

Idaho Labor Market and Economic Report, 2023



Idaho Department of Labor
Bureau of Research and Analysis

Summer 2024

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Labor market quick facts

Summary table

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications

	2023	2022	2010
Population	1,964,726	1,938,996	1,570,819
Average labor force	961,506	944,919	762,147
Average number unemployed	29,758	26,813	66,882
Average unemployment rate	3.1	2.8	8.8
Average total employment	931,748	918,106	695,265
Average covered employment	842,383	820,854	605,560
Average covered wage	\$56,261	\$54,221	\$34,905
2024 first quarter industry short-term projections	878,100	NA	NA
2032 population projection	2,332,538	NA	NA

Quick fact 1. Labor force and unemployment, not seasonally adjusted, Idaho, annual data from select years during 2000-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Year	Labor force	Unemployed	Unemployment rate	Employed
2000	661,066	30,838	4.7	630,228
2005	730,354	28,954	4.0	701,400
2010	762,147	66,882	8.8	695,265
2011	764,205	62,545	8.2	701,660
2012	772,112	57,143	7.4	714,969
2013	777,606	53,061	6.8	724,545
2014	776,937	34,132	4.4	742,805
2015	795,014	30,893	3.9	764,121
2016	812,921	29,741	3.7	783,180
2017	839,776	26,901	3.2	812,875
2018	862,434	24,667	2.9	837,767
2019	888,611	25,671	2.9	862,940
2020	899,807	49,677	5.5	850,130
2021	921,718	32,768	3.6	888,950
2022	944,919	26,813	2.8	918,106
2023	961,506	29,758	3.1	931,748

Quick fact 2. Labor force and unemployment, not seasonally adjusted, Idaho metropolitan areas, 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Metropolitan area	Labor force	Unemployed	Unemployment rate	Employed
Idaho state	961,506	29,758	3.1	931,748
Coeur d'Alene	87,778	3,182	3.6	84,596
Lewiston WA-ID	32,345	966	3.0	31,379
Boise City	421,351	12,542	3.0	408,809
Twin Falls	56,387	1,793	3.2	54,594
Pocatello	44,267	1,370	3.1	42,897
Idaho Falls	82,020	2,143	2.6	79,877
Logan UT-ID	78,697	1,828	2.3	76,869

Quick fact 3. Wages and employment by industry, Idaho, 2023 annual averages

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

NAICS	Industry sector	Avg. number of firms	Avg. employment	Avg. annual wage
	All industries	94,396	842,383	\$56,261
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2,625	24,543	\$46,385
21	Mining	234	2,912	\$92,707
22	Utilities	414	4,014	\$81,552
23	Construction	12,674	66,580	\$60,012
31-33	Manufacturing	3,872	74,331	\$72,311
42	Wholesale trade	5,152	34,703	\$84,148
44-45	Retail trade	7,257	94,066	\$39,720
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	3,103	30,864	\$53,451
51	Information	2,911	10,249	\$88,255
52-53	Financial activities	9,190	39,286	\$76,293
54-56	Professional and business services	20,242	108,406	\$75,333
61	Educational services (private + government)	2,397	68,235	\$42,855
62	Health care and social assistance (private + govt)	10,991	121,070	\$56,142
71-72	Leisure and hospitality	6,466	94,492	\$24,174
81	Other services (except public administration)	5,728	22,316	\$42,854
92	Public administration	1,141	46,317	\$63,164

Quick fact 4. Projected industry average annual growth rates, Idaho, 2023-2025, 2022-2032

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications

NAICS	Industry sector	2023-2025	2022-2032
	All industries	1.22%	1.30%
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1.13%	0.70%
21	Mining	1.91%	0.62%
22	Utilities	1.85%	0.79%
23	Construction	2.05%	2.31%
31-33	Manufacturing	1.28%	1.41%
42	Wholesale trade	0.95%	1.12%
44-45	Retail trade	0.45%	0.91%
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	1.13%	0.86%
51	Information	1.69%	0.73%
52-53	Financial activities	0.76%	1.08%
54-56	Professional and business services	1.06%	1.23%
61	Educational services (private + government)	0.61%	1.46%
62	Health care and social assistance	1.90%	2.04%
71-72	Leisure and hospitality	0.61%	1.82%
81	Other services (except government)	0.54%	1.31%
92	Government (except education and hospitals)	0.57%	0.11%

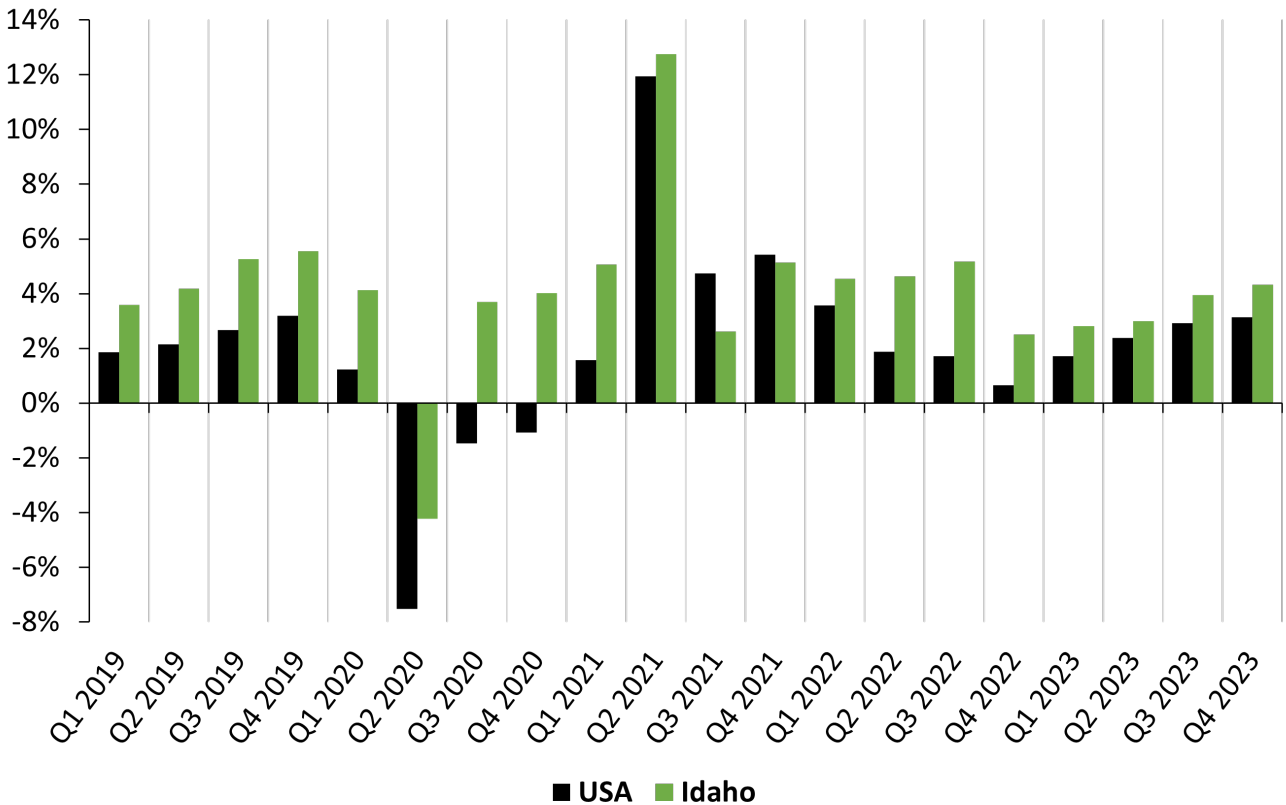
Executive summary

In 2023, Idaho’s economy was characterized by a return to stable and consistent growth. This was a change from the massive disruption experienced in 2020 from the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by 2021’s subsequent recovery phase and 2022’s continued elevated growth. The pandemic triggered an economic contraction, which was classified by the National Bureau of Economic Research as a recession beginning in March 2020. For Idaho, the return to normalcy following this short but traumatic recession was characterized by robust population growth and job creation. Idaho’s economic dynamism has consistently made it one of the fastest-growing states in the country.

Economic activity, as measured by gross domestic product (GDP), saw a large decline shortly after the pandemic in the first quarter of 2020. Idaho’s recovery from this decline was rapid, as the state’s GDP had already returned to positive year-over-year growth by the third quarter of that same year. While national GDP growth remained negative (on an annualized basis) for three consecutive quarters, Idaho’s growth was negative for only one quarter. GDP growth metrics in 2021 were somewhat irregular due to the base effect of the pandemic. In 2022, Idaho’s GDP growth metrics were substantially stronger than the nation’s, with the state having grown more than 4%, while national growth was declining rapidly to below 2%. During 2023, Idaho’s real GDP growth declined slightly to 3.5% but continued to outperform the U.S. national average growth of 2.5%.

Figure 0.1. Gross domestic product (chained dollars), change from same quarter previous year, U.S. and Idaho, first quarter (Q1) 2019 through fourth quarter (Q4) 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



In 2023, Idaho's GDP in current dollars was just under \$118.8 billion, with 89% coming from the private sector. The largest contributing industries in the private sector included real estate and rental leasing, at 14% of GDP, professional and business services, at 11%, manufacturing, at 10%, retail trade, at 8% and health care, also at 8%.

This report will examine Idaho's economic progress in 2023 through a wide variety of economic indicators, grouped across several key categories.

Jobs and unemployment

In 2022, Idaho's employment levels increased robustly and returned to a path of long-term growth. Every measure of unemployment decreased, including not only standard measures like unemployment claims and the unemployment rate, but also alternative measures of underemployment. Job postings and availability continued to grow as the state exhausted its supply of available workers.

In 2023, Idaho continued to have strong employment growth while some measures of unemployment reported gradual increases from record low metrics experienced during 2022. Although Idaho's labor market is still very tight compared to historical standards, 2023 did provide minimal relief as unemployment and related claims data were more comparable to levels of 2018-2019 than the extremely low levels recorded statewide in 2022.

Income and wages

Idaho's wage measurements in 2023 showed growth in both wage (job associated) income and overall household income metrics.

Employment projections

The Idaho Department of Labor produces employment projections forecasting the state's future job growth. These projections anticipate broad job growth across the state's array of industries.

