



PRESS RELEASE

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Arkansas' unemployment rate increased to 4.2% in December

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Jan. 27, 2026) Today, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, in conjunction with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, announced Arkansas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose one-tenth of a percentage point, from 4.1% in November to 4.2% in December. At 4.4% in December, the United States' jobless rate declined one-tenth of a percentage point since November.

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force Summary:

- The size of Arkansas' civilian labor force increased by 5,162 in December to reach a record high of 1,444,246. Employment rose by 3,541, also reaching record high levels. The number of unemployed Arkansans actively seeking work is up 1,621, pushing up the state's unemployment rate. Increased labor force activity caused growth in the labor force participation rate, which rose to 59.0% in December.
- Compared to December 2024, there are 16,467 more employed and 10,537 more unemployed Arkansans actively seeking work. The unemployment rate is up six-tenths of a percentage point over the year, while the labor force participation rate is up seven-tenths of a percentage point.

Arkansas Nonfarm Payroll Job Summary:

- Arkansas' nonfarm payroll jobs rose 1,400 in December to total 1,399,400. The largest increase occurred in Trade-Transportation-Utilities (+2,200). Most of the gains were in Retail Trade (+1,600), related to seasonal hiring for the holiday shopping season. Five other major industry sectors posted modest monthly gains.
- Compared to December 2024, nonfarm payroll jobs in the state are up 16,200. Sizable expansions were reported in Leisure and Hospitality (+6,500), Private Education and Health Services (+5,900), Trade-Transportation-Utilities (+3,700), Professional and Business Services (+2,900), and Manufacturing (+1,800). The largest annual decline was in Construction (-2,200).

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force (Seasonally Adjusted)

	December 2025	November 2025	December 2024	Change from November 2025	Change from December 2024
Civilian Labor Force	1,444,246	1,439,084	1,417,242	5,162	27,004
Employment	1,383,259	1,379,718	1,366,792	3,541	16,467
Unemployment	60,987	59,366	50,450	1,621	10,537
Unemployment Rate	4.2%	4.1%	3.6%	0.1%	0.6%
Labor Force Participation Rate	59.0%	58.8%	58.3%	0.2%	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>

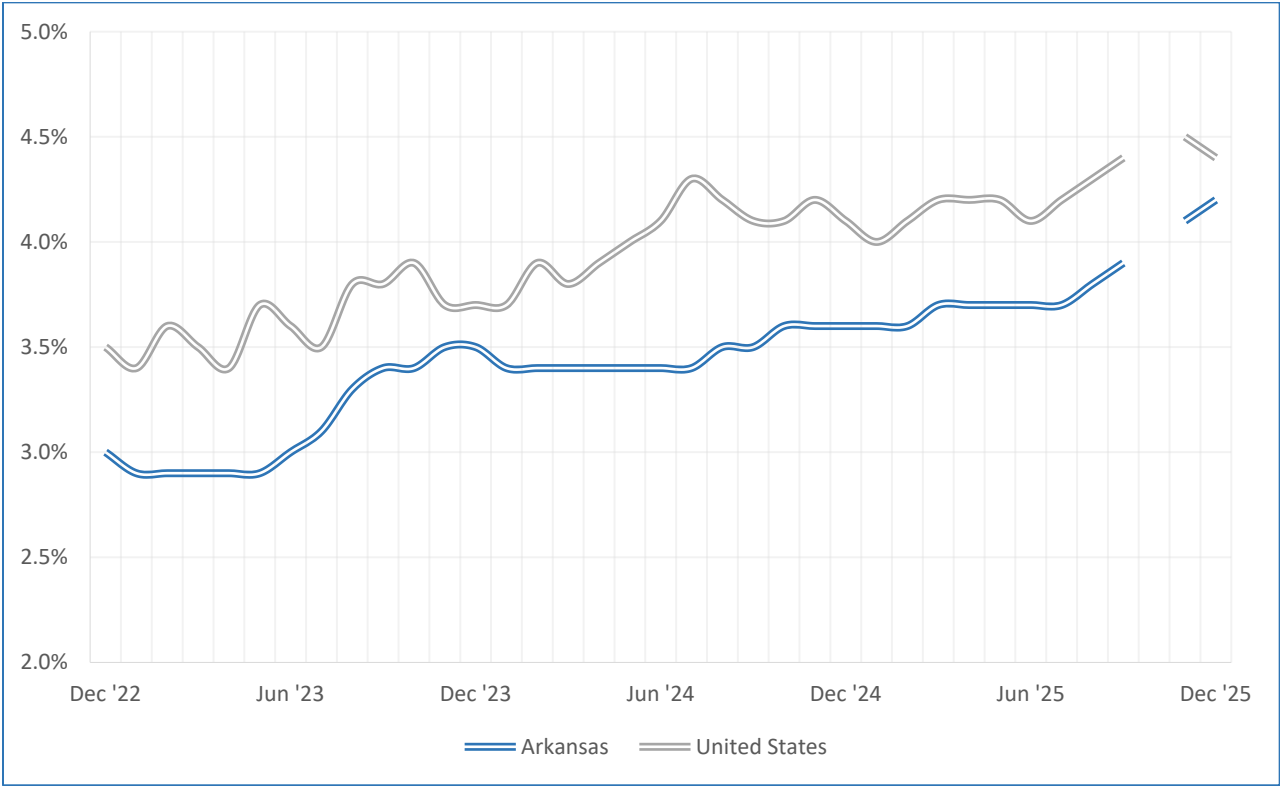
Arkansas Nonfarm Payroll Jobs (Not Seasonally Adjusted, In Thousands)

