WHIPLASH!
THE MARKET STUMBLES THEN STEADIES

Engage2Excel
RECRUITMENT SOLUTIONS®

6.9 MILLION
OPEN JOBS
FEB 2026 MOST RECENT

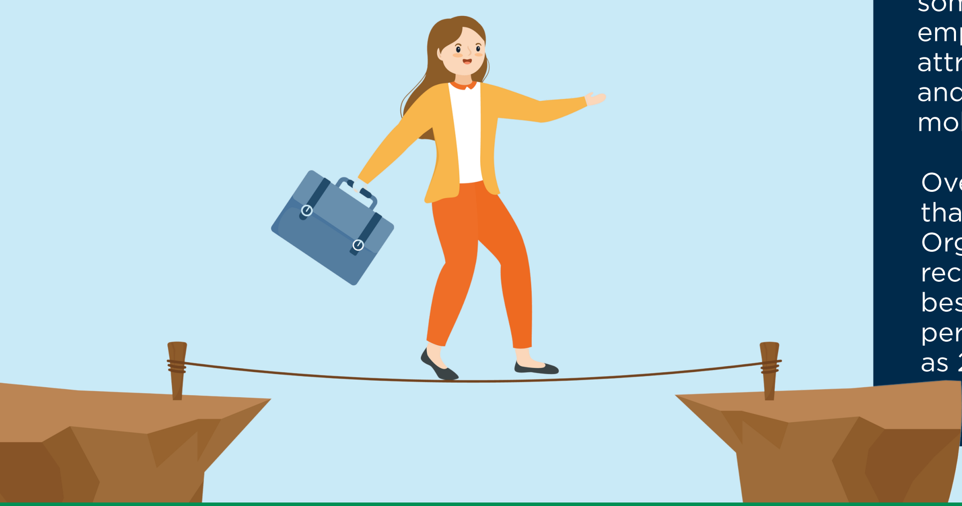
4.3 PERCENT
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

178 THOUSAND
NEW JOBS ADDED

MONTHLY QUITS
FEB 2026 MOST RECENT
1.9 PERCENT

HOURLY EARNINGS
0.9 PERCENT

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE
61.9 PERCENT



OUTLOOK

After a choppy start to 2026, the March employment report delivered a welcome dose of reassurance. U.S. employers added 178,000 jobs, easily surpassing expectations and rebounding from February's decline. While hiring remains measured, the data points to a labor market that is stabilizing—and giving employers room to plan with greater confidence.

The unemployment rate held steady at 4.3%, reinforcing the message that the labor market remains balanced rather than weakening. Job gains were led by health care, construction, transportation and warehousing, and social assistance, reflecting continued demand in essential and service-driven industries. At the same time, losses in the federal government and financial services highlight the ongoing reality of selective hiring and cost discipline.

Wage growth continued at a moderate and sustainable pace, with average hourly earnings up 3.5% year-over-year. That's a positive signal for employees without creating undue pressure on employer labor budgets. Average weekly hours edged slightly lower, another sign that organizations are managing workforce needs carefully rather than aggressively expanding headcount.

The report also underscores where opportunity remains. Participation dipped modestly, and long-term unemployment increased, suggesting some talent remains on the sidelines. For employers, this creates space to rethink attraction, inclusion, and engagement strategies—and to invest in manager effectiveness, internal mobility, and meaningful employee experiences.

Overall, March's data points to a labor market that is still growing, just more intentionally. Organizations that stay focused on engagement, recognition, and clear communication will be best positioned to retain talent, motivate performance, and move forward with confidence as 2026 continues.

SOURCES:
BLS Employment Situation
CNN
Federal Reserve Beige Book
Reuters

U.S. JOBS REPORT RECAP
APRIL 2026