Regional economic highlights

All of Idaho's six labor regions experienced job and population growth in 2023. However, growth industries and the pace of growth varied dramatically among the regions.

Economic comparisons with other states

Idaho consistently ranks among the fastest-growing states in both employment and population. In 2023, the state once again had one of the fastest-growing populations in the country.

Section 1: Jobs and unemployment

Key indicators point to an ongoing tight labor market and an economy that continues to grow post-pandemic. Total nonfarm employment in Idaho grew by 2.3% in 2023, reaching a new all-time high of over 846,000 employed persons. Growth was distributed across the economy and throughout the state, with most major sectors adding employment and all six state regions experiencing job growth. Meanwhile, unemployment rates remained relatively low in Idaho, with unemployment claim levels comparable to those pre-pandemic. These high numbers of open jobs combined with low levels of unemployment provide continual evidence of a tight labor market.

Total nonfarm employment continues to grow

Following the recession of 2007-2009, Idaho's labor market underwent a record-long economic expansion. This was halted in March 2020 when COVID-19 swept across the nation. As Figure 1.1 shows, total nonfarm employment fell by nearly 80,000 jobs in March and April of 2020 before beginning a rapid rebound. Idaho became one of the first states to regain all jobs lost during the short 2020 recession, and this swift recovery set the state up for a return to robust patterns of growth. Idaho added nearly 19,000 total nonfarm jobs in 2023, for a growth rate of 2.3% from December 2022 to December 2023. Preliminary data from the first quarter of 2024 shows nonfarm job growth continuing to accelerate into the new year, with private sector job growth continuing to outpace the public sector.

Figure 1.1. Total private and public sector nonfarm jobs, seasonally adjusted, Idaho, Jan. 2007 through March 2024

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

* Shaded area represents a national recession period.

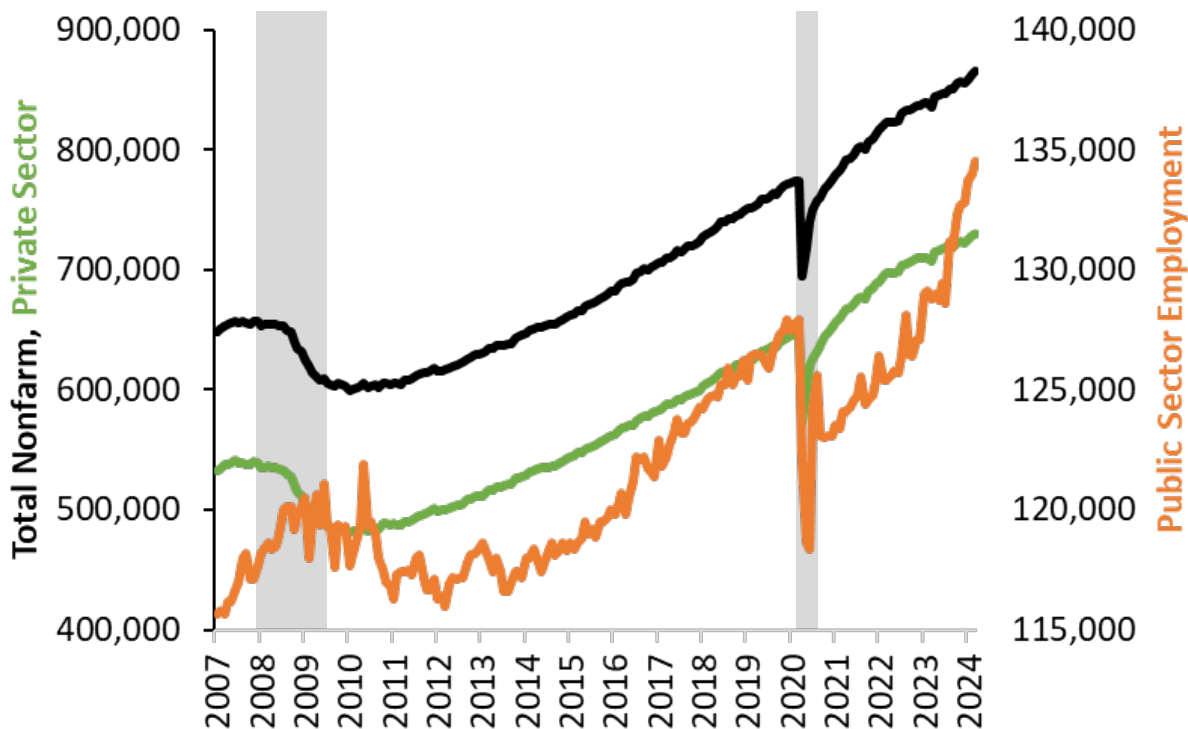
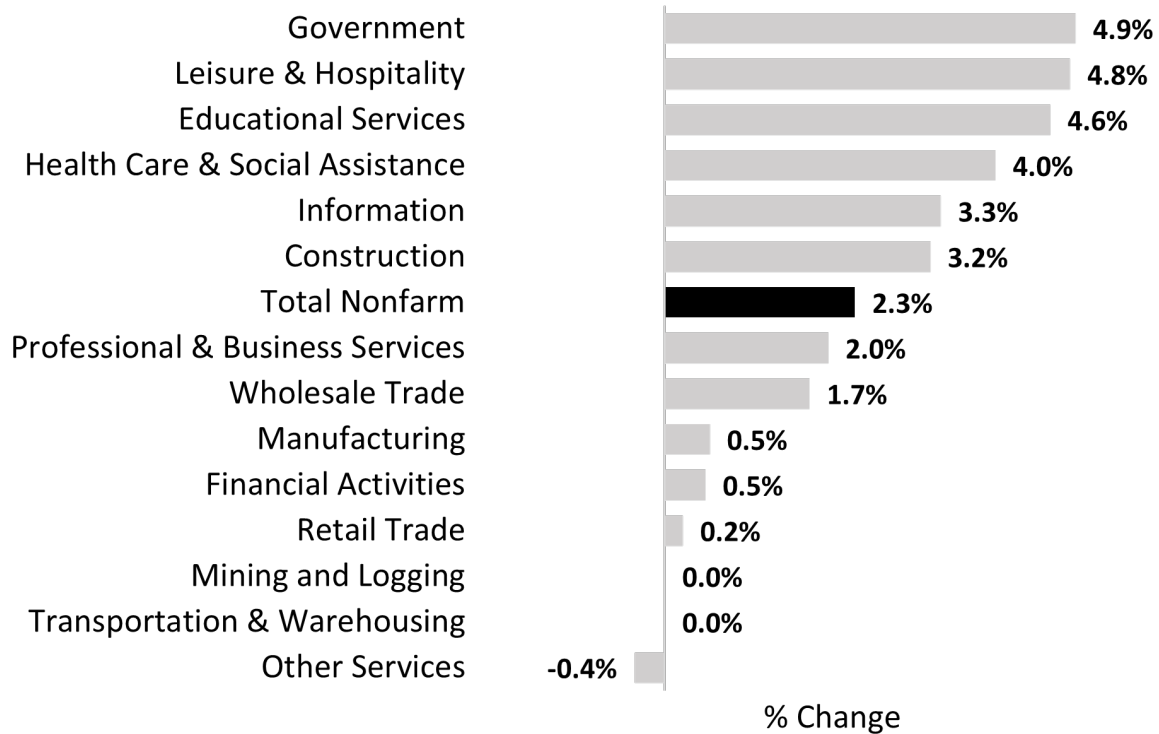


Figure 1.2 shows the percentage change in nonfarm employment by industry from 2022-2023. Annual average employment was 2.3% higher in 2023 than the previous year, with a net gain of 18,800 jobs. The fastest growing industry was government, which grew by 6,200 jobs or 4.9%, followed by leisure and hospitality at 4,300 jobs. All major sectors of the economy gained jobs in 2023, with private employment accounting for 81% of the total growth over the year.

Figure 1.2. Annual percentage change in employment by private sector industries and government, Idaho, 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics



All Idaho MSAs grew employment by at least 1% in 2023

Idaho’s job gains in 2023 were well distributed across all six of the state’s metropolitan statistical areas (MSA), as shown in Figure 1.3. The highest employment growth rates were led by a 3.7% increase in the Idaho Falls MSA followed closely by a 3.6% annual gain in the Coeur d’Alene MSA. The Boise MSA, the state’s largest MSA, had the next highest growth rate at 2.2% and led the state in total job growth, adding more than 8,000 jobs and accounting for 45% of Idaho’s job gains. The state’s remaining MSAs, Pocatello, up 2.1%, Lewiston, up 1.7%, and Twin Falls, up 1.0%, all experienced faster job growth rates than were reported in 2022. Nonmetropolitan areas grew as well, with just over 3,000 jobs added in nonmetropolitan counties.

Figure 1.3. Total nonfarm employment change, annual average, Idaho, metropolitan areas and balance of state, 2022-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Area	Job change (2022-2023)	Percentage change (2022-2023)
Total for state	18,800	2.3%
Boise City	8,400	2.2%
Coeur d'Alene	2,600	3.6%
Idaho Falls	2,900	3.7%
Lewiston, ID-WA	500	1.7%
Pocatello	800	2.1%
Twin Falls	500	1.0%
All other nonmetro areas	3,100	1.8%

