



May 2026

Oregon Jobs and Labor Force – April 2026 Update

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Oregon's Labor Market Pauses Its Slide, but Softness Remains

Oregon's labor market showed a modest sign of stabilization in April, but the broader picture remains soft. Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 500 jobs, ending a string of monthly losses since the start of the year — though the gain was too small and too concentrated to signal a broad-based turnaround.

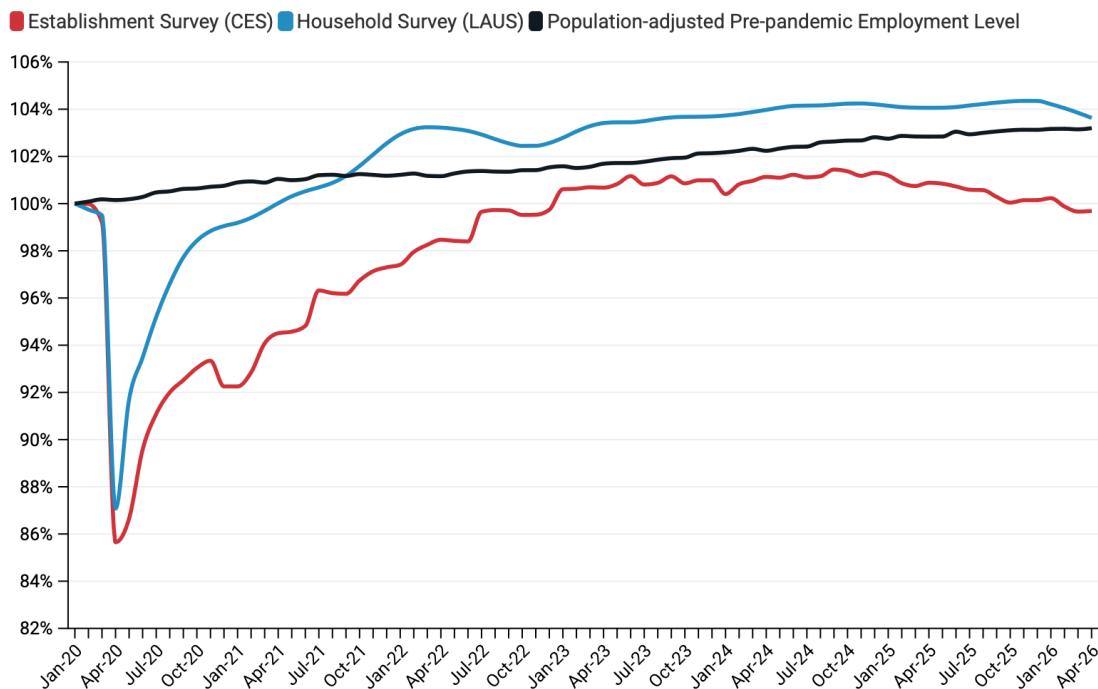
The household survey points to a similarly cautious reading. Oregon's unemployment rate held at 5.2% in April, well above the national rate of 4.3%, while the state's labor force participation rate declined to 62.5%. The flat unemployment rate should not be read as a sign of strengthening conditions. Since January, Oregon's labor force and household employment have both declined, and the employment-population ratio has slipped from 59.6% to 59.3% — suggesting a labor market that is softening through weaker labor force attachment and lower household employment, rather than one in which unemployment is rising because more people are actively searching for work.

This matters because the labor market is being evaluated against a national backdrop of low job gains, elevated inflation, and cautious monetary policy. The Federal Reserve held the federal funds rate unchanged at 3.50% to 3.75% in April, noting that job gains have remained modest, unemployment little changed, and inflation still elevated. For Oregon, April's small job gain is welcome, but not yet enough to signal a durable turnaround. The state's labor market remains looser than the nation's, with employment growth concentrated in a narrow set of sectors and several major industries continuing to lag.

Key Highlights—Oregon April 2026 Employment Data

- Oregon's seasonally adjusted total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 500 jobs in April 2026, a modest rebound following consecutive monthly losses since the start of the year. Private sector employment drove all over-the-month gains, while government employment held steady.
- Education and Health Services led sectoral gains, adding 2,200 jobs, while Construction posted a solid gain of 800 jobs. Professional and Business Services registered the largest over-the-month decline, shedding 1,000 jobs, followed by Financial Activities (-900 jobs) and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities (-700 jobs).
- On a seasonally adjusted basis, total nonfarm payroll employment in Oregon remains 6,200 jobs below its January 2020 level. Six of eleven supersectors continue to trail their pre-pandemic employment levels.
- Oregon's Labor Force Participation Rate declined to 62.5% in April 2026, falling below the national rate and continuing a gradual downward trend since the start of the year.
- Oregon's unemployment rate held at 5.2% in April, remaining well above the national rate of 4.3%.

Employment Levels in Oregon since January 2020



Source: BLS, OED • October data unavailable due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations.

