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Contact: Mark McInerney, (207) 620-0197

The Employment Situation in Maine – September 2026

At 3.3 percent, the unemployment rate has changed little for more than two years. Nonfarm wage and salary jobs have remained within a narrow range for 29 consecutive months.

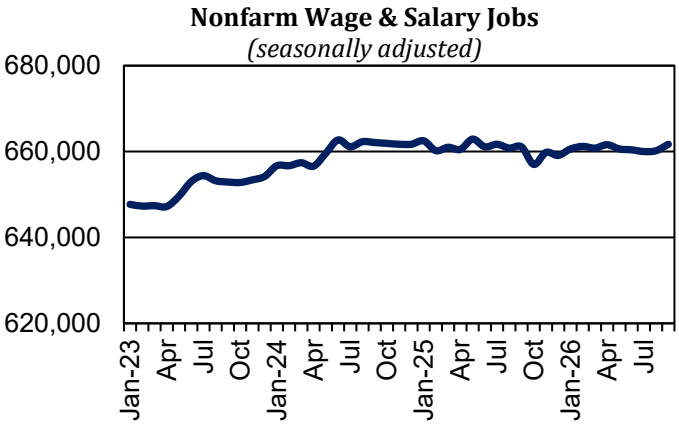


Figure 1: Nonfarm Wage and Salary Jobs

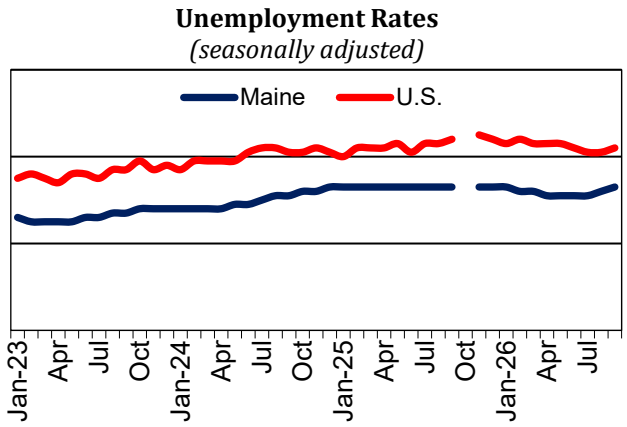


Figure 2: Unemployment Rates, Maine and U.S.

Seasonally Adjusted Statewide Labor Force Estimates

Unemployment rates have remained within a narrow range between 3.1 and 3.3 percent for 25 consecutive months. Unemployment has been below 4 percent for 57 months, the longest duration on record. Maine's unemployment rate has been below the U.S. average for more than 18 years and remains below the long-term average of 5.4 percent for the state since 1976. Unemployment averaged 4.1 percent for New England and 4.2 percent for the U.S. in the month.

The labor force participation rate averaged 58.6 percent over the last three months, lower than during the three months through June. A decreasing employment-to-population ratio in the three months through September is the reason for lower rates of labor force participation.

Statewide Labor Force Estimates ***(seasonally adjusted)***						
Metric	Last Two Months			Three-Month Averages		
	August	September	Change	Apr to Jun	Jul to Sept	Change
Labor Force Participation Rate	58.6%	58.5%	-0.1%	59.2%	58.6%	-0.6%
Employment Rate (Employment to Population Ratio)	56.7%	56.6%	-0.1%	57.4%	56.8%	-0.6%
Unemployment Rate	3.2%	3.3%	0.1%	3.1%	3.2%	0.1%

Figure 3: Statewide Labor Force Estimates

Seasonally Adjusted Statewide Nonfarm Jobs Estimates

Preliminary seasonally adjusted estimates indicate that nonfarm wage and salary jobs increased by 1,700 from August. The leisure and hospitality sector accounted for the majority of the over-the-month job increase in September. Seasonal adjustment is imperfect and can sometimes over or understate the magnitude of change because seasonal employment patterns may differ from year to year. Additional monthly estimates are needed to fully assess how the employment pattern in leisure and hospitality compares with recent years.

Job estimates have stayed within a narrow range near 660,000 for 29 consecutive months (estimates ranging less than 0.5 percent higher or lower each month). Over the last year, job increases in the health care and social assistance, and financial activities sectors were mostly offset by modest decreases across several sectors.

