PRESS RELEASE

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Arkansas' unemployment rate drops to 3.8% in October as employment grows

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Nov. 20, 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, from 3.9% in September to 3.8% in October. At 4.1%, the United States jobless rate also decreased by one-tenth of a percentage point over the month.

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force Summary:

- Arkansas' civilian labor force added 3,587 in October, with 3,697 more employed Arkansans. Both series remain at record-high levels. The number of unemployed actively seeking work declined 110 over the month, pushing the unemployment rate down to 3.8%. Arkansas' labor force participation rose to 59.2% in October.

- Over-the-year comparison data is not available for October. Due to a lapse in federal appropriations, the October 2025 Current Population Survey was not conducted by the US Census Bureau, resulting in missing data.*

Arkansas Nonfarm Payroll Job Summary:

- Arkansas' nonfarm payroll jobs increased by 8,700 in October to reach a record high of 1,363,000 jobs. The largest gains were in Trade-Transportation-Utilities (+2,200), Professional and Business Services (+2,000), Private Education and Health Services (+1,100) and Government (+1,100). Expansions were mostly seasonal, related to the start of the holiday shopping season and on-going hiring at schools.

- Compared to October 2025, nonfarm payroll jobs in the state are up 14,400. Seven major industry sectors posted annual growth, with five sectors adding 2,000 or more jobs each. The largest increases were in Leisure and Hospitality (+4,500), Trade-Transportation-Utilities (+3,200), Professional and Business Services (+2,500), Construction (+2,000), and Private Education and Health Services (+2,000).

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force (Seasonally Adjusted)

	October 2026	September 2026	October 2025*	Change from September 2026	Change from October 2025*
Civilian Labor Force	1,462,765	1,459,178	-	3,587	-
Employment	1,406,676	1,402,979	-	3,697	-
Unemployment	56,089	56,199	-	-110	-
Unemployment Rate	3.8%	3.9%	-	-0.1%	-
Labor Force Participation Rate	59.2%	59.1%	-	0.1%	-

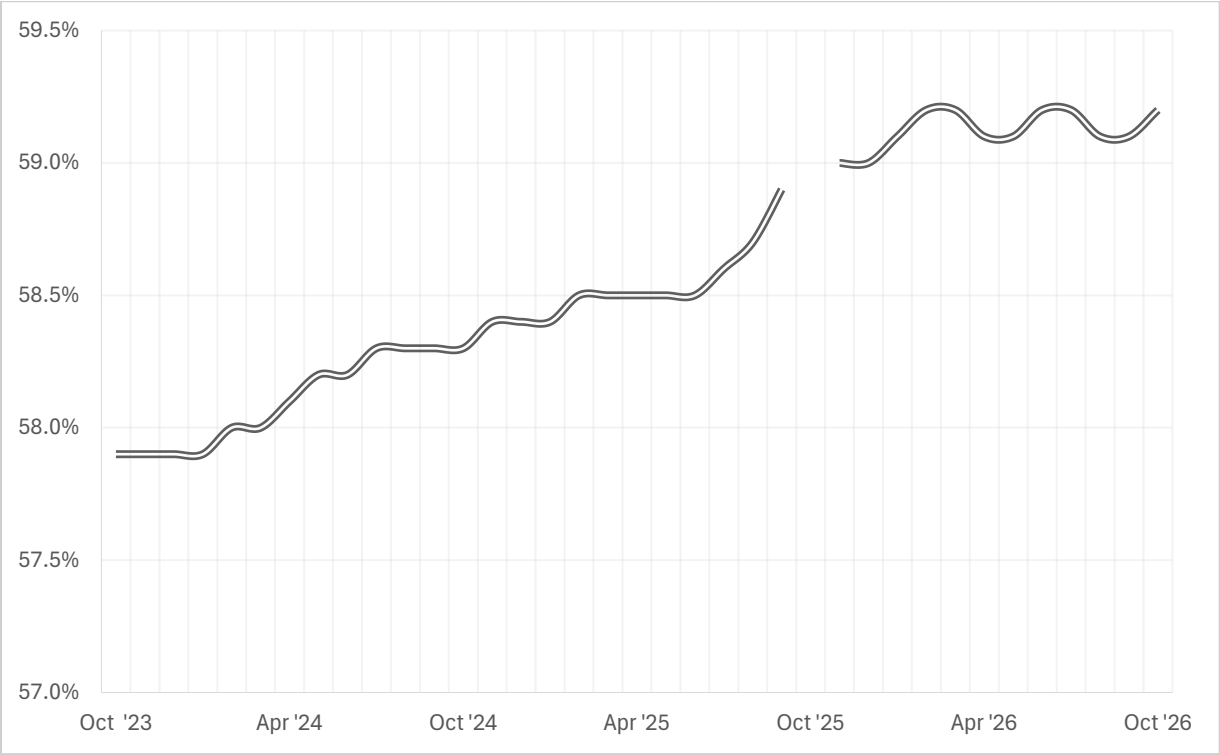
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey. https://www.bls.gov/cps/definitions.htm

