United States Congress
Joint Economic Committee
Est. 1946 Republicans
Representative David Schweikert, *Chairman*

Illinois

Employment Update

September 2026 | Released October 20, 2026

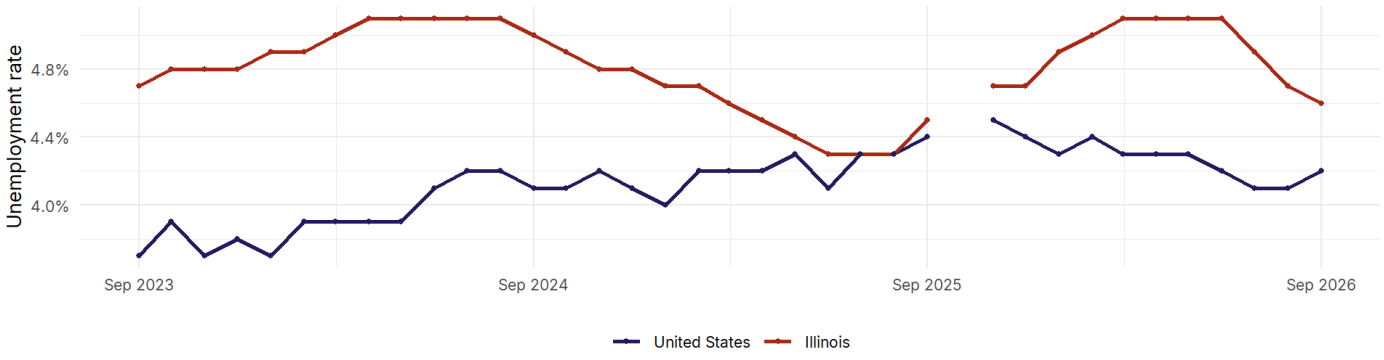
United States Employment Snapshot

- In September, among the 50 states and the District of Columbia **unemployment fell in 18, rose in 9, and remained unchanged in 24.**
- The highest unemployment rate was 5.6 percent in **District of Columbia**, and the lowest was 2 percent in **South Dakota**. Nationally, the unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage point to 4.2 percent.
- In September, **payroll jobs rose in 24 states and fell in 25.** The largest payroll job percent increase was 0.5 percent in **South Carolina**. The largest payroll job percent decline was 0.4 percent in **Missouri and Wisconsin**.

Illinois Employment Snapshot

- In September, **Illinois lost 7,200 net payroll jobs** and the **unemployment rate fell by 0.1 percentage point to 4.6 percent**. In the prior month, Illinois lost 8,300 net payroll jobs.
- Over the past 12 months, **Illinois added 13,800 net payroll jobs** and the **unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage point from 4.5 percent**.
- Nationally, nonfarm payrolls **rose by 29,000 in September, or 0 percent.** Illinois **is tied for 34th** in the nation for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.
- In September, **Illinois's private sector lost 2,600 net private payroll jobs**, and over the past 12 months it added 14,800 private payroll jobs. In the prior month, Illinois lost 7,800 net private payroll jobs.
- In September, employment in Illinois **rose by 331**, and over the past 12 months it fell by 92,172.
- **Illinois's labor force participation rate remained steady at 63 percent** in September and **ranks 19th** in the nation. In the past 12 months, the labor force participation rate has fallen by 0.9 percentage points.