- The **Current Employment Statistics (CES)** survey indicates that Oregon has yet to fully return to its **pre-pandemic employment-to-population ratio**.
- Estimates from the **Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)** program show that Oregon’s total employment surpassed pre-pandemic levels as early as **September 2021** and has remained above that benchmark.

Industry-Level Dynamics

- **Overall Employment:** Oregon's seasonally adjusted total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 500 jobs in April 2026, a modest rebound following consecutive monthly losses since the start of the year. Private sector employment drove all of the over-the-month gains, while government employment held steady.
- **Education and Health Services** led over-the-month gains, adding 2,200 jobs. Growth was driven primarily by Health Care and Social Assistance, which expanded by 1,900 jobs.
- **Construction** posted a gain of 800 jobs, contributing to the month's private sector growth.
- **Professional and Business Services** registered the largest over-the-month decline, losing 1,000 jobs. Losses were concentrated in Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, which shed 1,400 jobs.
- **Financial Activities** contracted by 900 jobs over the month.

- **Government** employment was unchanged on net, though this masks offsetting movements at the sub-sector level — federal and state government shed 300 positions, while local government added 300.
- **Manufacturing** employment fell by 400 jobs in April, extending a prolonged downward trend.
- **Trade, Transportation, and Utilities** declined by 700 jobs, with losses concentrated in Retail Trade (-800 jobs), partially offset by a gain of 200 jobs in Wholesale Trade.
- **Mining and Logging** was essentially unchanged, with a nominal gain of 100 jobs.
- **Other Services** expanded modestly, adding 400 jobs over the month.
- **Leisure and Hospitality** added 100 jobs, with gains attributable to Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation.

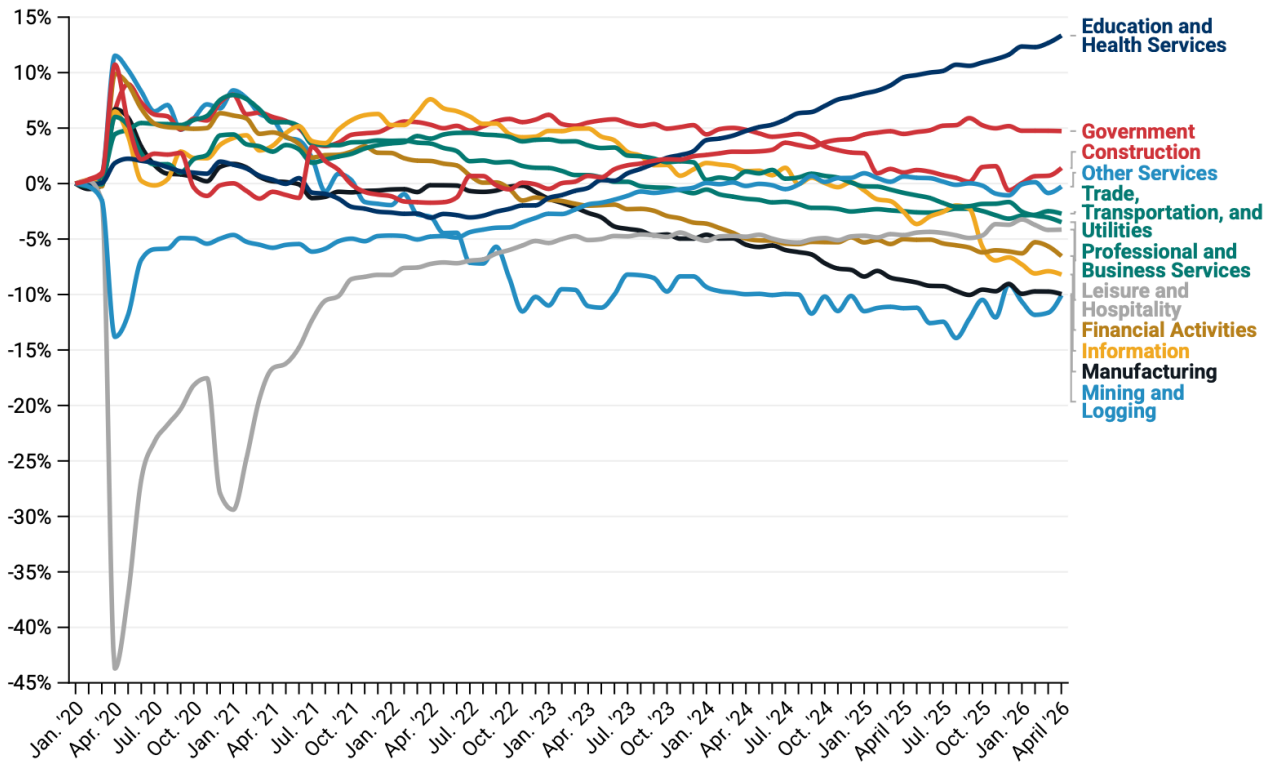
Since the Onset of the Pandemic:

Total seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment in Oregon has decreased by 6,200 jobs since January 2020, with private sector employment accounting for roughly 19,400 of the job losses. Six of eleven supersectors remain below their pre-pandemic levels on a seasonally adjusted basis: Mining and Logging; Manufacturing; Trade, Transportation, and Utilities; Information; Financial Activities; Professional and Business Services; and Leisure and Hospitality.

