

NC Economy Watch

January 2026

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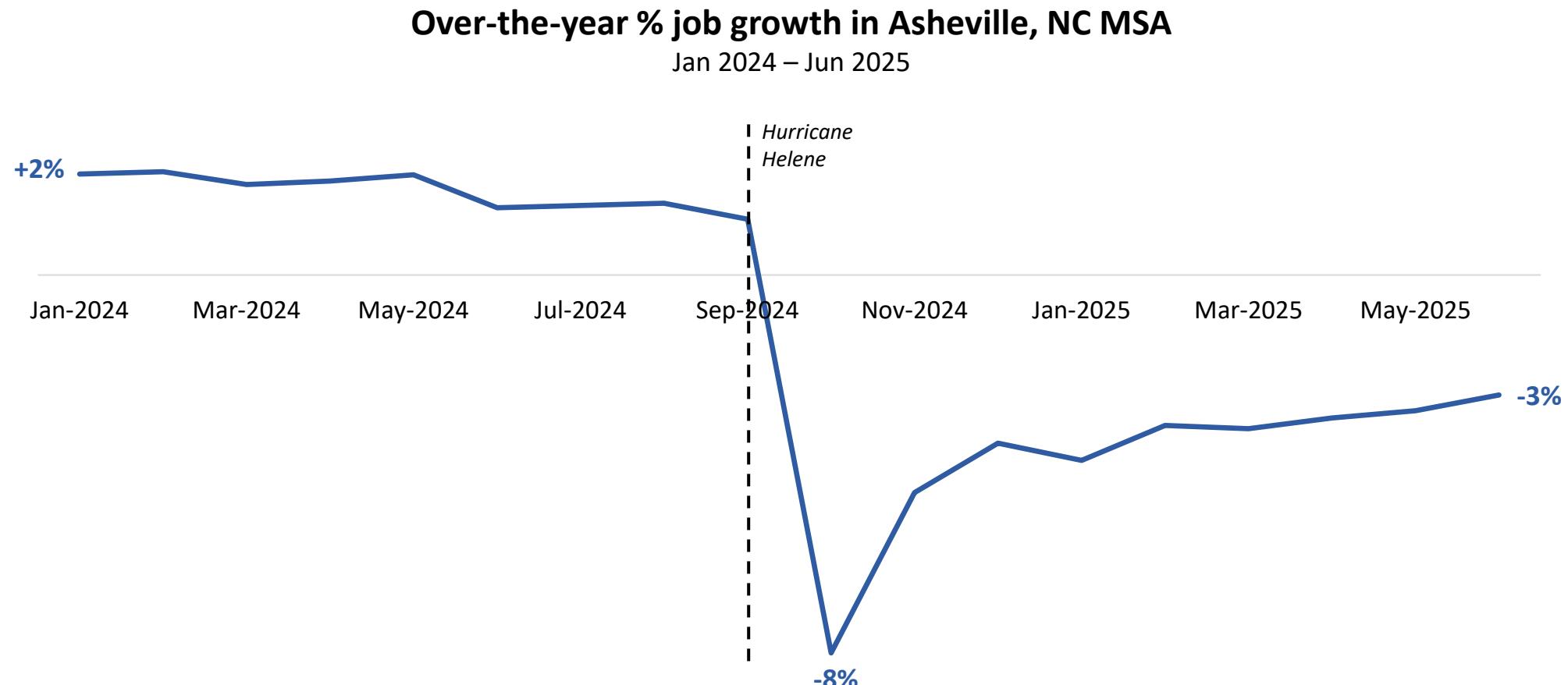
January 20, 2026

Remembering the year that was

In January 2025, we presented **three big questions** for the new year:

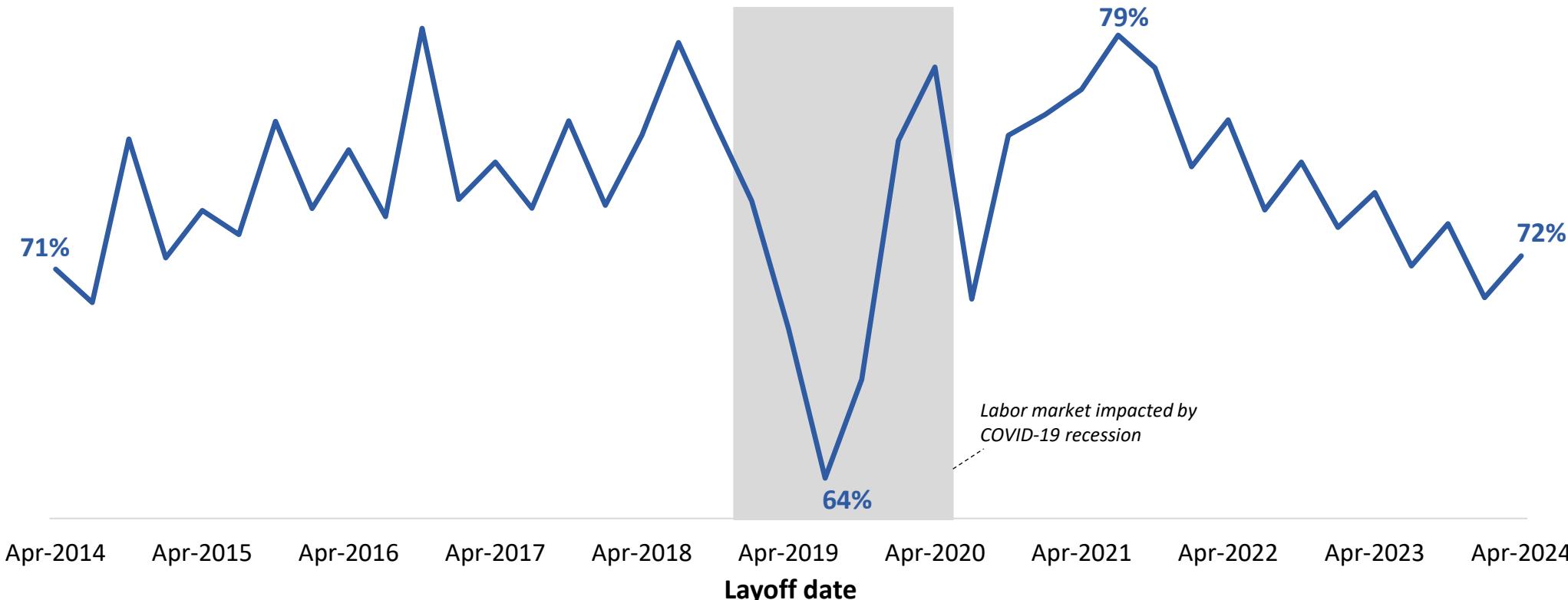
- Will Asheville's labor market recover from **Hurricane Helene**?
- Will labor market conditions improve for **jobseekers** across the state?
- Will we see any more relief on **interest rates**?

