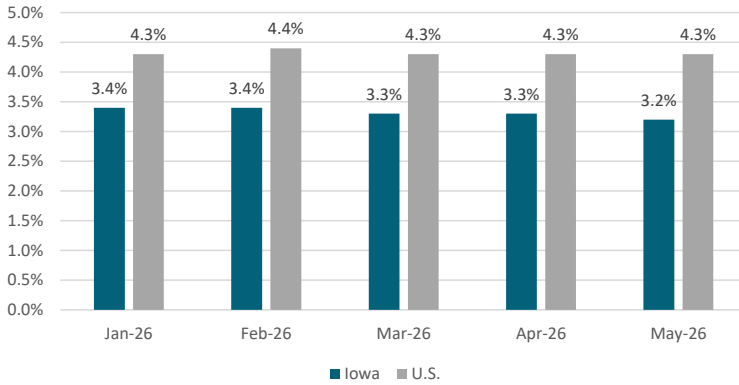
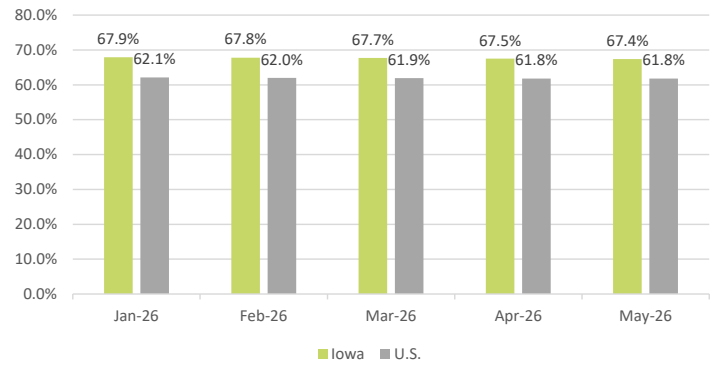


## Labor Force & Unemployment

Iowa and U.S. Unemployment Rates (2026)



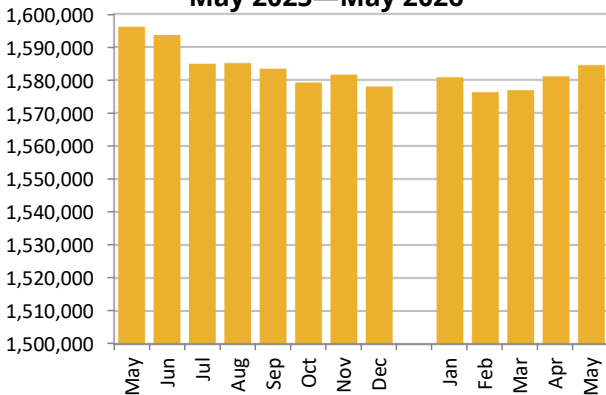
Iowa and U.S. Labor Force Participation Rates



- Iowa's unemployment rate dropped to 3.2 percent in May. The state's jobless rate was 3.6 percent one year ago.
- The U.S. unemployment rate remained at 4.3 percent in May.
- The state's total employment level decreased to 1,676,100 in May from 1,677,900 in April.
- Iowa's labor force participation rate decreased to 67.4 percent in May.
- 20 to 24 year olds saw the largest drop in labor force numbers.

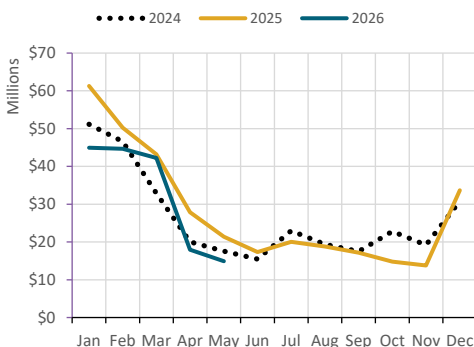
## Nonfarm Employment

Total Nonfarm Employment  
May 2025—May 2026



- Iowa establishments gained 3,400 jobs in May, raising total nonfarm employment to 1,584,500 jobs.
- Retail trade added the most jobs in May (+1,700). This was the first sizable increase since March of last year.
- Professional, scientific, and technical services added 900 jobs. Prior to May, this sector lost jobs in three consecutive months.
- Government gained 800 jobs since April. These hires were at the local level and were related to summer activities.
- Job losses were small in magnitude and limited to other health care and social assistance (-500), other services (-500), and construction (-400).
- Over the past twelve months, Iowa establishments have shed 11,600 jobs. Trade, transportation, and utilities are down 6,100 jobs with trade being responsible for 4,000 jobs lost. Health care and social assistance has added the most jobs (+3,200).
- The U.S. gained 172,000 jobs. The largest gains were in leisure and hospitality (+70,000) and local government (+55,000).

## Unemployment Insurance (UI) Benefits Paid



- Unemployment benefits paid fell from \$17.9 million in April 2026 to \$14.9 million in May 2026. The May 2025 benefits paid totaled \$21.4 million.
- Benefits paid during the first five months of 2026 totaled \$165 million. This is \$39 million (\$204 million) less than the first five months of 2025.
- Benefits paid during 2026 are mirroring the 2022 through 2024 trend. The five month totals were \$161 in 2022, \$158 in 2023, and \$168 in 2024.

Upcoming Monthly News Release Schedule

Reference Month	Statewide News Release	Local Area News Release
May	June 18, 2026	June 23, 2026
June	July 16, 2026	July 21, 2026
July	August 20, 2026	August 25, 2026

## Labor Market Information Division

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 CES: workforce.iowa.gov/ces  
 LAUS: workforce.iowa.gov/laus  
 UI Stats: workforce.iowa.gov/uistats

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