



PRESS RELEASE

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

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Oct. 20, 2026) — The Arkansas Department of Commerce, in conjunction with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, today announced that 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:

- Arkansas' civilian labor force grew by 1,168 in September, with 1,902 more employed residents, bringing both series to record highs. Unemployment declined for the eighth consecutive month.
- Compared to September 2025, there are 20,642 more employed in the state. The number of people who are unemployed and 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:

- Arkansas nonfarm payroll jobs increased by 12,500 in September, reaching 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, there are 11,100 more nonfarm payroll jobs in Arkansas. Seven major industry sectors posted annual growth with the largest gains occurring in Leisure and Hospitality (+4,500), Trade-Transportation-Utilities (+3,200), Private Education and Health Services (+1,600), Professional and Business Services (+1,500), and Construction (+1,200).

Arkansas Civilian Labor Force (Seasonally Adjusted)

	Sept. 2026	Aug. 2026	Sept. 2025	Change from Aug. 2026	Change from Sept. 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 <https://www.bls.gov/cps/definitions.htm>

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

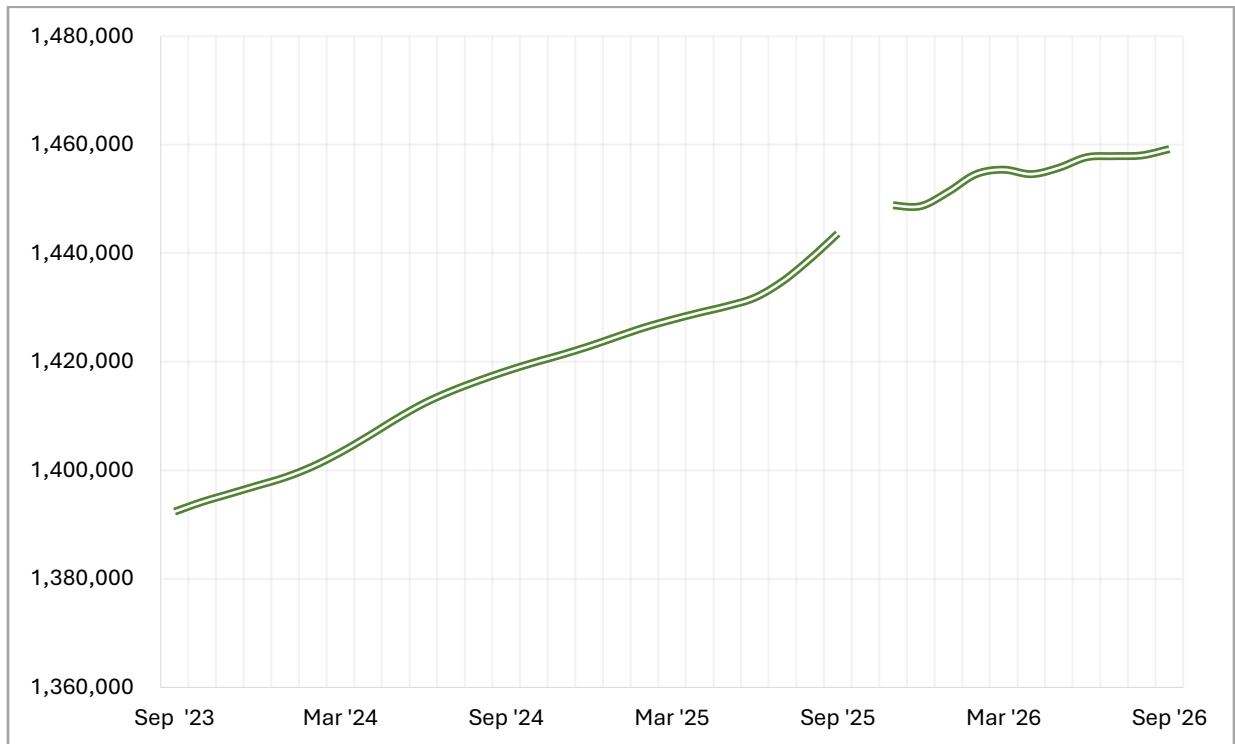
Industry Sector based on 2022 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	Sept. 2026	Aug. 2026	Sept. 2025	Change from Aug. 2026	Change from Sept. 2025
Total Nonfarm Payroll Jobs	1354.4	1341.9	1343.3	12.5	11.1
Goods Producing	232.3	231.9	230.2	0.4	2.1
Mining, Logging, & Construction	72.8	73.0	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. Current month's data are preliminary; previous month's data are revised.

Civilian Labor Force (Seasonally Adjusted)

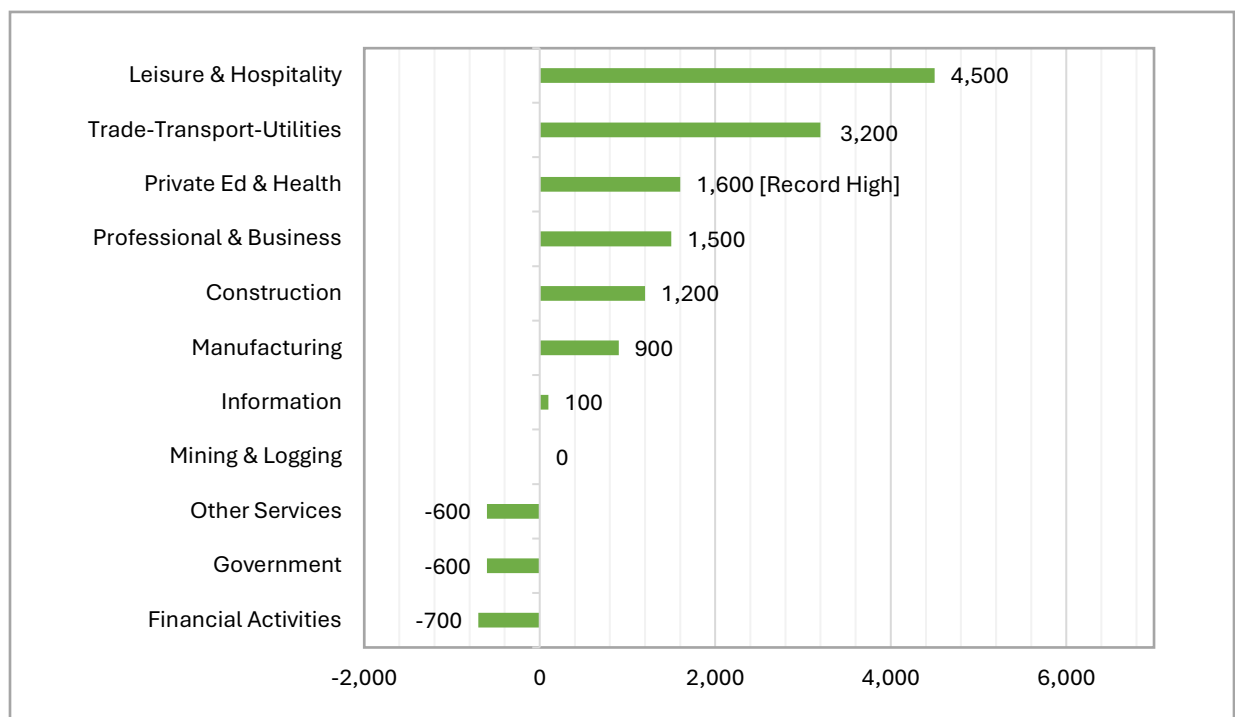
September 2023 – September 2026

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



Job Gains/Losses by Major Industry Sectors (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

September 2025 - September 2026



For more labor market data, visit 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.

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.

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