



November 2024

Iowa Jobs and Labor Force Update

October 2024

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Introduction

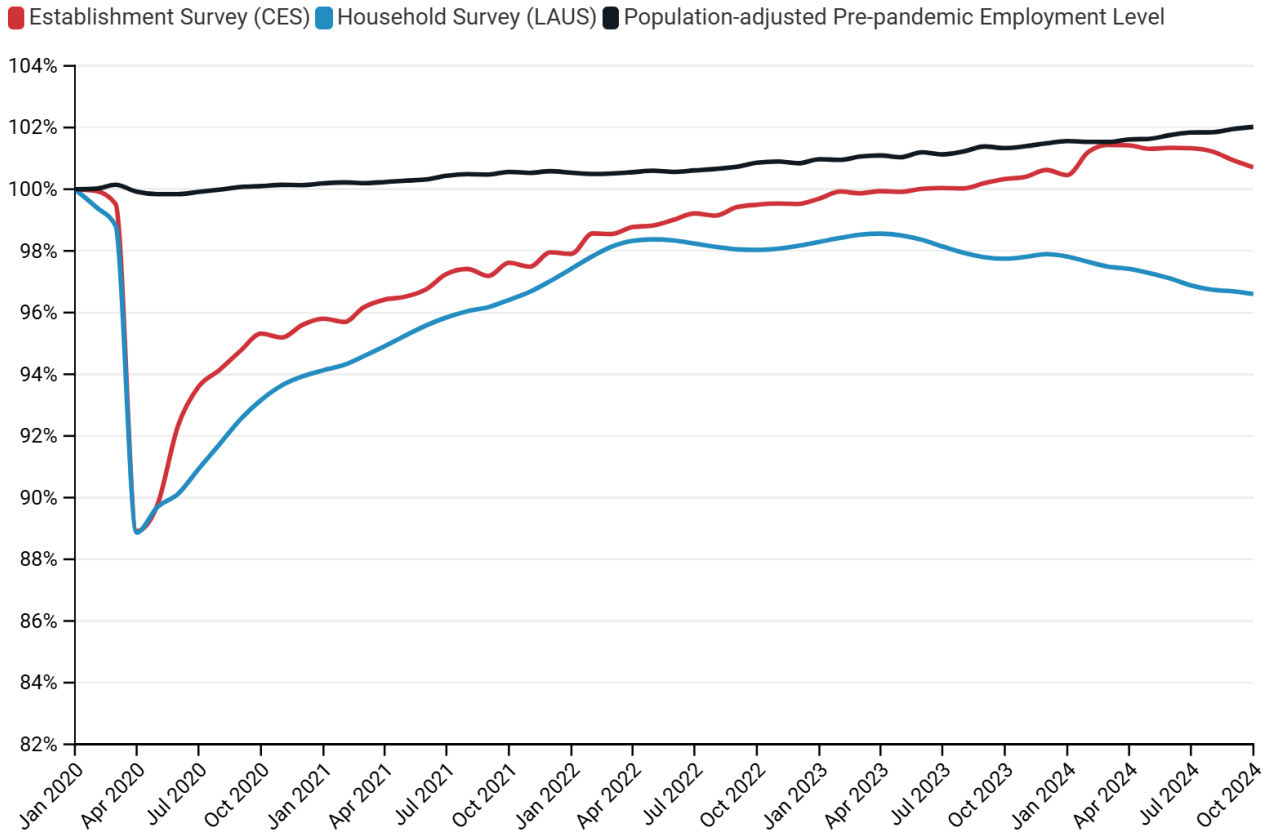
The September Bureau of Labor Statistics employment and unemployment release shows that Iowa’s job market continues to tighten. In October 2024, total nonfarm employment in Iowa declined by 3,700 jobs to 1.6 million—the state’s second-lowest employment level this year. Two-thirds of this month’s job losses occurred in construction and manufacturing, which together lost 2,400 jobs. On top of last month’s revised decline of 4,500 nonfarm jobs, Iowa’s labor market has lost nearly all its year-to-date job gains.

In addition to this decline in employment, Iowa’s unemployment rate grew 0.1% to 3%, the 12th lowest in the United States. Its labor force participation rate also fell 0.1% to 66.2%, continuing the year’s downtrend. In its [July Inflation, Employment, and Economic Update](#) report, Common Sense Institute reported that the July “inflation and employment data reveal[ed] mostly concerning economic trends for Iowa and the United States,” which bears weight considering this month’s data.¹ The report suggested that although inflation continues to improve across Iowa and the United States, it could result in a weakening labor market.

