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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Holds Steady at 3.3 Percent in April

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was stable at 3.3 percent in April. The state's jobless rate was 3.6 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate remained at 4.3 percent in April.

The total number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 57,200 in April from 58,100 in March.

The total number of working Iowans dropped to 1,677,900 in April. This figure is 2,800 lower than March and 3,400 higher than one year ago. Meanwhile, the labor force participation rate decreased from 67.7 percent in March to 67.5 percent in April.

"April results indicate Iowa experienced stronger-than-expected growth in leisure and hospitality, along with notable increases in the hiring for health care, manufacturing, and construction jobs," said Beth Townsend, Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "While gains were modest, it nonetheless demonstrates that opportunities exist for any Iowan entering the workforce – especially when it comes to careers in health care and social assistance, which currently employs 4,300 more people than it did a year ago. Across the state, IowaWORKS.gov has nearly 55,000 open positions waiting for anyone who wants a new or better career."

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

In April, Iowa establishments gained 3,400 jobs, lifting total nonfarm employment to 1,580,300 jobs. This gain follows a small increase of 600 jobs in March after an upward revision. Private service providing industries gained 2,800 jobs to fuel the monthly increase. Goods-producing firms also increased (+600) with both construction and manufacturing industries increasing slightly. Government showed little change relative to March (+300). This sector continues to trail last year's mark (-1,500) while private industries have shed 13,600 jobs.

Accommodations and food services added the most jobs in April (+1,600). This sector is up 2,700 jobs since January. Both food service contractors and limited-service restaurants fueled this increase. Arts, entertainment, and recreational industries also increased slightly leading to an increase of 2,000 jobs in leisure and hospitality. Private education added 600 jobs in April following a similar gain in March. Manufacturing added 400 jobs. This sector had previously shed 1,200 jobs over the past two months. Durable goods factories were responsible for most of the April increase (+300). As far as losses go, retail trade led all sectors with 1,400 jobs shed since March. This sector showed little change over the prior two months. These losses were spread among multiple industries. Professional and business services shed 500 jobs. Professional, scientific, and technical services continued to fuel most of the decrease. This sector has steadily trended down over the past 12 months and is now down 2,700 jobs annually.

Over the past 12 months, Iowa has shed 15,100 jobs. Trade, transportation, and utilities combined are down 8,500 jobs. Trade industries, retail and wholesale trade combined, are down a combined 6,500 jobs with retail shedding most (-4,000). Transportation, warehousing, and utilities trails last year's mark by 2,000 jobs. Manufacturing has shed 3,800 jobs. Durable goods factories alone shed 2,400 jobs compared to 1,400 jobs pared by nondurable goods shops. The manufacturing sector has shown little change in employment since September. Leisure and hospitality is down 3,700 jobs since last April. Arts, entertainment, and recreational industries have lost the most jobs (-2,200) versus accommodations and food service industry losses (-1,500). On the positive side, health care and social assistance has gained the most jobs (+4,300). This sector has continued to trend upward and has added 4,700 jobs since September alone. Construction has gained 2,300 jobs since last April. This sector has shown signs of expansion stretching back to October of last year.

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

				Change from	
	April	March	April	March	April
	2026	2026	2025	2026	2025
Civilian labor force	1,735,000	1,738,900	1,736,400	-3,900	-1,400
Unemployment	57,200	58,100	61,900	-900	-4,700
Unemployment rate	3.3%	3.3%	3.6%	0.0	-0.3
Employment	1,677,900	1,680,700	1,674,500	-2,800	3,400
Labor Force Participation Rate	67.5%	67.7%	67.8%	-0.2	-0.3
U.S. unemployment rate	4.3%	4.3%	4.2%	0.0	0.1

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

				Change from	
	April	March	April	March	April
	2026	2026	2025	2026	2025
Total Nonfarm Employment	1,580,300	1,576,900	1,595,400	3,400	-15,100
Mining	2,300	2,300	2,200	0	100
Construction	86,300	86,100	84,000	200	2,300
Manufacturing	214,300	213,900	218,100	400	-3,800
Trade, transportation and utilities	302,400	303,100	310,900	-700	-8,500
Information	17,500	17,400	18,500	100	-500
Financial activities	103,800	103,700	105,600	100	-1,800
Professional and business services	141,600	142,100	143,900	-500	-2,300
Education (private)	42,300	41,700	42,100	600	200
Health care and social assistance	205,000	204,700	200,700	300	4,300
Leisure and hospitality	141,600	139,600	145,300	2,000	-3,700
Other services	55,300	54,700	55,200	600	100
Government*	267,900	267,600	269,400	300	-1,500
<i>* includes publicly owned education and health services</i>					
<i>Data Above Subject to Change</i>					

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

				% Change from	
	April	March	April	March	April
	2026	2026	2025	2026	2025
Initial claims	5,572	7,665	7,963	-27.3%	-30.0%
Continued claims					
Benefit recipients	12,396	23,129	20,248	-46.4%	-38.8%
Weeks paid	33,327	76,582	52,563	-56.5%	-36.6%
Amount paid	\$17,934,788	\$42,223,024	\$27,862,791	-57.5%	-35.6%

Local Data and Next Data Release

Media Alert: Local data for April 2026 will be available on the IWD website on Tuesday, May 27. Statewide data for May 2026 will be released on June 18, 2026.

Visit 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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