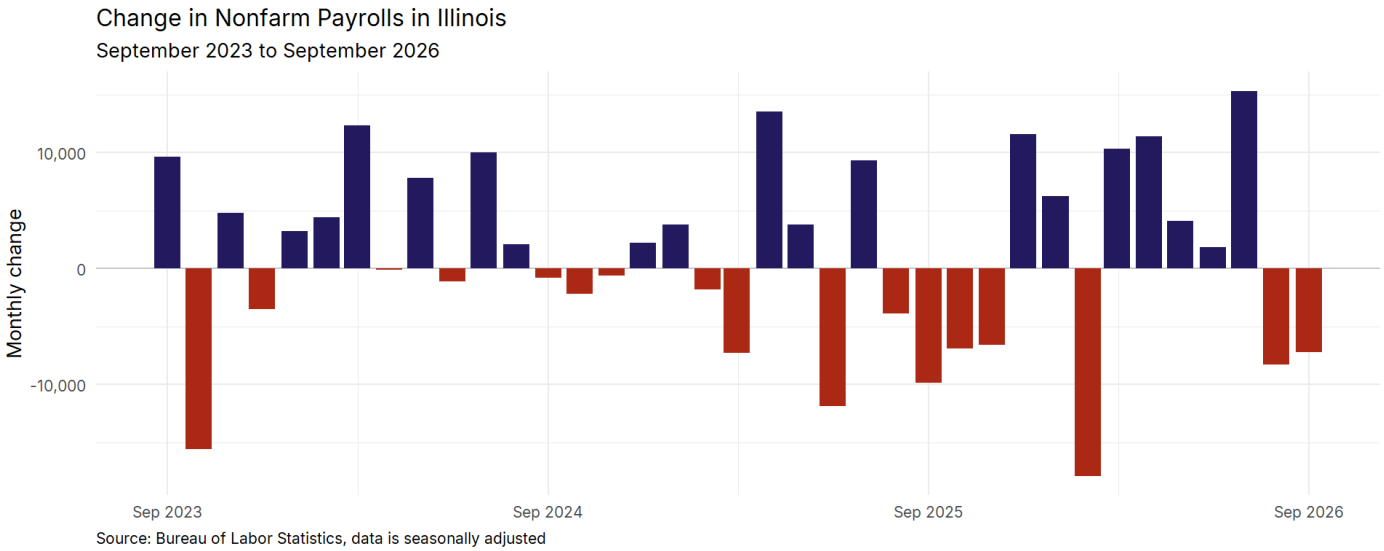
Unemployment Rate in Illinois
September 2023 to September 2026



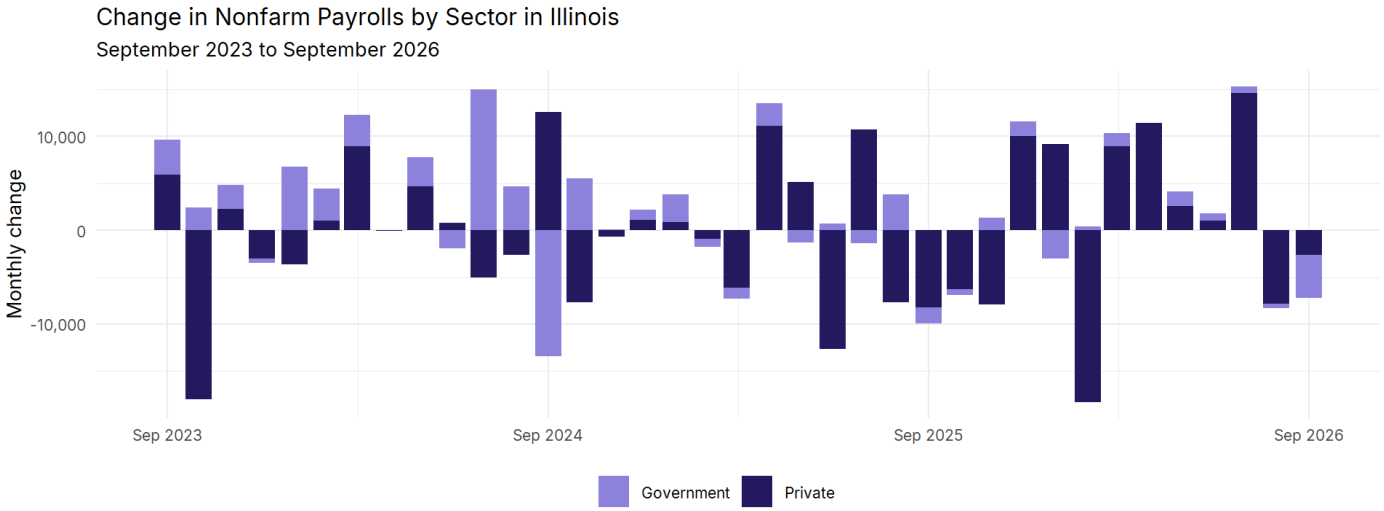
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, data is seasonally adjusted