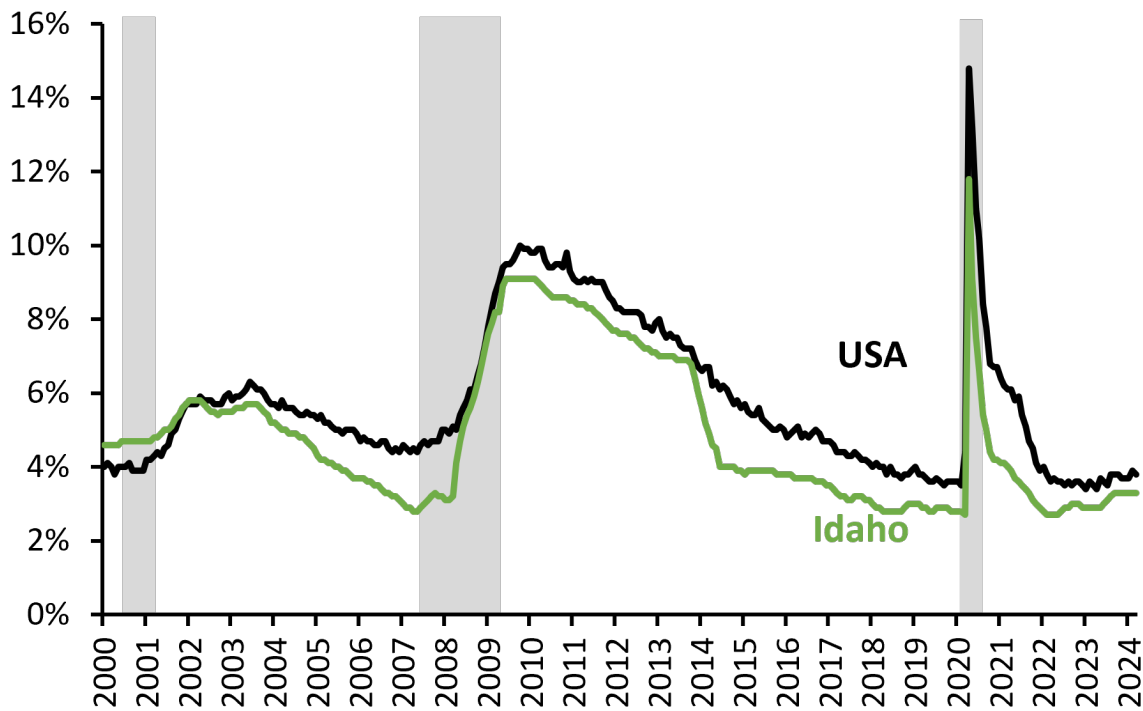
Unemployment rates remain at historically low levels

The overall unemployment rate is widely used as a lagging indicator of the direction of the economy. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed people who are actively seeking work divided by the labor force. The labor force is limited to individuals who are employed or seeking work.

Figure 1.4. Unemployment rate, seasonally adjusted, U.S. and Idaho, Jan. 2000 through March 2024

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

* Shaded area represents a national recession period.



The unemployment rate for Idaho tends to be lower than the national rate. As shown in Figure 1.4, the state unemployment rate peaked at 9.1% in 2009 at the tail end of the Great Recession. Since then, the

unemployment rate has steadily declined until the COVID-19 pandemic affected the labor market in the early months of 2020. Idaho unemployment rates spiked from 2.7% in March 2020 to 11.6% in April 2020, while nationwide rates surged to 14.8% that same month. As the labor market recovered from the two-month long pandemic recession, unemployment rates steadily declined to record lows of 2.7% during the spring of 2022. By March 2024, the unemployment rate was 3.3%. Although higher than 2022's record low annual average of 2.8%, Idaho's unemployment rate has continued to hover near historical low levels.

Unemployment claims return to typical levels from 2022 record lows

As Figure 1.5 shows, the number of new (initial) claims filed for unemployment insurance benefits remained in sustained decline until the most recent recession. A peak of 25,613 new claims were filed in January 2009 at the height of the Great Recession, and the average monthly initial claims jumped from 12,213 in 2008 to 15,919 in 2009. In contrast, the pandemic recession reached a peak of 71,285 new claims in April 2020. With Idaho's labor market fully recovered from the pandemic, new claims have returned to lower levels, averaging close to 5,200 per month in 2023 compared to 4,800 in 2022 and 4,900 in 2019.

Figure 1.5. Monthly initial claims, not seasonally adjusted, Idaho, Jan. 2007 through March 2024

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

* Shaded area represents a national recession period.

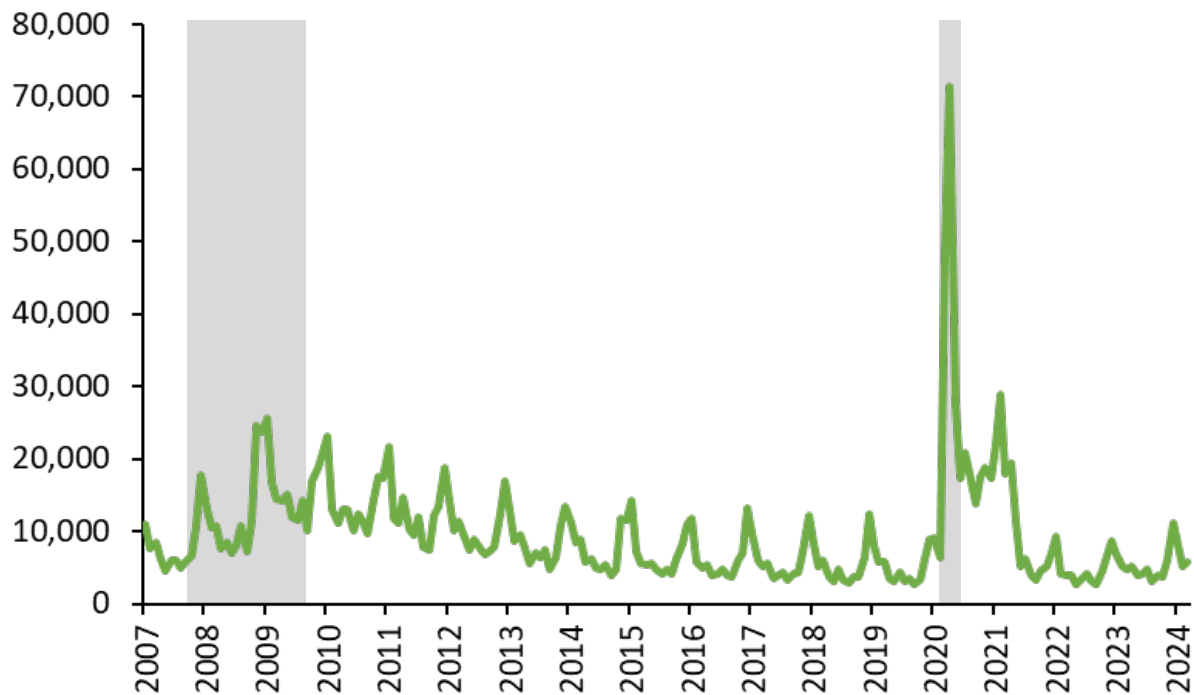


Figure 1.6 shows the largest share of unemployment insurance claimants was in the construction industry at 18.4%. Other top claimant industries included manufacturing; administrative, support, and waste management services; and retail trade.

Figure 1.6. Regular unemployment claimant characteristics by industry, Idaho, 2023

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications

Industry of the insured unemployed	2023 claimants	Percentage of total
Total	75,655	100.00%
Construction	13,926	18.4%
Manufacturing	9,766	12.9%
Administrative and support and waste management	9,599	12.7%
Retail trade	6,021	8.0%
Health care and social assistance	5,042	6.7%
Transportation and warehousing	4,829	6.4%
Professional, scientific and technical services	4,367	5.8%
Accommodation and food services	3,485	4.6%
Agriculture and forestry	3,310	4.4%
Wholesale trade	2,651	3.5%
Finance and insurance	2,423	3.2%
INA*	1,890	2.5%
Other services (excludes public administration)	1,573	2.1%
Public administration	1,461	1.9%
Information	1,248	1.6%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,169	1.5%
Educational services	1,045	1.4%
Real estate and rental and leasing	994	1.3%
Mining	509	0.7%
Utilities	199	0.3%
Management of companies and enterprises	148	0.2%

* Information not available.

The insured unemployment rate is the proportion of individuals currently collecting unemployment insurance compared with the total number of Idaho workers (both working and not working) covered by unemployment insurance.

Figure 1.7 compares the official unemployment rate in Idaho to the insured unemployment rate. As the unemployment rate jumped to 11.6% in March 2020, the insured employment rate jumped to 9.2% — the highest rate on record dating back to 1986.

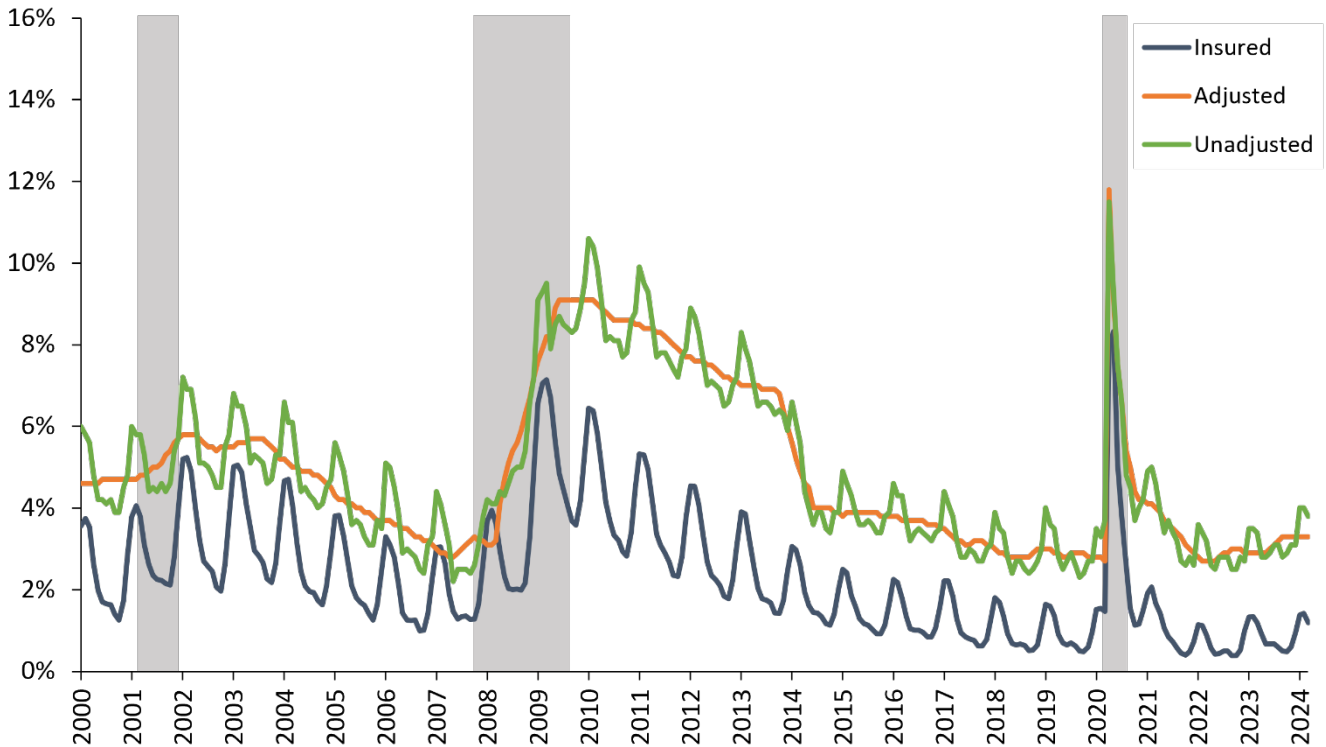
Unemployment rates historically move in tandem with the insured rate. The gap between overall and insured unemployment rates widened following the end of the Great Recession in 2009, showing the number of unemployed persons climbed at a faster pace than those who collected unemployment insurance benefits. This left an increasing number of out-of-work individuals without support, including the long-term unemployed who had exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits. The Coronavirus

Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act programs initiated early in the year might have prevented this gap from widening further following the pandemic recession.

