

# Monthly Economic Update

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**FEBRUARY 2026, FEATURING JANUARY NEWS RELEASES**  
**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE**

Based in part on information and commentary supplied by Federal  
and State government statistical agencies.

# Wisconsin Updates

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## Employment

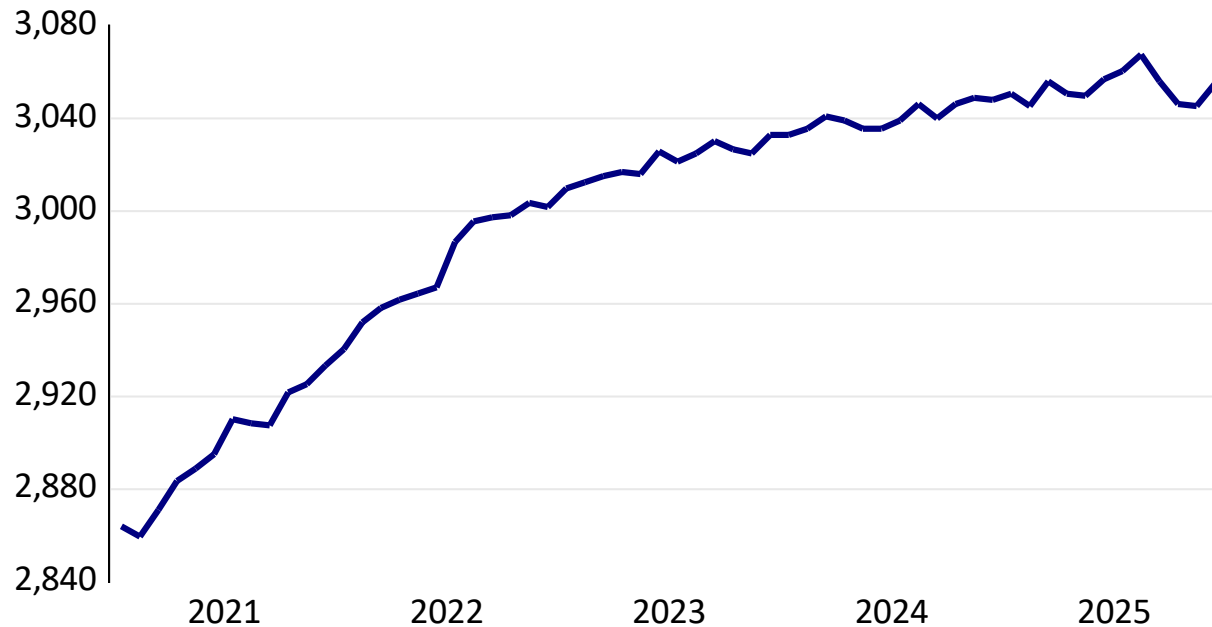
- By Sector
- Government Focus
- MSA Employment

## Wisconsin Personal Income (2025Q3)

# Wisconsin Employment Up 9,000 in December

## Unemployment rate held at 3.1%

Wisconsin Total Nonfarm Employment



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Wisconsin nonfarm employment increased by 9,000 jobs in December, with private employment up by 3,600 and government employment gaining 5,400, mostly in local government.

Over the past three months, a more stable measure, the average monthly job change is a decline of 600 jobs.

Private employment has averaged a decline of 400 jobs over the past three months. Government employment has declined nearly 200 jobs on average.

