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### **Iowa's Unemployment Rate Holds Steady at 3.4 Percent in February**

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.4 percent in February, the same as in January and down slightly from 3.5 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate increased to 4.4 percent in February.

The total number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 58,700 in February from 59,100 in January.

The total number of working Iowans dropped to 1,682,900 in February. This figure is 1,600 lower than January and 11,800 higher than one year ago. The state's labor force participation rate decreased slightly from 67.9 percent in January to 67.8 percent in February.

"February's report contains a few bright spots as well as evidence of some general tightening in sections of Iowa's economy," said Beth Townsend, Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "Accommodations and food services led all hiring in February, while the construction sector grew for its fourth straight month. Meanwhile, health care and social assistance has 3,200 more jobs than it did last year. Over 53,000 open positions are still available on IowaWORKS.gov for any Iowan in search of a new role or a better career."

### **Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment**

In February, Iowa's business establishments pared 4,400 jobs from payrolls, lowering total nonfarm employment to 1,576,400 jobs. This loss is the second in the last three months and translated to 5,200 jobs shed since November. Private service industries continue to fuel job losses, particularly private education and trade industries. Goods-producing firms, conversely, gained 1,300 jobs during that span with construction industries driving that increase. Government also lost jobs in February, shedding 1,100 jobs from January, and coming in 1,500 jobs lower than last year's mark. Private industry trails by 17,700 jobs annually.

Private education services shed the most jobs in February (-1,400). This loss follows a similar loss in January (-1,500). Professional and business services also pared jobs (-1,400). All three segments of this supersector lost jobs since January. Administrative support and waste management firms were responsible for half of those jobs shed. Professional, scientific, and technical establishments lost 500 jobs. This industry has steadily trended down since June of 2025. Consulting and accounting firms were responsible for this monthly decline. Trade, transportation, and utilities shed a combined 1,000 jobs with slightly over half stemming from transportation and warehousing. This sector has not added jobs monthly since January 2025. Job gains, on the other hand, were sporadic in February, yet highest in accommodations and food services (+1,000). Full-service restaurant hiring was responsible for the jobs gained. Construction added jobs in February (+700). This sector has been a bright spot in the state's economy and has added 2,900 jobs since October.

On an annual level, the state has shed 19,200 jobs. The trade and transportation industries are down 8,400 jobs. Wholesale and retail firms are down a combined 5,400 jobs. Retail alone accounts for 3,000 jobs shed. Transportation and warehousing industries are also down 3,000 jobs. This sector started to shed jobs in the second half of last year. Leisure and hospitality trails last year's level by 4,800 jobs. Losses are split between accommodations and food services and arts, entertainment, and recreation industries. Manufacturing trails last February by 3,800 jobs. Durable goods factories were responsible for most of the jobs lost (-3,200). Conversely, health care and social assistance continues to expand and is up 3,200 jobs over the past 12 months. Construction has gained 2,100 jobs, and administrative support and waste management added 1,100 jobs.

### Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	February 2026	January 2026	February 2025	Change from	
				January 2026	February 2025
Civilian labor force	1,741,500	1,743,600	1,732,600	-2,100	8,900
Unemployment	58,700	59,100	61,500	-400	-2,800
Unemployment rate	3.4%	3.4%	3.5%	0.0	-0.1
Employment	1,682,900	1,684,500	1,671,100	-1,600	11,800
Labor Force Participation Rate	67.8%	67.9%	67.7%	-0.1	0.1
U.S. unemployment rate	4.4%	4.3%	4.2%	0.1	0.2

### Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,576,400	1,580,800	1,595,600	-4,400	-19,200
Mining	2,400	2,300	2,200	100	200
Construction	85,800	85,100	83,700	700	2,100
Manufacturing	214,600	215,100	218,400	-500	-3,800
Trade, transportation and utilities	303,100	304,100	311,500	-1,000	-8,400
Information	17,300	17,300	18,200	0	-900
Financial activities	104,400	104,300	105,700	100	-1,300
Professional and business services	142,700	144,100	144,100	-1,400	-1,400
Education and health services (private)	244,800	246,200	243,100	-1,400	1,700
Leisure and hospitality	139,200	138,600	144,000	600	-4,800
Other services	54,200	54,700	55,300	-500	-1,100
Government*	267,900	269,000	269,400	-1,100	-1,500

\* includes publicly owned education and health services

### Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	February 2026	January 206	February 2025	% Change from	
				January 2026	February 2025
<b>Initial claims</b>	7,491	13,195	9,255	-43.2%	-19.1%
<b>Continued claims</b>					
Benefit recipients	25,477	27,653	28,012	-7.9%	-9.0%
Weeks paid	81,146	82,990	91,781	-2.2%	-11.6%
Amount paid	\$44,638,791	\$44,935,629	\$50,245,746	-0.7%	-11.2%

MEDIA ALERT: Local data for February 2026 is available on the IWD website. Statewide and local data for March 2026 will be released on May 6, 2026.

Visit [iowalmi.gov](http://iowalmi.gov) for more information about current and historical data, labor force data, nonfarm employment, hours and earnings, and jobless benefits by county.

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