4.4% in January 2026. The unemployment rate for December 2025 was originally estimated at 4.2% but was later revised up to 4.3%. The United States' jobless rate declined one-tenth of a percentage point, from 4.4% in December 2025 to 4.3% in January 2026.

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force Summary:     *See Annual Data Revisions note of Page 4 of this release*

- Arkansas' civilian labor force rose by 2,644 in January, reaching a record high level of 1,451,310. Employment increased by 1,205, also setting a record high. The number of unemployed Arkansans actively seeking work rose 1,439, pushing the unemployment rate up to 4.4%. Arkansas' labor force participation rate increased to 59.1%, a level not seen in the State since 2012.
- Compared to January 2025, employment has grown by 17,185. There are 9,520 more unemployed Arkansans actively seeking work and the unemployment rate is up six-tenths of a percentage point. Arkansas' labor force participation rate has increased from 58.4% to 59.1% over the year.

Arkansas Nonfarm Payroll Job Summary:     *See Annual Data Revisions note of Page 4 of this release*

- Nonfarm payroll jobs in Arkansas decreased by 17,800 in January, a typical seasonal decline. The largest loss was in Trade-Transportation-Utilities (-5,200), related to the end of temporary hiring for the holidays. Other notable seasonal losses occurred in Leisure and Hospitality (-3,700) and in Government (-2,800), both related in large part to the holiday break at schools and universities.
- Compared to January 2025, there are 9,200 additional nonfarm payroll jobs in the State. Five major industry sectors posted annual growth, with Trade-Transportation-Utilities adding 5,500 jobs. Other sizable expansions were seen in Private Education and Health Services (+3,500), Professional and Business Services (+2,700), and in Leisure and Hospitality (+2,300).

### Arkansas Civilian Labor Force (Seasonally Adjusted)

	January 2026	December 2025	January 2025	Change from December 2025	Change from January 2025
Civilian Labor Force	1,451,310	1,448,666	1,424,605	2,644	26,705
Employment	1,387,674	1,386,469	1,370,489	1,205	17,185
Unemployment	63,636	62,197	54,116	1,439	9,520
Unemployment Rate	4.4%	4.3%	3.8%	0.1%	0.6%
Labor Force Participation Rate	59.1%	59.0%	58.4%	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)**

