KANSASWORKS

State Board Meeting

Docking State Office Building

Room 226 (Wheatfield Room)

915 SW Harrison Street, Topeka, KS 66612

Virtual Teams Meeting

Meeting Link: KWSB Meeting 4-14-2026

Meeting ID: 258 981 045 228 04

Passcode: dX7ZF6B2

April 14, 2026

David Harwood, Chair

Neelima Parasker, Vice Chair

KANSASWORKS STATE BOARD

AGENDA

Tuesday, April 14, 2026
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Microsoft Teams-Virtual Only
Join Teams Meeting Now
Meeting ID: 258 981 045 228 04
Passcode: dX7ZF6B2

Dial in by phone
+1 785-414-8630, 114159476# United States, Topeka
Find a local number
Phone conference ID: 114 159 476#

I. Welcome, Call to Order and Introductions: David Harwood, Chair

II. Chair Report: David Harwood

III. knectY: Opportunity Youth Project: Amanda Ramsey, Special Projects Manager and Cindy Nau, knectY Program Manager, Kansas Department of Commerce

IV. Consent Agenda: David Harwood
a. December 9, 2025, KWSB Meeting Minutes
Recommended Action: Approve the consent agenda as presented

V. State Policy Discussion: Trent Howerton, Policy Manager, Kansas Department of Commerce

VI. State Service Delivery Study Report: Susan Weidenbach, Director of Workforce Advancement, Kansas Department of Commerce

VII. Labor Market Report: Emilie Doerksen, Labor Economist, Kansas Department of Labor

VIII. Local, State, Federal Updates: Susan Weidenbach, Director of Workforce Advancement, Kansas Department of Commerce
- Recent Directives from the United States Department of Labor
- Current grant opportunities

IX. 2026 KWSB Meetings:
- August 25, 2026 (All-day meeting, in-person only)
- December 8, 2026 (Virtual only)

X. Meeting Adjournment

KANSASWORKS STATE BOARD

DRAFT MINUTES/MOTIONS

Tuesday, December 9, 2025
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Welcome provided by David Harwood, **KANSAS**WORKS State Board Chair

Chair Report: David Harwood, Senior Vice President, Terracon, provided the Chair Report.

Bylaws Review and Vote: Susan Weidenbach, Director of Workforce Advancement, Kansas Department of Commerce, reviewed all draft bylaw revisions and conducted a vote. Bylaw revisions approved by the board.

Consent Agenda and Actions:

KWSB Draft Meeting Minutes 5-1-24 ~ Approved
KWSB Draft Meeting Minutes 8-7-24 ~ Approved
KWSB Draft Meeting Minutes 12-3-24 ~ Approved
KWSB Draft Meeting Minutes 2-3-25 ~ Approved
KWSB Draft Meeting Minutes 5-6-25 ~ Approved
KWSB Draft Meeting Minutes 8-5-25 ~ Approved

State Policy Recommendation: Trent Howerton, Policy Manager, Kansas Department of Commerce, reviewed policy update recommendations.

Labor Market Report: Emilie Doerksen, Labor Economist of the Kansas Department of Labor, provided a presentation of the most recent updates in labor market information.

Annual Report Highlights: Susan Weidenbach, Director of Workforce Advancement, Kansas Department of Commerce, presented a high-level overview of the PY24/FY25 Workforce Services Annual Report.

Local, State, Federal Updates: Susan Weidenbach, Director of Workforce Advancement, Kansas Department of Commerce, provided information on executive orders issued by the Trump administration.

2026 KWSB Meetings:

- August 25, 2026
- December 8, 2026

KWSB Meeting adjourned: 2:16 PM

DRAFT

Labor Market Conditions

KANSASWORKS State Board Meeting
April 2026

Grant Weishaar, Economic Analyst

Kansas
Department of Labor

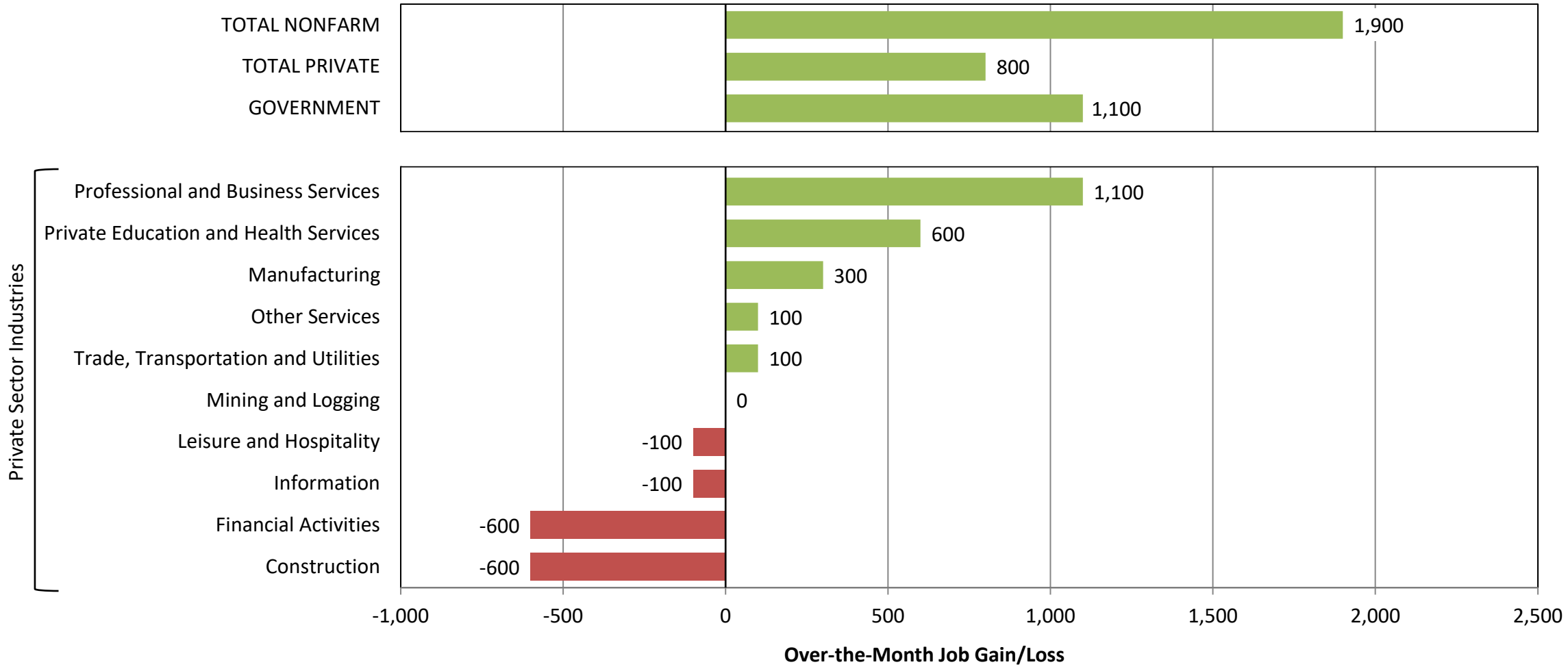
Current Employment Statistics (CES)

- Monthly survey of employers conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics
  - CES provides estimates of employment, hours, and earnings by industry
- 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
  - Persons appearing on more than one payroll are counted on each payroll
- Establishments are classified in an industry based on their principal product or activity using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)

CES FAQs: *https://www.bls.gov/sae/questions-and-answers.htm*

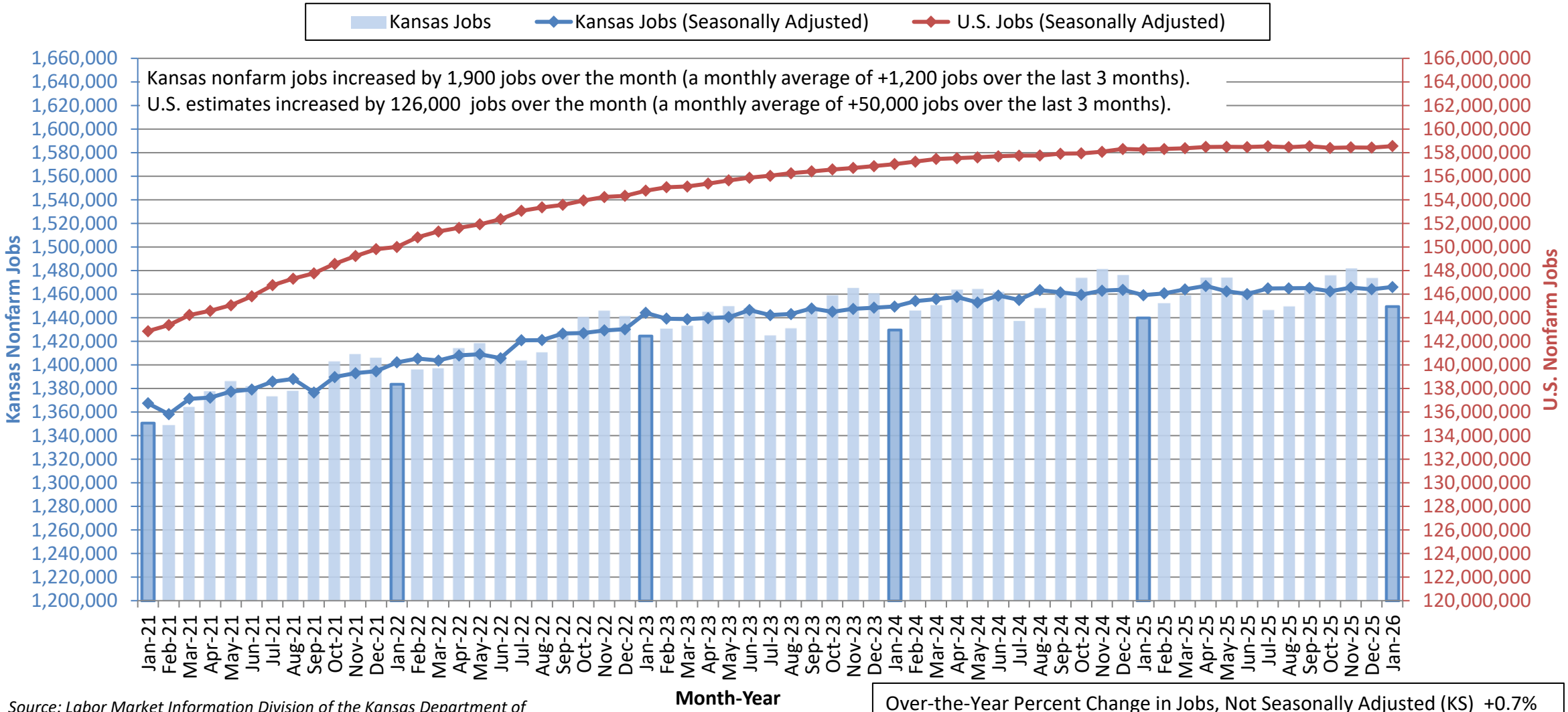
Over-the-Month Change in Employment (seasonally adjusted)
Kansas
January 2026

