

AEDC EMPLOYMENT REPORT

MARCH 2026



ANCHORAGE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Sponsored by:



Anchorage Economic Development Corporation

Anchorage Employment Report

A Monthly Publication

March 2026



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President & CEO's Review



The March unemployment report showcases several interesting trends, both month to month and year over year. Overall, Anchorage added 100 jobs between February 2026 and March 2026, with small gains in Oil and Gas and Construction largely offset by losses in the Healthcare and Government sectors, while all other sectors remained relatively static.

Year over year, the story is somewhat different. Total nonfarm jobs are down 1,700 between 2025 and 2026. While this seems like a significant contraction, it is more a reflection of unusually high employment numbers in 2025. Total nonfarm employment in 2026 is higher than in every other year going back to 2018 (excluding 2025), indicating a strengthening economy and growing employment across the private sector.

When viewed over the course of the last decade, Anchorage's economic trends are broadly positive. The workforce is up, unemployment is down, the labor force is increasing, and many anchor industries appear to be either growing or holding steady. Key economic indicators are returning to pre-COVID levels, and there are signs of new investment and economic growth coming to Anchorage that are expected to continue this trend, including increased military spending at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson as well as a variety of new commercial and infrastructure projects slated to begin in 2026 and 2027.

The biggest concerns remain population losses among the 18–64 age demographic, which reduce the available workforce, as well as external macroeconomic factors such as inflation, reduced federal spending and employment, and global trade disruptions acting as a drag on Anchorage's economic recovery.

Next month's employment numbers should provide a clearer picture of the size and strength of summer seasonal industries, including tourism, construction, and seafood logistics. This will give us a better understanding of how national and global economic factors are impacting Anchorage's economy and seasonal employment. We are hopeful that these sectors will show strong performance, indicating continued growth and investment in some of the Municipality's key industries.

Report Inclusion Details



Each month, AEDC publishes the ***Anchorage Employment Report***, offering a comprehensive snapshot of the city's labor market and overall economic health.

The report tracks key indicators including unemployment trends, labor force participation, industry performance, and broader workforce dynamics.

It also highlights notable shifts across sectors, emerging trends, and year-over-year comparisons to provide important context.

Together, these insights create a clear and timely picture of Anchorage's employment landscape—supporting informed decision-making for businesses, policymakers, educators, and job seekers alike. The report serves as a valuable tool for understanding workforce challenges, identifying opportunities for growth, and guiding strategic planning across the community.

Please note that data for the most recent months are preliminary estimates and may be subject to revision as additional information becomes available.

*Data for the January - March reports was delayed due to a Federal release with published data.