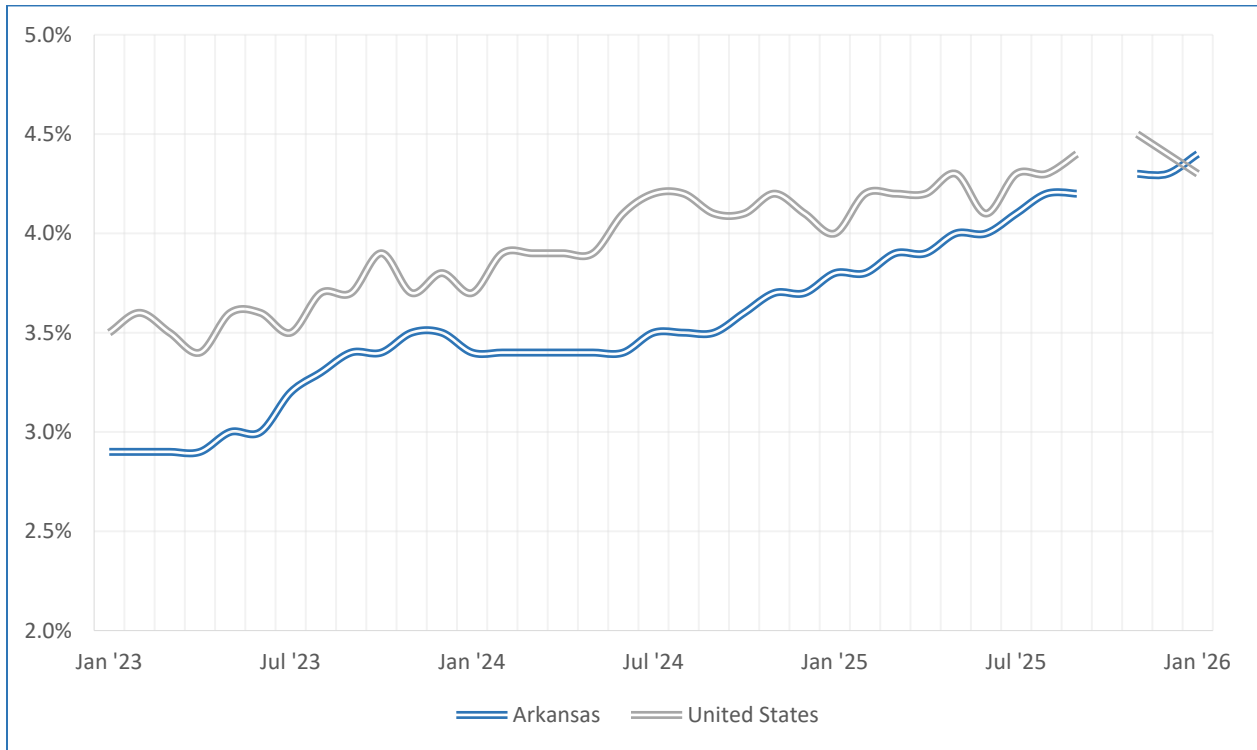
Industry Sector based on 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	January 2026	December 2025	January 2025	Change from December 2025	Change from January 2025
<b>Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs</b>	1333.4	1351.2	1324.2	-17.8	9.2
<b>Goods Producing</b>	227.5	230.0	230.5	-2.5	-3.0
Mining, Logging, & Construction	69.5	71.2	69.9	-1.7	-0.4
<b>Mining &amp; Logging</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>-0.1</b>
<b>Construction</b>	<b>64.7</b>	<b>66.4</b>	<b>65.0</b>	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>-0.3</b>
Specialty Trade Contractors	40.7	41.6	41.1	-0.9	-0.4
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>158.0</b>	<b>158.8</b>	<b>160.6</b>	<b>-0.8</b>	<b>-2.6</b>
Durable Goods	73.9	74.6	75.8	-0.7	-1.9
Nondurable Goods	84.1	84.2	84.8	-0.1	-0.7
<b>Service Providing</b>	1105.9	1121.2	1093.7	-15.3	12.2
<b>Trade, Transportation, &amp; Utilities</b>	<b>274.5</b>	<b>279.7</b>	<b>269.0</b>	<b>-5.2</b>	<b>5.5</b>
Wholesale Trade	54.3	54.2	53.4	0.1	0.9
Retail Trade	144.2	147.6	142.0	-3.4	2.2
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	76.0	77.9	73.6	-1.9	2.4
<b>Information</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>-0.7</b>
<b>Financial Activities</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>59.4</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>-0.2</b>
Finance & Insurance	44.0	43.9	44.4	0.1	-0.4
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	15.3	15.5	15.1	-0.2	0.2
<b>Professional &amp; Business Services</b>	<b>164.0</b>	<b>165.9</b>	<b>161.3</b>	<b>-1.9</b>	<b>2.7</b>
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	53.7	53.1	52.6	0.6	1.1
Management of Companies	43.3	43.4	41.1	-0.1	2.2
Administrative & Support Services	67.0	69.4	67.6	-2.4	-0.6
<b>Private Education &amp; Health Services</b>	<b>211.4</b>	<b>212.9</b>	<b>207.9</b>	<b>-1.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Educational Services	20.6	21.4	19.4	-0.8	1.2
Health Care & Social Assistance	190.8	191.5	188.5	-0.7	2.3
Ambulatory Health Care	70.3	70.1	68.4	0.2	1.9
Social Assistance	40.2	40.5	39.9	-0.3	0.3
<b>Leisure &amp; Hospitality</b>	<b>127.4</b>	<b>131.1</b>	<b>125.1</b>	<b>-3.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	13.2	13.7	12.6	-0.5	0.6
Accommodation & Food Services	114.2	117.4	112.5	-3.2	1.7
Accommodation Services	10.3	10.6	10.2	-0.3	0.1
Food Services	103.9	106.8	102.3	-2.9	1.6
<b>Other Services</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>51.8</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>Government</b>	<b>204.6</b>	<b>207.4</b>	<b>206.6</b>	<b>-2.8</b>	<b>-2.0</b>
Federal Government	20.3	20.5	21.8	-0.2	-1.5
State Government	69.2	70.8	69.8	-1.6	-0.6
State Government, Educational Services	25.2	26.7	25.4	-1.5	-0.2
State Government, Excluding Education	44.0	44.1	44.4	-0.1	-0.4
Local Government	115.1	116.1	115.0	-1.0	0.1
Local Government, Educational Services	70.1	70.6	70.2	-0.5	-0.1
Local Government, Excluding Education	45.0	45.5	44.8	-0.5	0.2

Source: Monthly Survey of Employers, based on 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2025 benchmark.

