

Iowa Labor Force Update - August 2026

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Summary

Iowa added 2,400 nonfarm jobs in August, with private-sector employment rising by 1,900 and government employment rising by 500. The BLS also revised July 2026 nonfarm employment upward by 300 jobs. Taken together, Iowa's cumulative job growth so far in 2026 stands at 7,800 jobs since December 2025—well ahead of the 9,600-job loss recorded at this point last year. Iowa has added 700 jobs (+0.0%) over the last twelve months, an improvement from the 1,800-job loss reported last month. In August, Iowa ranked 38th nationally in job growth rate, one spot higher than reported in July but still below the national average of +0.4%. Despite weak annual growth, Iowa has the 8th-lowest unemployment rate in the nation at 3.2% and the 3rd-highest labor force participation rate at 67.0%. At the metro level, all eight of Iowa's major metropolitan areas lost jobs over the year.

Key Findings

- **Iowa's job growth rate improved over the last year, but continues to rank poorly.** Iowa's +0.0% nonfarm growth rate ranks 38th among all states over the last 12 months, an improvement of one spot. The national rate was 0.4%.
- **Iowa added 2,400 nonfarm jobs in August.** This was led by gains in manufacturing and education & health services.
- **Iowa has gained 7,800 jobs in the first eight months of 2026.** That is well ahead of the 9,600 jobs lost by this point last year.
- **All eight of Iowa's major metro areas lost jobs over the last year at a combined decline of roughly 8,800.** This means every net job Iowa added came from outside its metropolitan areas.

Sector Leaderboard

Sector	1M Change	12M Change	12M Rate (IA/ US)
Manufacturing	+1,300	-600	-0.3%/ +0.2%
Education & Health Services	+800	+6,000	+2.5%/ +2.0%
Leisure & Hospitality	+700	-1,500	-1.0%/ +0.8%
Construction	+600	+3,200	+3.8%/ +1.5%
Government	+500	+100	+0.0%/ -0.9%
Other Services	+400	+300	+0.5%/ +0.4%
Mining and Logging	+0	+0	+0.0%/ +0.3%
Information	-200	+100	+0.6%/ -4.0%
Financial Services	-300	+800	+0.8%/ -1.1%
Trade, transportation & utilities	-400	-5,200	-1.7%/ +0.1%
Professional & Business Services	-1,000	-2,500	-1.8%/ +0.7%
Total private	+1,900	+600	+0.0%/ +0.6%
Total nonfarm	+2,400	+700	+0.0%/ +0.4%

Job Growth Rate Rank

38th

over the last 12 months

LFPR

67.0% (-0.1 pp)

#3

12M change: -0.7 pp

Unemployment Rate

3.2% (+0.0 pp)

#8

12M change: -0.3 pp

Private vs. Public Jobs

+1.9k/ +0.5k

12M change: +0.6k / +0.1k

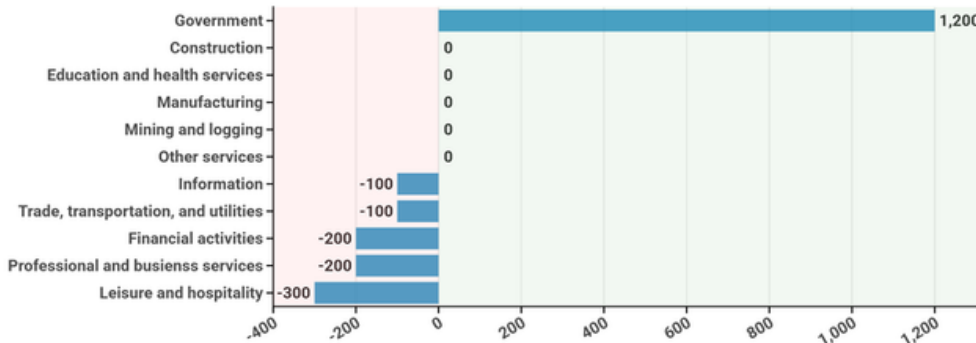
Total Nonfarm Jobs

1,585.8k (+2.4k)

12M change: +0.7k

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Sector Employment Revisions - July 2026



