



December 2024

# Iowa Jobs and Labor Force Update

November 2024

**Author:** Andrzej Wieciorkowski

## Introduction

The December Bureau of Labor Statistics employment and unemployment release shows that Iowa’s job market continues to decline. Although November marked total non-farm employment growth by 400 jobs to 1.59 million, revisions to October’s figures signal concerns. This month, BLS revised October’s total nonfarm employment downward by 1,300. On top of the preliminary employment decline, Iowa lost close to 5,000 jobs in October.

Despite the tepid employment growth in November, Iowa’s unemployment rate remained low at 3.1% (+0.1), the 10th lowest in the United States. Thankfully, its labor force participation rate grew 0.1% as well to 66.3%, the first uptick since November 2023. These trends follow closely notions presented in CSI’s [July Inflation, Employment, and Economic Update](#) report, where Common Sense Institute reported the July “inflation and employment data reveal[ed] mostly concerning economic trends for Iowa and the United States.” This bears weight considering this month’s data and the presently declining trend.<sup>i</sup> Per the July report, although inflation continues to improve across Iowa and the United States, this could result in a weakening labor market such as what is currently being experienced.

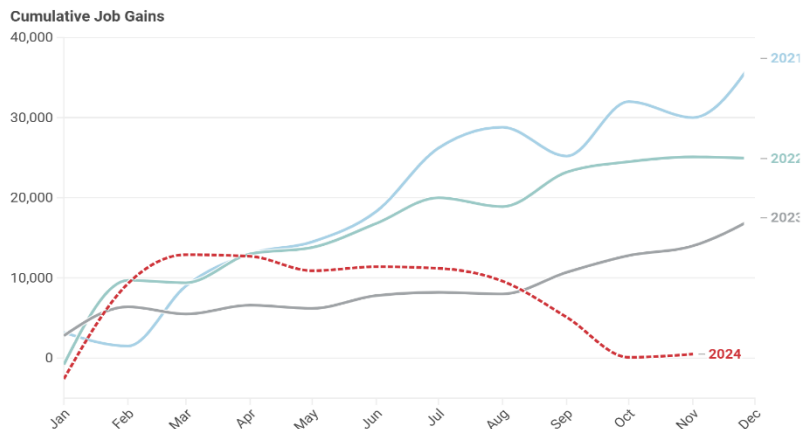
## Key Findings—Iowa November 2024 Employment Data

- **Despite a slight uptick in employment, other employment metrics continue to signal a worrying trend across Iowa’s labor market.**
  - **JOBS:** The state gained 400 jobs in November.
  - **Revisions:** Employment figures for October were revised downward 1,300 jobs.
  - **Unemployment:** Iowa’s unemployment grew 0.1% to 3.1% in October.
  - **LFPR:** Iowa’s LFPR grew by 0.1% to 66.3% in October. This marks the first uptick in LFPR since November 2023.

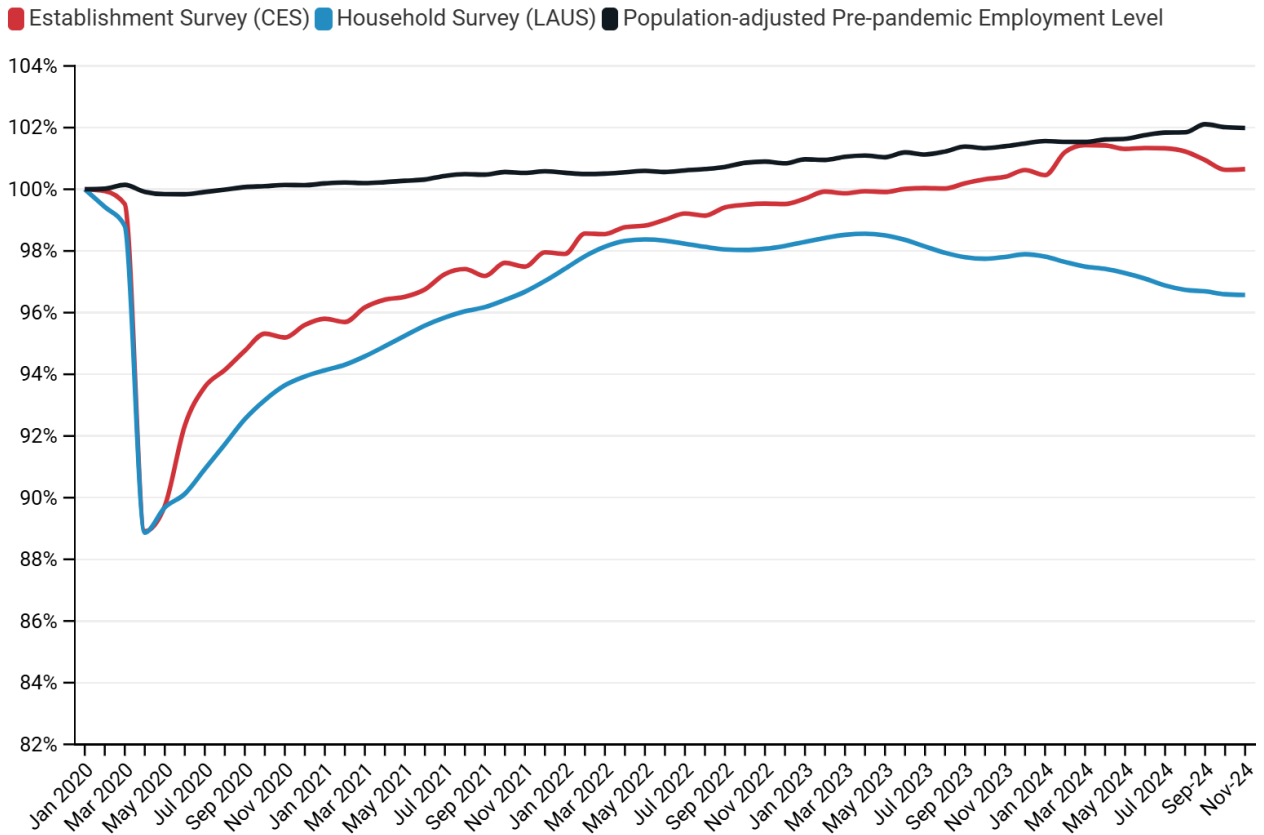
- **Iowa’s employment situation remains relatively strong but continues to weaken. In November, the state boasted the 10th lowest unemployment rate, two spots higher than last month. It also ranked 10th highest in LFPR, unchanged from last month.**
- **Since the start of the year, from December ‘23 to November ‘24, Iowa gained only 500 jobs – a drastically slower pace than the last three years.**