Six of the major sectors saw an increase in jobs over-the-month, while four saw a decrease and one was unchanged.



Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Employment Statistics (CES)

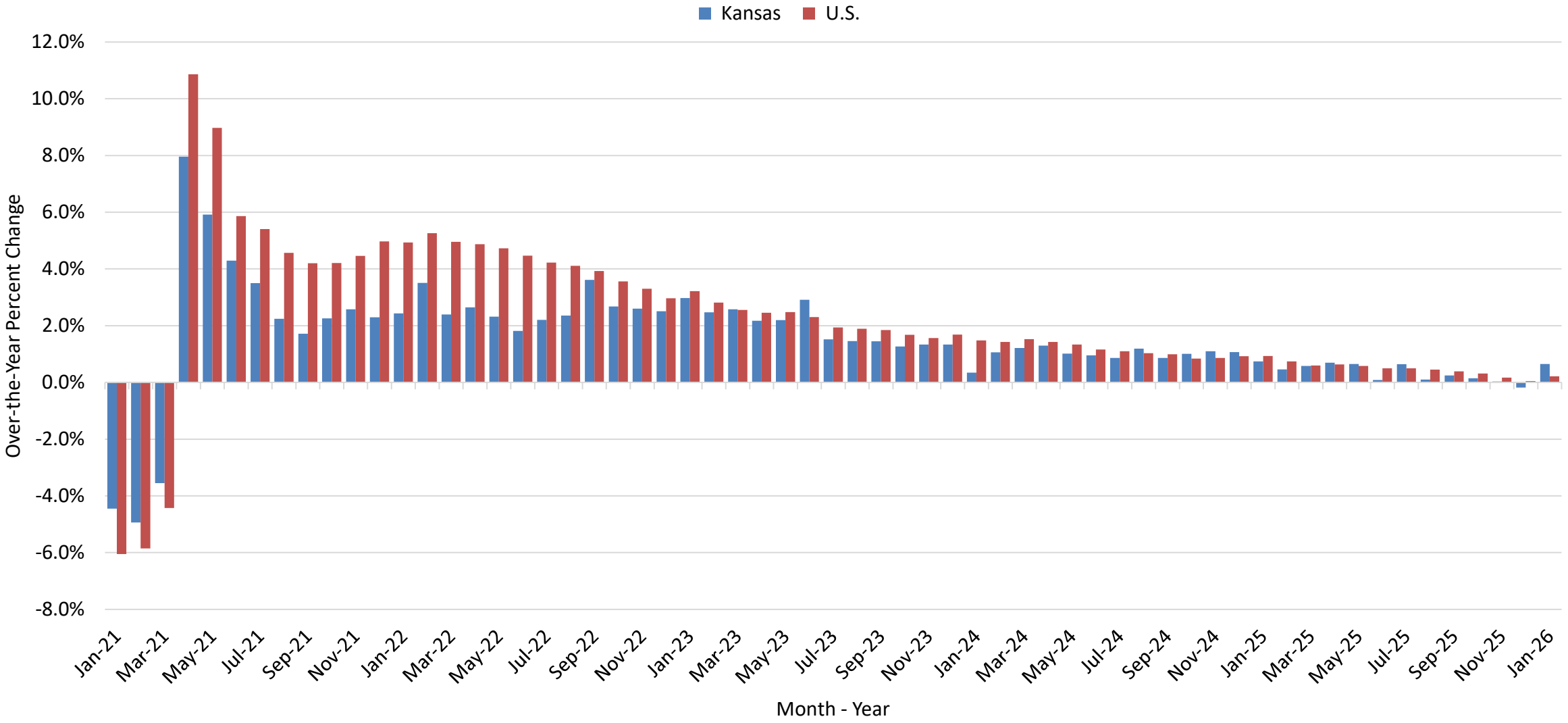
Nonfarm Jobs
Kansas and U.S.
January 2021 - January 2026



Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Employment Statistics

Over-the-Year Percent Change in Jobs, Not Seasonally Adjusted (KS) +0.7%
Over-the-Year Percent Change in Jobs, Not Seasonally Adjusted (US) +0.2%

Over-the-Year Percent Change in Total Nonfarm Jobs
Kansas and U.S. (Not Seasonally Adjusted)
January 2021 - January 2026



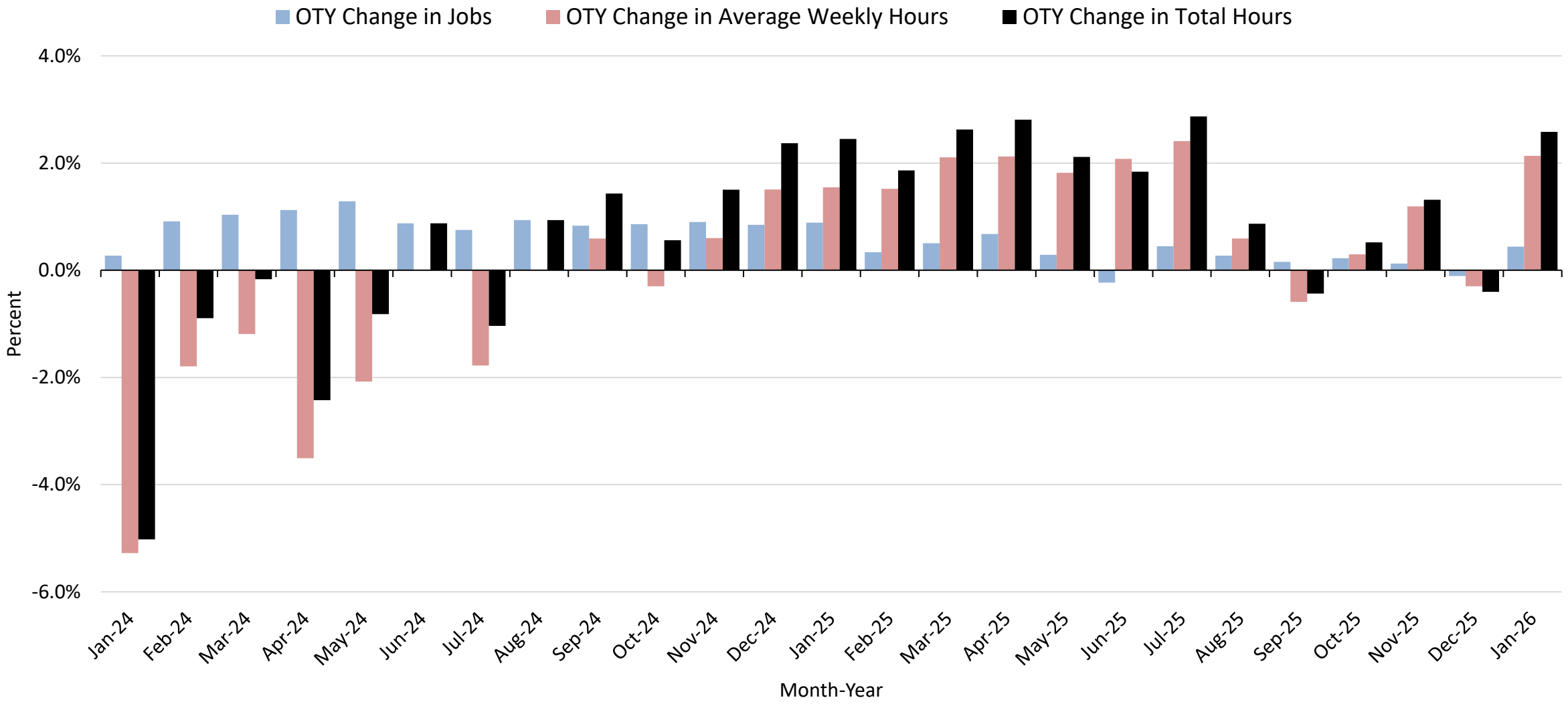
Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Employment Statistics (CES)