Iowa Nonfarm Revisions

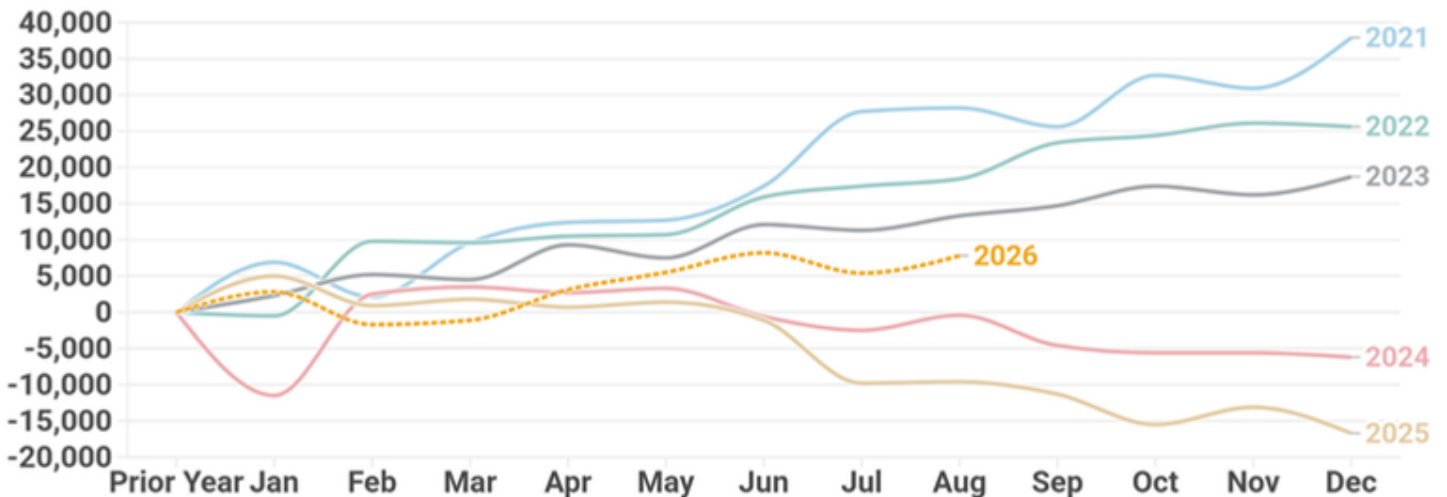
+300 (+0.02%)
for July 2026

U.S. Nonfarm Revisions

+33.8k (+0.02%)
for July 2026

Cumulative Jobs Added by Year - Iowa

From December 2025 to August 2026, employment has grown by 7,800 jobs, versus a loss of 9,600 this time last year.



Note: The dotted yellow line indicates 2026 YTD.

Private Employment Wages & Hours - Iowa

Not-seasonally adjusted earnings and hours measures for the private payroll side of the labor market.

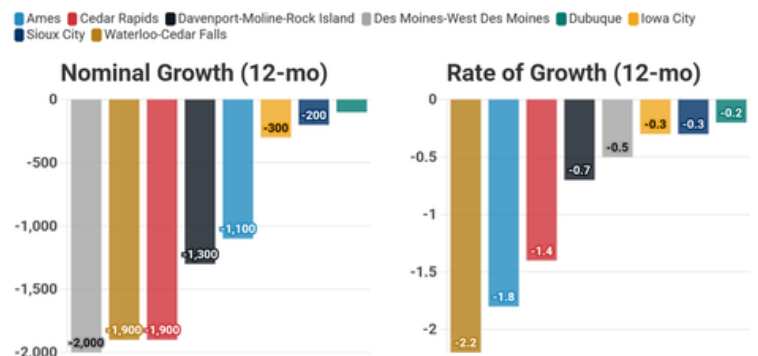
Average hourly earnings **\$30.81** (+\$0.09)
12M change: +\$0.36

Average weekly earnings **\$1,059** (+\$6.16)
12M change: +\$30.65

Average weekly hours **34.4** +0.10
12M change: +0.60

Annual Jobs Added by Iowa Metro, August 2026

Despite flat statewide employment over the past year, every major metro area lost jobs year-over-year in August 2026



Definitions and methodology notes

Definitions of the report’s labor-market terms

Payroll employment terms	BLS CES	Labor force terms	BLS CPS/LAUS	Labor demand and turnover terms	BLS JOLTS
Total nonfarm jobs Employment reported by the Current Employment Statistics program for workers on non-farm payrolls. It reflects payroll jobs, not unique people, so a person with more than one job can be counted more than once.		Labor force All people age 16 and older who are classified as either employed or unemployed. In plain terms, it is the number of people working or actively looking for work.		Job openings Open positions employers are actively recruiting to fill.	
Private jobs The private-sector portion of nonfarm payroll employment. It excludes government payroll employment.		Employed People are classified as employed if, during the reference week, they did any paid work, worked in their own business or farm, worked at least 15 unpaid hours in a family business, or were temporarily absent from a job.		Hires All additions to payroll during the month, whether they are new hires, recalls, or other additions.	
Government jobs The government portion of nonfarm payroll employment, including federal, state, and local government payrolls.		Unemployed People are classified as unemployed if they were not employed, were available for work, and had actively looked for work in the last 4 weeks, or were on temporary layoff.		Quits Voluntary separations initiated by employees, except retirements and transfers to other locations.	
Average hourly earnings Gross payrolls divided by total hours worked during the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. This is an earnings measure, not a posted wage-rate measure.		Labor force participation rate The labor force as a percentage of the civilian noninstitutional population.		Layoffs and discharges Involuntary separations initiated by the employer, including layoffs with no intent to rehire, discharges, and certain terminations of temporary or seasonal workers.	
Average weekly hours Average paid hours during the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. Paid time can include holidays, sick leave, and other paid leave.		Unemployment rate The number of unemployed people as a percentage of the labor force.		Total separations The sum of quits, layoffs and discharges, and other separations.	
Average weekly earnings A weekly earnings measure derived from average hourly earnings and average weekly hours.					

Report notes

Seasonally adjusted A BLS statistical adjustment that removes recurring seasonal influences so underlying month-to-month changes are isolated.	1-month change Report convention: current month minus prior month.	12-month change Report convention: current month minus the same month one year earlier.
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