NEWS RELEASE

For Statewide Distribution

Iowa Workforce Development

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Iowa's Unemployment Rate Increases to 3.3 Percent in October

DES MOINES, IOWA – Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased slightly to 3.3 percent in October while Iowa employers added 7,000 jobs. The U.S. unemployment rate decreased to 4.1 percent in October.

The total number of unemployed Iowans increased to 56,400 in October from 55,700 in September. The total number of working Iowans decreased to 1,661,200 in October. This figure is 4,000 lower than September. The labor force participation rate fell to 66.7 percent in October from 66.9 percent in September.

"October's report indicates that Iowa employers continued to hire despite some contraction in the overall labor force," said Beth Townsend, Executive Director of Iowa Workforce Development. "Led by food producers and large-project contractors, manufacturing firms and construction companies posted substantial increases in the number of jobs. Combined with continuing good weather, Iowa is seeing historically low numbers of unemployment claims and people finding jobs in less than 10 weeks, on average. Iowa employers have more than 58,000 openings, so opportunities for Iowans to find their first or next job remain strong."

Note: This release does not include the typical analysis of year-to-year unemployment rate changes from October 2025 to October 2026 because there are no household survey estimates for October 2025. Household survey data, which provide the primary inputs to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program, were not collected for October 2025 due to the federal government shutdown at that time. No data was collected retroactively.

Seasonally Adjusted Nonfarm Employment

Firms in Iowa gained 7,000 jobs in October, lifting total nonfarm employment to 1,591,200 jobs. Private industry fueled most of the gain (+6,400). Government increased by 600 jobs but is unchanged since last October. The largest increases were in the goods-producing sectors, specifically construction and manufacturing, although private service industries also experienced smaller gains in several sectors, including transportation and warehousing and professional and business services. With this increase, nonfarm employment is up 12,000 jobs since last year.

Manufacturing gained the most jobs since September (+2,100). Non-durable goods producers added 1,100 jobs. This is the largest gain for this sector in over a year. Much of the increase stemmed from hiring within food manufacturing. Durable-goods producers added 1,000 jobs. This is the third consecutive gain for this subsector, equating to 1,800 jobs gained since July. Construction continued to trend up in October (+1,800). This is the fifth consecutive gain for this sector, leading to an increase of 4,300 jobs since May. Much of this month's gain was within heavy and civil engineering construction projects.

Among service industries, transportation, warehousing, and utilities added the most jobs in October (+1,700). This sector had previously lost jobs in five straight months, shedding 2,100 jobs since April. Other increases in October included professional, scientific, and technical services (+500), private education (+400), and health care and social assistance (+300). Private service losses were sparse by comparison and limited to retail trade (-800), wholesale trade (-200), finance and insurance (-100), and accommodation and food services (-100).

Over the past 12 months, construction has gained the most jobs (+7,000). This sector has benefited this year largely from specialty trade contractors ramping up employment. Health care and social assistance is up 4,400 jobs. This sector has added 1,800 jobs since May. Despite a slight over-the-month loss, accommodation and food services are also markedly up versus last October (+2,900). Conversely, administrative support and waste management industries have shed the most jobs annually (-1,100), followed by transportation and warehousing (-800).

Employment and Unemployment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

	October 2026	September 2026	October 2025	Change from September 2026	Change from October 2025
Civilian labor force	1,717,700	1,720,900	-	-3,200	-
Unemployment	56,400	55,700	-	700	-
Unemployment rate	3.3%	3.2%	-	0.0	-
Employment	1,661,200	1,665,200	-	-4,000	-
Labor Force Participation Rate	66.7%	66.9%	-	-0.2	-
U.S. unemployment rate	4.1%	4.2%	-	-0.1	-

Nonfarm Employment in Iowa, Seasonally Adjusted Data

Total Nonfarm Employment	1,591,200	1,584,200	1,579,200	7,000	12,000
Mining	2,200	2,200	2,200	0	0
Construction	89,900	88,100	82,900	1,800	7,000
Manufacturing	215,500	213,400	215,100	2,100	400
Trade, transportation and utilities	304,700	304,000	306,300	700	-1,600
Information	17,200	17,100	17,500	100	-300
Financial activities	105,300	105,300	104,200	0	1,100
Professional and business services	141,000	140,200	142,400	800	-1,400
Education (private)	43,300	42,900	44,200	400	-900
Health care and social assistance	206,000	205,700	201,600	300	4,400
Leisure and hospitality	143,900	143,800	139,900	100	4,000
Other services	54,400	54,300	55,100	100	-700
Government*	267,800	267,200	267,800	600	0

** includes publicly owned education and health services*

Data Above Subject to Change

Unemployment Insurance Claims for Iowa

	October 2026	September 2026	October 2025	% Change from September 2026	% Change from October 2025
Initial claims	5,414	5,508	7,435	-1.7%	-27.2%
Continued claims					
Benefit recipients	8,239	8,479	9,527	-2.8%	-13.5%
Weeks paid	23,374	25,603	27,593	-8.7%	-15.3%
Amount paid	$12,957,899	$14,097,257	$14,800,212	-8.1%	-12.4%

Media Alert: Local data for October 2026 will be posted to the website on Tuesday, November 24, 2026. Statewide data for November 2026 will be released on December 17, 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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