



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Zoe Dell, zoe.dell@arkansas.gov

Employment in Arkansas grows as unemployment moves to 3.9% in August

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Sep. 18, 2026) Today, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, in conjunction with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, announced Arkansas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined one-tenth of a percentage point, down from 4.0% in July to 3.9% in August. The United States' jobless rate remained stable at 4.1% between July and August.

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force Summary:

- Arkansas' civilian labor force rose by 192 in August, a result of 1,972 more employed and 1,780 fewer unemployed Arkansans actively seeking work. The civilian labor force and employment both remain at record high levels. The number of unemployed actively seeking work has steadily declined throughout 2026, pushing the unemployment rate down for a 4th consecutive month.
- Compared to August 2025, there are 22,140 more employed Arkansans. An increase in the size of the civilian labor force and population increases caused the labor force participation rate to rise four-tenths of a percentage point over the year.

Arkansas Nonfarm Payroll Job Summary:

- Arkansas' nonfarm payroll jobs rose 12,200 in August, related mostly to seasonal hiring. The largest gains were in Government (+5,700) and Private Education and Health Services (+3,200), reflecting the start of the 2026/2027 school year. Hiring in Professional and Business Services (+1,700) and Leisure and Hospitality (+1,500) were also related in part to hiring for the new school year.
- Compared to August 2025, nonfarm payroll jobs in Arkansas are up 11,300. Notable annual growth occurred in Leisure and Hospitality (+6,200), Professional and Business Services (+3,400), Trade-Transportation-Utilities (+2,800), and in Construction (+1,500). Declines were reported in Government (-1,300), Financial Activities (-1,200), and Other Services (-1,100).

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force (Seasonally Adjusted)

	August 2026	July 2026	August 2025	Change from July 2026	Change from August 2025
Civilian Labor Force	1,458,078	1,457,886	1,438,959	192	19,119
Employment	1,401,154	1,399,182	1,379,014	1,972	22,140
Unemployment	56,924	58,704	59,945	-1,780	-3,021
Unemployment Rate	3.9%	4.0%	4.2%	-0.1%	-0.3%
Labor Force Participation Rate	59.1%	59.2%	58.7%	-0.1%	0.4%

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)