Industry Sector based on 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	December 2025	November 2025	December 2024	Change from November 2025	Change from December 2024
Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	1399.4	1398.0	1383.2	1.4	16.2
Goods Producing	235.9	235.4	236.1	0.5	-0.2
Mining, Logging, & Construction	70.3	70.2	72.3	0.1	-2.0
Mining & Logging	5.3	5.2	5.1	0.1	0.2
Construction	65.0	65.0	67.2	0.0	-2.2
Specialty Trade Contractors	40.5	40.8	42.5	-0.3	-2.0
Manufacturing	165.6	165.2	163.8	0.4	1.8
Durable Goods	79.0	78.7	78.2	0.3	0.8
Nondurable Goods	86.6	86.5	85.6	0.1	1.0
Service Providing	1163.5	1162.6	1147.1	0.9	16.4
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	279.2	277.0	275.5	2.2	3.7
Wholesale Trade	53.7	53.5	54.8	0.2	-1.1
Retail Trade	150.0	148.4	145.4	1.6	4.6
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	75.5	75.1	75.3	0.4	0.2
Information	11.7	11.7	12.2	0.0	-0.5
Financial Activities	70.0	70.2	70.8	-0.2	-0.8
Finance & Insurance	54.8	55.1	55.3	-0.3	-0.5
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	15.2	15.1	15.5	0.1	-0.3
Professional & Business Services	164.5	164.3	161.6	0.2	2.9
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	53.5	53.4	51.8	0.1	1.7
Management of Companies	42.4	42.0	40.7	0.4	1.7
Administrative & Support Services	68.6	68.9	69.1	-0.3	-0.5
Private Education & Health Services	224.5	223.8	218.6	0.7	5.9
Educational Services	19.7	19.7	19.6	0.0	0.1
Health Care & Social Assistance	204.8	204.1	199.0	0.7	5.8
Ambulatory Health Care	71.9	71.7	68.7	0.2	3.2
Social Assistance	44.7	44.2	41.8	0.5	2.9
Leisure & Hospitality	133.0	134.3	126.5	-1.3	6.5
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	13.9	14.0	13.3	-0.1	0.6
Accommodation & Food Services	119.1	120.3	113.2	-1.2	5.9
Accommodation Services	11.3	11.5	10.7	-0.2	0.6
Food Services	107.8	108.8	102.5	-1.0	5.3
Other Services	65.2	65.1	65.9	0.1	-0.7
Government	215.4	216.2	216.0	-0.8	-0.6
Federal Government	20.5	20.4	22.1	0.1	-1.6
State Government	77.8	78.3	77.6	-0.5	0.2
State Government, Educational Services	31.8	32.3	31.6	-0.5	0.2
State Government, Excluding Education	46.0	46.0	46.0	0.0	0.0
Local Government	117.1	117.5	116.3	-0.4	0.8
Local Government, Educational Services	71.5	71.6	71.1	-0.1	0.4
Local Government, Excluding Education	45.6	45.9	45.2	-0.3	0.4