### Cumulative Jobs Added by Year - Iowa

Iowa’s employment growth has slowed drastically relative to the prior three years. Through 11 months of 2024, the state has only added 500 new 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 grew by 400 or 0.03%. However, this uptick is due to the prior month’s employment figures being revised downward by 1,300 jobs.
- Based on the **household survey**, employment fell in October by 383 jobs or 0.02%.

### Revisions

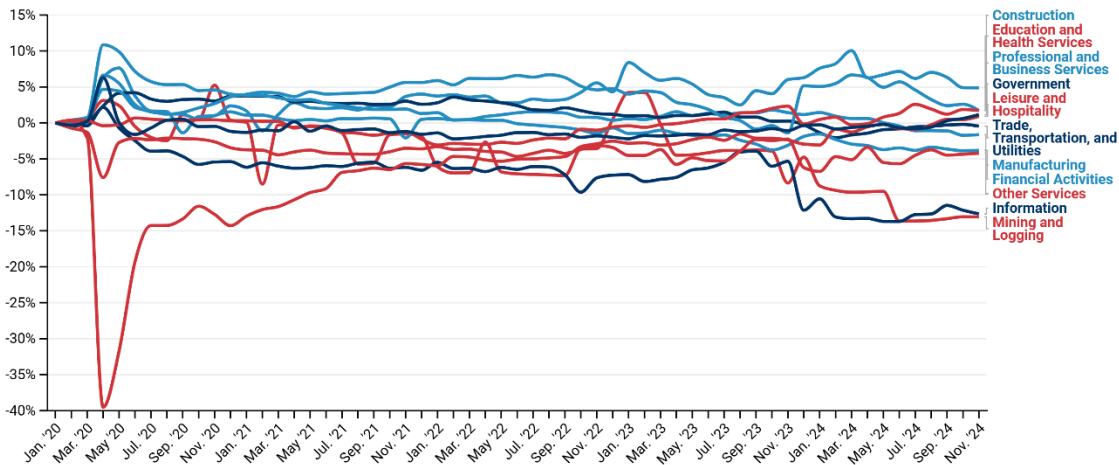
- In December, the BLS revised October 2024 seasonally-adjusted total nonfarm employment upward 63,500 jobs nationally—a 0.04% increase.
- In December, the BLS revised October 2024 seasonally-adjusted total nonfarm employment in Iowa downward by 1,300 jobs—a 0.08% decline.
  - In November, CSI reported a 3,700 decline in statewide employment. Following these revisions, the real decline in October was a net loss of 5,000 jobs.

- In December, the BLS revised October 2024 seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment for the following major sectors:
  - Leisure and hospitality downward by 1,100 jobs.
  - Information downward by 600 jobs.
  - Manufacturing downward by 500 jobs.
  - Construction and professional and business services both upward by 400 jobs.