Kansas Nonfarm Jobs (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

	January 2026	12 Month Change	
		Absolute Change	Percent Change
TOTAL NONFARM	**1,449,200**	**9,400**	**0.7%**
TOTAL PRIVATE	**1,188,300**	**5,200**	**0.4%**
Mining and Logging	5,800	-300	-4.9%
Construction	69,900	2,700	4.0%
Manufacturing	172,600	-700	-0.4%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	272,300	-400	-0.1%
Information	16,800	-400	-2.3%
Financial Activities	79,400	400	0.5%
Professional and Business Services	170,900	700	0.4%
Private Education and Health Services	218,300	3,500	1.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	127,300	-300	-0.2%
Other Services	55,000	0	0.0%
GOVERNMENT	**260,900**	**4,200**	**1.6%**
Federal Government	24,000	-2,900	-10.8%
State Government	53,800	4,600	9.3%
Local Government	183,100	2,500	1.4%

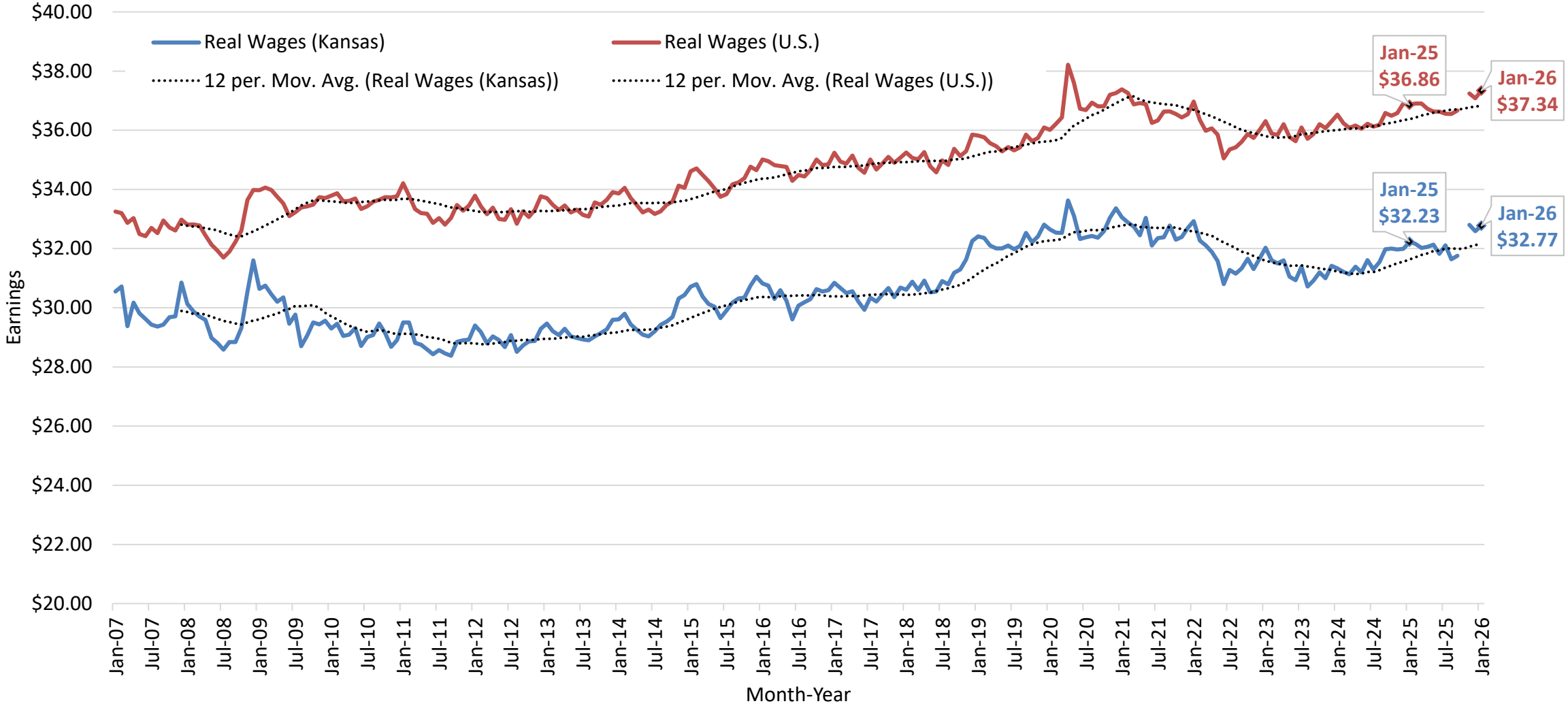
Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Employment Statistics (CES)

Over-the-Year Percent Change in Private Sector Jobs, Average Weekly Hours, and Total Hours Worked
Kansas (Not Seasonally Adjusted)
January 2024 - January 2026



Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Employment Statistics (CES)

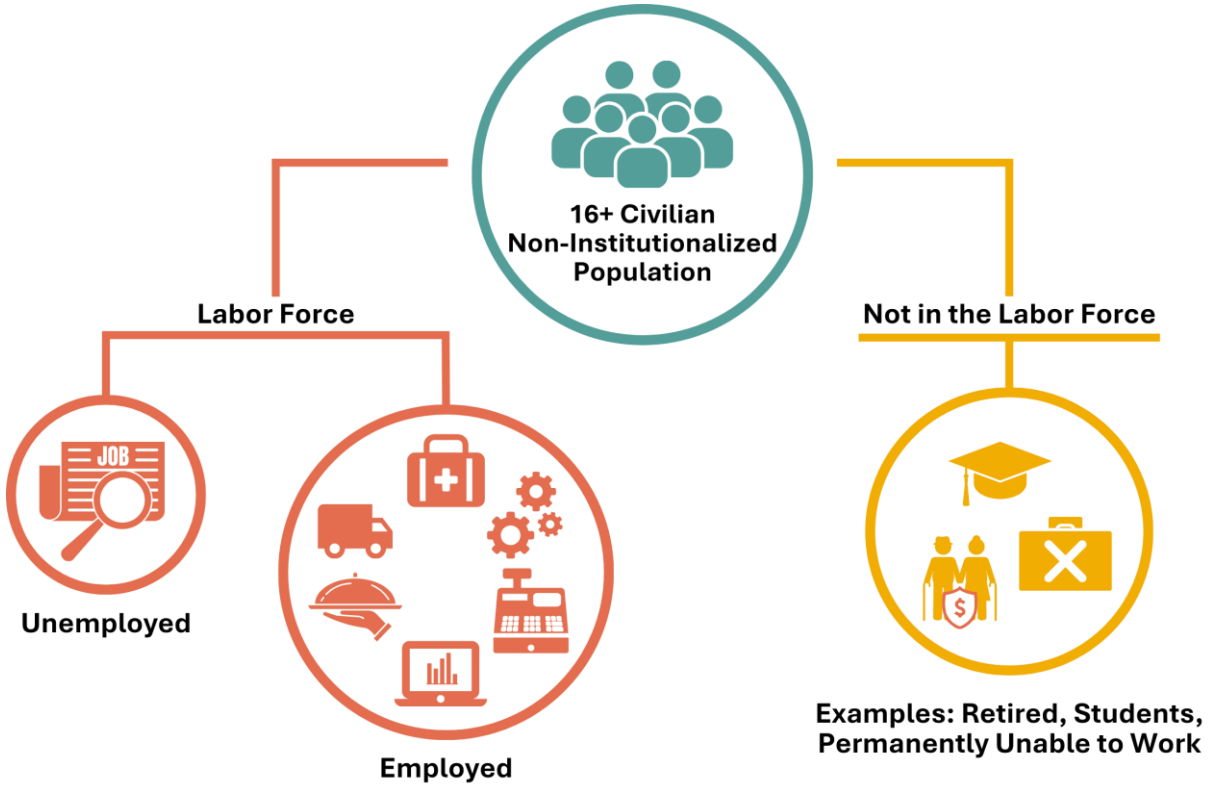
Private Sector Real Hourly Earnings
Kansas and U.S. (Not Seasonally Adjusted)
January 2007 - January 2026



Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Employment Statistics (CES)
**October 2025 data unavailable due to the 2025 lapse in federal appropriations*

Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

- **Unemployed** individuals are all people who were not employed during the reference week, were available for work, and made specific efforts to find employment some time during the 4-week period ending with the reference week
  - Laid-off workers awaiting recall are also included in this category
- **Employed** individuals include those working for pay or profit, running their own business or farm, or working 15 or more hours unpaid in a family business
  - Those temporarily absent from work, such as on leave, are also counted as employed

