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Employment in the Columbia Gorge: January 2026

Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates declined in three of the five counties while remaining steady in Wheeler and increasing in Gilliam County.

Hood River County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declined to 4.1% in January, down from a revised December rate of 4.2%. Over the year, the county's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged up by 0.6 percentage point.

Hood River County's nonfarm employment decreased by 400 (+2.1%) in January and was estimated at 11,760 jobs. Private-sector employment decreased over the month (380 jobs). The largest losses occurred in retail trade (250 jobs). The largest private-sector gains took place in arts, entertainment, and recreation (+110 jobs). Public-sector employment shed 20 jobs over the month; all losses recorded at the local level (-10 jobs).

Hood River County's seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment decreased by 280 jobs over the year ending in January, representing a 2.3% decrease. Job losses occurred in leisure and hospitality (-370 jobs); retail trade (-150 jobs); and other services (-30 jobs). Losses in leisure and hospitality primarily occurred in arts, entertainment, and recreation (-330 jobs). Over-the-year gains occurred in manufacturing (+90 jobs); professional and business services (+40 jobs); and private education and health services (+50 jobs).

Wasco County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.2% as of January, down from 5.3% in December. Over the year, Wasco County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is 0.8 percentage points higher.

Wasco County's nonfarm employment decreased by 1.5%, a decrease of 150 jobs to total 10,020 as of January. Job losses occurred within the private sector (-100 jobs), bringing private employment down to 7,810. Government employment decreased by 50 jobs and is now 2,210. Losses were seen in trade, transportation, and utilities (-60 jobs); leisure and hospitality (-40 jobs); construction (-20 jobs); and government (-50 jobs). Private-sector gains were concentrated in professional and business services (+20 jobs) – the only major sector to see gains.

Wasco County's private industry employment decreased by 110 (-1.1%) jobs over the year ending in January. Losses were strongest in leisure and hospitality (-60 jobs); retail trade (-60 jobs); construction

(-40 jobs) and government (-50 jobs). Over-the-year gains occurred in private education and health services (+80 jobs); manufacturing (+20 jobs); and other services (+20 jobs).

Gilliam County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from December, going from a rate of 5.6% to 5.7% in January. Over the year, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is 1.0 percentage point higher.

Gilliam County's nonfarm employment decreased 35 from December to January and totaled 845 jobs. Over-the-year total private employment decreased by 155 jobs while government employment decreased by 25 jobs for an over-the-year net loss of 180 total nonfarm jobs.

Sherman County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 5.2% in December to 5.1% in January and increased by 1.2 percentage points over the year. Sherman County's nonfarm employment decreased by 40 jobs (-4.5%) over the month of January and now stands at 855. Private-sector employment shed 10 jobs over the month, while public-sector employment decreased by 30 jobs. Over the year ending in January, private industry shed 65 jobs, bringing the total to 550, a 10.6% decrease from the previous year. Public-sector employment lost 35 jobs over the year for a net loss of 95 total nonfarm jobs over the year.

Wheeler County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained at 4.8% in January, matching December's rate of 4.8%. Over the year, Wheeler County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was up by 0.8 percentage point. Total nonfarm employment decreased by 5 jobs (-1.4%) from December to January and now stands at 340 jobs. Over the year ending in January, total nonfarm employment increased by 15 (+4.6%). The private sector added 15 jobs over the year, while the public sector was unchanged.

Next Press Releases

The Oregon Employment Department plans to release the February county and metropolitan area unemployment rates on Tuesday, April 21 and the statewide unemployment rate and employment survey data on Wednesday, April 15.



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Hood River County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	January 2026	December 2025	January 2025	December 2025	January 2025
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	13,269	13,450	13,633	-181	-364
Unemployed	610	553	610	57	0
Unemployment rate	4.6%	4.1%	4.5%	0.5	0.1
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	4.1%	4.2%	3.5%	-0.1	0.6
Employed	12,659	12,897	13,023	-238	-364
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	11,760	12,160	12,030	-400	-270
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	11,670	11,770	11,950	-100	-280
Total private	10,270	10,650	10,520	-380	-250
Mining, logging, and construction	500	520	500	-20	0
Manufacturing	1,710	1,770	1,620	-60	90
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1,880	2,160	1,920	-280	-40
Wholesale trade	480	490	380	-10	100
Retail trade	1,250	1,500	1,400	-250	-150
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	150	170	140	-20	10
Information	80	80	80	0	0
Financial activities	340	350	330	-10	10
Professional and business services	960	980	920	-20	40
Private education and health services	1,970	1,960	1,920	10	50
Leisure and hospitality	2,530	2,520	2,900	10	-370
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,010	900	1,340	110	-330
Accommodation and food services	1,520	1,620	1,560	-100	-40
Accommodation	440	470	450	-30	-10
Food services and drinking places	1,080	1,150	1,110	-70	-30
Other services	300	310	330	-10	-30
Government	1,490	1,510	1,510	-20	-20
Federal government	100	110	110	-10	-10
State government	150	150	140	0	10
Local government	1,240	1,250	1,260	-10	-20
Local education	730	730	730	0	0
Local government excluding educational services	510	520	530	-10	-20

The most recent month is preliminary, the prior month is revised. Prepared in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Civilian labor force includes employed and unemployed individuals 16 years and older by place of residence. Employed includes payroll employment, self-employed, unpaid family workers, domestics, agriculture, and labor disputants. Unemployment rate is calculated by dividing unemployed by civilian labor force.

Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.



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Wasco County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	January 2026	December 2025	January 2025	December 2025	January 2025
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	12,306	12,514	12,336	-208	-30
Unemployed	801	674	762	127	39
Unemployment rate	6.5%	5.4%	6.2%	1.1	0.3
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	5.2%	5.3%	4.4%	-0.1	0.6
Employed	11,505	11,840	11,574	-335	-69
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	10,020	10,170	10,120	-150	-100
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	10,260	10,200	10,370	60	-110
Total private	7,810	7,910	7,860	-100	-50
Mining, logging, and construction	410	430	460	-20	-50
Mining and logging	50	50	60	0	-10
Construction	360	380	400	-20	-40
Manufacturing	470	470	450	0	20
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1,990	2,050	2,020	-60	-30
Wholesale trade	220	220	190	0	30
Retail trade	1,480	1,500	1,540	-20	-60
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	290	330	290	-40	0
Information	260	260	270	0	-10
Financial activities	280	280	270	0	10
Professional and business services	550	530	580	20	-30
Private education and health services	2,330	2,330	2,250	0	80
Ambulatory health care services	520	520	500	0	20
Nursing and residential care facilities	590	580	520	10	70
Leisure and hospitality	1,180	1,220	1,240	-40	-60
Accommodation and food services	1,140	1,170	1,150	-30	-10
Other services	340	340	320	0	20
Government	2,210	2,260	2,260	-50	-50
Federal government	260	280	300	-20	-40
State government	330	330	320	0	10
Local government	1,620	1,650	1,640	-30	-20
Indian tribal	100	100	60	0	40
Local education	760	780	830	-20	-70
Local government excluding education and tribal	760	770	750	-10	10

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Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.



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Gilliam County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	January 2026	December 2025	January 2025	December 2025	January 2025
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	931	945	1,064	-14	-133
Unemployed	67	54	58	13	9
Unemployment rate	7.2%	5.7%	5.5%	1.5	1.7
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	5.7%	5.6%	4.7%	0.1	1.0
Employed	864	891	1,006	-27	-142
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	845	880	1,025	-35	-180
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	830	865	1,015	-35	-185
Total private	570	595	725	-25	-155
Trade, transportation, and utilities	100	105	110	-5	-10
Professional and business services	230	230	215	0	15
Private education and health services	70	75	75	-5	-5
Leisure and hospitality	40	45	40	-5	0
Government	275	285	300	-10	-25
Federal government	10	10	15	0	-5
State government	25	25	25	0	0
Local government	240	250	260	-10	-20

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Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.



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Sherman County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	January 2026	December 2025	January 2025	December 2025	January 2025
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	898	918	951	-20	-53
Unemployed	52	45	40	7	12
Unemployment rate	5.8%	4.9%	4.2%	0.9	1.6
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	5.1%	5.2%	3.9%	-0.1	1.2
Employed	846	873	911	-27	-65
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	855	895	950	-40	-95
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	875	900	975	-25	-100
Total private	550	560	615	-10	-65
Trade, transportation, and utilities	345	355	385	-10	-40
Retail trade	130	130	130	0	0
Leisure and hospitality	70	70	70	0	0
Government	305	335	335	-30	-30
Federal government	115	120	150	-5	-35
State government	30	30	30	0	0
Local government	160	185	155	-25	5

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Civilian labor force includes employed and unemployed individuals 16 years and older by place of residence.
 Employed includes payroll employment, self-employed, unpaid family workers, domestics, agriculture, and labor disputants.
 Unemployment rate is calculated by dividing unemployed by civilian labor force.

Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.



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Wheeler County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	January 2026	December 2025	January 2025	December 2025	January 2025
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	683	690	664	-7	19
Unemployed	40	34	40	6	0
Unemployment rate	5.9%	4.9%	6.0%	1.0	-0.1
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	4.8%	4.8%	4.0%	0.0	0.8
Employed	643	656	624	-13	19
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	340	345	325	-5	15
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	365	355	350	10	15
Total private	155	160	140	-5	15
Trade, transportation, and utilities	30	30	30	0	0
Leisure and hospitality	20	25	20	-5	0
Government	185	185	185	0	0
Federal government	5	5	5	0	0
State government	35	35	40	0	-5
Local government	145	145	140	0	5

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Nonfarm Payroll Employment: Data are by place of work and cover full- and part-time employees who worked or received pay for the pay period that includes the 12th of the month. The data exclude the self-employed, volunteers, unpaid family workers, and domestics.

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The Oregon Employment Department and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) work cooperatively to develop and publish monthly payroll employment and labor force data for Oregon’s metropolitan areas and counties. The estimates of monthly job gains and losses are based on a survey of businesses. The estimates of unemployment are based on a survey of households and other sources.

The Oregon Employment Department payroll employment estimates are revised quarterly using information from unemployment insurance tax records. All department publications use data from this *official Oregon series* unless noted.

The department also makes the BLS-produced nonfarm payroll employment series for metropolitan areas available. These are revised annually by BLS.

The pdf version of the news release, including tables and graphs, can be found at www.qualityinfo.org/press-release/. To obtain the data in other formats such as in Excel, visit QualityInfo.org, select Tools, and choose LAUS or CES from the dropdown menu. To request the press release as a Word document, contact the person shown at the top of this press release.

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