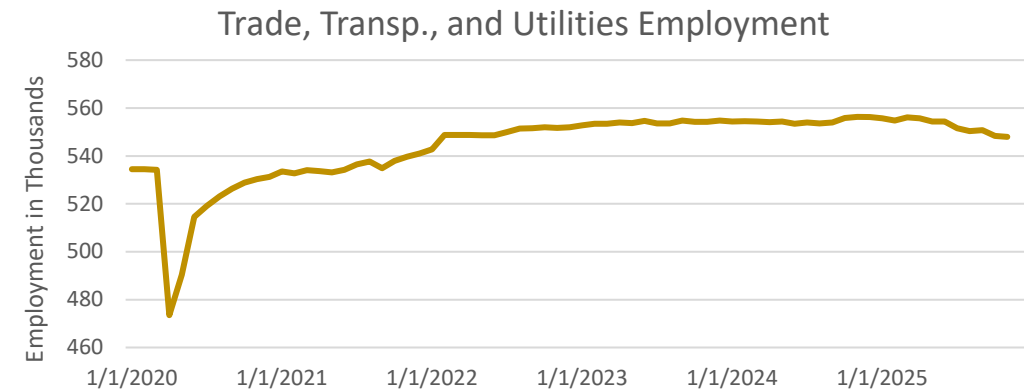
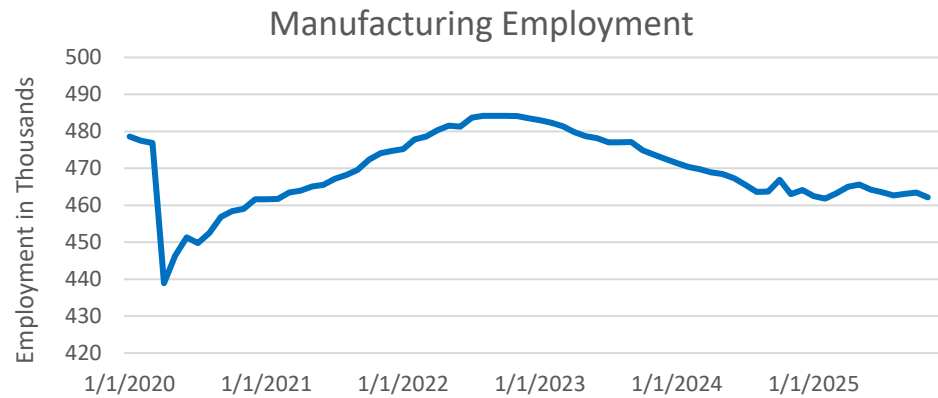
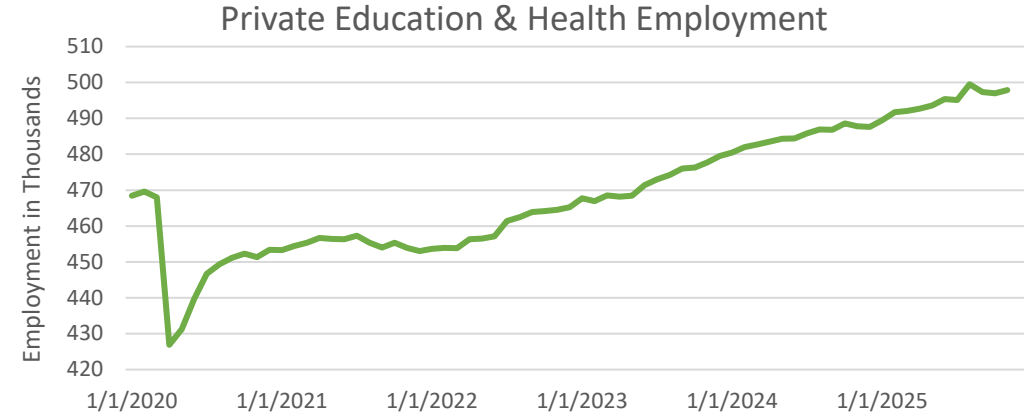
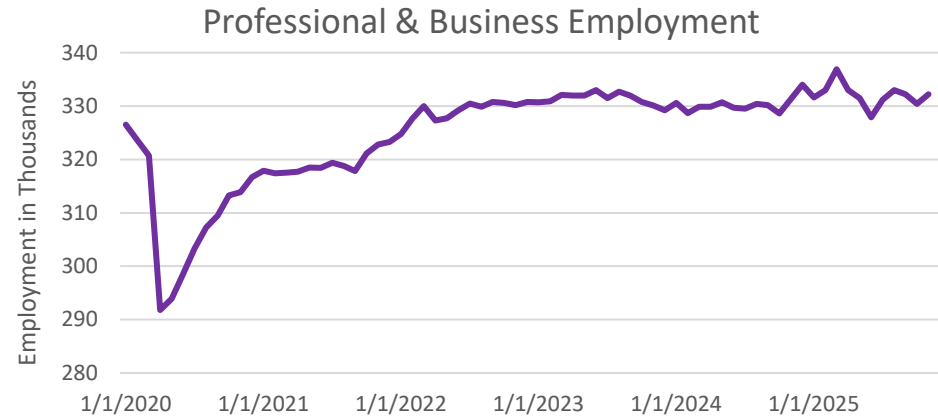
The largest average job gains over the past three months is in construction (+1,100 jobs), private education and health (+1,100), and leisure and hospitality (+1,200). The largest average job losses were in trade, transportation, and warehousing (-1,500), professional and business services (-1,500) and manufacturing (-900).