Illinois

Payroll employment



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, data is seasonally adjusted

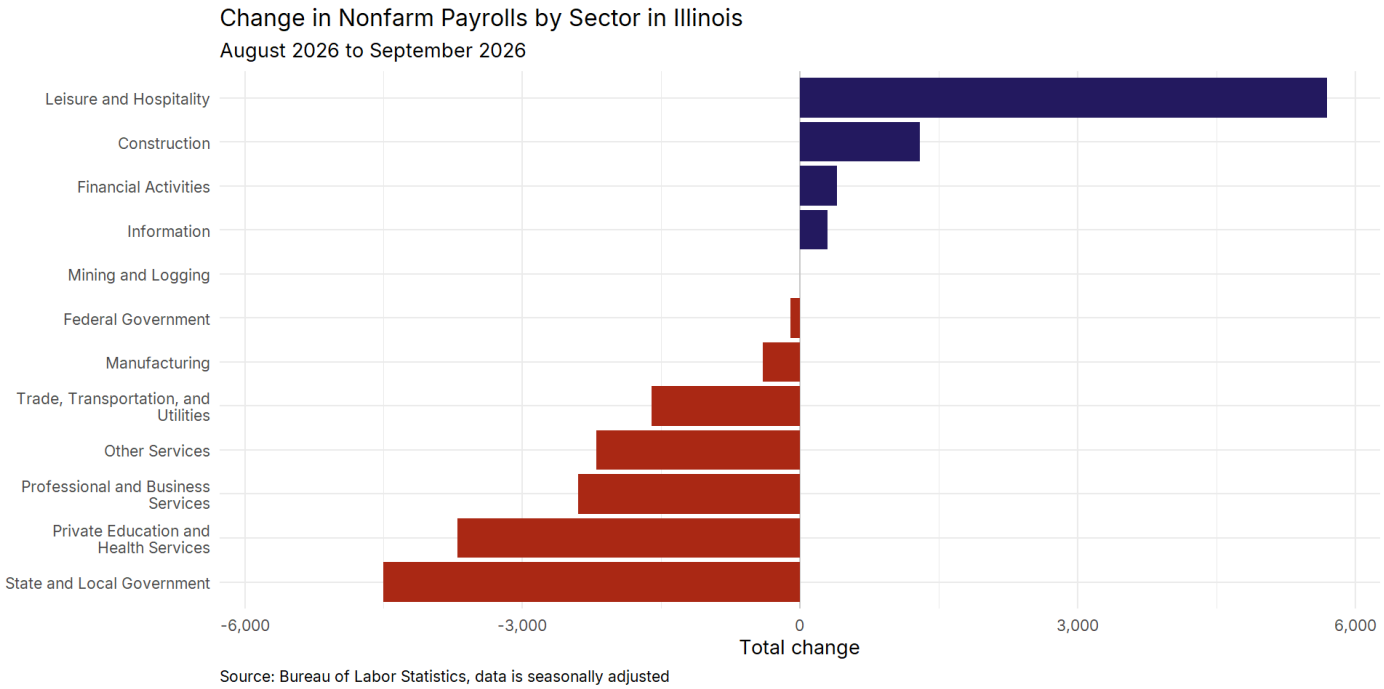


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, data is seasonally adjusted

- **Illinois lost 7,200 net payroll jobs, or -0.1 percent,** on a seasonally adjusted basis during September. In the prior month, Illinois lost 8,300 jobs. Illinois nonfarm payroll employment has increased in **7 of the past 12 months.**
- Nationally, nonfarm payrolls **rose by 29,000 in September, or 0 percent.** Illinois is tied for 34th in the nation for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.
- **Illinois lost 2,600 private sector jobs, or 0 percent,** on a seasonally adjusted basis during September. In the prior month, Illinois lost 7,800 jobs. Illinois private sector payroll employment has increased in **7 of the past 12 months.**
- Nationally, private sector payroll jobs **rose by 46,000 jobs in September, or 0 percent.** Illinois is tied for 34th in the nation for percentage gain in private sector payroll employment over the past 12 months.

