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The Employment Situation in Maine – March 2026

The unemployment rate remained at 3.2 percent. Nonfarm wage and salary jobs have been near 660,000 for the last 23 months.

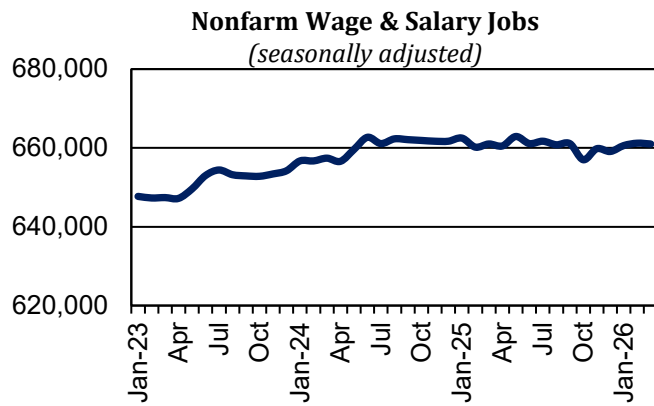


Figure 1: Nonfarm Wage and Salary Jobs

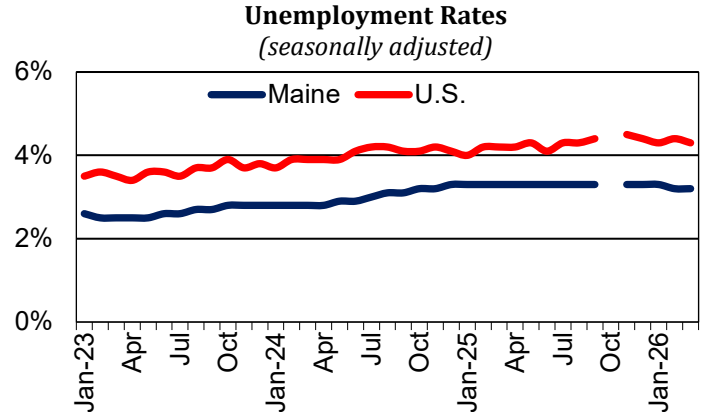


Figure 2: Unemployment Rates, Maine and U.S.

Note on Preliminary Unemployment Estimates: They should be considered in the context of whether they are below, near, or above historical or U.S. averages, rather than if they are up or down a few tenths of a point from some other month. The household survey sample they are derived from is large enough for direct estimates for the nation. For states it is much smaller and [statistical modeling](#) is used to prevent large single-month changes that may overstate the magnitude or the direction of changes in labor market conditions.

One result of this is that preliminary unemployment rates for Maine tend to follow an undulating pattern, moving in one direction for several months and then the other through the course of a year. Revisions, published annually in March, have consistently smoothed these patterns. Upward or downward changes in preliminary unemployment or labor force participation rates often are not as indicative of improvement or deterioration in conditions as may appear. Though rates for many months will change when revised, unemployment rates for 2025 and to date in 2026 certainly will remain well below the long-term and national averages.

Seasonally Adjusted Statewide Labor Force Estimates

The 3.2 percent unemployment rate for March was unchanged. Unemployment has been below four percent for 51 months, the longest duration on record. Maine's unemployment rate has been below the U.S. average for more than 18 years, and below the long-term average of 5.4 percent for the state since 1976.

Labor force participation and employment rates were little changed in March. Unemployment averaged 4.4 percent for New England and 4.3 percent for the U.S. in the month.

Statewide Labor Force Estimates (seasonally adjusted)					
Metric	Rate			Change	
	Mar 26	Feb 26	Mar 25	Two Months	Year
Labor Force Participation Rate	59.5%	59.6%	60.0%	-0.1%	-0.5%
Employment Rate (Employment to Population Ratio)	57.6%	57.7%	58.0%	-0.1%	-0.4%
Unemployment Rate	3.2%	3.2%	3.3%	0.0%	-0.1%

Figure 3: Statewide Labor Force Estimate

Notes: These estimates are derived from two monthly surveys. The Current Population Survey collects information from households on labor force status, including labor force participation, employment, and unemployment. The Current Employment Statistics survey collects information from nonfarm employers by industry on the number of wage and salary jobs, hours worked, and wages paid to individuals on their payrolls. Both surveys are administered by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Preliminary estimates from the two surveys sometimes diverge in direction or magnitude of change. Over extended periods they tend to be more aligned. The Current Population Survey of households was not conducted during the federal government shutdown that began in October 2025, no labor force estimates are available for that month.