Figure 1.7. Overall unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted) and insured unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted), Idaho, Jan. 2000 through March 2024

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Training Administration

* Shaded area represents a national recession period.



However, with structural changes in employer and employee relationships, including the rise of the “gig economy,” independent contractors and temporary workers occupy an increasingly larger share of the workforce than before. This may explain the gap between the unemployed and the insured unemployed remaining a little larger than pre-2008 levels, as gig workers tend to not be covered by the unemployment insurance typically paid for by an employer.

Labor underutilization remains at relatively low levels in 2023

The unemployment rate provides information about labor market conditions including the availability of labor and the level of economic distress. However, the unemployed are not the only pool of new hires, nor the only ones experiencing economic concern. The official definition of “unemployed” includes only those people who are jobless and have actively looked for work in the past month. However, there are the jobless who want to work but have given up looking because they believe there are no jobs currently available to them. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) refers to these individuals as “marginally attached workers.” In addition, there are workers who want to work full time but are currently working part time (less than 35 hours a week) because they are unable to find full-time jobs.

Recognizing these other forms of labor market distress, the BLS has developed six alternative measures of labor underutilization that are progressively more inclusive. The standard measurement (U-3), along with three of the six measurements, includes:

- **U-3.** Total unemployed as a percentage of the civilian labor force (the official unemployment rate).
- **U-4.** Total unemployed plus discouraged workers as a percentage of the civilian labor force plus discouraged workers.
- **U-5.** Total unemployed, plus discouraged workers, plus all other persons marginally attached to the labor force as a percentage of the civilian labor force, plus all persons marginally attached to the labor force.
- **U-6.** Total unemployed, plus all persons marginally attached to the labor force, plus total employed part time for economic reasons as a percentage of the civilian labor force, plus all persons marginally attached to the labor force.

Discouraged workers are one category of marginally attached workers. They have looked for work sometime in the past 12 months but are not currently looking because they believe their job search efforts would be futile. This belief may reflect economic troubles in the local labor market or arise from personal characteristics, such as a lack of schooling or training, or discrimination due to age, race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, criminal record or disability.

Other marginally attached workers give a nonlabor market reason for not looking for work in the past four weeks. For example, they may be in school or training, or they are having difficulties finding childcare, dealing with family responsibilities, coping with an illness or facing transportation problems.

Individuals employed part time for economic reasons are those who work fewer than 35 hours a week but want and are available to work full time. They give an economic reason for working part time, such as reduced hours or being unable to find a full-time job. They are also referred to as “underemployed” or “involuntary, part-time workers.”

The corresponding alternative unemployment rates have also experienced a decline. Idaho’s U-6 rate, the broadest measure of unemployment, experienced a temporary dip in recent years — after rising from 6% in 2019 to 9.8% in 2020, it fell to very low levels of 5.5% in 2022 before rebounding to 6.5% in 2023.

The gap between the U-6 and U-3 rates has narrowed significantly since its peak in 2009, as the ranks of discouraged workers, marginally attached workers and those involuntarily working part time declined steadily. Idaho’s U-6 four-quarter moving average was 8% above the standard unemployment rate at the height of the recession in 2009. By 2019, the gap had decreased to 3.1%, on par with the pre-recession gap in 2007. In 2020, the gap again widened to 4.6% but narrowed significantly to 2.7% by 2022 before reaching 3.2% in 2023.

Figure 1.8. Alternatively, unemployed workers, Idaho, 2005-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey

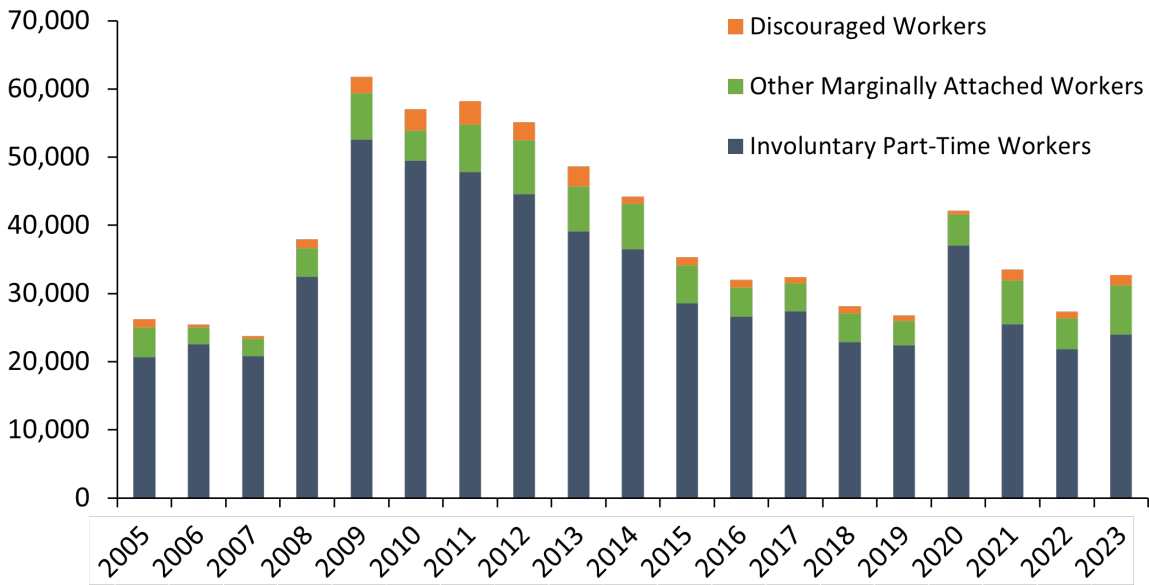
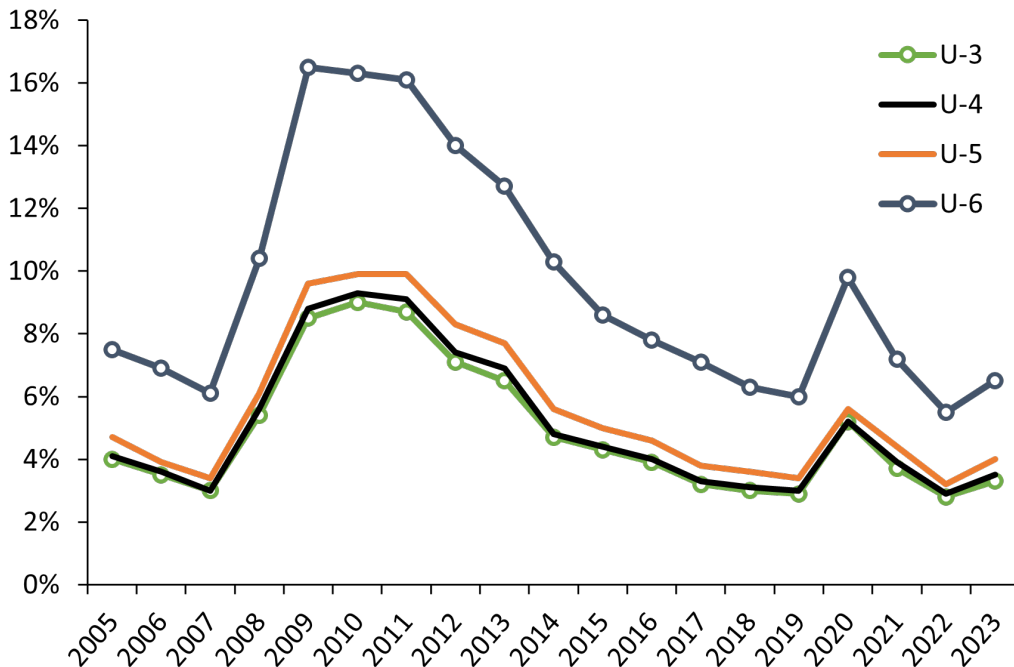


Figure 1.9. Alternative measures of labor underutilization: U-3 (standard), U-4 (unemployed plus discouraged workers), U-5 (unemployed plus all marginally attached workers) and U-6 (unemployed with marginally attached workers and involuntary part-time), four-quarter moving average, Idaho, 2005 through 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