Key Findings—Iowa October 2024 Employment Data

- **Even after an upward revision of 300 jobs, October’s jobs numbers signal that employment continues to tighten in Iowa by all measures with no end in sight.**
 - **JOBS: The state lost 3,700 jobs in October.**
 - **Unemployment: Iowa’s unemployment grew 0.1% to 3% in October.**
 - **LFPR: Iowa’s LFPR declined by 0.1% to 66.2% in October. The last time Iowa’s LFPR was this low was in November 2020.**
- **Iowa’s employment situation remains strong but continues to significantly weaken. In October, the state boasted the 12th lowest unemployment rate, four spots lower than last month. It also ranked 10th highest in LFPR, one spot lower than last month.**
- **Since the start of the year, from December ‘23 to October ‘24, the private sector gained 1,400 jobs. Over the last two months, the private sector has lost 8,200 jobs.**

Employment Levels in Iowa since January 2020



- According to both the employment figures from the BLS survey of establishments (CES) and the number of people employed from the BLS survey of households (LAUS), **Iowa has yet to recover to a pre-pandemic employment-to-population ratio.**
- Based on the **establishment survey** and revised September numbers, employment significantly fell by 3,700 or 0.23%.
- Based on the **household survey**, employment fell in October by 1,452 jobs or 0.09%.

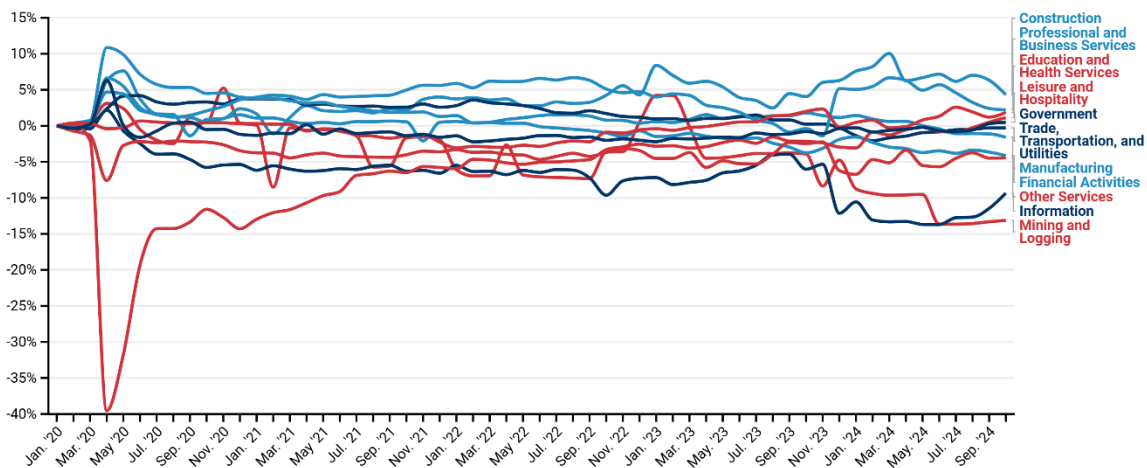
Revisions

- In November, the BLS revised September 2024 seasonally-adjusted total nonfarm employment downward by 51,200 jobs nationally—a 0.03% decline.
- In November, the BLS revised September 2024 seasonally-adjusted total nonfarm employment in Iowa upward by 300 jobs—a 0.02% increase.
- In November, the BLS revised September 2024 seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment for government upward by 2,500 jobs and professional and business services downward by 700 jobs.

A Deeper Dive into Iowa Industries (BLS CES Survey)

- **Based on the establishment survey, the net loss of 3,700 jobs in October was driven by net job losses in seven of 11 major sectors.**
 - Construction lost 1,800 jobs, a 2.12% decline.
 - Manufacturing lost 1,600 jobs, a 0.71% decline.
 - Financial activities lost 800 jobs, a 0.75% decline.
 - Trade, transportation, and utilities lost 700 jobs, a 0.22% decline.
 - Professional and business services lost 600 jobs, a 0.42% decline.
 - Other services and government both lost 100 jobs, a 0.18% and 0.04% decline, respectively.
- Three sectors saw a net gain in jobs from September to October.
 - Education and health services gained 1,000 jobs for a 0.42% increase.
 - Leisure and hospitality gained 600 jobs for a 0.41% increase.
 - Information gained 400 jobs for a 2.16% increase.
 - Mining and logging remained unchanged.
- “Agriculture, Construction, and Mining Machinery Manufacturing” experienced its fourth consecutive decline in employment this month, declining 1,000 jobs since June 2024. In October, this sector lost 200 jobs, a 0.82% decline.
- **Since the start of the year, from December ‘23 to October ‘24, the private sector gained 1,400 jobs.** Last month, CSI reported a YTD gain of 4,800. Private sector employment over the last two months fell by 8,200.
 - Manufacturing contributed the most to this loss, losing 6,000 jobs.
 - Professional and business services was the next largest contributor, losing 4,000 jobs.
- **Since January 2020, the private sector has gained 11,300 jobs.**
 - In last month’s [Iowa Jobs and Labor Force Update](#), CSI reported that the private sector gained 14,700 jobs since January 2020.ⁱⁱ This month’s drastic drop in employment continues a significant two-month decline in the labor force resulting in 9,200 jobs lost.

