May 2025 JobsWatch

Quarterly Employment Update

WHY TRACK JOBS DATA?

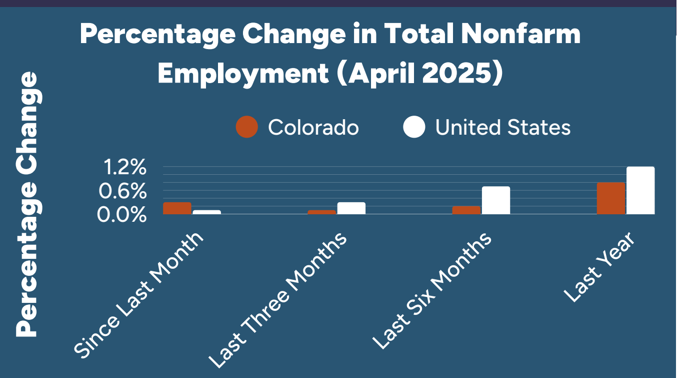
CFI believes in a people-centered economy. When we center policies around the people who uplift our economy, including workers, we are at our strongest. This data is one tool that helps inform CFI's worker-centered approach to policy.

BLS UPDATE SUGGEST SLOWDOWN IN JOB GROWTH

After a months-long data suspension, updated numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics confirm what many Coloradans have felt: our economy has been slowing for a while. Colorado's unemployment rate has ticked up to 4.8%, the 8th highest in the nation.

From February 2024 to February 2025, Colorado experienced negative job growth, with sectors like retail—particularly during the King Soopers strike—driving the slowdown. With the return of workers post-strike, job numbers saw a slight bounce. Colorado's year-over-year job growth is now at 0.8%, a modest improvement but still below the national rate of 1.2%.

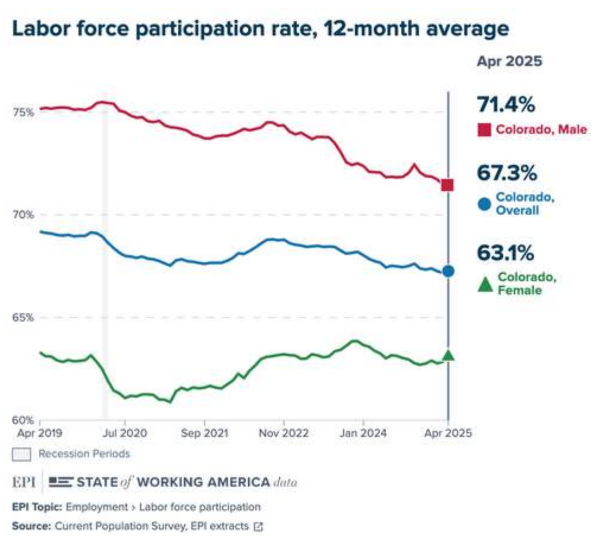
This is a clear reminder of how essential strong unions and fair contracts are—not just for worker well-being, but for economic stability. When workers are empowered to negotiate fair pay and safe conditions, we can avoid disruptive strikes and keep our essential workforce on the job.



Source: State and Regional Number of Jobs
Employment, Hours, and Earnings from the Current Employment Statistics survey (State and Metro Area)
Seasonally Adjusted
http://www.bls.gov/news.release/laus.t05.htm

LABOR FORCE PARTICPATION RATE LAGS

Colorado's labor force participation rate (LFPR) remains strong—7th highest in the U.S.—but has slipped since 2020, with our recovery ranking just 33rd. The LFPR has fallen 0.9 percentage points since February 2020, outpacing the national decline. Key differences persist between men and women's participation rates in Colorado, with women's LFPR roughly 8% lower than that of men's as of 2024. Recent CPS data shows women's workforce participation has stagnated, while men's share has declined post pandemic, dragging down the overall LFPR.



CFI's past research has shown that high child care costs are a key factor limiting women's labor force participation. Infant care in Colorado costs nearly $12,000 more per year than in-state college tuition, ranking the state 5th highest for infant care expenses. Colorado's new paid family and medical leave program (FAMLI), which launched this year, could also influence future trends. Research suggests state paid leave policies boost maternal labor force participation by six points post-birth. It's too early to draw conclusions, but rising FAMLI uptake—especially among men—could help reduce the remaining LFPR gap between men and women.