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

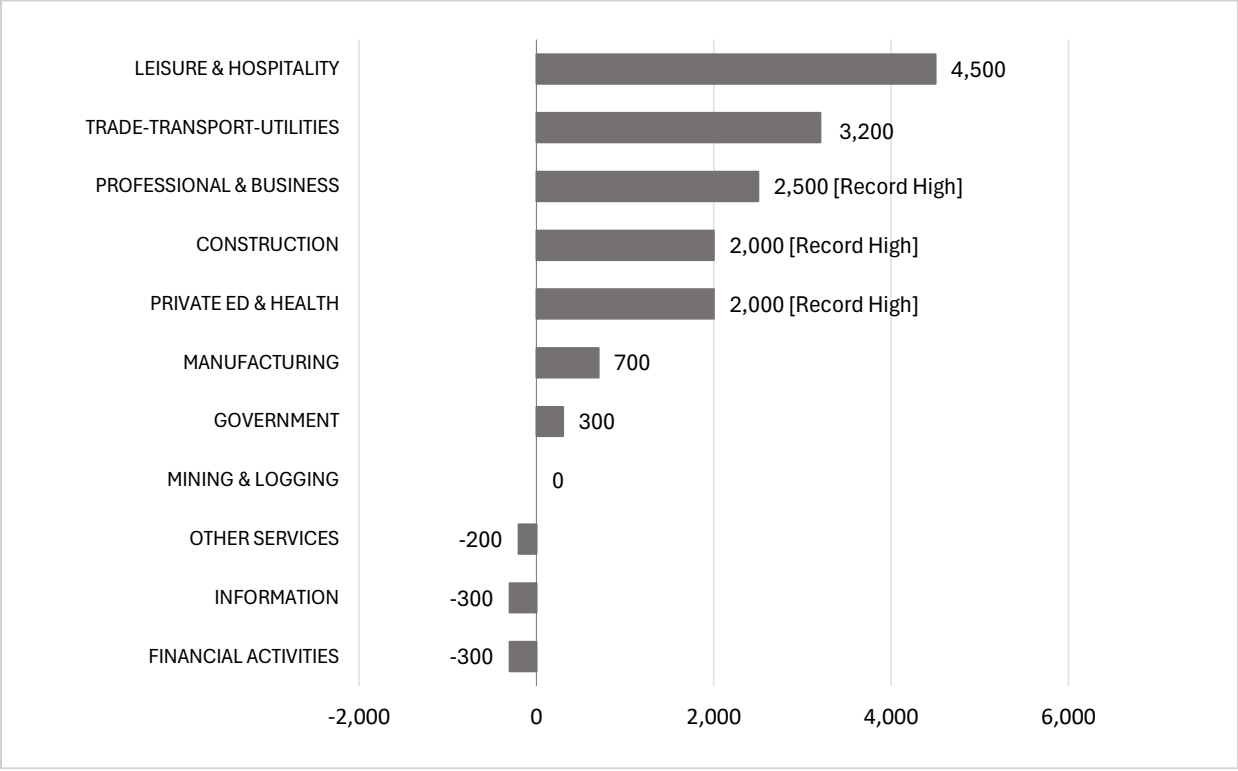
Industry Sector based on 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	October 2026	September 2026	October 2025	Change from September 2026	Change from October 2025
Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	1363.0	1354.3	1348.6	8.7	14.4
Goods Producing	233.3	232.1	230.6	1.2	2.7
Mining, Logging, & Construction	73.8	73.1	71.8	0.7	2.0
Mining & Logging	**4.8**	**4.8**	**4.8**	**0.0**	**0.0**
Construction	**69.0**	**68.3**	**67.0**	**0.7**	**2.0**
Specialty Trade Contractors	43.1	42.7	41.8	0.4	1.3
Manufacturing	**159.5**	**159.0**	**158.8**	**0.5**	**0.7**
Durable Goods	76.7	75.8	74.5	0.9	2.2
Nondurable Goods	82.8	83.2	84.3	-0.4	-1.5
Service Providing	1129.7	1122.2	1118.0	7.5	11.7
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	**276.7**	**274.5**	**273.5**	**2.2**	**3.2**
Wholesale Trade	54.9	54.5	54.1	0.4	0.8
Retail Trade	145.5	144.3	144.2	1.2	1.3
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	76.3	75.7	75.2	0.6	1.1
Information	**11.7**	**11.9**	**12.0**	**-0.2**	**-0.3**
Financial Activities	**59.8**	**59.1**	**60.1**	**0.7**	**-0.3**
Finance & Insurance	44.1	43.7	44.6	0.4	-0.5
Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing	15.7	15.4	15.5	0.3	0.2
Professional & Business Services	**168.8**	**166.8**	**166.3**	**2.0**	**2.5**
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	54.1	53.6	52.7	0.5	1.4
Management of Companies	42.9	42.8	43.2	0.1	-0.3