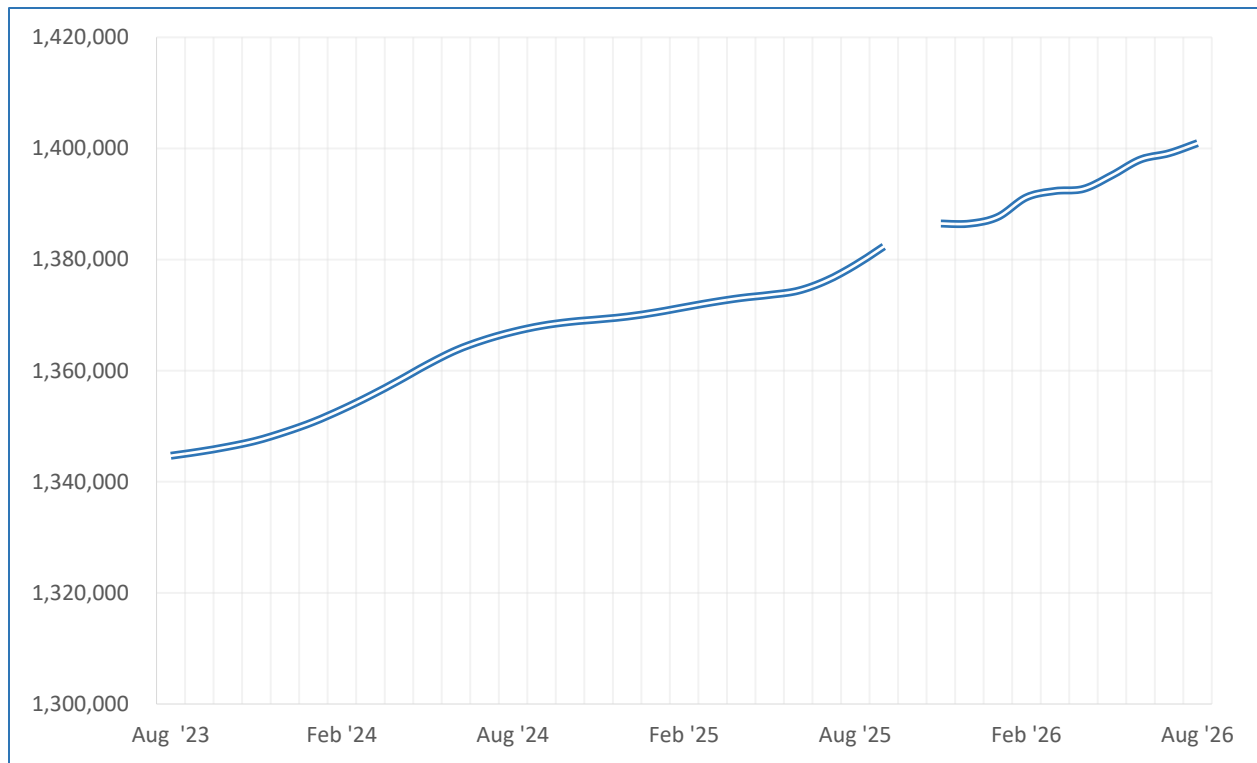
Industry Sector based on 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	August 2026	July 2026	August 2025	Change from July 2026	Change from August 2025
Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	1343.2	1331.0	1331.9	12.2	11.3
Goods Producing	232.0	231.9	230.3	0.1	1.7
Mining, Logging, & Construction	73.1	72.8	71.6	0.3	1.5
Mining & Logging	4.8	4.8	4.8	0.0	0.0
Construction	68.3	68.0	66.8	0.3	1.5
Specialty Trade Contractors	42.5	42.3	41.9	0.2	0.6
Manufacturing	158.9	159.1	158.7	-0.2	0.2
Durable Goods	75.6	75.4	74.6	0.2	1.0
Nondurable Goods	83.3	83.7	84.1	-0.4	-0.8
Service Providing	1111.2	1099.1	1101.6	12.1	9.6
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	274.2	273.9	271.4	0.3	2.8
Wholesale Trade	54.4	54.9	54.0	-0.5	0.4
Retail Trade	144.7	144.3	142.9	0.4	1.8
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	75.1	74.7	74.5	0.4	0.6
Information	12.3	12.3	12.0	0.0	0.3
Financial Activities	59.1	59.0	60.3	0.1	-1.2
Finance & Insurance	43.7	43.6	44.6	0.1	-0.9
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	15.4	15.4	15.7	0.0	-0.3
Professional & Business Services	166.7	165.0	163.3	1.7	3.4
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	54.6	54.8	52.8	-0.2	1.8
Management of Companies	43.2	43.0	43.4	0.2	-0.2
Administrative & Support Services	68.9	67.2	67.1	1.7	1.8
Private Education & Health Services	210.2	207.0	209.7	3.2	0.5
Educational Services	18.6	15.9	18.3	2.7	0.3
Health Care & Social Assistance	191.6	191.1	191.4	0.5	0.2
Ambulatory Health Care	69.7	69.9	69.7	-0.2	0.0
Social Assistance	41.0	40.0	40.3	1.0	0.7
Leisure & Hospitality	140.0	138.5	133.8	1.5	6.2
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	16.8	17.3	15.0	-0.5	1.8
Accommodation & Food Services	123.2	121.2	118.8	2.0	4.4
Accommodation Services	11.4	11.4	11.1	0.0	0.3
Food Services	111.8	109.8	107.7	2.0	4.1
Other Services	52.2	52.6	53.3	-0.4	-1.1
Government	196.5	190.8	197.8	5.7	-1.3
Federal Government	20.3	20.3	21.3	0.0	-1.0
State Government	68.8	65.2	69.7	3.6	-0.9
State Government, Educational Services	24.6	21.0	25.2	3.6	-0.6
State Government, Excluding Education	44.2	44.2	44.5	0.0	-0.3
Local Government	107.4	105.3	106.8	2.1	0.6
Local Government, Educational Services	60.3	57.4	60.4	2.9	-0.1
Local Government, Excluding Education	47.1	47.9	46.4	-0.8	0.7