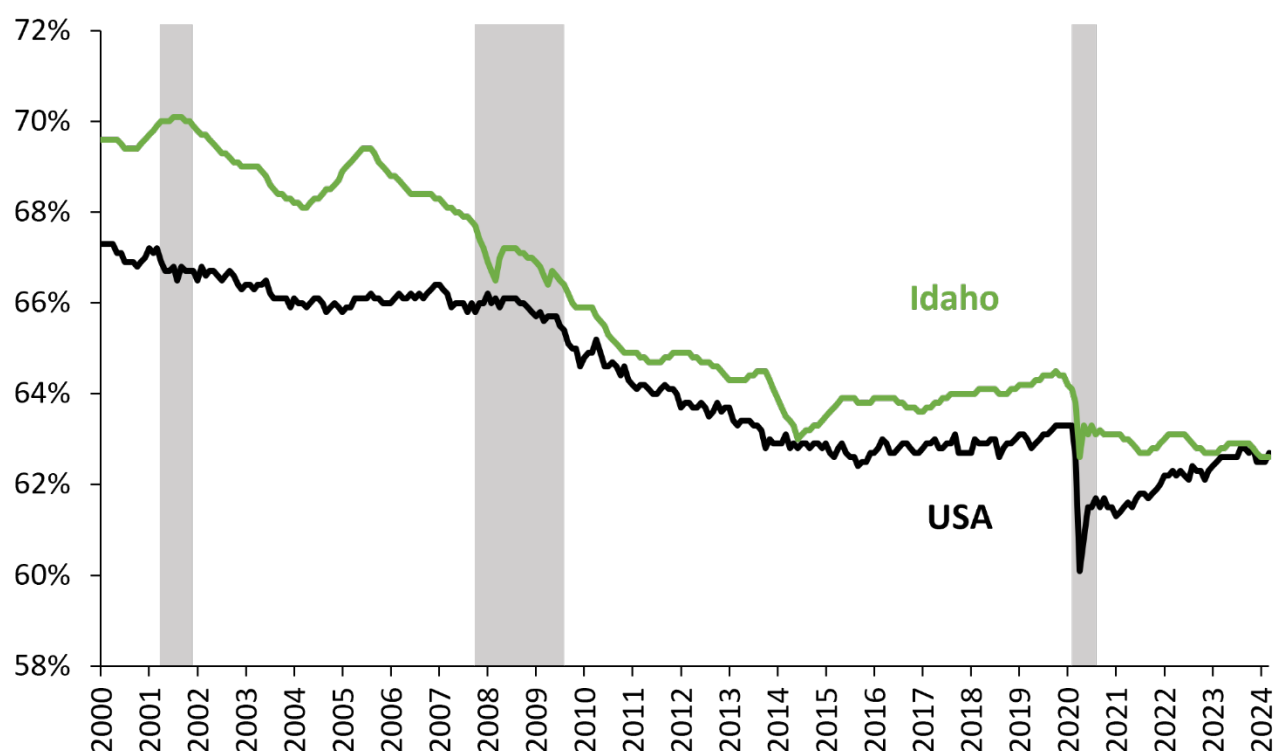


Labor force participation shrinks as labor market exits outweigh entrants

While unemployment rates have dropped steeply from their peaks in 2020, the labor force participation rate — the share of Idaho adults either working or looking for work — continues its long-term trend downward. Figure 1.10 shows Idaho’s labor participation rate dropped significantly from the early 2000’s to after the 2020 pandemic recession. As of March 2024, the labor force participation rate remained at 62.6%. Idaho’s labor participation rate has historically been higher than that of the U.S., but it has been nearly identical to the U.S. average for all of 2023 and through the early part of 2024. After rising in 2022 from depressed levels during and immediately following the pandemic, the state employment-to-population ratio (Figure 1.11) steadily decreased throughout 2023 and March 2024, and rates of 60.6% remain nearly 2% lower than where they were pre-pandemic.

Figure 1.10. Labor force participation rate, seasonally adjusted, U.S. and Idaho, Jan. 2000 through March 2024

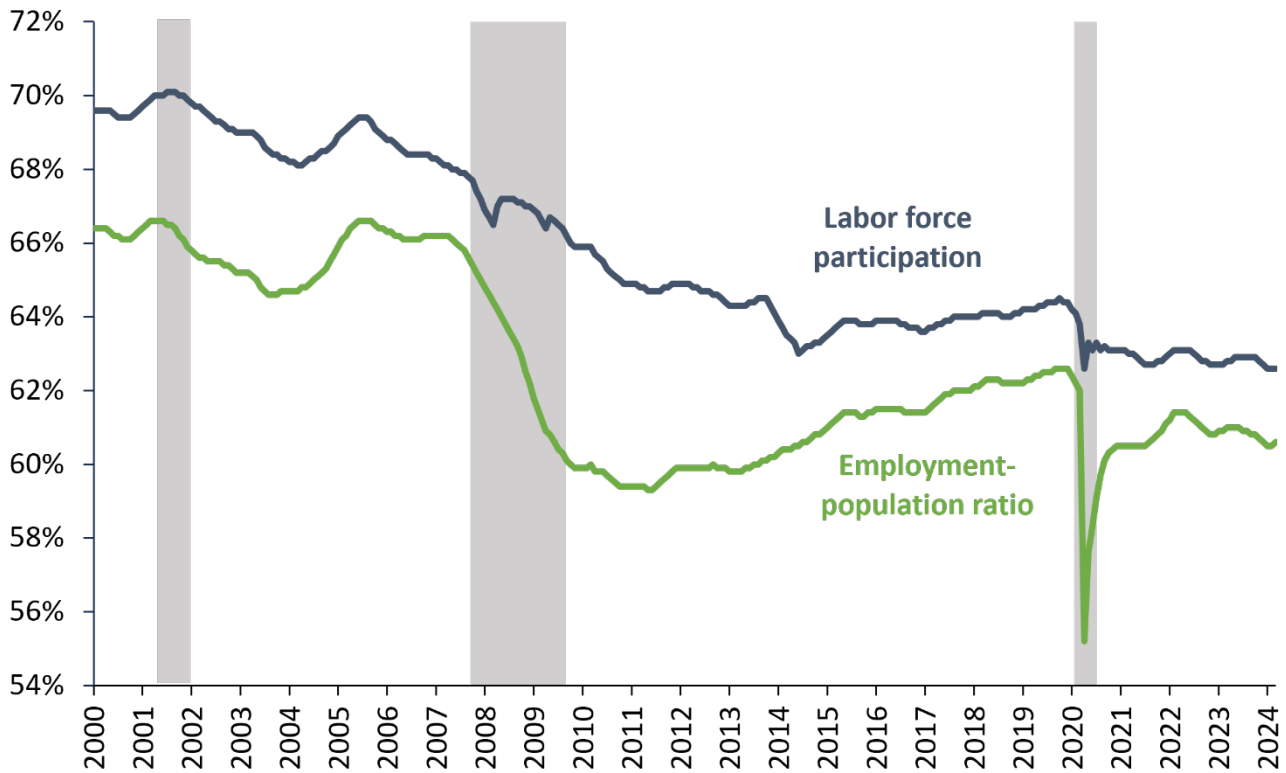
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Labor force participation usually falls during recessions, as some people give up looking for work. This was also the case in Idaho during the pandemic-induced recession. Economists have speculated that fear of the COVID-19 virus was a major factor contributing to lower labor force participation among workers of all ages. An examination of participation rates by age indicates the national decline has been concentrated among the 65 and older population. The disruption may have facilitated a reversal in a long-running trend of rising labor force participation among senior citizens, with many of them choosing to retire amid uncertainty surrounding the virus, as well as an economy shifting toward remote work.

Figure 1.11. Labor force participation rate and employment-to-population ratio, seasonally adjusted, Idaho, Jan. 2000 through March 2024

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Job vacancies exceed labor supply

A wave of retirements may be contributing to the growing number of job vacancies across the state. For example, a Pew Research study documented a rise of 1.7 million retirees from the baby boomer generation in 2020 (Fry, 2020).

The Federal Reserve Board estimates the retired share of the U.S. population in 2022 was nearly 1.5% above its pre-pandemic level and that “excess” retirements could account for most of the decline in the labor force participation rate. The excess retirement levels should fade, but “the retired share will remain well above its pre-pandemic level, reflecting population aging,” (Montes, Smith, and Dajon 2022).

The Conference Board has been tallying monthly help-wanted online reports since 2005. This data series, which pulls information from more than 1,200 job boards nationwide, is an indicator of economic and employment trends. An increase in the number of postings typically indicates businesses have a growing confidence in the outlook of sales and profits, whereas a decline highlights economic concern. Job postings are considered a conservative proxy for job openings because some postings may be hiring for more than one opening and some industries do not use online advertising, instead relying on word of mouth or physical walk-ins.

In 2019, the Help Wanted OnLine™ (HWOL) program partnered with Burning Glass Technologies Inc., the new sole provider of online job advertisement data for HWOL. With the partnership, the HWOL data

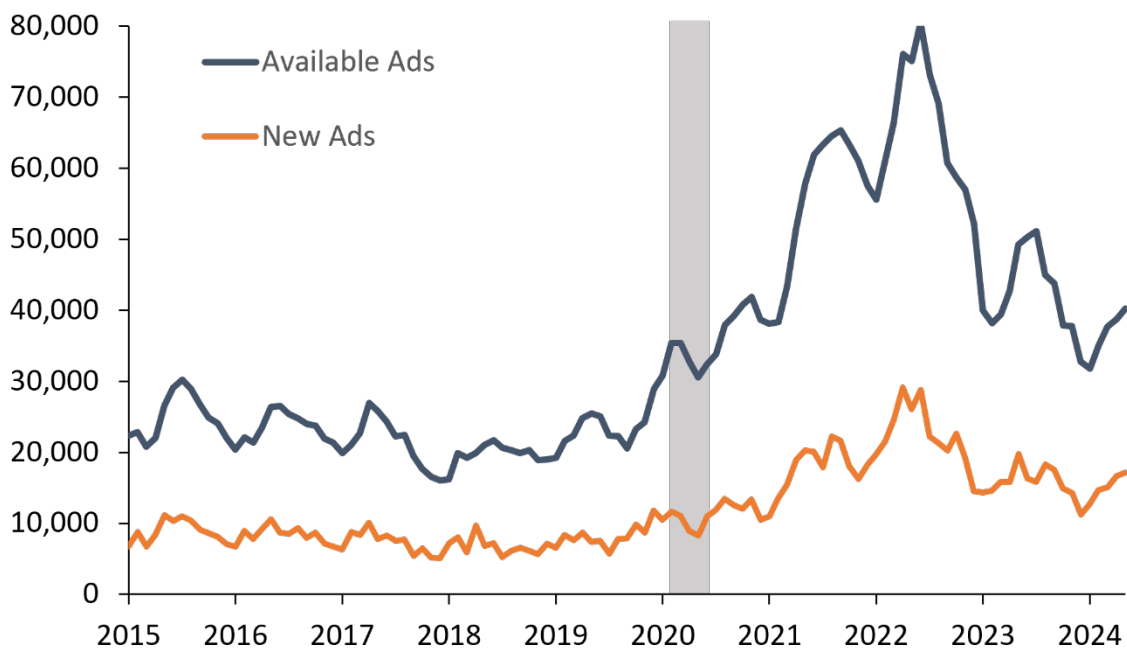
series has been revised historically to reflect a new universe and methodology of online job advertisements. Therefore, the new data series cannot be used in conjunction with the pre-revised HWOL data series.