Over the past year, employment has risen 6,700, an increase of 0.2%. For comparison, U.S. employment has risen 0.4%.

A decline in the labor force in Wisconsin has allowed employment to nearly flatten while keeping the unemployment rate low at 3.1%. Nationally, the unemployment rate in December was 4.4%.

The labor force participation rate in Wisconsin was at 64.2% in December, up from 64.1% in November but down from 65.9% last year.

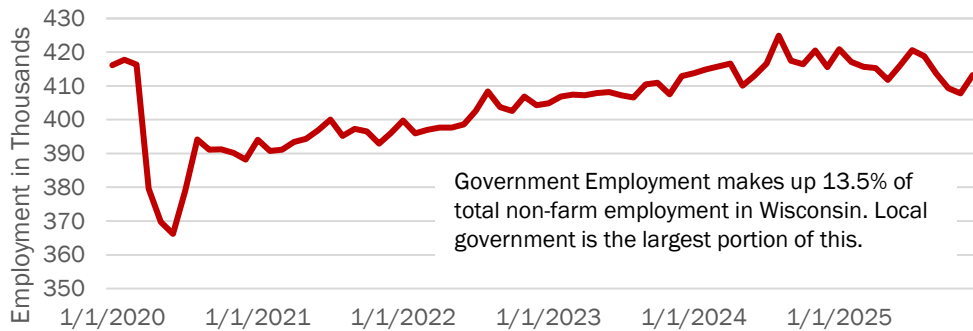
# Wisconsin Employment by Sector



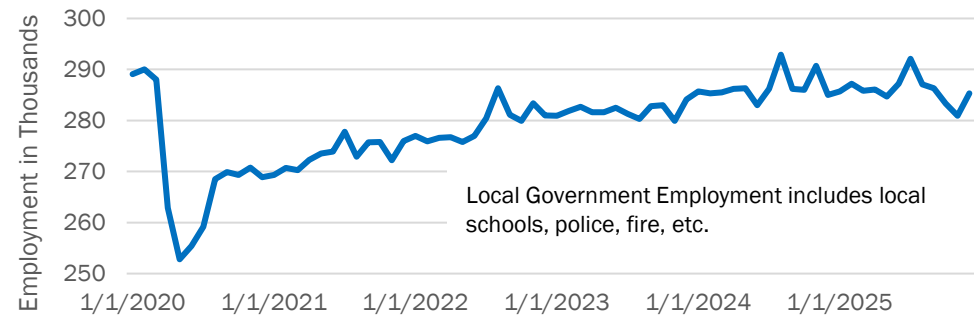
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