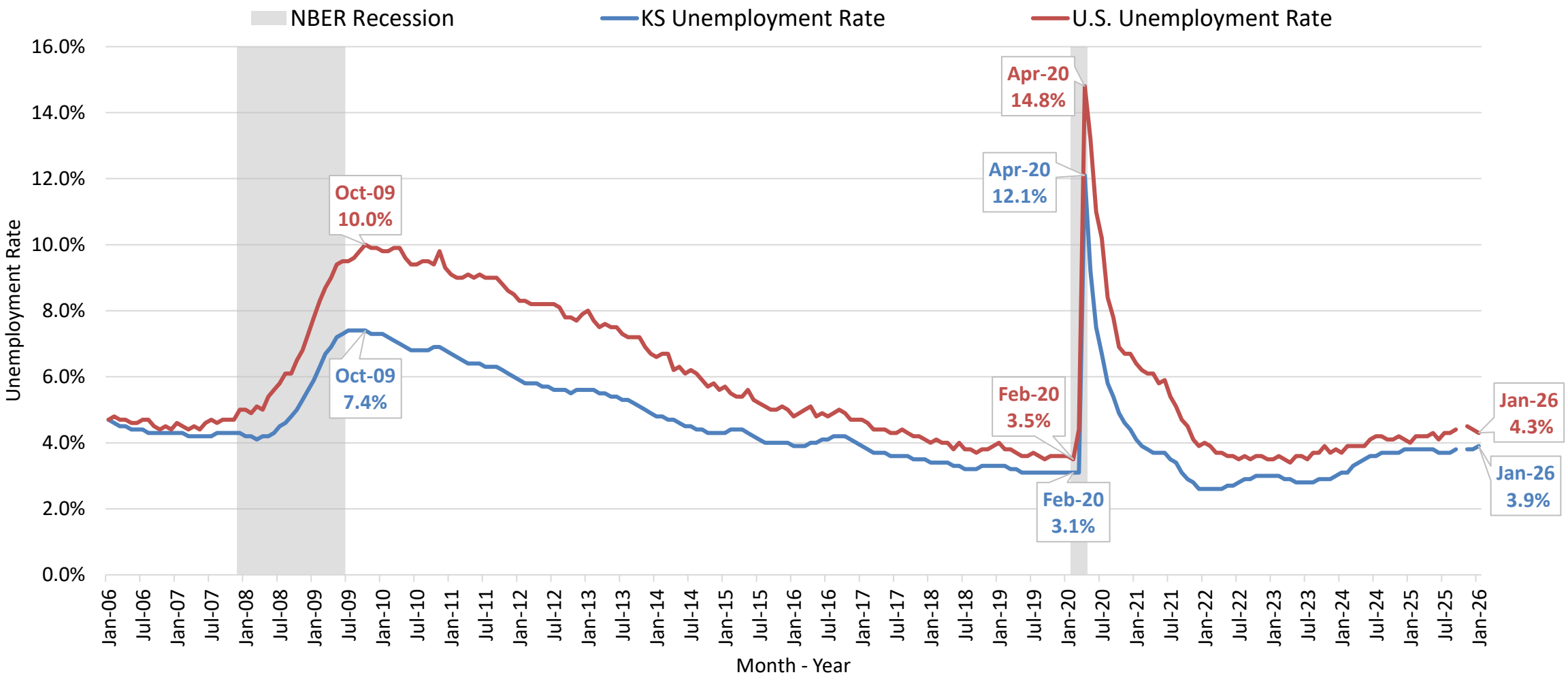


$$Unemployment\ Rate = \frac{Unemployed}{Labor\ Force} * 100$$

$$Labor\ Force\ Participation\ Rate = \frac{Labor\ Force}{Civilian\ Noninstitutional\ Population, Age\ 16+} * 100$$

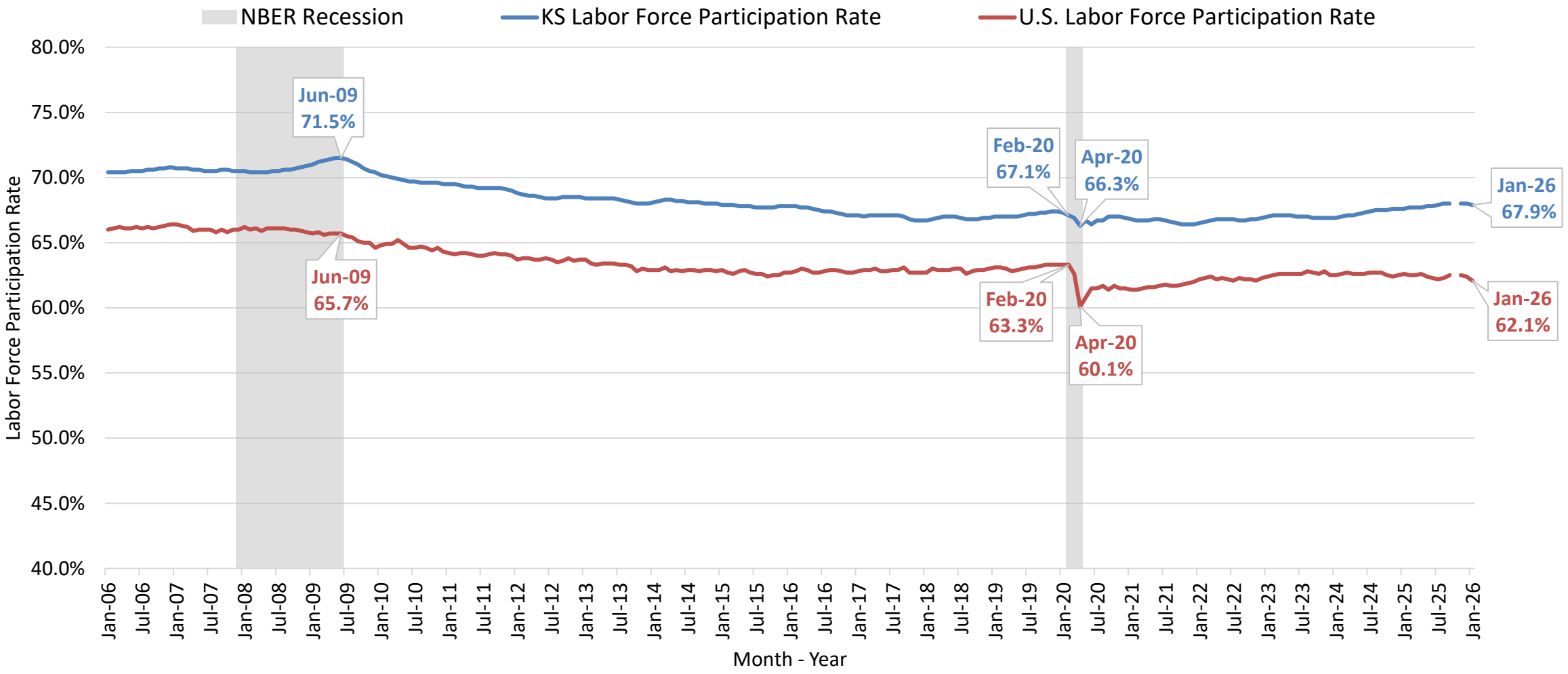
LAUS FAQs: https://www.bls.gov/lau/laufaq.htm

Unemployment Rate
Kansas and U.S.
January 2006 - January 2026



Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Current Population Survey (CPS)
**October 2025 data unavailable due to the 2025 lapse in federal appropriations*

Labor Force Participation Rate
Kansas and U.S.
January 2006 - January 2026



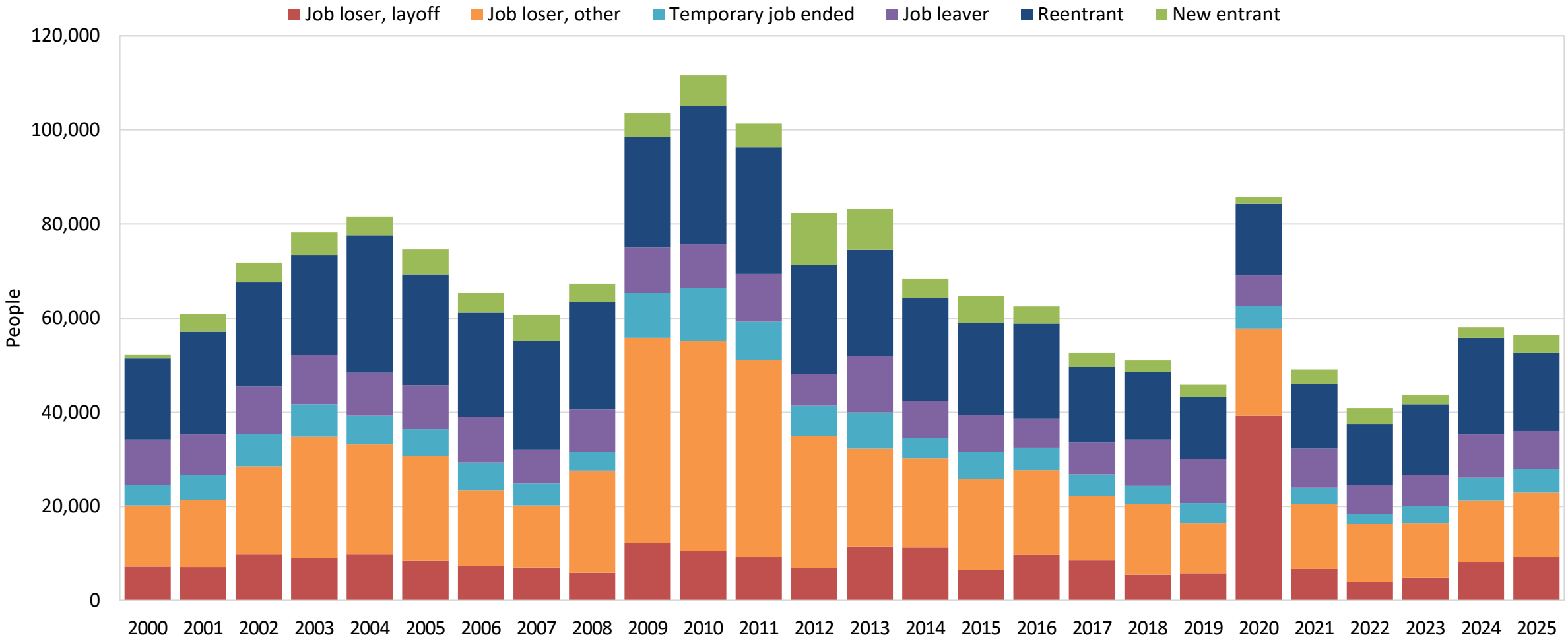
Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Current Population Survey (CPS)
**October 2025 data unavailable due to the 2025 lapse in federal appropriations*

