PRESS RELEASE

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Arkansas jobs at record high; Unemployment unchanged at 3.9% in September

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Oct. 20, 2026) Today, the Arkansas Department of Commerce, in conjunction with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, announced Arkansas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained stable at 3.9% between August and September. The United States' jobless rate increased one-tenth of a percentage point, from 4.1% in August to 4.2% in September.

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force Summary:

- The civilian labor force in Arkansas grew by 1,168 in September, with 1,902 more employed Arkansans. Both series reached new record high levels. Unemployment declined for an eighth consecutive month, The changes were not enough to impact the unemployment rate, which remained stable at 3.9%.
- Compared to September 2025, Arkansas has 20,642 more employed residents. The number of unemployed actively seeking work has declined, along with the unemployment rate. Arkansas' labor force participation rate is up two-tenths of a percentage point over the year.

Arkansas Nonfarm Payroll Job Summary:

- Nonfarm payroll jobs in Arkansas increased by 12,500 in September to reach a new record high of 1,354,400 jobs. The largest increases were related to the new school year, with continued hiring in Government (+10,500) and Private Education and Health Services (+3,600). Modest gains occurred in Manufacturing (+600) and Trade-Transportation-Utilities (+400). Leisure and Hospitality saw expected seasonal declines, down 1,900 jobs.
- Compared to September 2025, Arkansas' nonfarm jobs are up 11,100. Seven major industry sectors posted annual growth. The largest gains were in Leisure and Hospitality (+4,500), Trade-Transportation-Utilities (+3,200), Private Education and Health (+1,600), Professional and Business Services (+1,500) and Construction (+1,200).

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force (Seasonally Adjusted)

	September 2026	August 2026	September 2025	Change from August 2026	Change from September 2025
Civilian Labor Force	1,459,190	1,458,022	1,443,627	1,168	15,563
Employment	1,402,996	1,401,094	1,382,354	1,902	20,642
Unemployment	56,194	56,928	61,273	-734	-5,079
Unemployment Rate	3.9%	3.9%	4.2%	0.0%	-0.3%
Labor Force Participation Rate	59.1%	59.1%	58.9%	0.0%	0.2%

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

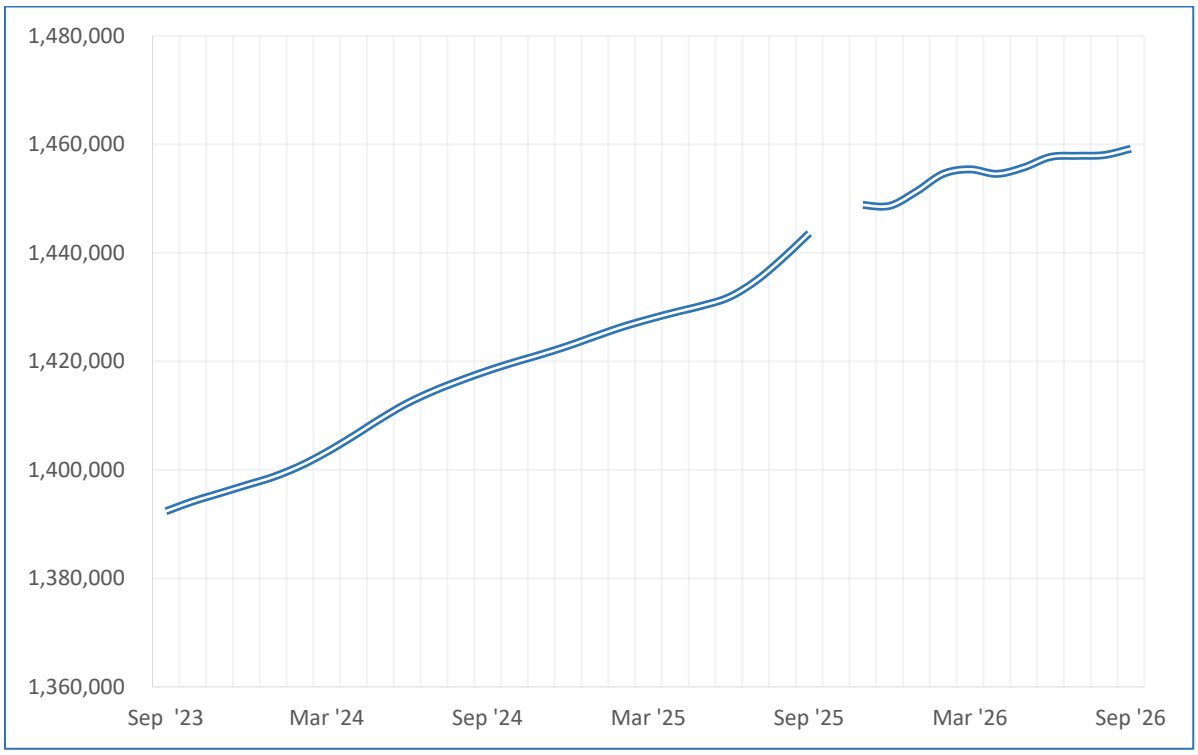
Arkansas Nonfarm Payroll Jobs (Not Seasonally Adjusted, In Thousands)