# Wisconsin Employment: Focus on Government Employment

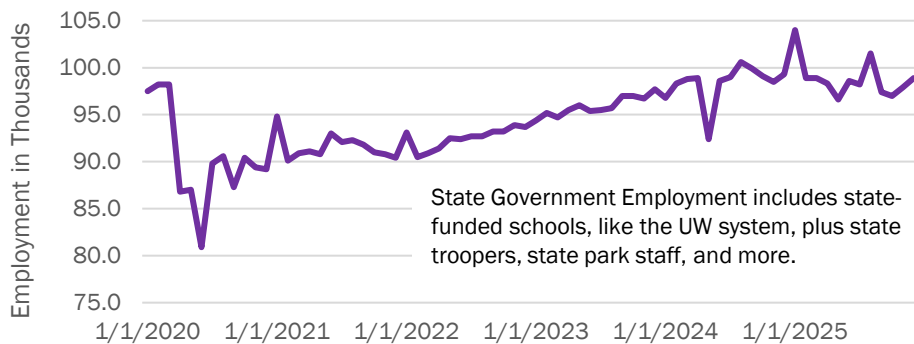
### Total Government Employment



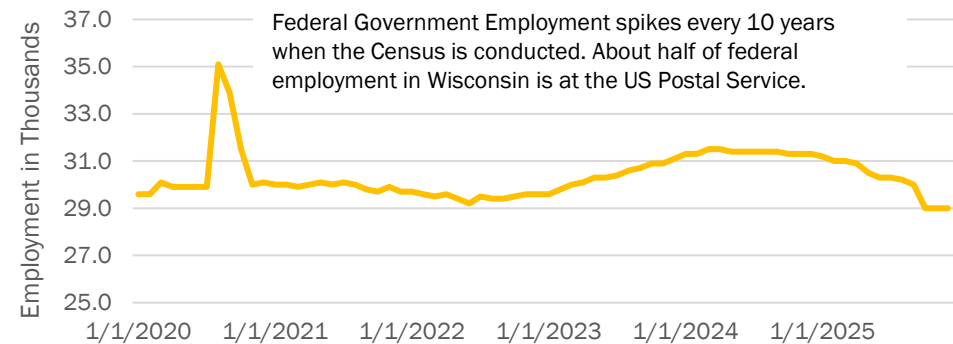
### Local Government Employment



### State Government Employment



### Federal Government Employment



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

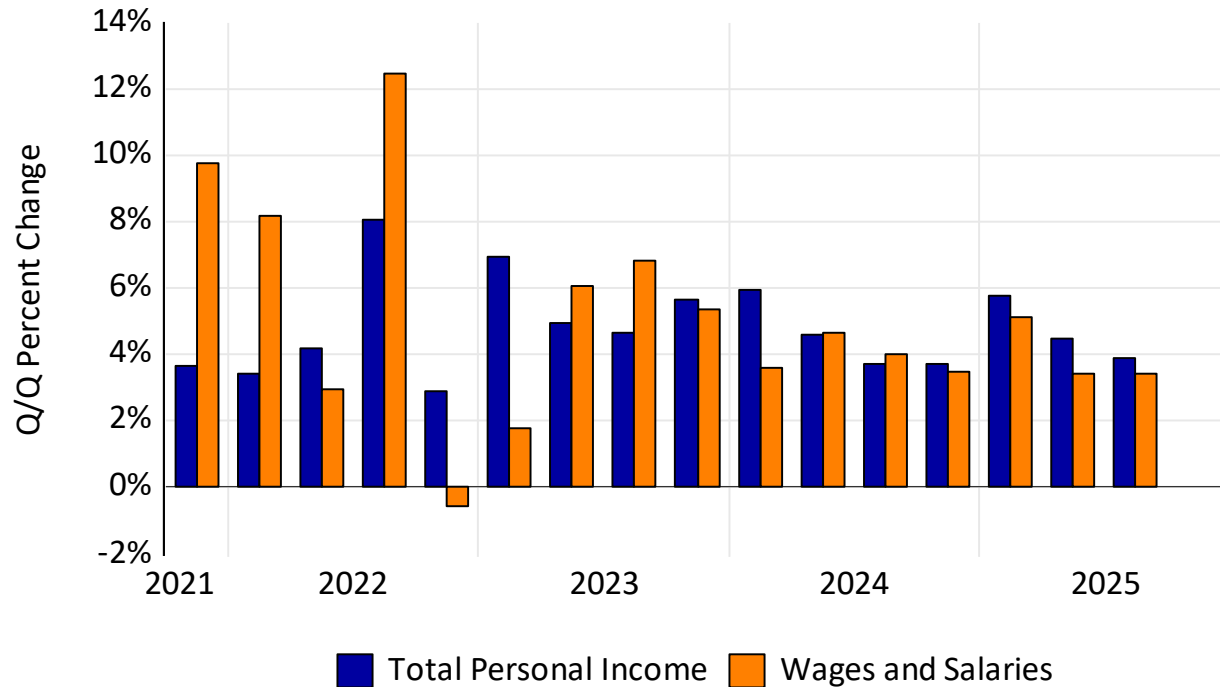
# Six of Wisconsin's 13 MSAs Had Employment Growth over Prior Year