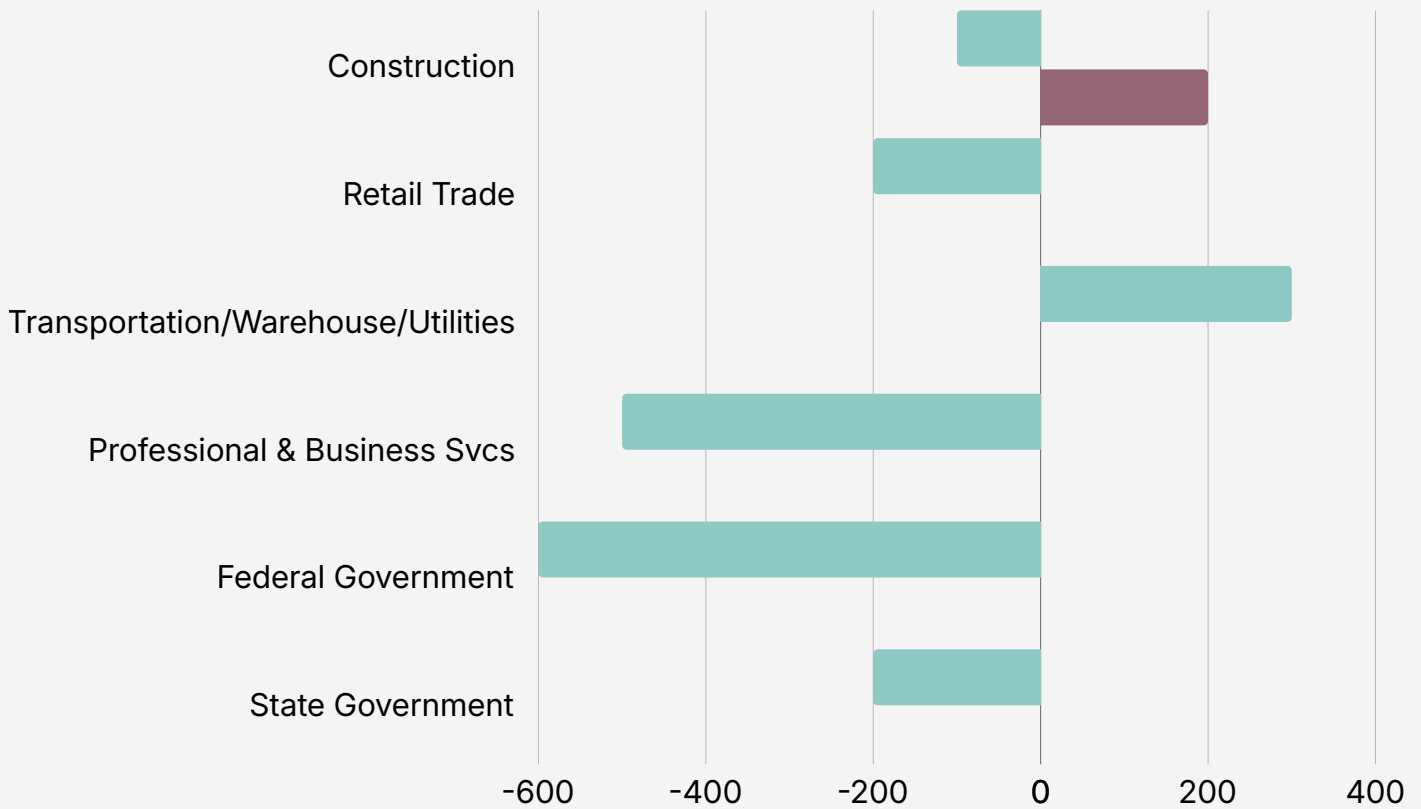
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March Employment Overview

Year over Year and Month over Month Changes

- Year over Year: March '25 to March '26
- Month over Month: February '26 to March '26

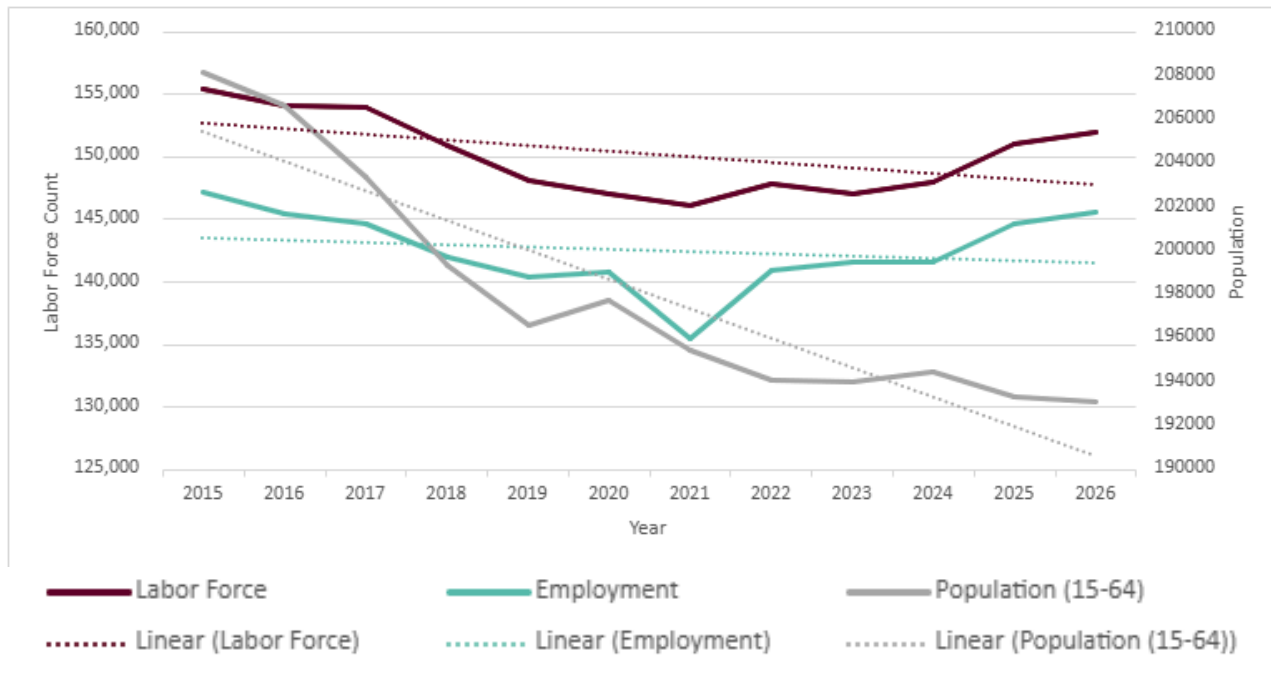


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (CES Labor Force Data)

