



For Immediate Release: January 27, 2026
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North Carolina's December Employment Figures Released

RALEIGH — The state's seasonally adjusted December 2025 unemployment rate was 3.9 percent, unchanged from November's revised rate. The national rate decreased 0.1 of a percentage point to 4.4 percent.

North Carolina's unemployment rate increased 0.2 of a percentage point from a year ago. The number of people employed increased 9,802 over the month to 5,104,078 and increased 14,611 over the year. The number of people unemployed increased 683 over the month to 204,751 and increased 8,543 over the year.

Seasonally adjusted Total Nonfarm employment, as gathered through the monthly establishment survey, increased 3,300 to 5,125,000 in December. Major industries experiencing increases were Leisure & Hospitality Services, 2,900; Financial Activities, 1,900; Private Education & Health Services, 1,700; Construction, 1,100; Government, 900; Professional & Business Services, 800; Other Services, 600; and Mining & Logging, 100. Major industries experiencing decreases were Trade, Transportation & Utilities, 5,900; and Manufacturing, 800. Information employment remained unchanged.

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rates since December 2024

	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025	Jun 2025	Jul 2025	Aug 2025	Sep 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025
N.C.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	*	3.9	3.9
U.S.	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.4	*	4.5	4.4

Estimates are subject to monthly and annual revisions
October 2025 data are unavailable due to the lapse in appropriations

Since December 2024, Total Nonfarm jobs increased 80,700 with the Total Private sector increasing by 78,800 and Government increasing by 1,900. Major industries experiencing increases were Private Education & Health Services, 19,400; Professional & Business Services, 18,200; Construction, 14,400; Leisure & Hospitality Services, 13,100; Financial Activities, 9,100; Trade, Transportation & Utilities, 7,300; Other Services, 4,900; Government, 1,900; and Mining & Logging, 300. Major industries experiencing decreases over the year were Manufacturing, 7,200; and Information, 700.

The next unemployment update is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4, 2026 when the county unemployment rates for December 2025 will be released.

These data can be accessed on the Commerce website at <https://d4.nccommerce.com/>

North Carolina Department of Commerce

Labor and Economic Analysis Division

NORTH CAROLINA and U.S. LABOR FORCE DATA

North Carolina data is embargoed until 10:00 A.M. Tuesday, January 27, 2026

				Month Ago		Year Ago	
				Numeric	Percent	Numeric	Percent
				Change	Change	Change	Change
				December 2025	November 2025	December 2024	
North Carolina <i>(Local Area Unemployment Statistics)</i>							
<i>Smoothed Seasonally Adjusted</i>							
Labor Force	5,308,829	5,298,344	5,285,675	10,485	0.2	23,154	0.4
Employed	5,104,078	5,094,276	5,089,467	9,802	0.2	14,611	0.3
Unemployed	204,751	204,068	196,208	683	0.3	8,543	4.4
Unemployment Rate	3.9	3.9	3.7	0.0	xxx	0.2	xxx
<i>Not Seasonally Adjusted</i>							
Labor Force	5,289,892	5,292,485	5,245,410	-2,593	0.0	44,482	0.8
Employed	5,108,591	5,072,021	5,067,210	36,570	0.7	41,381	0.8
Unemployed	181,301	220,464	178,200	-39,163	-17.8	3,101	1.7
Unemployment Rate	3.4	4.2	3.4	-0.8	xxx	0.0	xxx
United States <i>(Current Population Survey)</i>							
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>							
Labor Force	171,495,000	171,541,000	168,506,000	-46,000	0.0	xxx	xxx
Employed	163,992,000	163,760,000	161,586,000	232,000	0.1	xxx	xxx
Unemployed	7,503,000	7,781,000	6,920,000	-278,000	-3.6	xxx	xxx
Unemployment Rate	4.4	4.5	4.1	-0.1	xxx	xxx	xxx
<i>Not Seasonally Adjusted</i>							
Labor Force	170,723,000	171,467,000	167,746,000	-744,000	-0.4	xxx	xxx
Employed	163,720,000	164,066,000	161,294,000	-346,000	-0.2	xxx	xxx
Unemployed	7,003,000	7,401,000	6,452,000	-398,000	-5.4	xxx	xxx
Unemployment Rate	4.1	4.3	3.8	-0.2	xxx	xxx	xxx

Annual population adjustments affect the comparability of national labor force estimates over time.
Estimates are subject to monthly and annual revisions.