Industry Sector based on 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	September 2026	August 2026	September 2025	Change from August 2026	Change from September 2025
Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	1354.4	1341.9	1343.3	12.5	11.1
Goods Producing	232.3	231.9	230.2	0.4	2.1
Mining, Logging, & Construction	72.8	73.0	71.6	-0.2	1.2
Mining & Logging	**4.8**	**4.8**	**4.8**	**0.0**	**0.0**
Construction	**68.0**	**68.2**	**66.8**	**-0.2**	**1.2**
Specialty Trade Contractors	42.4	42.5	41.8	-0.1	0.6
Manufacturing	**159.5**	**158.9**	**158.6**	**0.6**	**0.9**
Durable Goods	75.8	75.6	74.4	0.2	1.4
Nondurable Goods	83.7	83.3	84.2	0.4	-0.5
Service Providing	1122.1	1110.0	1113.1	12.1	9.0
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	**274.6**	**274.2**	**271.4**	**0.4**	**3.2**
Wholesale Trade	54.4	54.5	53.7	-0.1	0.7
Retail Trade	144.6	144.5	143.1	0.1	1.5
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	75.6	75.2	74.6	0.4	1.0
Information	**12.0**	**12.2**	**11.9**	**-0.2**	**0.1**
Financial Activities	**59.0**	**59.1**	**59.7**	**-0.1**	**-0.7**
Finance & Insurance	43.6	43.6	44.3	0.0	-0.7
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	15.4	15.5	15.4	-0.1	0.0
Professional & Business Services	**166.4**	**166.4**	**164.9**	**0.0**	**1.5**
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	53.5	54.4	52.2	-0.9	1.3
Management of Companies	42.9	43.0	43.0	-0.1	-0.1
Administrative & Support Services	70.0	69.0	69.7	1.0	0.3
Private Education & Health Services	**213.6**	**210.0**	**212.0**	**3.6**	**1.6**
Educational Services	21.4	18.6	21.1	2.8	0.3
Health Care & Social Assistance	192.2	191.4	190.9	0.8	1.3
Ambulatory Health Care	70.1	70.0	69.4	0.1	0.7
Social Assistance	41.1	40.5	40.2	0.6	0.9
Leisure & Hospitality	**137.3**	**139.2**	**132.8**	**-1.9**	**4.5**
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	16.0	16.7	14.6	-0.7	1.4
Accommodation & Food Services	121.3	122.5	118.2	-1.2	3.1
Accommodation Services	10.9	11.2	10.8	-0.3	0.1
Food Services	110.4	111.3	107.4	-0.9	3.0
Other Services	**52.2**	**52.4**	**52.8**	**-0.2**	**-0.6**
Government	**207.0**	**196.5**	**207.6**	**10.5**	**-0.6**
Federal Government	20.2	20.3	21.2	-0.1	-1.0
State Government	71.0	68.8	71.4	2.2	-0.4
State Government, Educational Services	26.6	24.6	26.9	2.0	-0.3
State Government, Excluding Education	44.4	44.2	44.5	0.2	-0.1
Local Government	115.8	107.4	115.0	8.4	0.8
Local Government, Educational Services	69.4	60.3	69.4	9.1	0.0
Local Government, Excluding Education	46.4	47.1	45.6	-0.7	0.8