Employment in Thousands	December 2024	September 2025	December 2025	3-month Average Change	1-year Change	1-year % Change
Wisconsin	3,047.6	3,056.0	3,054.3	-0.6	6.7	0.2%
Appleton	129.6	129.9	129.4	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2%
Eau Claire	89.8	90.1	89.8	-0.1	0.0	0.0%
Fond du Lac	46.3	46.3	46.0	-0.1	-0.3	-0.6%
Green Bay	181.8	183.9	184.1	0.1	2.3	1.3%
Janesville-Beloit	72.4	72.2	72.3	0.0	-0.1	-0.1%
Kenosha	77.9	78.3	78.1	-0.1	0.2	0.3%
La Crosse-Onalaska	87.7	88.3	88.5	0.1	0.8	0.9%
Madison	427.6	429.3	429.5	0.1	1.9	0.4%
Milwaukee-Waukesha	863.1	856.0	855.0	-0.3	-8.1	-0.9%
Oshkosh-Neenah	96.9	96.7	97.0	0.1	0.1	0.1%
Racine-Mount Pleasant	79.0	78.3	77.8	-0.2	-1.2	-1.5%
Sheboygan	63.5	64.0	64.4	0.1	0.9	1.4%
Wausau	72.1	72.0	71.3	-0.2	-0.8	-1.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

# WI Personal Income Up 3.9% in Third Quarter

**Wisconsin Personal Income and Wages  
Annualized Rates of Change**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Wisconsin personal income increased at the seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.9% in the third quarter of 2025, down from 4.5% in the second quarter and 5.8% in the first quarter. Wages and salaries, the largest component of personal income, increased 3.4%.

Wisconsin ranked 12<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states and D.C. in terms of annualized in the third quarter. Wisconsin's growth outpaced U.S. growth of 3.3% and also the Great Lakes Region at 3.1%. The Great Lakes region includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Net earnings (wages & salaries, supplements to wages & salaries, and proprietor's income) contributed 2.0 percentage points to Wisconsin's growth, while property income contributed 0.1 percentage points. Current transfer receipts contributed 1.8 percentage points to third quarter personal income growth in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's real GDP increased at an annual rate of 4.3% in the third quarter, slower than U.S. growth at 4.4% and the Great Lakes Region at 4.8%. Wisconsin ranked 31<sup>st</sup> in real GDP growth.

# U.S. Updates

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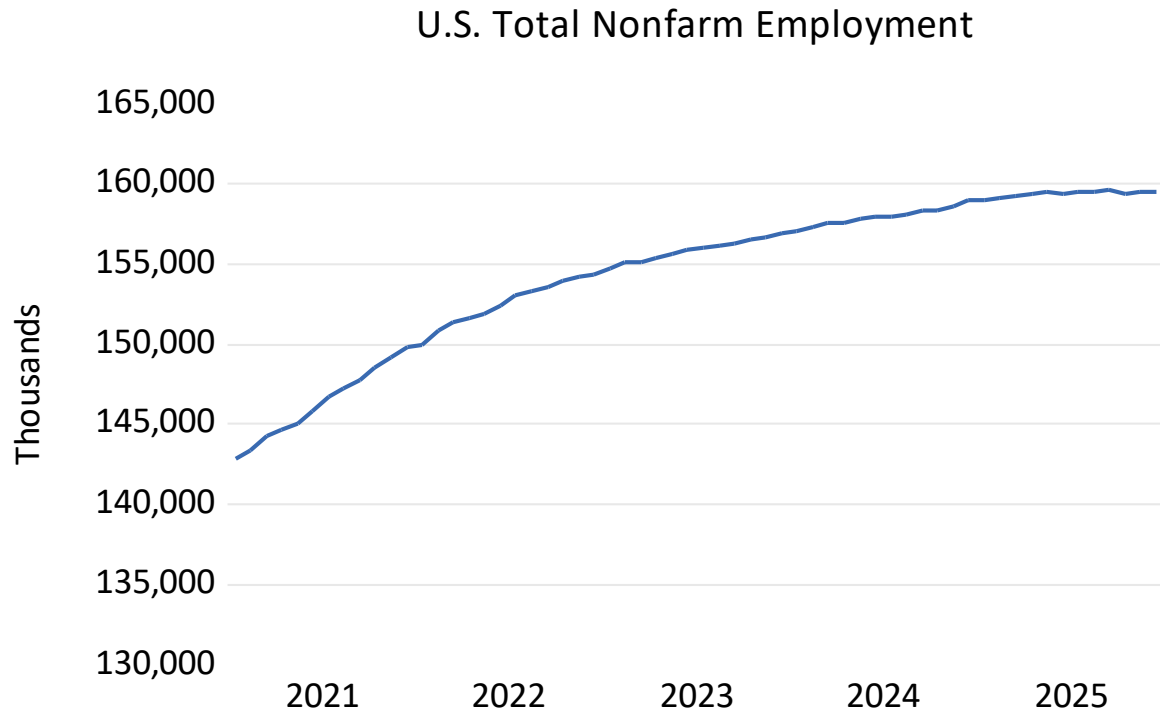
U.S. Employment