Current Population Survey (CPS)

- The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a monthly survey of U.S. households conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPS provides a wide range of information about the labor force.
  - CPS data is the source for the official U.S. unemployment rate and the primary input for the model-based state LAUS estimates.
    - The LAUS model helps reduce volatility in the monthly state-level CPS estimates, but the program only produces total labor force estimates (no demographic detail)
  - The following charts are based on CPS data for Kansas
    - The charts use a 12-month average to increase the reliability for state-level estimates and eliminate seasonality

Additional information about the limitations of state level CPS estimates:
https://www.bls.gov/lau/notescps.htm

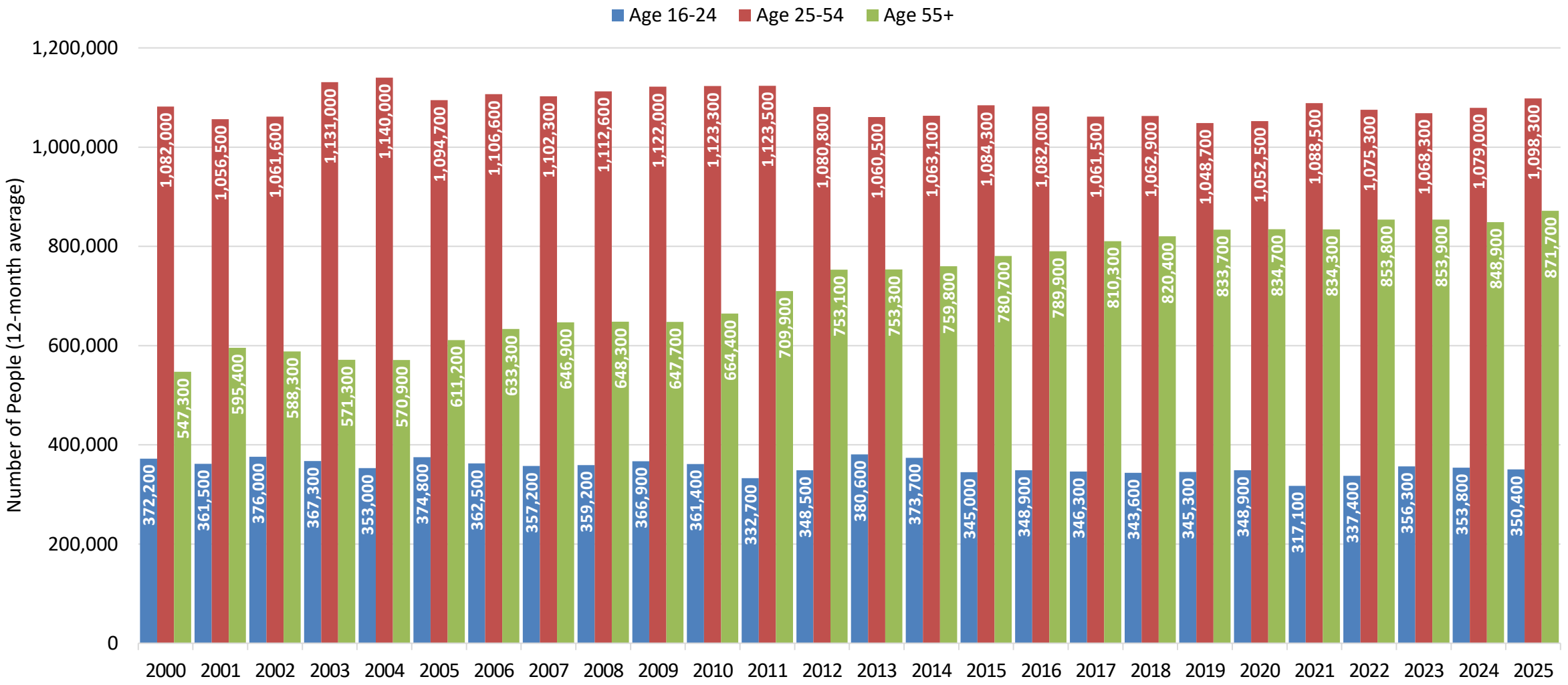
Unemployment Reason
Age 16+
Kansas
2000 - 2025



Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Population Survey (CPS)

Note: Annual estimates for 2025 are 11-month averages that exclude October. Data for October 2025 were not collected due to the federal government shutdown.

Civilian Noninstitutional Population by Age
Kansas
2000 - 2025



Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Population Survey (CPS)

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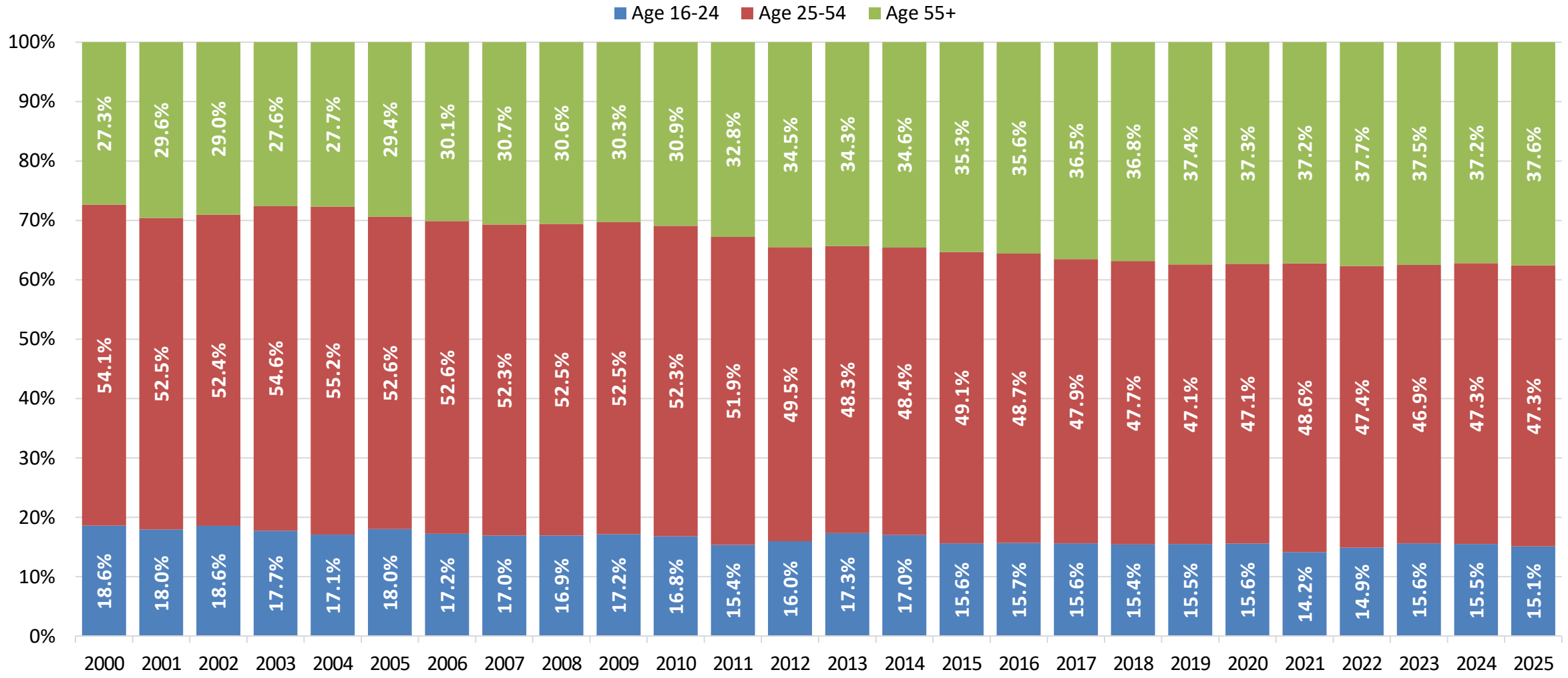
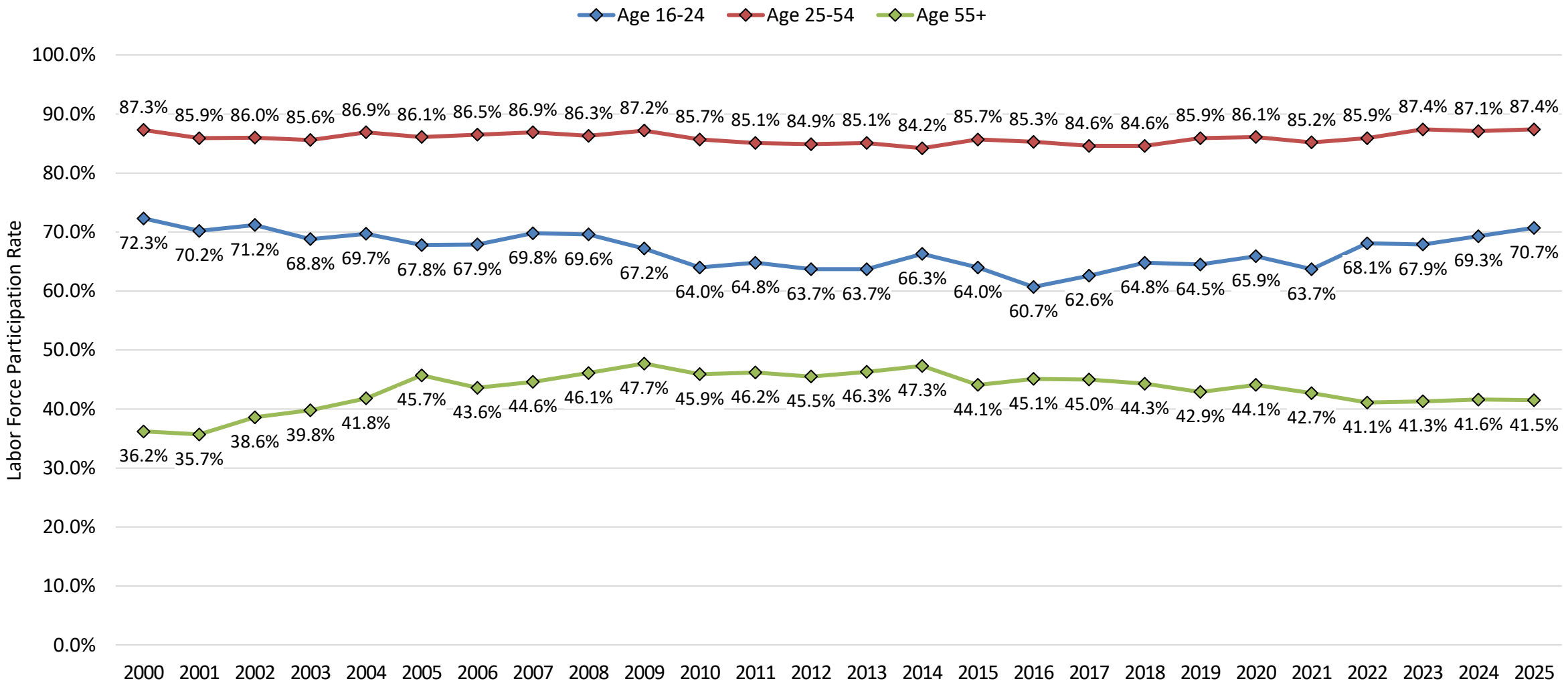
Civilian Noninstitutional Population by Age
Kansas
2000 - 2025



Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Population Survey (CPS)

Note: Annual estimates for 2025 are 11-month averages that exclude October. Data for October 2025 were not collected due to the federal government shutdown.

Labor Force Participation Rate by Age
Kansas
2000 - 2025



Source: Labor Market Information Division of the Kansas Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; Current Population Survey (CPS)

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Labor Market Information

401 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka Kansas 66603
Email: KDOL.Laborstats@ks.gov
Web: klic.dol.ks.gov

KANSASWORKS State Board
April 14, 2026
Workforce Program Initiatives Summary
FY26 / Quarter 2

PROGRAM SUMMARY UPDATES

REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT (RESEA)

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) is a collaboration between the Kansas Department of Commerce and the Kansas Department of Labor. The goals of RESEA are to shorten the number of weeks Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits are claimed, prevent and detect UI overpayments, decrease the likelihood of claimants exhausting UI benefits, achieve cost savings to the UI trust fund, and facilitate rapid reemployment for UI claimants.

RESEA is provided in sixteen Job Centers around the state. There are sixteen grant-funded positions located at five Job Centers. Wagner-Peyser-funded staff provide RESEA services in offices that do not have dedicated staff. Claimants scheduled for RESEA are required to report to a workforce center as a condition of receiving UI benefits. From October 1, 2025, to December 31st, 2025, Kansas saw changes in RESEA program metrics. Q4 Initial intake had 2,614 scheduled, 1,337 completed, 667 FTR, and 610 were waived prior to attending. Subsequent appointments had 1,331 scheduled, 961 completed, 191 FTR, and 179 waived prior to attending. As of November 2024, Kansas successfully launched the **ReEmployLink Module**, officially replacing the legacy CICS mainframe scheduling system. The transition has been a significant milestone, providing staff and claimants with a more modern, user-friendly, and efficient scheduling tool.

In parallel, Kansas has made **significant progress** in its multi-year, comprehensive **RESEA program evaluation**. Partnering with third-party evaluator **ACTUS**, the state has begun the 52-week random assignment. This large-scale study will use **random assignment methodology** to rigorously assess the impact of RESEA services—specifically, how effective the program is at reducing the length of time individuals receive Unemployment Insurance.

MY (RE)EMPLOYMENT PLAN

Beginning June 2021, My (Re)Employment Plan (MRP) was revived and updated in HB2196. The program remains a collaboration between the Kansas Departments of Commerce and Department of Labor and the **KANSAS**WORKS Workforce System and provides enhanced reemployment services to Kansans who are unemployed and looking for work. The program connects unemployment recipients who have received three weeks of Unemployment Insurance payments with **KANSAS**WORKS.com.

Individuals scheduled for My (Re)Employment Plan are required to complete a Job Search Plan and to create/upload their resume in **KANSAS**WORKS.com. Customers needing assistance are encouraged to visit their nearest Workforce Center. October 1 2025, to

December 31st 2025, 2,701 claimants were notified of their MRP participation requirements, 1,510 have completed, 537 FTR, and 382 were waived.

Studies have shown that the longer a person is unemployed, the harder it is to get back to work. Instead of waiting until the end of their entitlement to benefits, recipients are guided to make a planned approach toward getting a new job that emphasizes personal responsibility.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TAA)

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program is a federal workforce development program that assists U.S. workers who have lost or may lose their job because of a lack of work due to foreign trade. TAA seeks to provide adversely affected workers opportunities to obtain the skills, credentials, resources, and support necessary to become suitably reemployed. Petitions are filed with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) on behalf of a group of workers. If certified, the petition identifies the eligible worker group within a specific firm or subdivision who may pursue TAA Benefits and Employment and Case Management Services. TAA Benefits include paid Classroom Training, TRA-Trade Readjustment Allowances (income support while attending full-time TAA Training), sponsored On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, and Apprenticeship Programs. Funding is also available for Out-of-Area Job Search and Relocation Allowances, and RTAA-Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (a wage subsidy, for workers 50 years of age or older). The TAA Program works closely with the Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) in determining initial eligibility and throughout their TAA Enrollment.

During FY26 Quarter 2, three TAA Adversely Affected Workers were enrolled in the TAA Program. During this period, no new TAA Enrollments were approved for previous TAA Petitions. No TAA Workers completed TAA Training. During this period, no new TAA Training Plans were approved; one new TAA Training Plan is being developed to submit for approval. Additionally, no new TAA Workers were approved for Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA) Benefits or received a RTAA Wage Reimbursement Payment as the program expired on June 30, 2022.

Typically, TAA will coordinate with the Rapid Response Team, TAA Case Managers, and Local Area Commerce and partner staff to identify trade-impacted companies. TAA termination provisions took effect on July 1, 2022, and under this termination, USDOL may not conduct new investigations or issue certifications of eligibility for new groups of workers. In addition, benefits and services may not be provided to workers who were certified before July 1, 2022, but who were not separated before that date. Potential TAA Petitions are still being submitted to USDOL to hold in the scenario that the TAA Program gets reauthorized.

FOREIGN LABOR CERTIFICATION

H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program
H-2B Temporary Non-Agricultural Program

H-2A is the temporary agricultural program that allows agricultural employers who anticipate a shortage of domestic workers to bring nonimmigrant foreign workers to the U.S. to perform agricultural labor or services of a temporary or seasonal nature. Employment is of a seasonal

nature where it is tied to certain times of year by an event or pattern, such as a short annual growing cycle, and requires labor levels above what is necessary for ongoing operations. Employment is of a temporary nature when the employer's need to fill the position with a temporary worker will, except in extraordinary circumstances, last no longer than one year.

H-2A enrollments per local area:

	PY26/Q1	PY26/Q2	PY26/Q3	PY26/Q4	Y-T-D Total
Local Area I	133 Enrollments	Enrollment	Enrollments	Enrollments	133
Local Area II	22 Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	22
Local Area III	05 Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	05
Local Area IV	34 Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	34
Local Area V	08 Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	08
Total	202 Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	Enrollments	202

H-2B-78

JOBS FOR VETERANS GRANT (JVSG)

The Jobs for Veterans Grant (JVSG) works directly with the military installations of Fort Leavenworth, Fort Riley, McConnell Air Force Base, and Forbes Field. This overview provides a snapshot of **KANSAS**WORKS Veteran Employment Representative outreach across Kansas. JVSG staff continue to attend virtual SHRM, Chamber of Commerce meetings, and Veterans attending colleges, universities, and technical colleges. This is used to target Veterans within Kansas to market Workforce Center Services across the state to ensure that Veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses are aware of services that ensure them **"Priority of Service"** at one of the workforce center locations.

Veterans served in the Workforce Centers during the quarter. 536 Veterans were served within the workforce centers, with 150 receiving further assistance by Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOP) based on significant employment barriers. This assistance consisted of customized resume assistance and/or review, workshops, and basic employment skills required for each Veteran's needs. DVOPs conducted 133 in-person outreach contacts, a total of 253 Veterans and their spouses were provided with information on services available by JVSG staff at Workforce Centers across the state, with 17 of these Veterans receiving services during the quarter. Additionally, JVSG staff provided this information to 541 transitioning service members and spouses during the quarter, with 19 receiving services during the quarter. 654 Employer engagements, 302 of which were with federal contractors, were made by Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER). Additionally, Veteran Employment Representatives in partnership with Veterans Affairs, Veterans Readiness & Employment (VR&E) program assisted 41 Special Disabled, Disabled Veterans with 13 obtaining suitable employment during the quarter. A total of 35 Veterans, transitioning service members, and spouses received job placements.

