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

Illinois

Employment Update

September 2026 | Released October 20, 2026

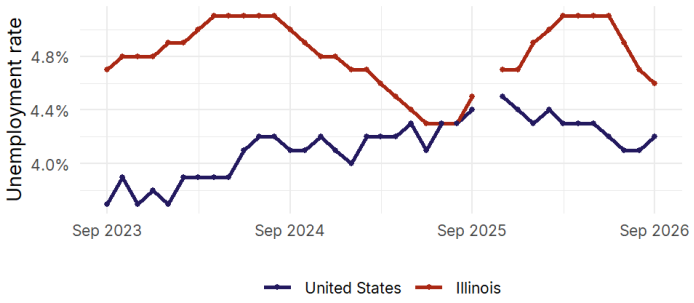
United States Employment Snapshot

- 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

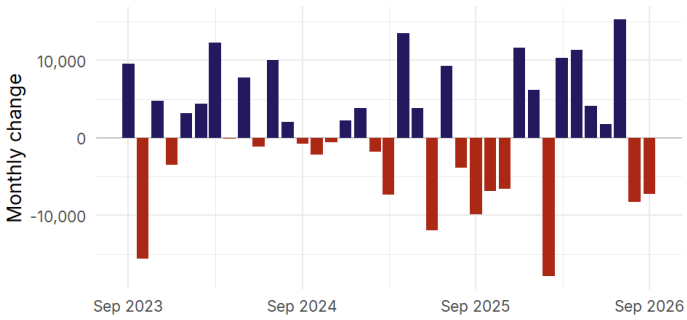
- In September, **Illinois lost 7,200 net payroll jobs** and the **unemployment rate fell by 0.1 percentage point to 4.6 percent**. In the prior month, Illinois lost 8,300 net payroll jobs.
- Over the past 12 months, **Illinois added 13,800 net payroll jobs** and the **unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage 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

Change in Nonfarm Payrolls in Illinois
September 2023 to September 2026



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, data is seasonally adjusted

Read the full release (https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/republicans/il/)