This chart shows year over year and month over month job changes across most major industries in Anchorage. Increases in Transportation/Warehouse/Utilities, Healthcare, and Oil & Gas employment year-to-year compensate for the declines in Government and Professional & Businesses Services employment. These trends indicate a shift in economic growth drivers, with resource extraction, transportation and logistics, tourism, and healthcare all making gains due to increased activity and investment, while consumer-focused industries such as retail, wholesale, and restaurants are seeing contraction, possibly due to rising costs and economic uncertainty.

The contraction in Professional & Business Services is more likely the result of reduced business spending on marketing, legal, and consulting services due to tighter budgets and the growing adoption of new technologies such as artificial intelligence. The year over year changes are likely due to unusually high employment numbers in 2025, as 2026 employment numbers are still on a trend of growth from the past few years.

March Employment Trends Compared with Annual Population Change

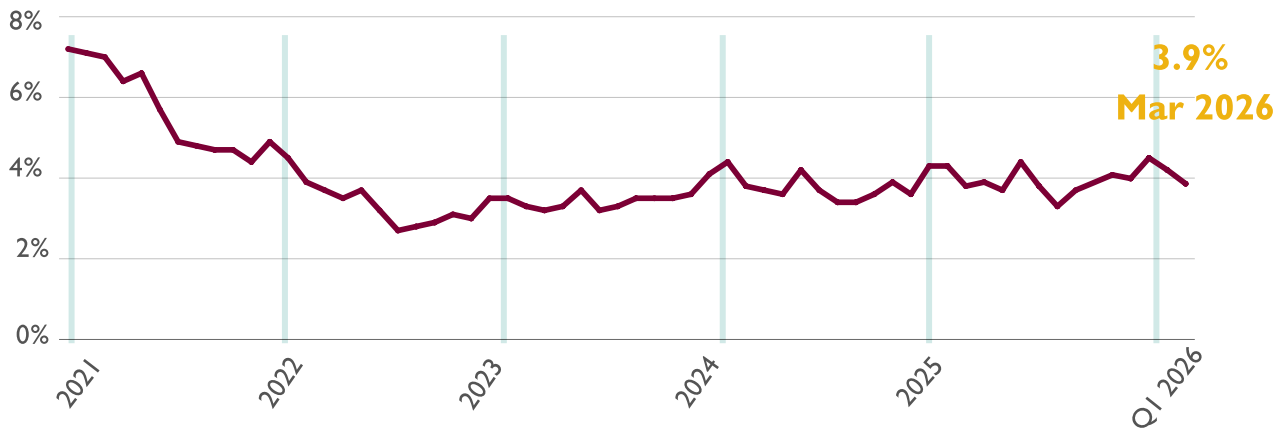


Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (CES Labor Force Data); Lightcast Analyst (Demographics Table via AEDC dashboard)

Anchorage’s labor market has been declining faster than overall employment since 2015. At the same time, the city’s working-age population is also shrinking, creating additional pressure on the available workforce. Since the unemployment rate is based on the labor force, a shrinking labor force can sometimes make economic conditions look stronger than they really are.

**10 Year
Employment
Trend**

Unemployment Rate Trend (2021-2026)



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (CES Labor Force Data)

Unemployment rate decreased slightly to 3.9% (February 2026, 4.2%). The average unemployment rate in 2026 thus far is 4.2%, however this is a seasonal trend year over year so we expect to continue seeing a decrease entering Q2 2026. The unemployment rate is 0.1 percentage point higher than March 2025 but **is the third-lowest March unemployment rate the Municipality has seen in the last 36 years.**

For Anchorage, this data suggests that more people are leaving the workforce altogether due to factors like outmigration, retirements, high costs of childcare, and lower participation among working-age residents. As a result, the unemployment rate may not fully reflect the challenges facing the local economy. Overall, the trend points to a gradual decline in Anchorage’s population which is coupled with a workforce that has been growing since 2022. Taken together, this raises concerns about a labor shortage that is causing difficulties for most private-sector industries.