### A Deeper Dive into Iowa Industries (BLS CES Survey)

- **Based on the establishment survey, the net growth of 400 jobs in November was driven by net job gains in five of 11 major sectors.**
  - Government gained 1,500 jobs for a 0.56% increase.
  - Leisure and hospitality gained 700 jobs for a 0.48% increase.
  - Manufacturing gained 300 jobs for a 0.14% increase.
  - Financial activities and other services both gained 100 jobs for 0.09% and 0.18% increases, respectively.
- Four sectors saw a net loss in jobs from October to November.
  - Professional and business services lost 1,200 jobs for a 0.84% decline.
  - Trade, transportation, and utilities lost 700 jobs for a 0.23% decline.
  - Education and health services lost 300 jobs for a 0.12% decline.
  - Information lost 100 jobs for a 0.55% decline.
  - Mining and logging and construction both remained unchanged.
- **Since the start of the year, from December '23 to November '24, the private sector gained 500 jobs.** Last month, CSI reported a YTD gain of 1,400. Private sector employment over the last two months fell by 9,100.
  - Manufacturing contributed the most to this loss, losing 6,200 jobs.
  - Professional and business services was the next largest contributor, losing 4,800 jobs.

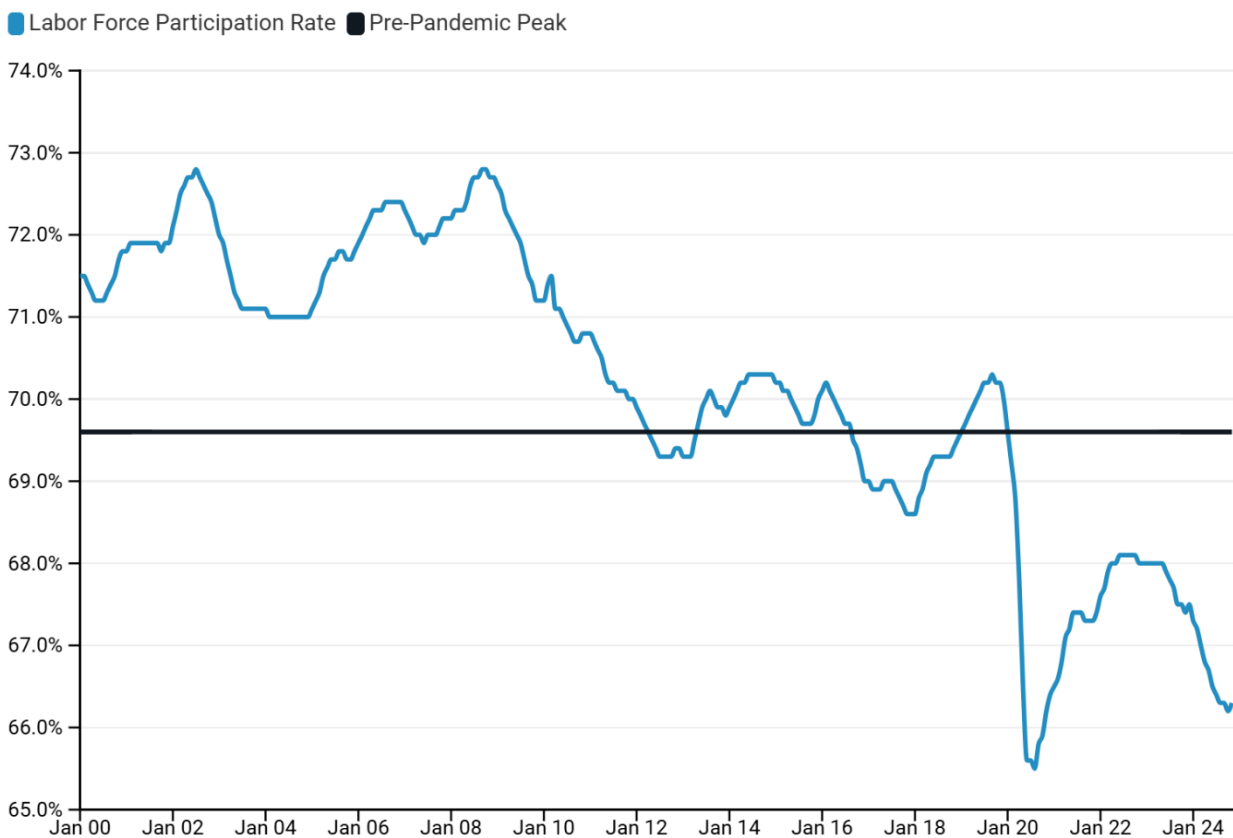
Changing Industry Shares of Total Iowa Employment since January 2020



## Iowa Labor Force Update

- In November, Iowa’s LFPR grew 0.1% to 66.3%, 3.3% below the pre-pandemic LFPR of 69.6% in January 2020. **This marks the first uptick in LFPR since November 2023.**
- The unemployment rate grew 0.1% to 3.1%. **This marks the third straight month with a rising unemployment rate.**
- Iowa ranked 10th lowest in unemployment rate among all 50 states, two spots higher 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.

---

<sup>i</sup> 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>