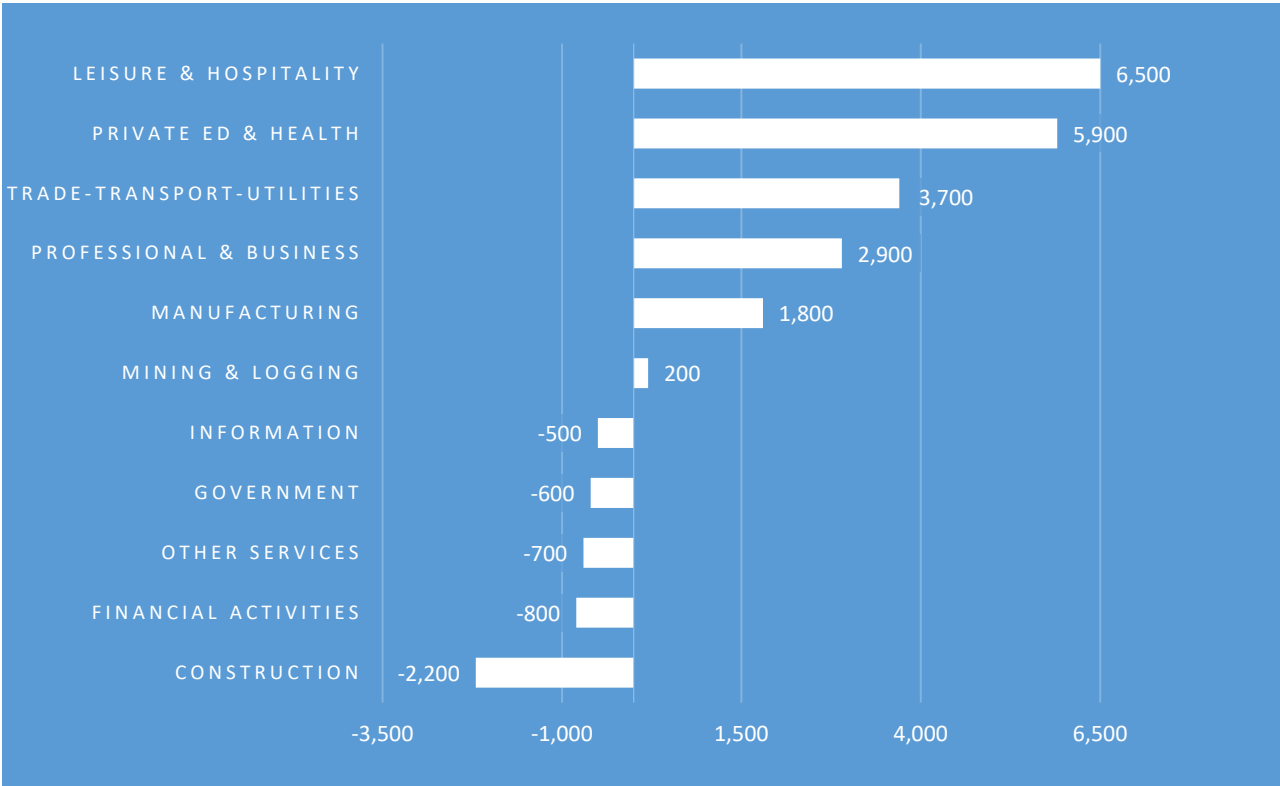
Source: Monthly Survey of Employers, based on 1st Quarter 2024 benchmark.

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

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



Job Gains/Losses by Major Industry Sectors
December 2024 to December 2025 (Not Seasonally Adjusted)





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.