From August 2026 to September 2026:

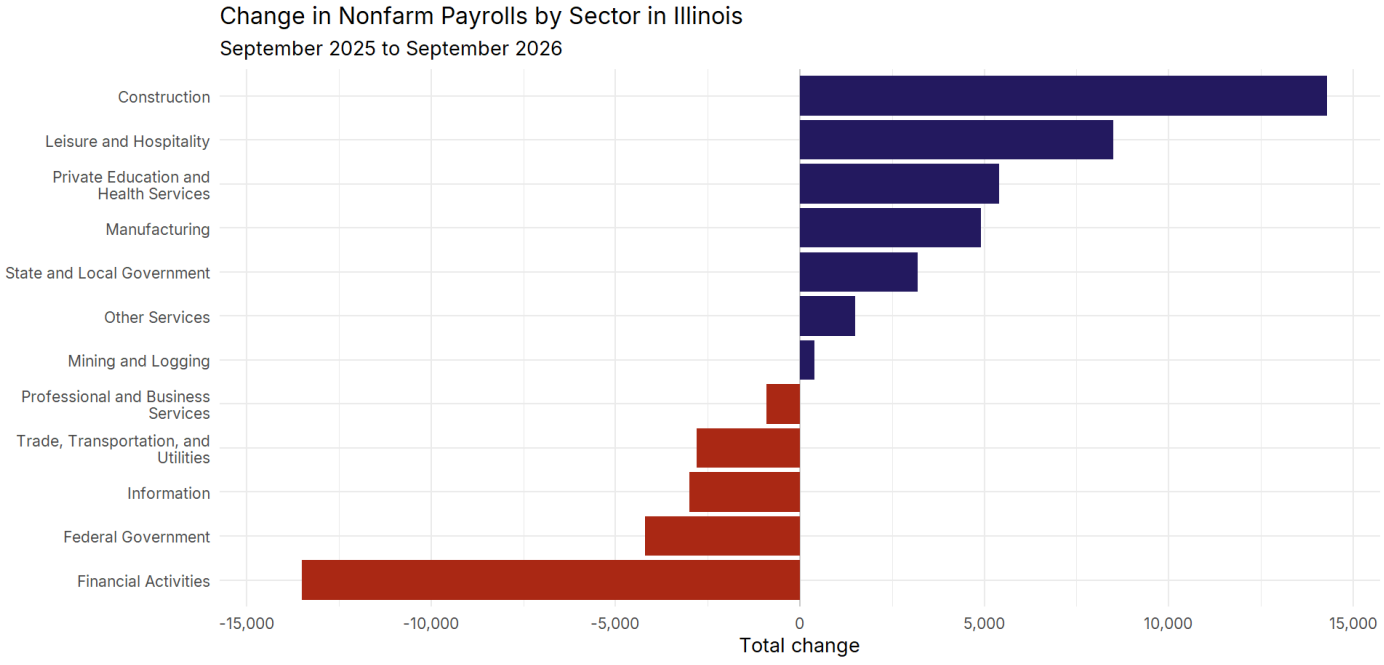
- The best performing sectors were **Leisure and Hospitality** (+5,700) and **Construction** (+1,300).
- The worst performing sectors were **State and Local Government** (-4,500) and **Private Education and Health Services** (-3,700).



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, data is seasonally adjusted

From September 2025 to September 2026:

- The best performing sectors were **Construction** (+14,300) and **Leisure and Hospitality** (+8,500).
- The worst performing sectors were **Financial Activities** (-13,500) and **Federal Government** (-4,200).



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, data is seasonally adjusted

