

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: October 21, 2025

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Nicole Ramos, Regional Economist
Nicole.S.Ramos@employ.oregon.gov
(541) 706-0779

Employment in the Columbia Gorge: September 2025

Federal Government Shutdown Pauses Employment Reports

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) suspended the monthly employment and unemployment reports for the nation, states, and metropolitan areas as of Oct. 1, 2025. Oregon's monthly jobs and unemployment rate for September are unavailable at this time. In the meantime, we will highlight data that we continue to produce and share when it becomes available. One such topic is federal government employment.

Statewide and Regional Federal Government Jobs

Oregon had an average of 29,000 federal government jobs covered by unemployment benefits during the first half of 2025. That accounted for about 1.5% of all jobs in the state. The federal government share of all jobs was much higher in some rural counties. This time last year, the top 10 counties by share of all jobs in federal government were rural areas. More than 15% of all jobs in Sherman County were in federal government. The next-largest shares were in Grant (9%), Harney (8%), and Lake (8%) counties.

Federal government employment in Wasco County accounted for 2.8% of all county employment, representing 300 covered positions. In comparison, 1.6% of all jobs in Wheeler County and 1.1% of jobs in Gilliam County were in the federal sector and totaled 18 jobs. Hood River had the lowest share in the region, with 1.0% of all fourth-quarter jobs last year classified as federal government positions (135 jobs).

More recently, and not directly comparable due to seasonal differences between quarters, Wasco County averaged 313 covered federal jobs in the second quarter of 2025. By June 2025, there were 321 federal jobs, 30 more than in the same month the previous year. In Sherman County, where federal government employment plays a significant role, there were 169 covered federal jobs this past June. Federal employment typically peaks in the third quarter and begins to decline in the fourth.

Federal government jobs also tend to pay relatively high wages. Looking at annual average wages, jobs on federal government payrolls in Oregon paid nearly \$98,500 in 2024. That was 38% higher than the average annual wage for all jobs in Oregon. Gilliam County had one of the smallest wage gaps between federal and overall employment, ranking lowest in the state. There, federal workers earned 5% less than the countywide average. No other county saw average federal wages less than total average wages.

In contrast, Wasco and Sherman counties had significantly larger wage gaps. In 2024, federal jobs in Wasco County paid 104% more than the countywide average—the largest difference in the state. Similarly, federal payroll jobs in Sherman County paid 88% more than the local average. In Hood River County, federal wages were 62% higher than the countywide average, while Wheeler County saw a 49% difference. [For more about federal government jobs in Oregon click here.](#)

Next Press Releases

The Oregon Employment Department will publish the latest Oregon Job Vacancy Survey report on Oct. 23, and the next update on statewide trends on Wednesday, Nov. 19. We will update our schedule of future releases as federal services return.

If you have questions about the South Central economy, feel free to reach out. We're still at work providing quality information so employers and job seekers can make informed decisions. The most current data remains last month's report, highlighting August employment figures. That data is attached for reference and is also available at qualityinfo.org.

To file a claim for unemployment benefits or get more information about unemployment programs, visit unemployment.oregon.gov.

The Oregon Employment Department (OED) is an equal opportunity agency. OED provides free help so you can use our services. Some examples are sign language and spoken-language interpreters, written materials in other languages, large print, audio, and other formats. To get help, please call 503-947-1444. TTY users call 711. You can also send an email to communications@employ.oregon.gov.

El Departamento de Empleo de Oregon (OED) es una agencia de igualdad de oportunidades. El OED proporciona ayuda gratuita para que usted pueda utilizar nuestros servicios. Algunos ejemplos son intérpretes de lengua de señas e idiomas hablados, materiales escritos en otros idiomas, letra grande, audio y otros formatos. Para obtener ayuda, por favor llame al 503-947-1444. Usuarios de TTY pueden llamar al 711. También puede enviar un correo electrónico a communications@employ.oregon.gov.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

September 23, 2025

Hood River County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	August 2025	July 2025	August 2024	July 2025	August 2024
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	14,452	14,774	14,067	-322	385
Unemployed	647	624	498	23	149
Unemployment rate	4.5%	4.2%	3.5%	0.3	1.0
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	<i>4.0%</i>	<i>4.0%</i>	<i>3.4%</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.6</i>
Employed	13,805	14,150	13,569	-345	236
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	11,500	11,570	11,670	-70	-170
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	<i>11,680</i>	<i>11,660</i>	<i>11,840</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>-160</i>
Total private	10,280	10,200	10,450	80	-170
Mining, logging, and construction	560	560	600	0	-40
Manufacturing	1,720	1,720	1,810	0	-90
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1,900	1,830	1,950	70	-50
Wholesale trade	320	270	350	50	-30
Retail trade	1,380	1,370	1,430	10	-50
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	200	190	170	10	30
Information	90	90	100	0	-10
Financial activities	350	350	390	0	-40
Professional and business services	950	950	950	0	0
Private education and health services	1,940	1,940	1,990	0	-50
Leisure and hospitality	2,420	2,410	2,310	10	110
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	420	410	350	10	70
Accommodation and food services	2,000	2,000	1,960	0	40
Accommodation	560	550	530	10	30
Food services and drinking places	1,440	1,450	1,430	-10	10
Other services	350	350	350	0	0
Government	1,220	1,370	1,220	-150	0
Federal government	130	130	170	0	-40
State government	140	140	130	0	10
Local government	950	1,100	920	-150	30
Local education	380	540	380	-160	0
Local government excluding educational services	570	560	540	10	30