Consumer Price Index

Consumer Sentiment

# U.S. Added 50,000 Jobs in December

## Unemployment rate at 4.4%



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Both total nonfarm payroll employment (+50,000) and the unemployment rate (4.4%) changed little in December. Employment in the prior two months was revised down by a total of 76,000. Payroll employment rose by 584,000 in 2025 (an average monthly gain of 49,000), less than the increase of 2.0 million in 2024 (an average monthly gain of 168,000).

Employment in food services and drinking places continued to trend up in December (+27,000). Health care employment continued its upward trend in December (+21,000), with a gain of 16,000 jobs in hospitals. Employment in social assistance continued to trend up (+17,000), mostly in individual and family services (+13,000).

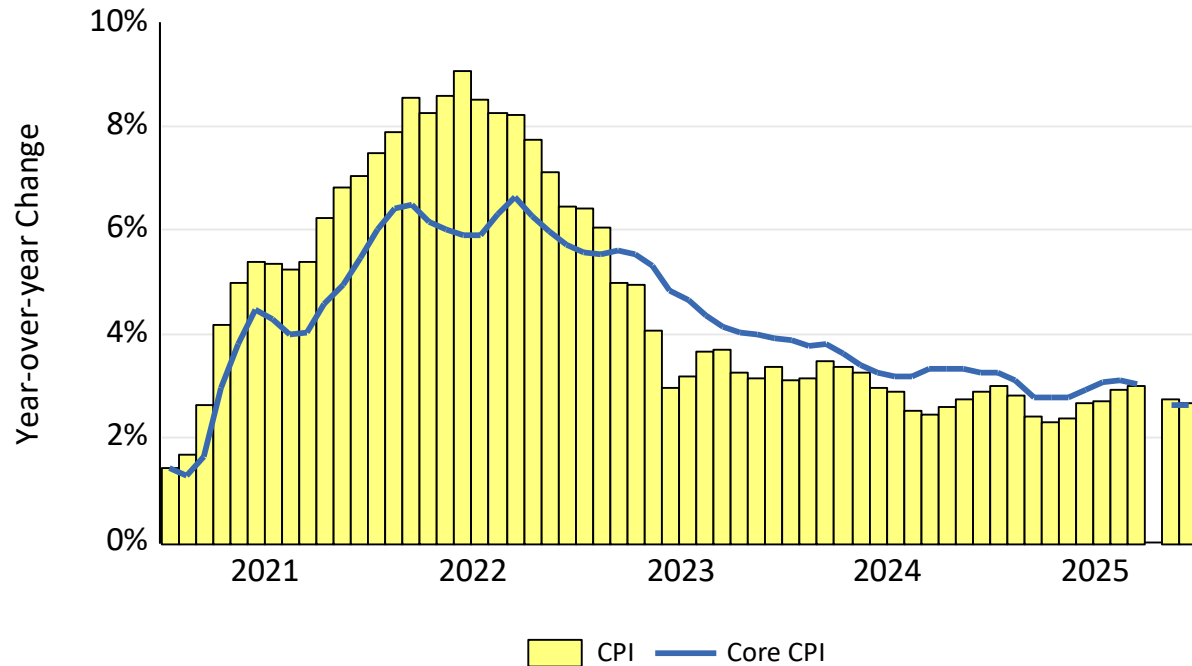
Retail trade lost 25,000 jobs in December. Over the month, employment declined in warehouse clubs, supercenters, and other general merchandise retailers (-19,000) and in food and beverage retailers (-9,000). Electronics and appliance retailers added 5,000 jobs. Retail trade employment showed little net change in both 2024 and 2025.

Federal government employment was little changed in December (+2,000). Since reaching a peak in January, federal government employment is down by 277,000, or 9.2%.