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

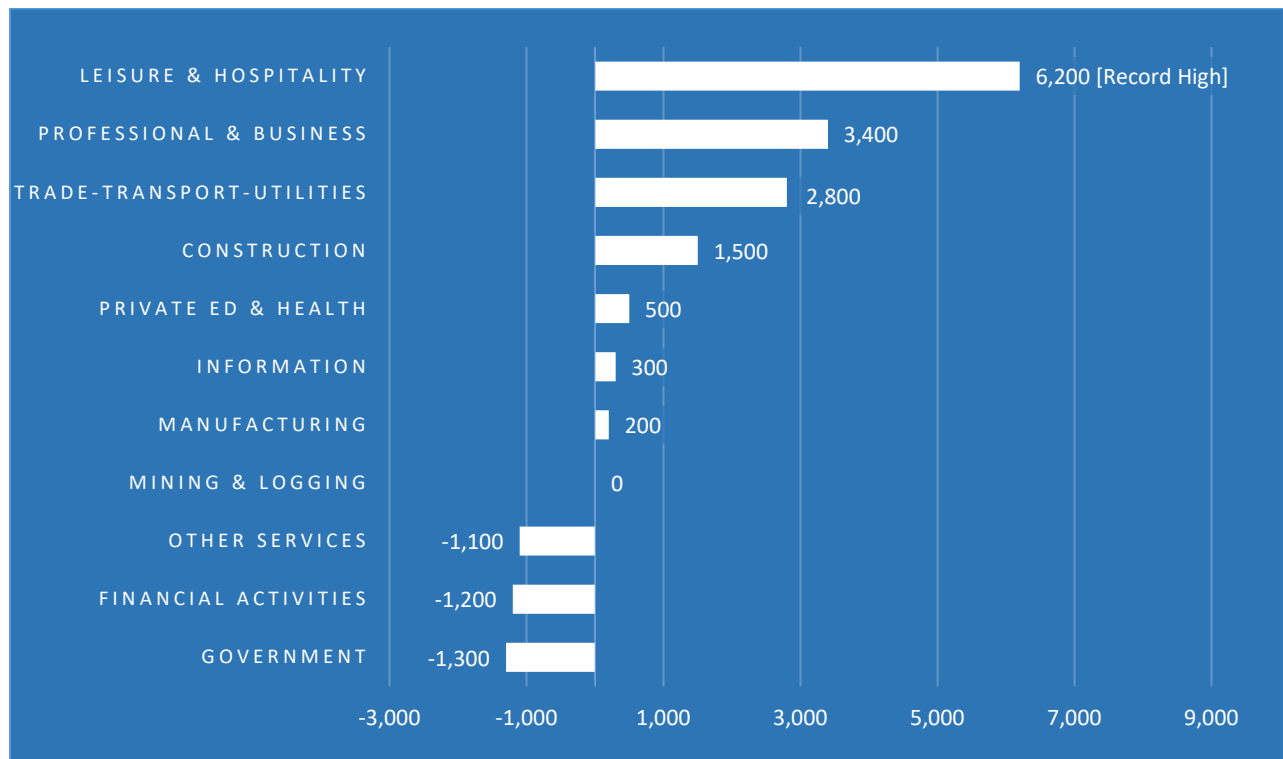
Notes: Current month's data are preliminary; previous month's data are revised.

Employment in Arkansas (Seasonally Adjusted) 3-Year Comparison

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



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



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



About the Arkansas Department of Commerce

The mission of the Arkansas Department of Commerce is to champion the economic health of every Arkansas citizen and business. Its divisions and regulatory boards include the Waterways Commission, Economic Development Commission, Division of Aeronautics, Workforce Connections, Division of Reemployment, State Bank Department, Insurance Department, Securities Department, 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.