Seasonally Adjusted Statewide Nonfarm Jobs Estimates

Preliminary seasonally adjusted estimates indicate nonfarm wage and salary jobs were little changed in March from one month ago. Small gains over-the-month spread across many sectors were offset by modest decreases that were also spread across several sectors.

In the last year, nonfarm wage and salary jobs were unchanged. Job increases in the leisure and hospitality sector and the health care and social assistance sector were offset by some decreases in the professional and business services sector and several others. Jobs have been near 660,000 (within 0.5 percentage points) since April 2024.

Statewide Nonfarm Wage & Salary Jobs Estimates (seasonally adjusted)

Industry	Jobs (thousands & percent)				Change in Jobs (thousands & percent)			
	2025	Last two months		Share of Jobs	Feb 26 to Mar 26		Mar 25 to Mar 26	
	Mar	Feb 26	Mar 26	Mar 26	Net	Percent	Net	Percent
Total Nonfarm	661.0	661.2	661.0	100%	-0.2	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Total Private	558.1	558.3	558.0	84%	-0.3	-0.1%	-0.1	0.0%
Healthcare & Social Assistance	113.4	114.2	114.2	17%	0.0	0.0%	0.8	0.7%
Retail Trade	81.7	81.3	81.0	12%	-0.3	-0.4%	-0.7	-0.9%
Professional & Business Services	78.2	76.4	76.0	11%	-0.4	-0.5%	-2.2	-2.8%
Leisure & Hospitality	70.3	72.0	72.7	11%	0.7	1.0%	2.4	3.4%
Manufacturing	51.3	51.6	51.5	8%	-0.1	-0.2%	0.2	0.4%
Construction	36.1	36.7	36.5	6%	-0.2	-0.5%	0.4	1.1%
Financial Activities	33.0	33.2	33.1	5%	-0.1	-0.3%	0.1	0.3%
Educational Services	23.3	23.4	23.5	4%	0.1	0.4%	0.2	0.9%
Other Services	22.7	22.6	22.7	3%	0.1	0.4%	0.0	0.0%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	18.7	18.6	18.6	3%	0.0	0.0%	-0.1	-0.5%
Wholesale Trade	19.0	18.5	18.4	3%	-0.1	-0.5%	-0.6	-3.2%
Information	8.4	7.9	7.9	1%	0.0	0.0%	-0.5	-6.0%
Mining & Logging	2.0	1.9	1.9	0.3%	0.0	0.0%	-0.1	-5.0%
Government	102.9	102.9	103.0	16%	0.1	0.1%	0.1	0.1%
Local	61.9	62.7	62.9	10%	0.2	0.3%	1.0	1.6%
State	23.5	23.4	23.3	4%	-0.1	-0.4%	-0.2	-0.9%
Federal	17.5	16.8	16.8	3%	0.0	0.0%	-0.7	-4.0%

Industries in descending order by number of jobs in current month. Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Figure 4: Statewide Nonfarm Wage & Salary Job Estimates

Not Seasonally Adjusted County and Metro Area Labor Force Estimates

On a not seasonally adjusted basis the statewide unemployment rate was 3.3 percent. Rates were at least 0.3 percentage points higher than that in eight counties, at least 0.3 points lower than that in three, and close to the average in five. Rates were lowest in southern and central counties and highest along the northern rim of the state.

Among the three metro areas, unemployment was below the statewide average in Portland-S. Portland, and close to the average in Bangor and Lewiston-Auburn.