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NORTH CAROLINA EMPLOYMENT DATA

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			Month Ago		Year Ago		
			Numeric	Percent	Numeric	Percent	
			Change	Change	Change	Change	
			December 2025	November 2025	December 2024		
North Carolina (Current Employment Statistics)							
Seasonally Adjusted							
Total Nonfarm	5,125,000	5,121,700	5,044,300	3,300	0.1	80,700	1.6
Total Private	4,345,700	4,343,300	4,266,900	2,400	0.1	78,800	1.8
Mining & Logging	6,300	6,200	6,000	100	1.6	300	5.0
Construction	288,300	287,200	273,900	1,100	0.4	14,400	5.3
Manufacturing	453,300	454,100	460,500	-800	-0.2	-7,200	-1.6
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	940,200	946,100	932,900	-5,900	-0.6	7,300	0.8
Information	84,400	84,400	85,100	0	0.0	-700	-0.8
Financial Activities	317,800	315,900	308,700	1,900	0.6	9,100	2.9
Professional & Business Services	766,500	765,700	748,300	800	0.1	18,200	2.4
Private Education & Health Services	727,900	726,200	708,500	1,700	0.2	19,400	2.7
Leisure & Hospitality Services	558,600	555,700	545,500	2,900	0.5	13,100	2.4
Other Services	202,400	201,800	197,500	600	0.3	4,900	2.5
Government	779,300	778,400	777,400	900	0.1	1,900	0.2
North Carolina (Current Employment Statistics)							
Not Seasonally Adjusted							
Total Nonfarm	5,156,200	5,156,400	5,078,200	-200	0.0	78,000	1.5
Total Private	4,364,600	4,360,100	4,287,800	4,500	0.1	76,800	1.8
Mining & Logging	6,300	6,200	6,000	100	1.6	300	5.0
Construction	287,000	287,900	272,500	-900	-0.3	14,500	5.3
Manufacturing	452,500	454,000	460,500	-1,500	-0.3	-8,000	-1.7
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	964,300	958,100	960,000	6,200	0.6	4,300	0.4
Information	85,000	84,600	85,800	400	0.5	-800	-0.9
Financial Activities	317,600	315,200	307,900	2,400	0.8	9,700	3.2
Professional & Business Services	766,600	769,500	747,900	-2,900	-0.4	18,700	2.5
Private Education & Health Services	731,800	733,400	712,100	-1,600	-0.2	19,700	2.8
Leisure & Hospitality Services	551,800	549,900	537,800	1,900	0.3	14,000	2.6
Other Services	201,700	201,300	197,300	400	0.2	4,400	2.2
Government	791,600	796,300	790,400	-4,700	-0.6	1,200	0.2

Estimates are subject to monthly and annual revisions.
Estimates may not add to totals due to rounding.

Accessing Data

The data presented in this press release, as well as historical data, can be accessed from NC Commerce's Demand Driven Data Delivery ("D4") system:

<https://d4.nccommerce.com/LausSelection.aspx>

<https://d4.nccommerce.com/CesSelection.aspx>

Technical Notes

This release presents labor force and unemployment estimates from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program. Also presented are nonfarm payroll employment estimates from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program. The LAUS and CES programs are both federal-state cooperative endeavors.

Labor force and unemployment--from the LAUS program

Definitions. The labor force and unemployment estimates are based on the same concepts and definitions as those used for the official national estimates obtained from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a sample survey of households that is conducted for the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) by the U.S. Census Bureau. The LAUS program measures employment and unemployment on a place-of-residence basis. The universe for each is the civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and over. Employed persons are those who did any work at all for pay or profit in the reference week (the week including the 12th of the month) or worked 15 hours or more without pay in a family business or farm, plus those not working who had a job from which they were temporarily absent, whether or not paid, for such reasons as bad weather, labor-management dispute, illness, or vacation. Unemployed persons are those who were not employed during the reference week (based on the definition above), had actively looked for a job sometime in the 4-week period ending with the reference week, and were currently available for work; persons on lay-off expecting recall need not be looking for work to be counted as unemployed. The labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percent of the labor force.