In December, average hourly earnings for all employees on private nonfarm payrolls rose by 12 cents, or 0.3%, to \$37.02. Over the past 12 months, average hourly earnings have increased by 3.8%.

# Annual Consumer Price Increase Steady at 2.7%

Consumer Price Index (CPI)



The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) increased 0.3% on a seasonally adjusted basis in December. Over the last 12 months, the all items index increased 2.7% before seasonal adjustment.

The index for shelter rose 0.4% in December and was the largest factor in the all items monthly increase. The food index increased 0.7% over the month as did the food at home index and the food away from home index. The index for energy rose 0.3% in December.

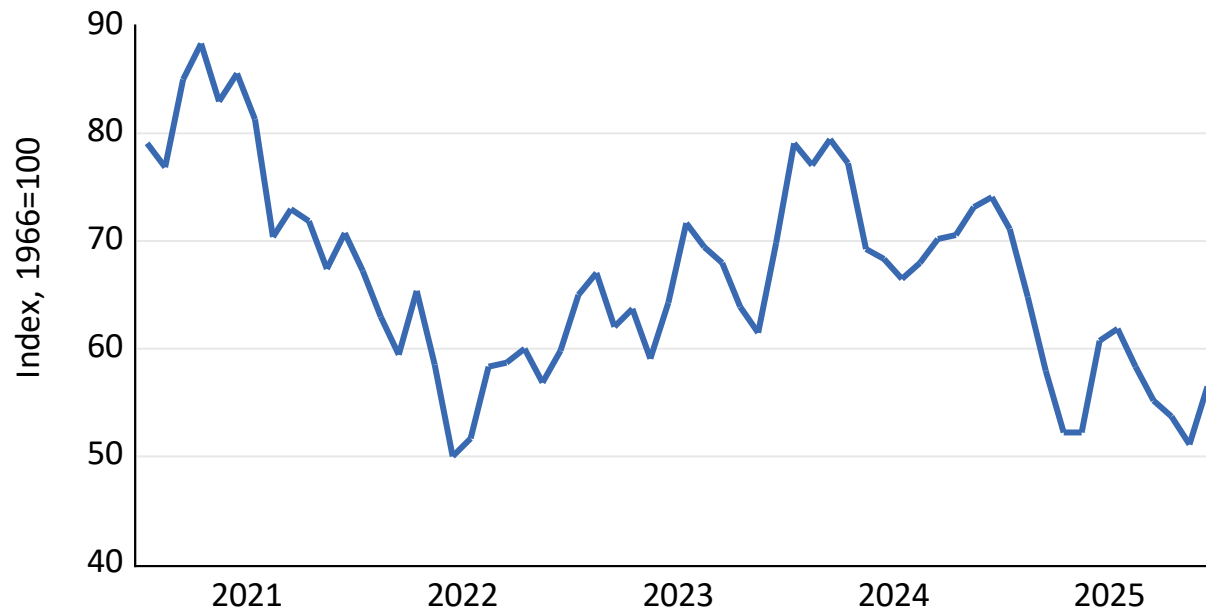
The core index, which excludes food and energy, rose 0.2% in December. Indexes that increased over the month include recreation, airline fares, medical care, apparel, personal care, and education. The indexes for communication, used cars and trucks, and household furnishings and operations were among the major indexes that decreased in December.

The all items index rose 2.7% for the 12 months ending December, the same increase as over the 12 months ending November. The core index rose 2.6% over the last 12 months. The energy index increased 2.3% for the 12 months ending December, while the food index increased 3.1% over the last year.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

# Consumer Sentiment Moved Higher in January

Consumer Sentiment - Michigan Survey



Consumer sentiment increased 6.6% in January, to 56.4. The Index for Current Economic Conditions increased nearly 10%, to 50.4, while the index of consumer expectations saw a smaller rise, up 4.4% to 57.0.

The survey director noted that gains in January were broad-based and were seen across many groups regardless of income distribution, educational attainment, age distribution, and political affiliation.

Despite the increase since last month, however, the index was 21.3% below last years' levels. The index of Current Economic Conditions was 26.2% below last year.

Inflation expectations for the year ahead fell back to 4.0%, the lowest reading since January 2025, when it was at 3.3%. Long-run inflation expectation moved up, from 3.2% last month to 3.3% this month.

Source: University of Michigan's Survey of Consumers

# Get in Touch

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