The latest data series (Figure 1.12) shows a labor market that has cooled from an explosive post-pandemic rebound, but still remains robust. Throughout 2021 and the first half of 2022, the number of job postings rose rapidly as Idaho employers refilled positions and returned to business as usual post pandemic. This situation created a high level of labor mobility and opportunity for workers to change roles at an unprecedented rate. Beginning in June 2022, the hiring situation began to stabilize and the number of postings gradually declined through 2023. However, job postings remain significantly higher than pre-pandemic averages, and the number of open jobs continues to outnumber available job seekers (the unemployment level).

Figure 1.12. Unique available and new job ad counts, seasonally adjusted, Idaho, Jan. 2015 through May 2024

Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc. and The Conference Board

* Shaded area represents a national recession period.



The HWOL Index measures changes over time in online advertised job vacancies relative to the base period. An increase in the index is associated with an increase in job openings and hiring activity in the economy. Index values for Idaho generally track with those of the nation. However, Idaho’s hiring activity escalated rapidly beginning in 2021 and continued through 2022, where record index levels near 230 were reported in the state for multiple consecutive months. The state’s HWOL Index has continued to outpace the national figure since that time. Although index levels for Idaho incrementally softened throughout 2023, they remained elevated in May 2024 at 141, well above both the national index score and Idaho’s own pre-pandemic levels of 100-110 in 2019.

Figure 1.13. Unique available job ad counts and the number of unemployed, seasonally adjusted, Idaho, Jan. 2015 through May 2024

Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc. and The Conference Board, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

* Shaded area represents a national recession period.

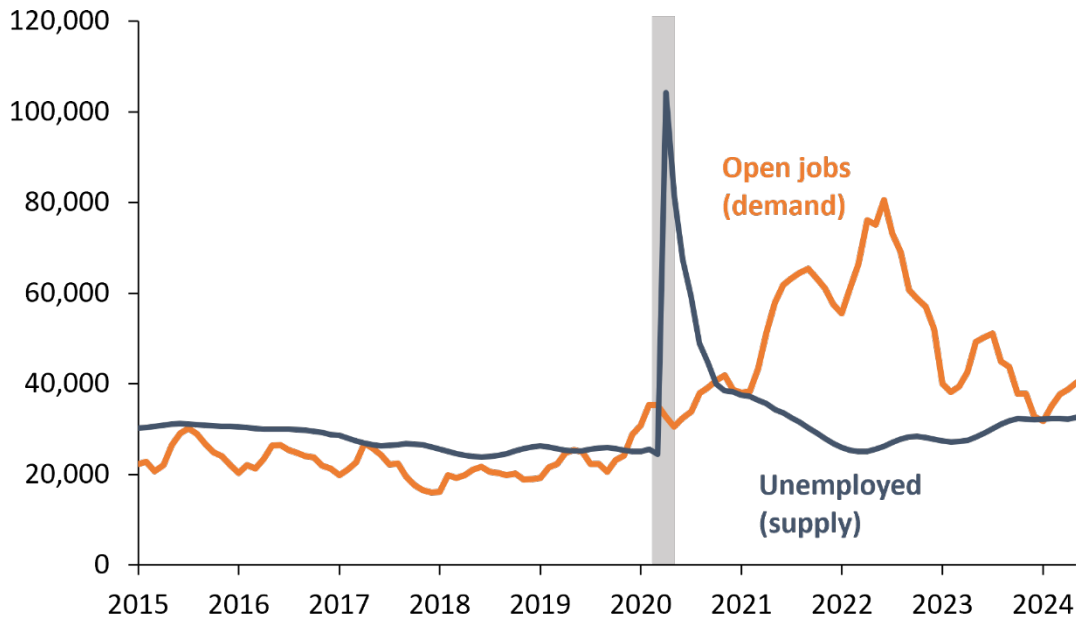
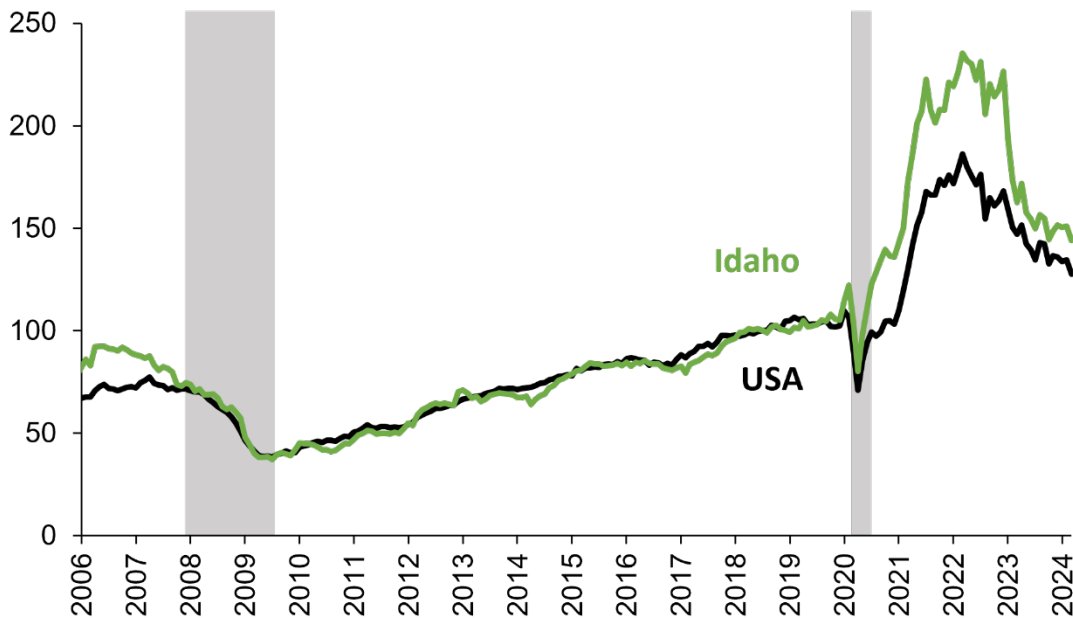


Figure 1.14. The Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine® Index, U.S. and Idaho, Dec. 2005 through May 2024

Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc. and The Conference Board

* Shaded area represents a national recession period.



Section 2: Wages and income

Wage and income data have begun the process of restabilizing after the pandemic recession’s job losses resulted in a temporary destabilization of wage data. As a result of job losses from the pandemic being heavily concentrated in lower-wage sectors — such as restaurants, accommodation and retail trade — the average wage rose quickly in 2020. This was not because individual workers were earning significantly more but because the mixture of jobs in the economy shifted. Tight labor markets (as discussed in Section 1) have raised wages, and steady income growth in Idaho is clearly discernable in the data as the effects of the pandemic fade.

Idaho average wage rises amid high wage growth

A sharp increase in the statewide average wage was recorded in 2020 even as total employment dipped. Nominal wage grew by 7.7% and real wage grew by 6.4%, outpacing wage growth over the past decade. This was due to the pandemic causing mass unemployment among lower-wage workers and therefore changing job composition. Real wages have been essentially flat since 2020 while nominal wages continue to rise. Annual average wages for the state are shown in Figure 2.1. Wages are expressed in both nominal terms and real wages (i.e., wages adjusted for inflation using the consumer price index). Wage growth in 2022 accelerated significantly as tight labor market conditions drove rising wages. However, these gains were inadequate to keep pace with high inflation, and real wages decreased slightly.

Figure 2.1. Average annual wage, nominal and inflation adjusted (in 2023 dollars), Idaho, 2006-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

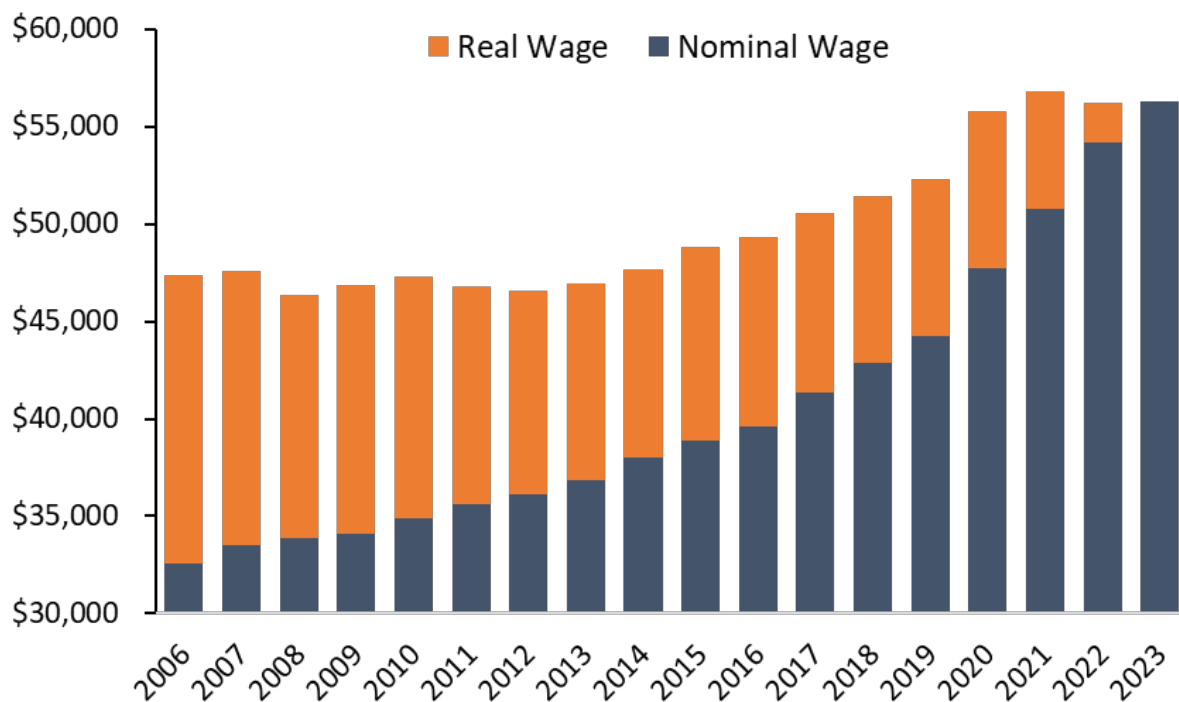
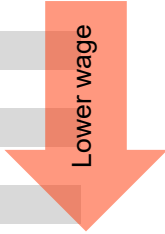


Figure 2.2 shows the average annual wage in different industry sectors. The average wage calculation divides the total industry wage by the average employment. When combined, retail trade, leisure and hospitality — comprised of jobs in the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations and food services — accounted for 22.4% of all jobs in the state but paid the lowest wages of all the industry sectors. On the other end of the spectrum, the highest paying industries — mining and information — accounted for less than 2% of all jobs.