Method of estimation. Statewide estimates are produced using an estimation algorithm administered by the BLS. This method, which underwent substantial enhancement at the beginning of 2021, utilizes data from several sources, including the CPS, the CES, and state unemployment insurance (UI) programs. Each month, census division estimates are controlled to national totals, and state estimates are then controlled to their respective division totals. Substate estimates are controlled to their respective state totals. For more information about LAUS estimation procedures, see the BLS website at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/hom/lau/calculation.htm>

Revisions. Labor force and unemployment data for the previous month reflect adjustments made in each subsequent month, while data for prior years reflect adjustments made at the end of each year. The monthly revisions incorporate updated model inputs, while the annually revised estimates reflect updated population data from the U.S. Census Bureau, any revisions in the other data sources, and model reestimation. In most years, historical data for the most recent five years (both seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted) are revised near the beginning of each calendar year, prior to the release of January estimates.

Seasonal adjustment. The LAUS program seasonally adjusts statewide estimates using an X-11 type of seasonal adjustment filter. These estimates are then smoothed using a filtering procedure to remove irregular fluctuations from the seasonally-adjusted series. For more information about seasonal adjustment and smoothing procedures, see the BLS website at <https://www.bls.gov/lau/lauseas.htm>.

Area definitions. The substate area data published in this release reflect the delineations that were issued by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget on July 21, 2023. A detailed list of the geographic definitions is available online at <https://www.bls.gov/lau/lausmsa.htm>.

Employment--from the CES program

Definitions. Employment data refer to persons on establishment payrolls who receive pay for any part of the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. Persons are counted at their place of work rather than at their place of residence; those appearing on more than one payroll are counted on each payroll. Industries are classified on the basis of their principal activity in accordance with the 2017 version of the North American Industry Classification System.

Method of estimation. CES State and Area employment data are produced using several estimation procedures. Where possible these data are produced using a "weighted link relative" estimation technique in which a ratio of current-month weighted employment to that of the previous-month weighted employment is computed from a sample of establishments reporting for both months. The estimates of employment for the current month are then obtained by multiplying these ratios by the previous month's employment estimates. The weighted link relative technique is utilized for data series where the sample size meets certain statistical criteria.

For some employment series, relatively small sample sizes limit the reliability of the weighted link-relative estimates. In these cases, BLS uses the CES small domain model (SDM) to generate employment estimates. The SDM combines the direct sample estimates (described above) and forecasts of historical (benchmarked) data to decrease the volatility of the estimates. For more detailed information about the CES small domain model, refer to the BLS Handbook of Methods.

Annual revisions. Employment estimates are adjusted annually to a complete count of jobs, called benchmarks, derived principally from tax reports that are submitted by employers who are covered under state unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The benchmark information is used to adjust the monthly estimates between the new benchmark and the preceding one and also to establish the level of employment for the new benchmark month. Thus, the benchmarking process establishes the level of employment, and the sample is used to measure the month-to-month changes in the level for the subsequent months. Information on recent benchmark revisions is available online at www.bls.gov/web/laus/benchmark.pdf.

Seasonal adjustment. Payroll employment data are seasonally adjusted at the statewide supersector level. In some cases, the seasonally adjusted payroll employment total is computed by aggregating the independently adjusted supersector series. In other cases, the seasonally adjusted payroll employment total is independently adjusted. Payroll employment data are seasonally adjusted concurrently, using all available estimates, including those for the current month, to develop sample-based seasonal factors. Concurrent sample-based factors are created every month for the current month's preliminary estimate as well as the previous month's final estimate.

Reliability of the estimates

The estimates presented in this release are based on sample surveys, administrative data, and modeling and, thus, are subject to sampling and other types of errors. Sampling error is a measure of sampling variability—that is, variation that occurs by chance because a sample rather than the entire population is surveyed. Survey data also are subject to nonsampling errors, such as those which can be introduced into the data collection and processing operations. Estimates not directly derived from sample surveys are subject to additional errors resulting from the specific estimation processes used.

Model-based error measures for seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted data and for over-the-month and over-the-year changes to LAUS estimates are available online at www.bls.gov/lau/lastderr.htm.

Measures of sampling error for state CES data at the total nonfarm and supersector levels are available online at <https://www.bls.gov/sac/additional-resources/reliability-of-state-and-area-estimates.htm>.

Release Dates

The next unemployment update is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4, 2026 when the county unemployment rates for December 2025 will be released.

The complete data release schedule through 2025 can be accessed here: <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/release-dates-unemployment-rates/open>