March Labor Force Estimates (not seasonally adjusted)						
Area	Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment Rate	
	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
Maine	675,000	671,790	26,780	23,230	3.8%	3.3%
U.S. (in thousands)	163,410	162,760	7,240	7,340	4.2%	4.3%
Counties						
Cumberland	169,820	169,310	5,230	4,450	3.0%	2.6%
Sagadahoc	18,890	18,830	580	510	3.0%	2.6%
Kennebec	61,260	60,500	2,120	1,870	3.3%	3.0%
York	114,340	113,990	4,250	3,660	3.6%	3.1%
Androscoggin	53,760	53,680	2,110	1,850	3.8%	3.3%
Knox	18,410	18,680	770	670	4.0%	3.5%
Penobscot	73,650	72,820	3,130	2,630	4.1%	3.5%
Lincoln	15,410	15,460	660	570	4.1%	3.6%
Franklin	13,890	14,010	620	520	4.2%	3.6%
Oxford	25,680	25,690	1,120	1,030	4.2%	3.8%
Waldo	17,770	17,670	820	800	4.4%	4.3%
Somerset	21,570	21,140	1,170	1,030	5.1%	4.6%
Aroostook	27,440	27,360	1,550	1,380	5.3%	4.8%
Hancock	25,440	25,340	1,490	1,210	5.5%	4.5%
Piscataquis	6,190	6,020	400	350	6.1%	5.5%
Washington	11,490	11,310	780	710	6.4%	5.9%
Metropolitan Areas						
Bangor	73,650	72,820	3,130	2,630	4.1%	3.5%
Lewiston-Auburn	53,760	53,680	2,110	1,850	3.8%	3.3%
Portland-S Portland	303,050	302,120	10,060	8,620	3.2%	2.8%

Figure 5: March Not Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Estimates

(Labor force estimates for substate areas, including unemployment rates, are not seasonally adjusted. Because of this, estimates for a certain month should be compared to the same month in other years and should not be compared to other months in the same or other years.)

Not Seasonally Adjusted Statewide and Metro Area Hours and Earnings Estimates

The private sector workweek averaged 33.3 hours and earnings averaged \$33.63 per hour in March. Average hours did not change, and hourly earnings increased 3.9 percent from a year ago. The workweek was longest in the construction and manufacturing sectors and shortest in the leisure and hospitality sector. Earnings were highest in professional and business services and lowest in leisure and hospitality. Hourly earnings were above the statewide average in Portland-S. Portland and below it in the Bangor and Lewiston-Auburn metros.

March Private Sector Average Hours & Earnings Estimates (not seasonally adjusted)						
Sector/Area	Weekly Hours			Hourly Earnings		
	2025	2026	Change	2025	2026	Change
Maine	33.3	33.3	0.0	\$32.36	\$33.63	3.9%
United States	34.5	34.5	0.0	\$36.28	\$37.55	3.5%
Sectors Statewide						
Construction	39.6	37.5	-2.1	\$33.99	\$34.94	2.8%
Manufacturing	37.2	37.5	0.3	\$32.84	\$33.29	1.4%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	32.1	31.9	-0.2	\$27.46	\$28.17	2.6%
Professional & Business Services	34.4	34.0	-0.4	\$37.24	\$39.35	5.7%
Education & Health Services	32.9	33.0	0.1	\$33.89	\$34.70	2.4%
Leisure & Hospitality	25.8	25.6	-0.2	\$23.55	\$24.60	4.5%
Metropolitan Areas						
Bangor	33.2	33.3	0.1	\$30.81	\$32.52	5.6%
Lewiston-Auburn	34.0	34.4	0.4	\$30.12	\$31.31	4.0%
Portland-S Portland	33.0	32.9	-0.1	\$34.70	\$35.59	2.6%

Figure 6: March Private Sector Hours & Earnings Estimates

April 2026 workforce estimates will be published on Friday May 22, 2026. The complete data release schedule is available [here](#).

Nonfarm jobs data is available [here](#)

Unemployment and labor force data is available [here](#)

NOTES:

1. Preliminary seasonally adjusted labor force estimates, including rates (labor force participation, employment, and unemployment rates), and levels (labor force, employed, and unemployed), as well as nonfarm wage and salary job estimates are inexact. Annual revisions (published in March each year) add accuracy. A comparison of 2025 and 2024 previously published to revised estimates is available in [this article](#).
2. The 90 percent confidence interval for the statewide seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March was between 2.5 and 3.8 percent.
3. Nonfarm wage and salary jobs from the payroll survey provide a better indication of changes in employment than resident employment from the household survey. The payroll survey is larger and has smaller margins of error.
4. Nonfarm payroll jobs estimates tend to be variable from month to month because the representativeness of reporting employers can differ. Seasonal adjustment is imperfect because weather, the beginning and ending of school semesters, and other events do not always occur with the same timing relative to the pay period that includes the 12th day of the month, which is the survey reference period. This sometimes exacerbates monthly changes in jobs estimates. Users should look to trends over multiple months rather than change from one specific month to another. Jobs estimates for the period from April 2025 to September 2026 will be replaced with payroll data in March 2027. Those benchmark revisions usually show less monthly variability than previously published estimates.