JVSG Staff attended 34 virtual and "in-person" community meetings, and engaged with Veteran Service Organizations, veterans, TSMs, and their families, to disseminate resources and free training information as well as provide updates about new developments in Veterans benefits and Veteran news. Throughout the quarter, in total, JVSG Staff conducted "in-person" outreach to 794 Veterans, Transitioning Service Members, and Military Spouses. These sessions

were conducted on military installations, in local communities, and at various non-profit meetings to discuss services and employment opportunities in Kansas.

KANSAS NETWORK FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER TRANSITION FOR YOUTH

This quarter, the knectY program was focused on expanding operations from one site in Garden City to eleven other sites across the state. Workforce centers participating include Hutchinson, Wichita, Manhattan, Topeka, Lawrence, Lenexa, Kansas City, Leavenworth, Emporia, and Pittsburg. The launch of the program was delayed for most sites due to difficulties securing staff for the career coach and employment specialist positions. By the end of the quarter, multiple staff were hired, but only two centers were fully staffed--Lawrence and Manhattan. Kansas City began the quarter fully staffed, but one left for another opportunity.

As of December 31, 49 participants were enrolled in knectY, with 7 occurring this quarter (three in Johnson County and four in Garden City). Multiple meetings were held discussing local progress implementing the knectY program and introducing the program to community/local partners. Enrollments next quarter will reflect the benefits of these efforts. Finally, the knectY data manager performed data quality reviews testing the QPR process and troubleshooting the identified issues.

Success stories from the program include a youth desiring employment as a traveling Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) obtaining a position in a senior living facility for his work experience. This position gives him the opportunity to use the CNA certification he earned in high school. Another high school student secured a chance to experience working in an automotive shop, where he'll gain valuable skills aligning with his dream of working in the automotive field.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP (RA)

2025 is the year of milestones! Governor Laura Kelly established the KOA through Executive Order on September 6, 2022. Since its inception, KOA has driven transformative growth in apprenticeship engagement across the state. In 2025, the office achieved three major milestones: employer engagement has increased by 228% since 2022, reaching a record 1,008 employers this year, while the addition of 2,000 new apprentices contributed to a sustained total of 4,000 active apprentices, the highest number in Kansas history.

October 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026						
	Active Apprentices	**New Apprentices**	**New Program**	**Active Programs**	**Active Employers**	**Completed Apprentices**
Actual	3938	491	10	212	1068	150
YOY Growth	39.4%	49.24%	900%	15.22%		26.05%

SAEF Base Funding - KOA continued modernizing internal systems as part of the SAEF Base Grant #2, including outreach redesign, RAPIDS integration updates, streamlined quality controls, and partnerships to support 4-year university apprenticeship expansion

Apprenticeship.gov. In addition, we are very close to releasing 24 outreach videos in partnership with HirePaths. This capacity-building effort supports sustainable growth and ensures KOA retains its state apprenticeship agency status.

MeadowLARK Grant - During Q2 2026, the Kansas Office of Apprenticeship (KOA) continued advancing MeadowLARK initiatives while navigating uneven partner capacity statewide. Several partners expanded programs and sectors, while others experienced delays due to system changes, mergers, or staffing losses. KOA supported continuity by adjusting timelines, providing targeted technical assistance, and addressing operational challenges.

A new MOU was drafted to support the second grant-funded merger between Kansas WorkforceONE (LAI) and Southeast **KANSAS**WORKS (LAV), clarifying roles, budgets, and alignment ahead of the October 1, 2026, effective date. Programmatically, KSDE fully implemented its Youth Teacher Apprenticeship pilot and Non-Traditional Teaching Pathway, and LAIV advanced healthcare and childcare apprenticeship pathways through new enrollments and deeper sector engagement.

Overall, Q2 2026 reflected both progress and adaptation, positioning MeadowLARK for continued momentum in upcoming quarters.

Sub awardee Self-Report - Listed below are new programs developed during this quarter.

MeadowLARK RAP Intermediary	New Occupations registered this quarter	New Apprentices Registered this Quarter in RAPIDS	Total Number of Employers Registered this Quarter	Total Number of Co-enrollments with WIOA	Total number of participants served, for expansion this quarter
KSDE	0	70	0	0	327
Kansas Workforce One (LAI)	0	0	0	61	61 (5 internally)
Workforce Partnership (LAIII)	0	4	0	0	18
Workforce Alliance (LAIV)	2	9	2	5	18

KANSAS RETAIN – RETAINING EMPLOYMENT AND TALENT AFTER INJURY/ILLNESS NETWORK

RETAIN Phase 2 – Effective May 17, 2021, the Kansas Department of Commerce was awarded $ 21,600,000 to expand the previous demonstration project Statewide, collaborating with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Rehabilitation Services, all three Local Workforce Development Areas, four Major Medical Systems, and three State and Regional Employer Organizations. Kansas is one of only five states competitively selected from the eight originally funded Phase 1 states to implement our demonstration project at full scale (48 months; May 17, 2021, to May 16, 2025).

RETAINWORKS applied for a one-year term, no-cost extension. On July 17th, 2025, the program was notified that the extension was awarded. With the extension timeframe, **RETAINWORKS** will now have a period of performance through October 31, 2025, and a grant end date of May 16, 2026.

Our medical system partners, Accession Via Christi Health System, the Kansas Clinical Improvement Collaborative, the University of Kansas Health System, Stormont Vail Health, and Local Workforce Development Boards have worked together to provide **RETAINWORKS** services across seventy-seven counties throughout Kansas.

WorkforceONE enrolled 1188 participants, Workforce Partnership enrolled 174 participants, and Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas enrolled 527 participants.

- 4,000 Participants (2,000 Treatment and 2,000 Control) was the goal for the life of the program. 1,889 participants have been enrolled as of October 31, 2025. Of those who have completed the program, approximately 80% of those were employed at entry and retained employment either within their original organization or with a new employer. Of those who entered the program unemployed, approximately 42% have entered employment at completion of their involvement with the program.

- 735 Medical Providers have both enrolled in the program and completed the training necessary to refer participants to the program as of October 31, 2025, which is the end of the program's enrollment period. The top three types of medical providers participating include primary care, orthopedics, and occupational/physical medicine.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

Kansas SCSEP funds provide paid work-based training at community service sites for low-income individuals ages 55 and older. This training serves as the bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities. Of the 56 participants served this quarter, there were 3 participants who exited due to unsubsidized employment. During this last quarter, there have been a total of 13,216 community service hours worked through the various community service sites.

WIOA training is available in addition to community service assignments. Workshops related to job search as well as computer training are also available and encouraged. Workshops offered during PY25 so far include:

- Basic Computers 101
- Online Applications
- Email, Uploading and Downloading
- Windows & Internet Navigation
- Intro to Microsoft Word
- Intro to Microsoft Excel
- Digital Skills Lab (self-paced open lab time with staff support)

- Roadmap to Resumes
- Google Workspace Essentials

OLDER KANSANS' EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (OKEP)

The Older Kansans' Employment Program (OKEP) is authorized and funded by the Kansas Legislature and is designed to provide employment placement services to Kansans 55 years of age and older, with emphasis on employment in the private sector. Available services include, but are not limited to, resume building, application assistance, **KANSAS**WORKS.com enrollment, computer training, and job coaching.

For fiscal year 2025, the legislature sustained the previous year's funding level, appropriating $504,697.00 for OKEP. This has allowed for a continuation of last year's program with seven OKEP providers. The outcomes for the second quarter were 490 participants, 144 job placements, 3745 services provided, and an average wage of $22.43. The average enrollee age was 69.

WORKFORCE/CORRECTIONS INITIATIVES

The Manager of Justice-Involved Programs serves as the liaison between the Kansas Department of Commerce (Commerce) and the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) to work statewide at increasing opportunities for individuals involved in the criminal justice system to rejoin the workforce in sustainable living wage employment. Statewide involvement in initiatives this quarter includes:

- Regular meetings with the KDOC Education Director and KDOC Employment Director, to discuss goals and connections needed to foster employment for individuals exiting the correctional facilities,
- Regular meetings with KDOC staff to develop a response to the Request for Proposal for Jobs for the Future's Fair Chance to Advance initiative submitted this quarter,
- Provided training for workforce professionals and partner agencies on employment support specific to individuals involved in the justice system,
- Technical assistance and connection to community partners and workforce professionals provided to KDOC staff,
- Provide oversight for shared position with Commerce and Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex (KJCC),
- Participated in the Returning Citizens Consortium (RCC) Employer Certification Workgroup, a project spearheaded by Workforce Partnership through a planning grant from the Kauffman Foundation,
- Held Justice-Involved Programs Summit to increase awareness of barriers to reentry and build partnerships to best serve this population.