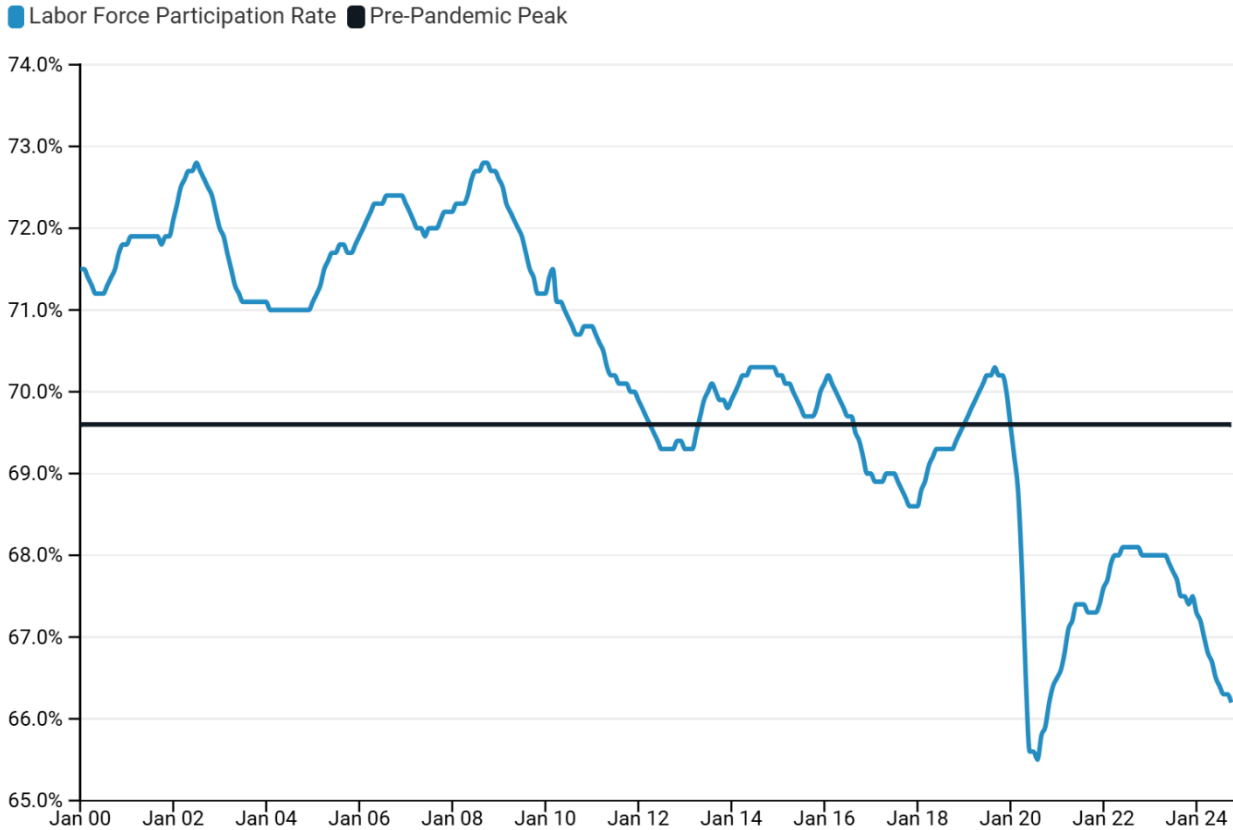
Changing Industry Shares of Total Iowa Employment since January 2020



Iowa Labor Force Update

- In October, Iowa’s LFPR fell 0.1% to 66.2%, 3.4% below the pre-pandemic LFPR of 69.6% in January 2020. **The last time Iowa’s LFPR was this low was in November 2020.**
- Iowa’s labor force participation rate has fallen 1.3% over the last 12 months.
- The unemployment rate grew 0.1% to 3%. Iowa ranked 12th lowest in unemployment rate among all 50 states, four spots lower than last month.

Labor Force Participation Rate in Iowa Since 2000



Data Sources

The data in this report are compiled from monthly and annual data released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), including data from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) survey and the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Survey. Some data are sourced directly from BLS and others are retrieved from FRED.

ⁱ Ben Murrey and Andrzej Wieciorkowski, "Iowa Inflation, Employment, and Economic Update – July 2024," Common Sense Institute, Aug. 16, 2024, <https://www.commonsenseinstituteus.org/iowa/research/jobs-and-our-economy/iowa-inflation-employment-and-economic-update---july-2024>

ⁱⁱ Andrzej Wieciorkowski, "Iowa Jobs and Labor Force Update – September 2024," Common Sense Institute, Oct. 22, 2024, <https://www.commonsenseinstituteus.org/iowa/research/jobs-and-our-economy/iowa-jobs-and-labor-force-update-september-2024-update>