3.9%
Unemployment

3rd Lowest
March Unemployment
Rate in Anchorage
the Muni has seen
in the last 36 years.

10-year Largest Industry Trend Shifts



Source: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (CES Labor Force Data)

Over the past decade, Anchorage has experienced significant shifts in its industry composition. Employment in traditionally resource-based sectors has declined sharply, with mining and logging down 51% and oil and gas down 53%. Additional losses in retail trade (16%), information (34%), state education (19%), and financial activities (14%) further point to broad-based contraction across both goods-producing and several service-oriented industries.

These declines have been partially offset by growth in healthcare (15%) as well as transportation and warehousing (24%) [combined], indicating a transition toward more population-serving and logistics-driven sectors.

Healthcare
15%
Increase

Transportation & Warehousing
24%
Increase

10-Year Largest Industry Trend Shifts

What this means for Anchorage

Anchorage’s economy is changing in a pretty significant way. Jobs in oil, gas, and other resource industries have declined, meaning the city is becoming less dependent on the high-wage industries that historically fueled a lot of economic growth. At the same time, industries like healthcare and logistics are growing, reflecting both local community needs and Anchorage’s role as a major transportation hub.

There are some tradeoffs that come with this shift. Many of the industries seeing declines typically provide higher wages and create broader economic impacts, while growing sectors like healthcare and logistics are more tied to population needs and often grow at a slower pace. Combined with a shrinking labor force and fewer working-age residents, this could make it harder for Anchorage to sustain strong long-term economic growth.

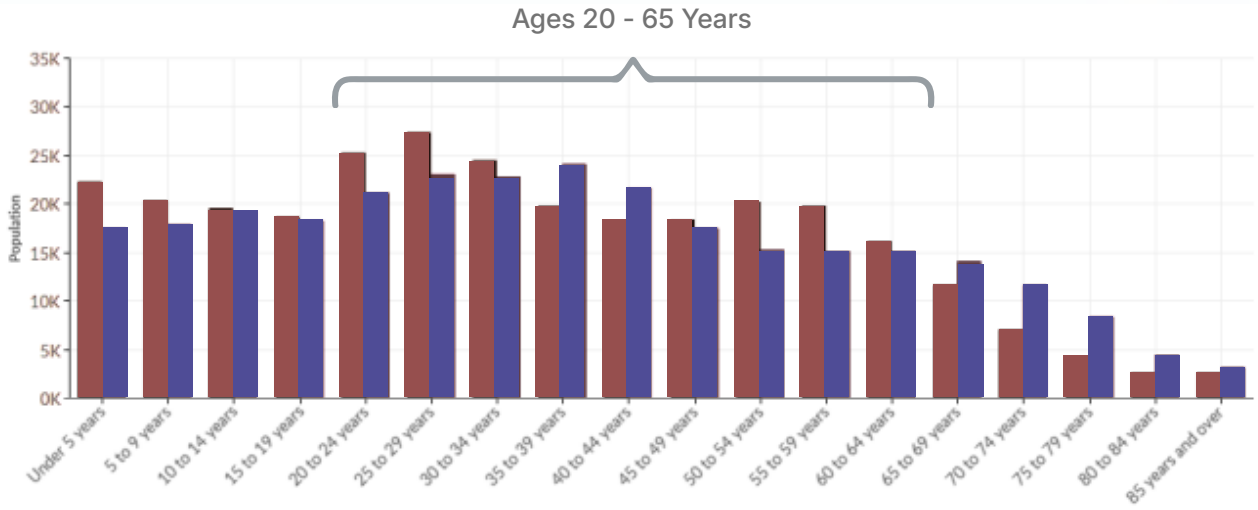
Overall, Anchorage appears to be shifting from a resource-based economy to one that is more focused on services and logistics. That may create more stability in the near term but could also mean fewer opportunities for the kind of rapid growth and high-paying jobs the city has historically relied on.

Industries of Growth



Appendix A- Population Change by Age (2015-2026)

■ 2015 Population ■ 2026 Population



Source: Lightcast. Analyst Platform: Demographics Report (Anchorage, AK). Accessed via AEDC Lightcast Analyst tool.

10 Year
Population
Change

Thank you Diamond Investors



AEDC wishes to thank our report sponsor, First National Bank Alaska, and our Diamond Investors who made this report possible. Thank you.

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