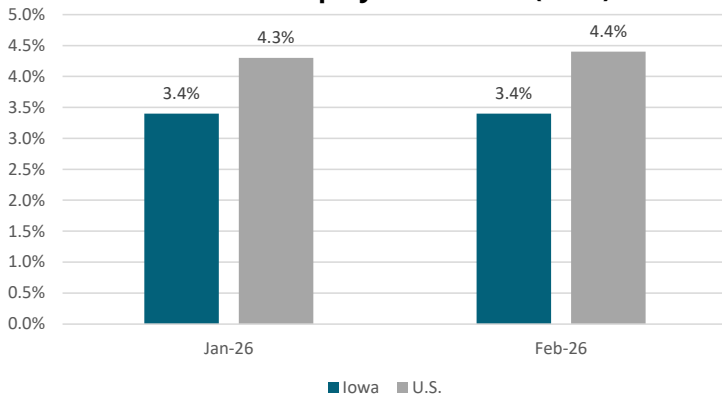
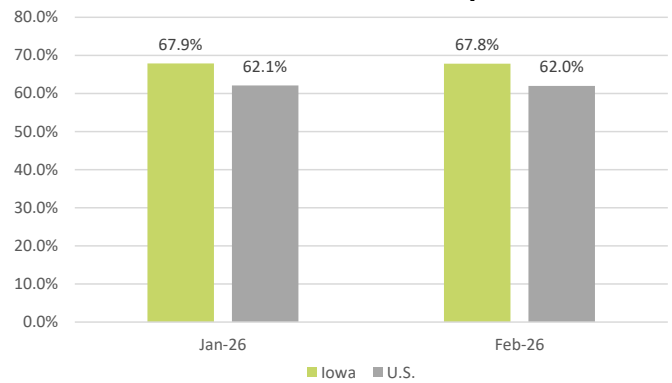


Labor Force & Unemployment

Iowa and U.S. Unemployment Rates (2026)



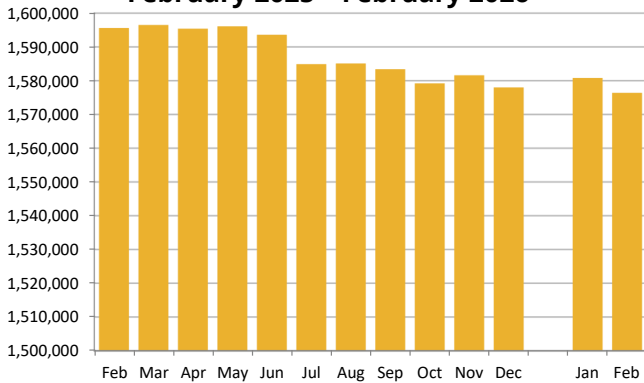
Iowa and U.S. Labor Force Participation Rates



- Iowa's unemployment rate remained at 3.4 percent in February. The state's jobless rate was 3.5 percent one year ago.
- The U.S. unemployment rate rose to 4.4 percent in February.
- The state's total employment level decreased to 1,682,900 in February from 1,684,500 in January.
- Iowa's labor force participation rate decreased slightly to 67.8 percent in February.
- 20 to 24 year olds saw the largest drop in labor force numbers.

Nonfarm Employment

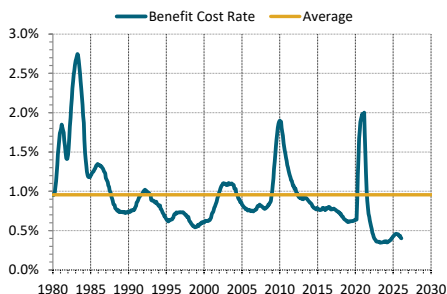
Total Nonfarm Employment February 2025—February 2026



- Iowa establishments shed 4,400 jobs in February. Nonfarm employment trails last year's mark by 19,200 jobs. Private industry lost 17,700 jobs and government lost 1,500 jobs.
- Professional and business services shed 1,400 jobs since January. Half of this loss stemmed from administrative support and waste management.
- Private education decreased by 1,400 jobs in February following a similar loss in January.
- Construction gained 700 jobs. This sector has been recently expanding and is up 2,900 jobs since October.
- Accommodations and food services gained 1,000 jobs. Full-service restaurants fueled much of this gain.
- Annually, the biggest losses were in trade and transportation (-8,400). Job gains were led by health care and social assistance (+3,200).
- The U.S. pared 133,000 jobs in February following a gain of 160,000 to begin the year.

Unemployment Insurance (UI)

Benefit Cost Rate (Benefits / Total Wages)



- The UI benefit cost rate represents UI benefits as a percentage of wages. This formula controls historic benefits for employment and wage growth.
- The benefits cost rate fell to a historic low in 2023. The benefit cost rate rose slightly in 2024 and 2025 but remained at the lowest levels in 45 years.
- The historic high peaks were caused by the farm crisis (1983), the great recession (2009), and the COVID-19 recession (2020).

Upcoming Monthly News Release Schedule

Reference Month	Statewide News Release	Local Area News Release
February	April 22, 2026	April 22, 2026
March	May 6, 2026	May 6, 2026
April	May 21, 2026	May 27, 2026

Labor Market Information Division

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Donna Burkett, Bureau Chief

Source: Labor Market Information (LMI) Division, Iowa Workforce Development—Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) unless noted. (Reference: February 2026)