Figure 2.2. Average annual wage, by industry, Idaho, 2022-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Economic sector	2023 avg. wage	Wage growth	2023 job share	Job growth
Mining	\$92,608	5.9%	0.3%	2.6%
Information	\$88,195	12.5%	1.2%	3.4%
Wholesale trade	\$84,046	4.1%	4.1%	1.1%
Utilities	\$81,570	-9.7%	0.5%	5.9%
Financial activities	\$76,954	3.2%	4.7%	-0.3%
Professional and business service	\$75,363	4.4%	12.9%	2.3%
Manufacturing	\$72,273	2.4%	8.8%	2.1%
Public administration	\$63,655	8.5%	5.5%	2.2%
Construction	\$60,035	6.4%	7.9%	3.7%
All industries	\$56,272	3.8%	100.0%	2.6%
Health care and social assistance	\$56,100	2.9%	14.4%	4.8%
Transportation and warehousing	\$53,513	4.0%	3.7%	0.8%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$46,347	4.7%	2.9%	2.5%
Other services	\$42,778	5.3%	2.6%	3.2%
Education	\$42,933	2.4%	8.1%	2.2%
Retail trade	\$39,718	1.0%	11.2%	-0.5%
Leisure and hospitality	\$24,143	4.7%	11.2%	5.2%



Many industries in Idaho experienced solid wage growth as the annual wage for all industries rose by 3.8% in 2023. Meanwhile, the labor market remained tight and jobs were hard to fill. Utilities, one of the highest paying industries in Idaho, experienced wage declines due partly to some high paying positions being reclassified as well as new hires at lower wage ranges.

Per capita personal income growth moderates

In 2023 dollars, per capita personal income was essentially flat as it increased by less than \$200 from 2022. Disaggregating income into its three major components — net earnings; dividends, interest and rent; and transfer receipts — shows the majority of 2023’s income growth was driven by dividends, interest and rent while net earnings were flat and transfer receipts declined.

Figure 2.3. Per capita personal income (in 2023 dollars) Idaho, 2007-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Year	Per capita personal income	Net earnings	Dividends, interest and rent	Transfer receipts
2007	\$46,018	\$29,423	\$9,735	\$6,859
2008	\$44,678	\$27,611	\$9,516	\$7,551
2009	\$42,842	\$26,221	\$8,385	\$8,236
2010	\$43,256	\$26,242	\$8,182	\$8,831
2011	\$43,949	\$26,587	\$8,839	\$8,524
2012	\$44,876	\$26,780	\$9,695	\$8,400
2013	\$45,467	\$27,655	\$9,335	\$8,478
2014	\$46,591	\$28,187	\$9,724	\$8,680
2015	\$48,795	\$29,316	\$10,387	\$9,091
2016	\$49,387	\$29,547	\$10,616	\$9,224
2017	\$50,417	\$30,227	\$10,879	\$9,310
2018	\$51,880	\$31,288	\$11,064	\$9,527
2019	\$54,264	\$32,702	\$11,650	\$9,913
2020	\$58,096	\$33,937	\$11,967	\$12,192
2021	\$60,596	\$34,700	\$12,722	\$13,174
2022	\$58,846	\$34,453	\$13,334	\$11,059
2023	\$59,035	\$34,454	\$13,806	\$10,775

Personal income is the sum of earned income (from owning a business or holding a job), investment income and transfer payments chiefly from government programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, food stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and unemployment benefits. Per capita personal income is the total personal income of an area divided by the population of the area. Transfer payments, chiefly from government programs, grew following the 2007–2009 recession. By 2010, unemployment insurance benefits and food stamps pushed transfer payments as high as 20.4% of total personal income. Since 2014, transfer payments have remained high with a relatively steady income share at around 18%. The sustained share of transfer payments is largely tied to baby boomers who are retiring.

Since 2010, net earned income hovered around 60% of total personal income for many years, a decline from 2007’s share of 63.9%. This reflects the aging demographics of the state and the falling labor force participation rate (see Section 1). Earned income in 2023 made up 58% of total personal income, higher than 2021’s low rate of 57% but still notably below the 60% reported from 2010-2019.

Household income continues to rise in 2023

Despite the uptick in average incomes and wages, median household incomes fell during the 2020 pandemic recession, as shown in Figure 2.4’s data series. Median household income differs significantly from average income in two ways. First, the median measures the 50th percentile of the distribution, rather than the average. Secondly, this series measures incomes among households, rather than individuals, which can result in large disparities. For example, a household with two working professionals will have a significantly higher income than a college student who lives alone and works only part time.

However, this trend was reversed in 2021, with a strong growth in wages driving significant gains in Idaho’s median household income. Income not only surged to a new all-time high, but also narrowed the gap with national income metrics to the lowest recorded levels. This continued onward into 2022, as U.S. median household income showed slight declines.

Figure 2.4. Median household income (in current dollars), U.S. and Idaho, 2005-2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates

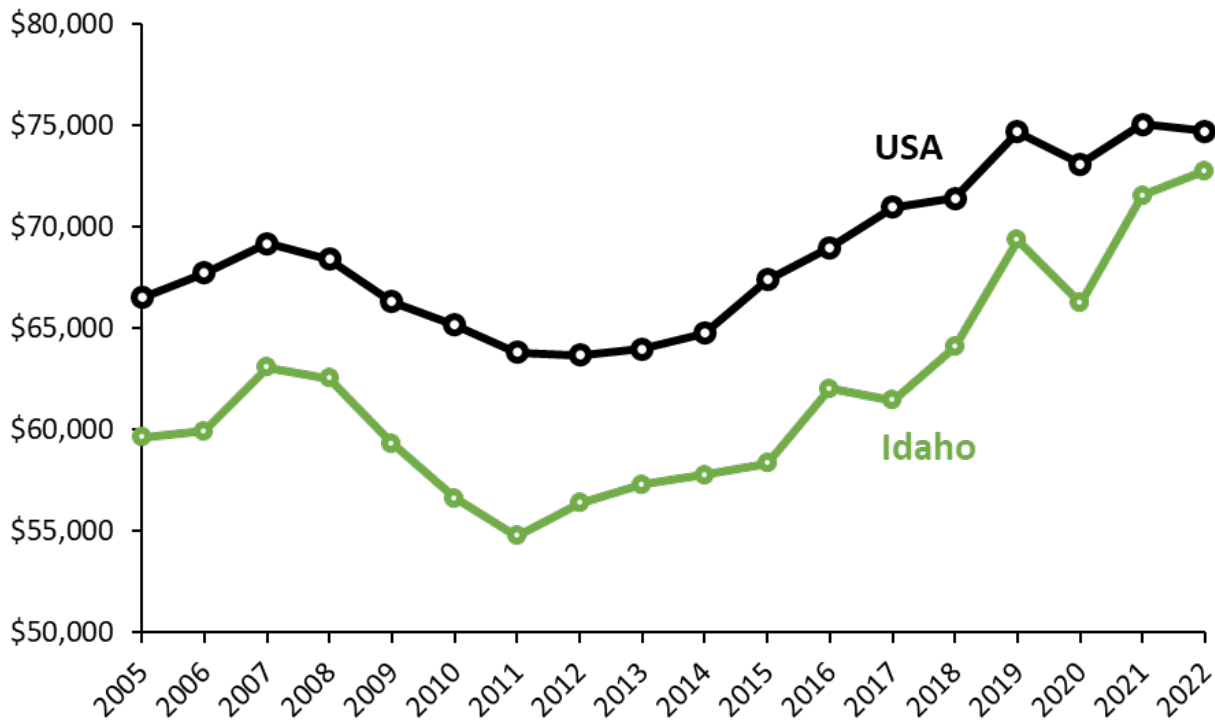


Figure 2.5 breaks down median household income by type of household and demonstrates the great variability between these major categories.

Figure 2.5. Median household income (in current dollars), Idaho, select years between 2012-2022

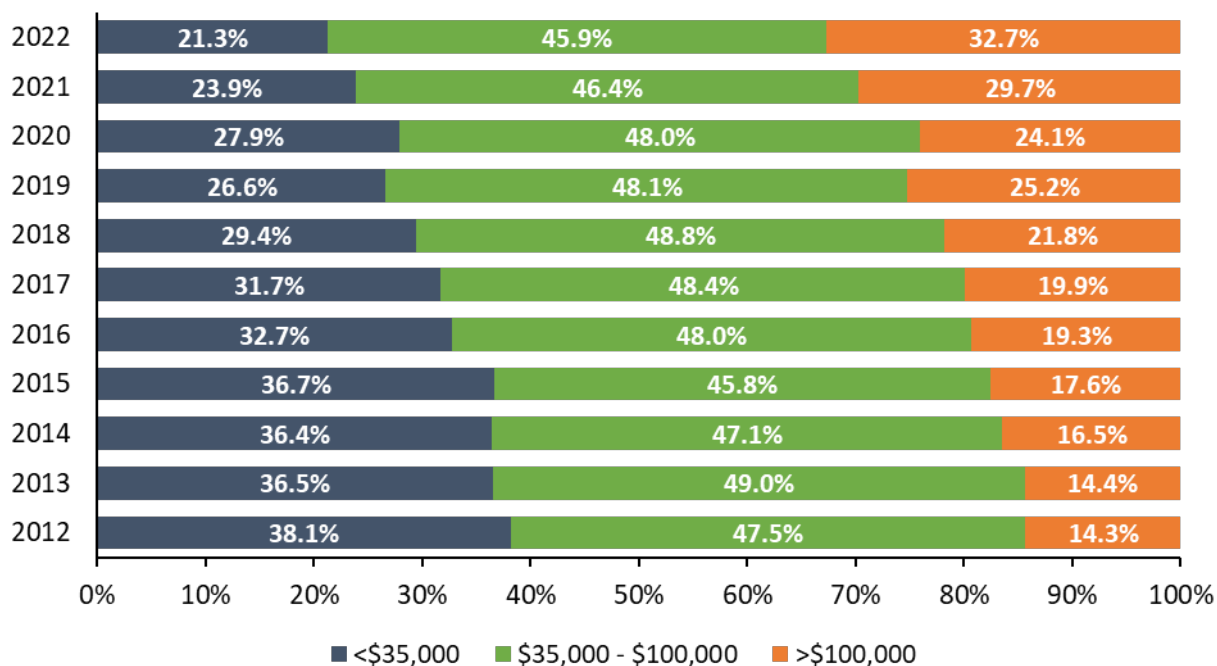
Source: American Community Survey, one-year estimates