Has Asheville's labor market recovered? No, not yet

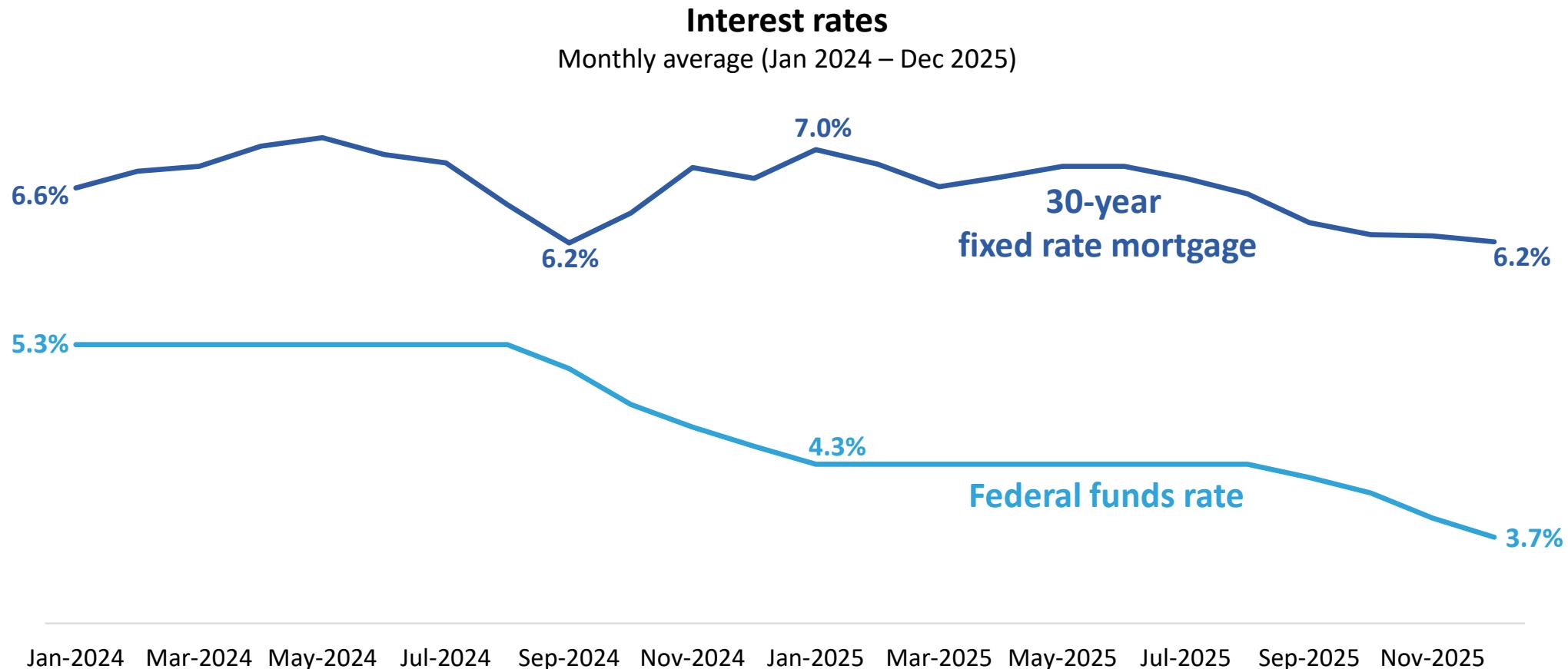


Did conditions improve for jobseekers? No, and they may have gotten worse

% of unemployment insurance claimants in North Carolina re-employed one year after layoff



Did interest rates decline? Yes, but not by much



Jan-2024 Mar-2024 May-2024 Jul-2024 Sep-2024 Nov-2024 Jan-2025 Mar-2025 May-2025 Jul-2025 Sep-2025 Nov-2025

Poll: Which economic story will you be following most closely in the year to come?

- The labor market situation (unemployment, job growth)
- Economic recovery in Western North Carolina
- Artificial intelligence
- Tariffs and trade
- Housing construction and affordability
- Demographics and labor force participation
- Something else (please specify in the MS Teams chat)

Resources of interest

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Hiring Continues to Weaken as North Carolina Approaches Fifth Consecutive Year of Labor Market Slowdown

<https://www.commerce.nc.gov/news/the-lead-feed/january-2026-nc-economy-watch>

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“Thank you!”

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