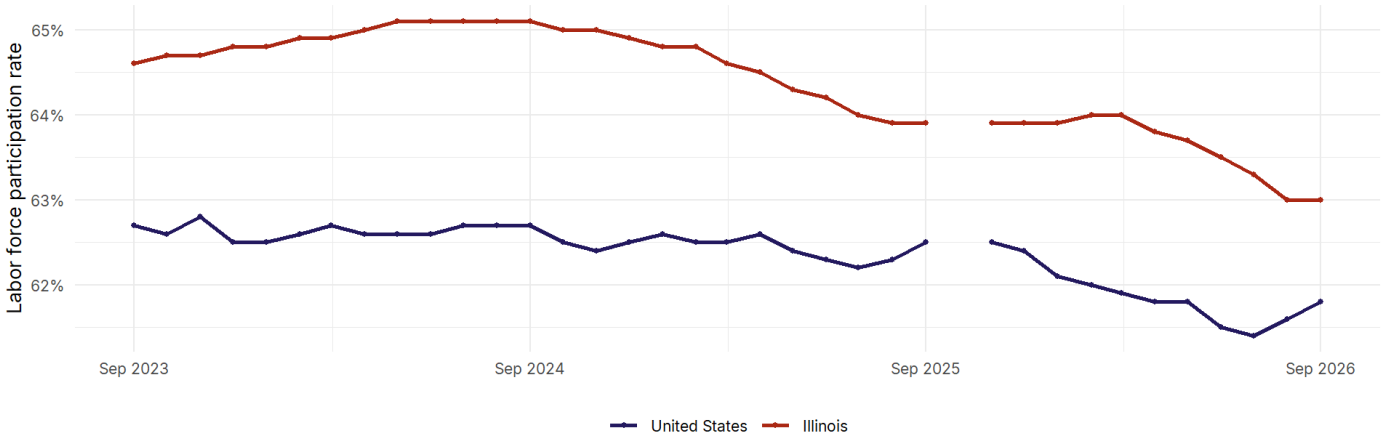
Labor force

The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 and older who are employed or actively looking for work.

- The labor force participation rate in **Illinois remained unchanged at 63 percent in September**.
- **Illinois ranks 19th** in the nation.
- The 10-year high for the labor force participation rate in Illinois was **65.1 percent** occurring in September 2016, and the 10-year low was **61.8 percent** in June 2020.
- The national labor force participation rate **rose by 0.2 percentage points to 61.8 percent** in September.

Labor Force Participation Rate in Illinois

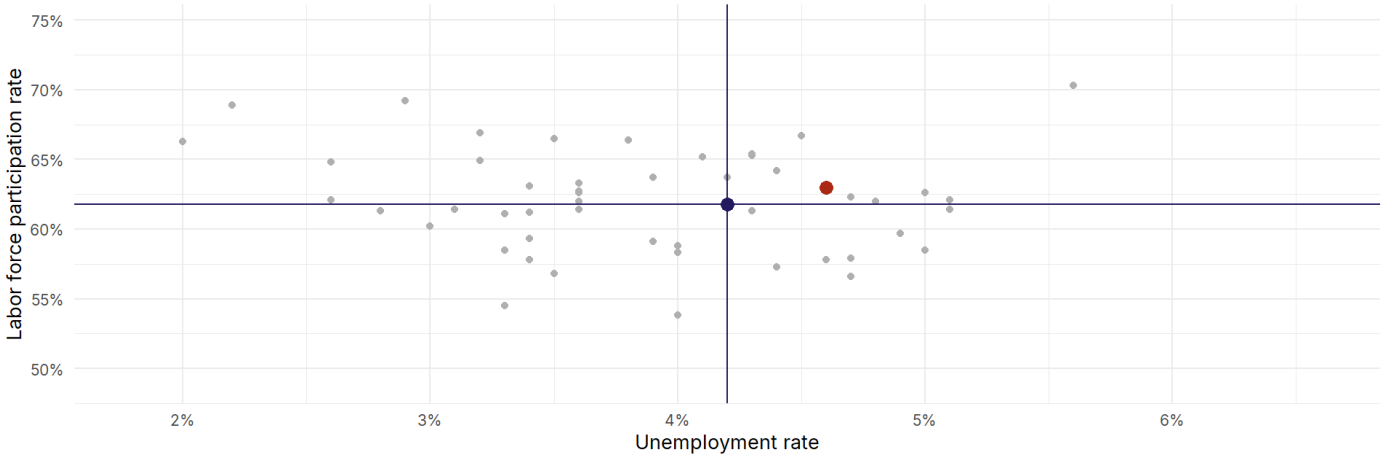
September 2023 to September 2026



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, data is seasonally adjusted

Unemployment and Labor Force Participation Rates by State

September 2026



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