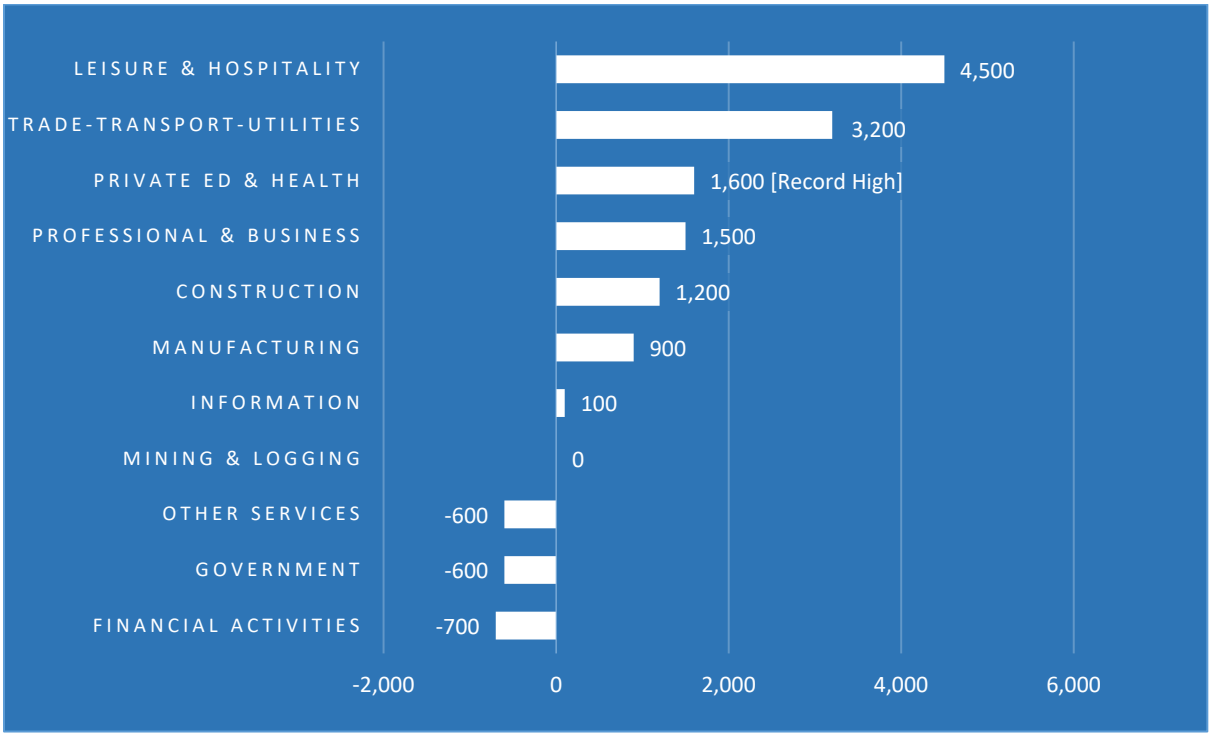
Source: Monthly Survey of Employers, based on 1st Quarter 2025 benchmark. Notes: Current month's data are preliminary; previous month's data are revised.

Civilian Labor Force (Seasonally Adjusted)
September 2023 – September 2026

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



Job Gains/Losses by Major Industry Sectors
September 2025 to September 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.