Administrative & Support Services	71.8	70.4	70.4	1.4	1.4
Private Education & Health Services	**214.3**	**213.2**	**212.3**	**1.1**	**2.0**
Educational Services	22.1	21.4	21.5	0.7	0.6
Health Care & Social Assistance	192.2	191.8	190.8	0.4	1.4
Ambulatory Health Care	70.3	69.6	69.8	0.7	0.5
Social Assistance	40.5	40.8	40.1	-0.3	0.4
Leisure & Hospitality	**137.6**	**137.4**	**133.1**	**0.2**	**4.5**
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	16.2	16.1	14.5	0.1	1.7
Accommodation & Food Services	121.4	121.3	118.6	0.1	2.8
Accommodation Services	10.8	10.9	10.8	-0.1	0.0
Food Services	110.6	110.4	107.8	0.2	2.8
Other Services	**52.7**	**52.3**	**52.9**	**0.4**	**-0.2**
Government	**208.1**	**207.0**	**207.8**	**1.1**	**0.3**
Federal Government	20.1	20.2	20.4	-0.1	-0.3
State Government	71.1	71.0	71.3	0.1	-0.2
State Government, Educational Services	27.1	26.6	27.2	0.5	-0.1
State Government, Excluding Education	44.0	44.4	44.1	-0.4	-0.1
Local Government	116.9	115.8	116.1	1.1	0.8
Local Government, Educational Services	70.5	69.4	70.5	1.1	0.0
Local Government, Excluding Education	46.4	46.4	45.6	0.0	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.

Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Participation Rates
State of Arkansas (3-Year Comparison)
Data for October 2025 is not available due to a lapse in federal appropriations.



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



For more labor market data, visit www.discover.arkansas.gov.

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.