Notable shifts:

- Among the supersectors still below pre-pandemic levels, Mining and Logging and Manufacturing have seen the steepest declines, down 10.4% and 10.2% respectively since January 2020, followed by Information and Financial Activities, down 8.5% and 6.8% respectively.
- By contrast, Education and Health Services has grown 13% since January 2020, driven largely by Health Care and Social Assistance, which is up 15.4%. Government employment has similarly increased, rising 4.4% over the same period.

Changing Industry Shares of Total Oregon Employment since January 2020



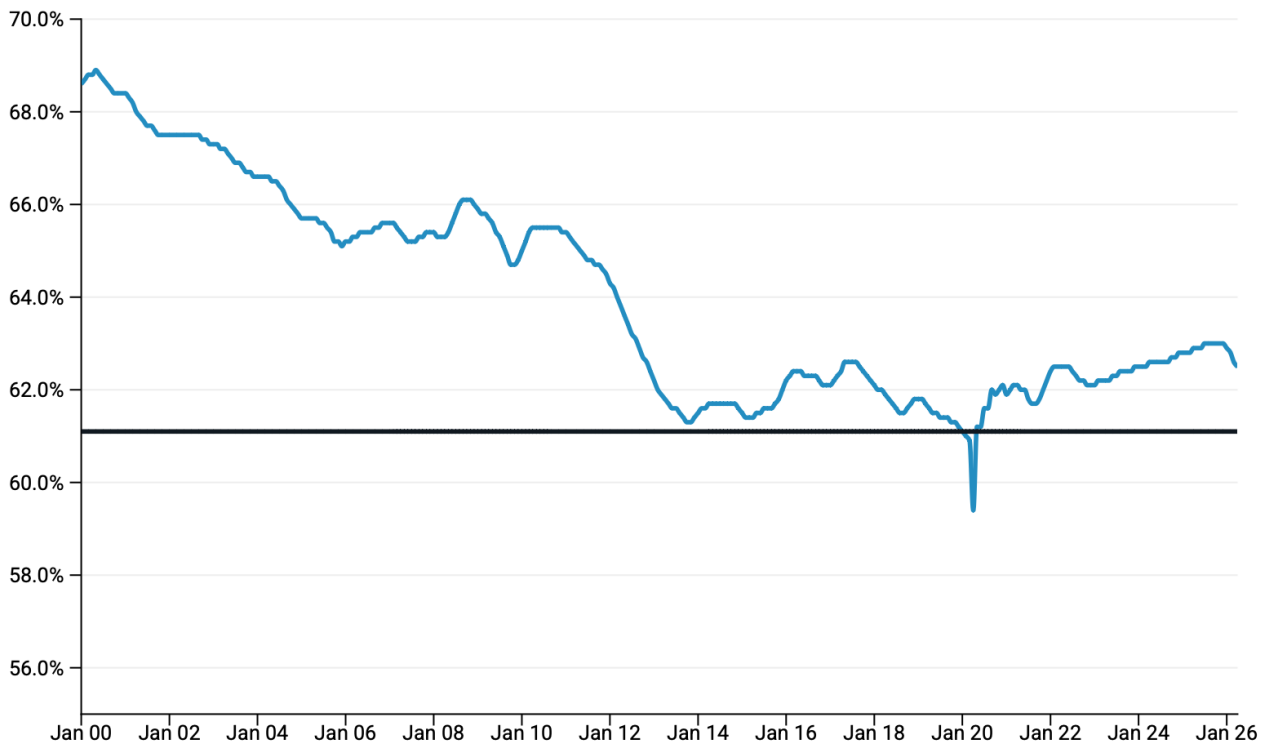
Source: Calculated by CSI using employment data from BLS and OED • Employment levels for March and April are estimated by applying Oregon Employment Department (OED) growth rates to the February 2026 BLS benchmark.

Oregon Labor Force Update

- Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** Oregon's LFPR has declined gradually since the start of the year, falling from 63.0% in December 2025 to 62.5% in April 2026 — dropping below the national rate of 62.6% recorded in December 2025.
- Unemployment Rate:** Oregon's unemployment rate held at 5.2% in April, remaining well above the national rate of 4.3%.

Labor Force Participation Rate in Oregon Since 2000

■ Labor Force Participation Rate ■ Pre-pandemic Level



Source: BLS, OED • October data unavailable due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations.

Technical Notes and Data Sources

All data are seasonally adjusted unless otherwise noted. Employment estimates derived from the **Oregon Current Employment Statistics (CES)** survey and are benchmarked to **Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)** data through **February 2026**. Labor force estimates come from the **Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)** program. **March and April 2026 CES estimates** are extrapolated using **monthly growth rates** from the **Oregon Employment Department’s April release**.