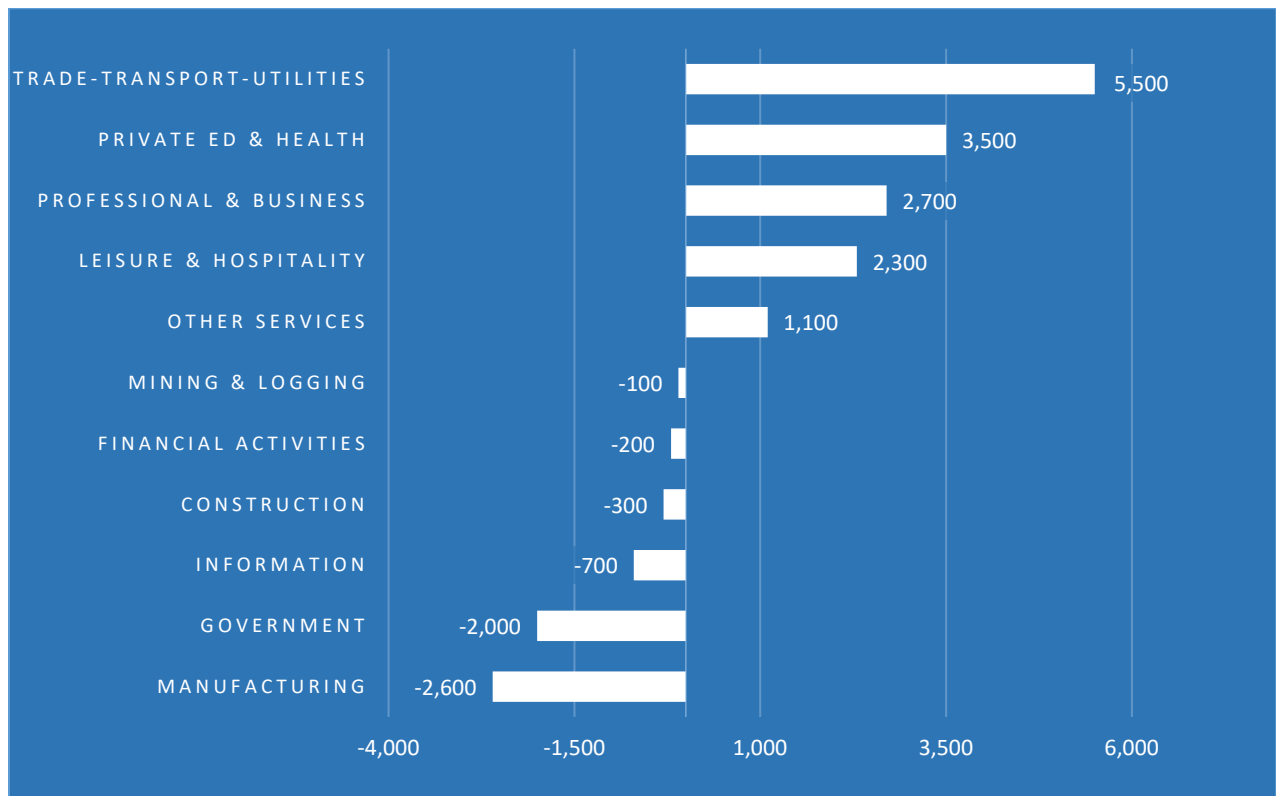
Notes: Current month's data are preliminary; previous month's data are revised.

## 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 January 2025 to January 2026 (Not Seasonally Adjusted)



For more Labor Market Data, visit our website at [www.discover.arkansas.gov](http://www.discover.arkansas.gov)

## Annual Data Revisions

### Civilian Labor Force:

In accordance with guidelines from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Arkansas' Civilian Labor Force (CLF) estimates are undergoing annual processing. The purpose of annual processing is to incorporate more complete and accurate information into the estimation process, including updated population data from the US Census Bureau.

All levels of data—State, counties, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), Micropolitan Statistical Areas, Local Workforce Development Areas, and cities—are being revised. The Statewide CLF data was revised back to January 2021 and is now available at <https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/Data-Search-Tool/LAUS>. Updated sub-state CLF estimates are still being produced and are scheduled for publication on May 19, 2026 on the Discover Arkansas website and at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov). All sub-state CLF data for Arkansas will be revised back to January 2016. More information concerning annual processing is available [here](#).

### Nonfarm Payroll Jobs:

In accordance with the same guidelines, the Current Employment Statistics program also re-estimated the Nonfarm Payroll Job series to include more comprehensive and precise information into the calculations. Statewide estimates were revised back to January 1990. MSA revisions are as follows:

- Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway MSA is revised back to January 1990
- Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers MSA is revised back to January 1990
- Fort Smith MSA is revised back to January 1990
- Hot Springs MSA is revised back to April 2020
- Jonesboro MSA is revised back to April 2020

All revised Nonfarm Payroll Jobs data have been updated on the Discover Arkansas website.



### **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.