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.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

September 23, 2025

Wasco County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	August 2025	July 2025	August 2024	July 2025	August 2024
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	12,810	17,407	12,633	-4,597	177
Unemployed	712	707	560	5	152
Unemployment rate	5.6%	4.1%	4.4%	1.5	1.2
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	<i>5.0%</i>	<i>4.9%</i>	<i>4.3%</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>0.7</i>
Employed	12,098	16,700	12,073	-4,602	25
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	10,240	10,420	10,300	-180	-60
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	<i>10,160</i>	<i>10,330</i>	<i>10,220</i>	<i>-170</i>	<i>-60</i>
Total private	8,230	8,240	8,290	-10	-60
Mining, logging, and construction	470	480	510	-10	-40
Mining and logging	50	50	60	0	-10
Construction	420	430	450	-10	-30
Manufacturing	490	500	470	-10	20
Trade, transportation, and utilities	1,960	1,970	2,060	-10	-100
Wholesale trade	200	200	190	0	10
Retail trade	1,500	1,520	1,600	-20	-100
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	260	250	270	10	-10
Information	250	250	270	0	-20
Financial activities	270	270	280	0	-10
Professional and business services	580	590	580	-10	0
Private education and health services	2,260	2,240	2,240	20	20
Ambulatory health care services	500	510	470	-10	30
Nursing and residential care facilities	500	490	510	10	-10
Leisure and hospitality	1,600	1,590	1,510	10	90
Accommodation and food services	1,400	1,370	1,350	30	50
Other services	350	350	370	0	-20
Government	2,010	2,180	2,010	-170	0
Federal government	320	320	320	0	0
State government	330	330	330	0	0
Local government	1,360	1,530	1,360	-170	0
Indian tribal	60	60	110	0	-50
Local education	490	660	490	-170	0
Local government excluding education and tribal	810	810	760	0	50

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.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

September 23, 2025

Gilliam County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	August 2025	July 2025	August 2024	July 2025	August 2024
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	1,053	1,036	1,039	17	14
Unemployed	58	52	52	6	6
Unemployment rate	5.5%	5.0%	5.0%	0.5	0.5
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	<i>4.8%</i>	<i>4.6%</i>	<i>4.7%</i>	<i>0.2</i>	<i>0.1</i>
Employed	995	984	987	11	8
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	1,000	1,000	990	0	10
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	<i>975</i>	<i>990</i>	<i>965</i>	<i>-15</i>	<i>10</i>
Total private	715	705	685	10	30
Trade, transportation, and utilities	115	115	115	0	0
Professional and business services	220	220	210	0	10
Private education and health services	70	65	75	5	-5
Leisure and hospitality	40	40	40	0	0
Government	285	295	305	-10	-20
Federal government	10	10	15	0	-5
State government	25	25	20	0	5
Local government	250	260	270	-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.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

September 23, 2025

Sherman County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	August 2025	July 2025	August 2024	July 2025	August 2024
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	1,005	1,008	995	-3	10
Unemployed	52	53	33	-1	19
Unemployment rate	5.2%	5.3%	3.3%	-0.1	1.9
Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)	4.7%	4.4%	3.8%	0.3	0.9
Employed	953	955	962	-2	-9
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	985	995	980	-10	5
Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)	955	960	950	-5	5
Total private	650	660	630	-10	20
Trade, transportation, and utilities	410	415	375	-5	35
Retail trade	130	135	135	-5	-5
Leisure and hospitality	95	100	90	-5	5
Government	335	335	350	0	-15
Federal government	150	150	160	0	-10
State government	30	30	30	0	0
Local government	155	155	160	0	-5

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.



Workforce & Economic Research Division

QualityInfo.org

September 23, 2025

Wheeler County Current Labor Force and Industry Employment

	--Change From--				
	August 2025	July 2025	August 2024	July 2025	August 2024
Labor Force Status					
Civilian labor force	672	673	716	-1	-44
Unemployed	29	30	27	-1	2
Unemployment rate	4.3%	4.5%	3.8%	-0.2	0.5
<i>Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)</i>	3.9%	3.9%	3.8%	0.0	0.1
Employed	643	643	689	0	-46
Nonfarm Payroll Employment					
Total nonfarm employment	335	330	375	5	-40
<i>Total nonfarm employment (seasonally adjusted)</i>	335	325	380	10	-45
Total private	175	175	200	0	-25
Trade, transportation, and utilities	35	35	35	0	0
Leisure and hospitality	40	45	45	-5	-5
Government	160	155	175	5	-15
Federal government	5	5	5	0	0
State government	35	35	40	0	-5
Local government	120	115	130	5	-10

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.

###