ReSpECTWORKS (PATHWAY HOME 6)

The Kansas Department of Commerce received close to $4 million from the US. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, to provide both pre- and post-release services to 400 eligible, incarcerated individuals, to support entrance into sustainable, living wage employment in a high-demand industry, through Pathway Home 6. Each Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) will hire at least one intensive case manager to support participants returning to their local area. Activities will include assessing barriers and needs, exploring career interests and opportunities, and fostering connections to education/training, job readiness programming, and other community-based supports to aid participants in gaining and maintaining employment and reducing the chance of recidivism. Each participant will work with the same intensive case manager both inside the facility and upon return to their community. Award updates from the former initiative include a longer period of eligibility, up to 270 days prior to release, and a greater emphasis on employer engagement. Enrollment will begin in quarter 3, FY 26. Grant activities this quarter included:

1. Hired **ReSpECT**WORKS Program Manager
2. Attended virtual Pathway Home 6 New Grantee Orientation

PROWD

The Workforce Services Division of Commerce received just under $7.2 Million through a *Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development* (PROWD) competition to serve residents of Federal Bureau of Prisons facilities in three phases, while incarcerated and after release. In phase 1, while incarcerated in FCI Leavenworth or its minimum camp, participants will have the opportunity to receive foundational training in high-demand fields in Kansas, as approved by the institution. In phase 2, after release to one of the three Residential Reentry Centers in Kansas, located in Leavenworth, Topeka, and Wichita, or to home confinement, participants will have the opportunity to continue in the Kansas PROWD program, and new participants will have the opportunity to join. In phase 3, after release to the community, a Local Workforce Development Area Kansas PROWD Navigator will provide case management and follow-up services, coordinating supports and services that will enhance employment success and reduce the chance of recidivism. Supportive services will be available to all program participants remaining in Kansas and when not accessible by other community organizations. Grant activities this quarter included:

1. Meetings with the Federal Project Officer and Technical Assistance Coach,
2. Continued enrolling participants at all three Residential Reentry Centers,
3. Manager of Justice-Involved Programs, Program Manager, and all Employment Services Professionals completed volunteer training at FCI Leavenworth,
4. Held a strategic planning meeting with all Employer Champions.

Participant Status	Number of Participants
Total enrolled since implementation	180

SECOND CHANCE ACT

Commerce Workforce Services received a $900,000.00 grant from the Department of Justice, effective October 1, 2023, to implement a Women's Second Chance Reentry Employment Counseling and Training program to serve residents of Topeka Correctional Facility. The purpose of this Second Chance Act is to provide intensive, collaborative case management and workforce development services, including occupational training in manufacturing, information technology, agriculture, and transportation. The project subgrantee, Kansas WorkforceONE, will support job seekers connecting women exiting the facility to high-demand, high-wage occupations in their community of release, thus providing employers with the skilled workers they need to be competitive.

1. Submitted Grant Award Modification to increase the service area to include southeast Kansas.

Participant Status	Number of Participants
Total enrolled since implementation	32

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT (WOTC)

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available to employers who invest in American job seekers who have consistently faced barriers to employment. Employers may meet their business needs and claim a tax credit if they hire an individual who is in a WOTC targeted group. An employer can receive a federal tax credit that varies between the amounts of $2,400 to $9,600 per applicant.

In the first quarter of FY 2026, 9,815 **new** certification requests were received. Quarterly processing resulted in 1,507 eligible for tax credits. 8,123 requests were denied. This is a federal tax savings to Kansas businesses of almost $3 million. The largest numbers of workers certified as eligible were recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), followed by Rural Renewal Counties (RRC), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Ex-felon.

The average tax credit per certification to the employer is $2,534.57.

FEDERAL BONDING

The Federal Bonding program provides fidelity bonds that protect employers against employee fraud and dishonesty for "at-risk" job seekers. The Federal Bonding program is a unique hiring incentive tool that targets individuals whose backgrounds can pose significant barriers to securing or retaining employment.

In the first quarter of FY 2026, no employer inquired about information on the Federal Bonding program.

KANSAS BOARD OF REGENTS ADULT EDUCATION (TITLE II)

More than 4700 adults are participating in WIOA Title II services so far in the 2025-2026 year, and over 40% have already demonstrated a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG), including passing some or all the GED® subject tests to obtain a high school equivalency diploma, passing a technical or occupational exam, and demonstrating increases of approximately two grade levels in literacy or numeracy skills.

Since July 1, 2025, 688 participants have passed at least one of the GED® subject tests, and 324 have earned a high school equivalency diploma. In addition, 30 participants have earned an industry-recognized credential.

With the federal continuing resolution signed into law, WIOA Title II will be funded for the 2026-2027 year. Allocation amounts for each state are usually sent in late March or April; the state then applies the funding formula and sends estimated award amounts to each local provider.

Ability to Benefit (ATB) implementation efforts are ongoing, with a focus on clarifying federal guidance and identifying practical Kansas pathways. This includes reviewing how the six-credit-hour option intersects with other allowable eligibility routes and determining required institutional partnerships and documentation processes. Supporting materials are being developed to promote consistent understanding and operationalization across institutions in a compliant and student-centered manner.

The internationally educated nurses (IEN) initiative continues advancing within the broader Internationally Trained Professionals (ITP) strategy. Partnerships are being strengthened to improve advising, case management, and pathways to licensure and employment. Policy guidance, technical assistance materials, implementation timelines, and data collection expectations are being developed to enable consistent statewide service delivery and scalability.

Seward County Community College Adult Education, under the direction of Dr. Katie Reck, is serving as the FY2026 lead agency for ROSA (Remote Opportunities for Student Access), a statewide shared online class catalog. ROSA is designed to expand learner access and strengthen collaboration across agencies by allowing programs to share distance learning opportunities. Coordination is underway to finalize program participation expectations, cross-agency learner enrollment processes, reporting requirements, and any compensation or support structures associated with implementation.

The Kansas Adult Education Association (KAEA) Conference will be February 25 – 27 in Wichita. On February 25, during the pre-conference, a Program Leaders Meeting will be held. During that meeting, programs will begin work on the Continuation Funding Application (CFA) for the 2026-2027 year.

Adult Education is conducting in-depth individual data review meetings with each program for spring 2026. Fall 2025 reviews were completed in September, October, and November.

Because of the new state data management system (DMS), each program is meeting with the state twice this year to ensure data accuracy and staff understanding of the DMS.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES (TITLE IV)

Rehabilitation Services' mission is working in partnership with Kansans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment and independence. Each day, the work of Rehabilitation Services employees is life-changing for the citizens we assist. The scope of the work we do on behalf of Kansans with disabilities is impressive, focusing on employment, self-sufficiency, empowerment, inclusion, and integration.

- Vocational Rehabilitation – assisting individuals to become employed and self-sufficient.
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), which are part of the VR program, are designed to help students with disabilities prepare for the adult world or work and independent living.
- Disability Determination Services – analyzing disability claims filed by Kansas citizens.
- The Business Enterprise Program -- offering small business opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.
- The Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing -- offering information, advocacy, and technical assistance.
- Independent Living Centers and Services – Supporting the work of Centers for Independent Living and providers of services for older individuals who are blind.

To empower Kansas citizens with disabilities to achieve their employment goals, a comprehensive array of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services is available. Services are customized according to each person's unique needs, skills, interests, abilities, and vocational goals. Services to be provided for each individual customer are specified on an Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and may include:

- Vocational assessment to help a customer identify his or her skills, abilities, interests, and job goals.
- Vocational counseling and guidance.
- Physical and mental restoration services, including artificial limbs, psychotherapy, and physical therapy.
- Training and education to learn new vocational skills.
- Rehabilitation technology, telecommunication aids and other adaptive devices.
- Job preparation and placement services.
- Job coaching.
- On-the-job training.
- Services to help students with disabilities get a job after finishing high school.
- Supported and customized employment for individuals who need intensive on-the-job training and ongoing support.
- Referral to other services or community resources.

The strengths of Rehabilitation Services programs are many. Counselors are specifically trained in working with people with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. Rehabilitation Services provides a continuum of services for transition students from the high schools to help them prepare for employment as adults.

This continuum begins with Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). Pre-ETS Transition Specialists provide job exploration, self-advocacy training, workplace readiness training, counseling on comprehensive transition or post-secondary education, and work-based learning experiences. The services are designed to provide an early start at job exploration and to assist students with disabilities in making the transition from secondary to post-secondary education/training and competitive, integrated employment. The Pre-ETS Transition Specialist assists a student in applying for VR services if desired. In State Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025), 54% of our persons served were transition youth with disabilities, and 27% of our successful employment outcomes were youth with disabilities.

The IPE the counselor develops with the VR customer is unique to that person and is intended to maximize their employment potential. The IPE addresses the individual's strengths, barriers to employment, vocational goals, and services to be provided. The plan is comprehensive and flexible to address the individual's needs. For the past 15 years, more than 60% of the VR customers who achieved employment have been individuals with significant disabilities, meaning they had multiple functional limitations in major areas of life, such as mobility, communication, self-care, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, self-direction, and work skills. Also, consistently over the past 15 years, about 77% of VR customers who are successfully employed report their own earnings as their largest source of financial support. This is a significant milestone toward self-sufficiency and less reliance on public benefits.

State Fiscal Year 2026

Quarter 2 (October 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025) Indicator	**SFY 2026 Quarter 2**
Number of persons achieving competitive integrated employment (stable employment for at least 90 days)	483
Average hourly wage	$17.34
Average hours worked per week	29
Percent of persons employed who report their own income as their primary source of support at case closure, a significant milestone toward self-sufficiency	80%
Number of youth (aged 24 and younger) achieving competitive integrated employment (stable employment for at least 90 days)	131

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next KWSB Quarterly Meeting – August 25, 2026