Statewide Nonfarm Wage & Salary Jobs Estimates *(seasonally adjusted)*

Industry	Jobs (thousands & percent)				Change in Jobs (thousands & percent)			
	2025	Last two months		Share of Jobs	Aug 26 to Sep 26		Sep 25 to Sep 26	
	Sep	Aug 26	Sep 26	Sep 26	Net	Percent	Net	Percent
Total Nonfarm	**661.1**	**660.0**	**661.7**	**100%**	**1.7**	**0.3%**	**0.6**	**0.1%**
Total Private	**558.3**	**557.8**	**559.9**	**85%**	**2.1**	**0.4%**	**1.6**	**0.3%**
Healthcare & Social Assistance	114.6	115.6	116.0	18%	0.4	0.3%	1.4	1.2%
Retail Trade	81.4	82.2	82.1	12%	-0.1	-0.1%	0.7	0.9%
Professional & Business Services	77.6	77.3	77.6	12%	0.3	0.4%	0.0	0.0%
Leisure & Hospitality	71.2	70.7	71.7	11%	1.0	1.4%	0.5	0.7%
Manufacturing	51.1	51.3	51.4	8%	0.1	0.2%	0.3	0.6%
Construction	35.5	35.1	35.1	5%	0.0	0.0%	-0.4	-1.1%
Financial Activities	32.8	33.4	33.7	5%	0.3	0.9%	0.9	2.7%
Educational Services	23.6	23.4	23.8	4%	0.4	1.7%	0.2	0.8%
Other Services	22.9	22.9	22.6	3%	-0.3	-1.3%	-0.3	-1.3%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	18.7	18.4	18.3	3%	-0.1	-0.5%	-0.4	-2.1%
Wholesale Trade	18.9	18.1	18.1	3%	0.0	0.0%	-0.8	-4.2%
Information	8.1	7.6	7.7	1%	0.1	1.3%	-0.4	-4.9%
Mining & Logging	1.9	1.8	1.8	0.3%	0.0	0.0%	-0.1	-5.3%
Government	**102.8**	**102.2**	**101.8**	**15%**	**-0.4**	**-0.4%**	**-1.0**	**-1.0%**
Local	62.2	62.2	62.0	9%	-0.2	-0.3%	-0.2	-0.3%
State	23.3	23.1	22.9	3%	-0.2	-0.9%	-0.4	-1.7%
Federal	17.3	16.9	16.9	3%	0.0	0.0%	-0.4	-2.3%

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

Figure 4: Statewide Nonfarm Wage & Salary Jobs Estimates

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.

Not Seasonally Adjusted County and Metro Area Labor Force Estimates

On a not seasonally adjusted basis, the statewide unemployment rate was 3.1 percent. Rates were at least 0.3 percentage points higher than that in eight counties, at least 0.3 points lower than that in four, and close to the average in four. Rates were lowest in the coastal 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.

September Labor Force Estimates (not seasonally adjusted)

Area	Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment Rate	
	2025	2026	2025	2026	2025	2026
Maine	688,510	677,790	20,940	21,780	3.0%	3.1%
U.S. (in thousands)	163,890	163,440	7,320	6,860	4.3%	4.0%
Counties						
Sagadahoc	19,370	19,150	520	510	2.6%	2.6%
Cumberland	175,080	173,550	4,600	4,730	2.6%	2.7%
Hancock	29,570	28,940	780	830	2.6%	2.8%
York	117,640	116,470	3,240	3,350	2.7%	2.8%
Lincoln	16,630	16,320	460	520	2.7%	3.1%
Kennebec	60,680	59,590	1,850	1,970	3.0%	3.2%
Knox	19,140	18,560	560	610	2.9%	3.2%
Androscoggin	54,320	53,760	1,830	1,840	3.3%	3.3%
Penobscot	73,770	72,360	2,420	2,530	3.2%	3.4%
Waldo	18,080	17,610	590	620	3.1%	3.4%
Oxford	25,080	24,690	900	940	3.5%	3.7%
Franklin	13,110	12,820	470	530	3.4%	3.9%
Aroostook	26,960	26,020	1,060	1,100	3.8%	4.0%
Somerset	21,430	20,970	860	900	3.9%	4.1%
Washington	11,390	10,990	520	510	4.4%	4.5%
Piscataquis	6,280	5,990	270	300	4.1%	4.7%
Metropolitan Areas						
Bangor	73,770	72,360	2,420	2,530	3.2%	3.4%
Lewiston-Auburn	54,320	53,760	1,830	1,840	3.3%	3.3%
Portland-S Portland	312,090	309,170	8,360	8,590	2.6%	2.7%

Figure 5: September 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 hours and earnings averaged $33.68 per hour in September. Average hours changed little, and hourly earnings increased 3 percent from one 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.

September Private Sector Average Hours & Earnings Estimates *(not seasonally adjusted)*

Sector/Area	Weekly Hours			Hourly Earnings		
	2025	2026	Change	2025	2026	Change
Maine	33.2	33.0	-0.2	$32.69	$33.68	3.0%
United States	34.2	34.2	0.0	$36.62	$37.69	2.9%
Sectors Statewide						
Construction	40.1	38.6	-1.5	$34.20	$35.61	4.1%
Manufacturing	36.8	37.9	1.1	$33.29	$34.15	2.6%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	32.3	33.6	1.3	$28.17	$28.61	1.6%
Professional & Business Services	34.0	33.0	-1.0	$37.15	$37.86	1.9%
Education & Health Services	32.8	31.9	-0.9	$34.10	$34.72	1.8%
Leisure & Hospitality	26.7	26.5	-0.2	$24.42	$25.67	5.1%
Metropolitan Areas						
Bangor	34.2	33.0	-1.2	$31.60	$32.23	2.0%
Lewiston-Auburn	34.6	35.3	0.7	$30.37	$31.31	3.1%
Portland-S Portland	32.2	32.5	0.3	$34.62	$35.68	3.1%

Figure 6: September Private Sector Hours & Earnings Estimates

October 2026 workforce estimates will be published on Friday, November 20, 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 unemployment estimates 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. Upward or downward changes in

preliminary unemployment or labor force participation rates often are not as indicative of improvement or deterioration in conditions as they 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.

2. 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.
3. The 90 percent confidence interval for the statewide seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September was between 2.5 and 4.1 percent.
4. 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.
5. 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.