Household type	2012	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change, 2012-22
All households	\$56,395	\$64,116	\$69,355	\$66,274	\$71,578	\$72,785	29.1%
Family	\$67,545	\$76,117	\$82,278	\$79,739	\$86,135	\$85,193	26.1%
Married-couple family	\$76,728	\$84,468	\$92,150	\$88,215	\$95,223	\$93,252	21.5%
Non-family	\$33,507	\$37,054	\$39,973	\$38,550	\$41,571	\$42,145	25.8%

Examining household income ranges allows for a more nuanced view of how economic recovery differs socioeconomically. Figure 2.6 illustrates the share of households that fell within certain income ranges. Since the housing crash and Great Recession, the share of households making less than \$35,000 a year has been in steady decline. These lower-income households accounted for 38.1% of households in 2012. By 2022, the share had dropped to 21.3%. Households making more than \$100,000 increased from 14.3% to 32.7% of total Idaho households, more than doubling over the past ten years.

Figure 2.6. Percentage of households by income range, not inflation adjusted, Idaho, 2012-2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates



The Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan think tank in Washington, D.C., defines the middle class as those earning between two-thirds and double the U.S. median household income after adjusting for household size. Thus, after adjusting for cost of living, a middle-class Idaho household of three would need to make between \$69,000 –\$207,000 a year in 2022 to remain within the middle-class income bracket. Even with this measure, upper-income families have grown at a faster rate than middle-income families, who have seen only modest growth.

Other indicators of the financial situation of Idaho households have also shown improvements over the past decade. Figure 2.7 highlights select Idaho household statistics from the American Community Survey (ACS). According to the ACS, the share of households receiving welfare dropped from 3% in 2012 to 2.7% in 2022. Food stamp recipients have also seen a significant decline from 2012. While the share of households with earnings from a job declined from 78.5% in 2012 to 77.2% in 2022, the share of households with income from Social Security and retirements has risen during this time frame from 29.8% in 2012 to 32.8% in 2022. This reflects an increasingly aging population.

The data shows poverty rates in decline from a high of 15.9% in 2012. Children tend to have higher episodic poverty rates than the general population. In 2022, 13.3% of children under 18 were living below the poverty level.

The federal government considers any household paying more than 30% of its income toward housing costs to be under duress. The percentage of renters under duress due to housing costs has declined since 2012 to 47.3% in 2022. Additionally, the share of homeowners with a mortgage paying 30% or more of their income toward housing was steadily moving downward prior to 2021 when it started to reverse and has since been creeping back up.

Figure 2.7. Percentage of households by income range, Idaho, select years between 2012-2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates

Household characteristics	2012	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Poverty rate for all people	15.9%	11.8%	11.2%	11.9%	11.0%	10.7%
Poverty rate for children under 18	20.7%	14.3%	13.2%	14.4%	13.1%	13.3%
Households with earnings from a job	78.5%	76.8%	77.9%	77.6%	77.3%	77.2%
Households receiving Social Security	29.9%	32.9%	32.1%	32.6%	32.8%	32.8%
Households receiving retirement income	17.7%	19.5%	25.5%	21.7%	25.1%	25.4%
Households receiving Supplemental Security Income	5.1%	4.6%	4.5%	4.6%	4.8%	4.8%
Households receiving welfare cash payments	3.0%	2.5%	2.3%	2.9%	4.0%	2.7%
Households receiving food stamps	13.8%	8.9%	8.3%	9.0%	8.4%	7.3%
Homeownership rate	68.4%	70.7%	71.6%	70.8%	71.9%	72.3%
Renters paying 30% or more of income for housing	49.9%	46.1%	46.7%	45.0%	46.7%	47.3%
Homeowners paying 30% or more of income for housing	32.7%	25.7%	23.6%	25.6%	25.8%	27.5%

Section 3: Employment projections

The Idaho Department of Labor produces employment projections to provide job seekers, policy makers and training providers with an idea of how much an industry or occupation is projected to change over time, as well as show future demand for workers. The most recent long-term projections (2022-2032) highlight the following key findings:

- The average annual growth rate for total employment is projected to be 1.3%.
- The health care and social services industry sector is projected to lead statewide job growth with the most added jobs, followed closely by construction. Meanwhile, construction is projected to have the highest annual growth rate of any industry, followed by health care and transportation and warehousing.

Projections are largely based on historical trends and demographic growth in Idaho.

Industry projections show 1.3% future job growth rate

Idaho's employment is projected to grow by 120,000 jobs by 2032. This translates to 13.8% total growth or an annual growth rate of 1.3%. Figure 3.1 shows the projected growth rates for the state by industry, and as indicated, growth will come from a broad range of sectors.

Construction is forecasted to be the fastest-growing sector with a projected annual growth rate of 2.3%, while health care and social assistance is estimated to be the highest-growing industry, with a growth rate of 2%. In terms of numerical job growth, health care and social assistance, construction, and professional and business services sectors were projected to bring the most jobs into Idaho. Collectively, these three sectors account for roughly 32% of the employment share in the base year (2022) and 46% of total projected job growth. Projections anticipate the slowest growth to occur in public administration and mining.

Figure 3.1. Base and projected total employment (industry and self-employed), Idaho, 2022-2032

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications

NAICS industry title	2022 employment	2032 projection	Net change	Annual growth
Total all industries	875,946	996,885	120,939	1.3%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	23,929	25,670	1,741	0.7%
Mining	2,840	3,020	180	0.6%
Construction	64,237	80,700	16,463	2.3%
Manufacturing	72,753	83,690	10,937	1.4%
Utilities	3,788	4,100	312	0.8%
Wholesale trade	34,268	38,300	4,032	1.1%
Retail trade	94,558	103,500	8,942	0.9%
Transportation and warehousing	30,587	36,075	5,488	1.7%
Information	9,907	10,650	743	0.7%
Financial activities	39,321	43,780	4,459	1.1%
Professional and business services	105,871	119,600	13,729	1.2%

(Table continues.)

NAICS industry title	2022 employment	2032 projection	Net change	Annual growth
Educational services	66,572	76,950	10,378	1.5%
Health care and social assistance	114,057	139,600	25,543	2.0%
Leisure and hospitality	89,969	102,450	12,481	1.3%
Other services (except government)	21,474	24,800	3,326	1.5%
Self employed	56,738	57,500	762	0.1%
Public administration	45,078	46,500	1,422	0.3%

Occupational projections show rapid growth in health care and construction jobs

Projected annualized growth rates for the major occupational groups in Idaho are shown in Figure 3.2. Health care support (2.4%), construction and extraction occupations (2.2%) and personal care and service occupations (2.2%) were calculated to outpace most other occupational groups. This reflects the state’s rapidly expanding population, booming housing market and demand for personal services. Growth in health care support occupations (2.4%), as well as health care practitioners and technical occupations (2.1%), reflects strong growth in the health care industry and the rapidly growing share of the state’s aging population. There are no occupational groups projected to decline during the projection period.

Figure 3.2. Projected annualized growth rates for major occupational groups, Idaho, 2022-2032

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications



Service sector jobs projected for most job openings

In addition to projecting the number of new jobs, occupational projections estimate a broader measure of future job availability, which includes the projected number of occupational separations. The total number of occupational openings is the sum of three components: occupational growth, occupational transfers (such as an accountant becoming a manager) and labor force exits (such as a worker retiring). Collectively, occupational transfers and labor force exits are known as “separations,” and they are the primary driver of job openings. The separations methodology used here does not track turnover within occupations. Turnovers within occupations occur when workers stay in occupations but change employers. This also means that jobs filled by intrastate movement, when workers stay within occupations, are not identified as new jobs.

The Idaho Department of Labor projects a total of about 120,000 openings each year due to growth and separations from 2022-2032. Figure 3.3 shows the projected annual openings for major occupation groups, with sales, food service, and office and administrative jobs dominating projections.

Figure 3.3. Projected annual openings due to growth and separations, Idaho, 2022-2032

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications



Top occupations ranked by projected job openings

The following tables show specific occupations ranked by total annual openings. Figures 3.4 to 3.8 show the top five occupations sorted by educational requirement for entry. The average annual wage demonstrates a link between educational attainment and monetary compensation by occupation. The average wage for the top five occupations requiring a high school education or less is \$31,073 per year, while for master's or doctoral degrees the average wage is \$72,868.

Figure 3.4. Top five occupations typically requiring a high school education or less for entry, Idaho, 2022-2032

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications

Title	Avg. annual openings	2023 annual avg. wage
Retail salespersons	10,187	\$31,450
Cashiers	4,459	\$29,432
Fast food and counter workers	4,236	\$27,872
Waiters and waitresses	3,222	\$29,702
Customer service representatives	2,786	\$38,771
		\$31,073

Figure 3.5. Top five occupations typically requiring a postsecondary certificate for entry, Idaho, 2022-2032

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications

Title	Avg. annual openings	2023 annual avg. wage
Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	1,696	\$50,752
Nursing assistants	1,396	\$37,128
Medical assistants	669	\$40,664
Hairdressers, hairstylists, and cosmetologists	610	\$30,992
Automotive service technicians and mechanics	563	\$46,030
		\$42,549

Figure 3.6. Top five occupations typically requiring an associate degree for entry, Idaho, 2022-2032

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications

Title	Avg. annual openings	2023 annual avg. wage
Forest and conservation technicians	257	\$51,875
Dental hygienists	208	\$82,742
Paralegals and legal assistants	178	\$48,194
Preschool teachers, except special education	154	\$28,434
Architectural and civil drafters	135	\$50,461
		\$53,983

Figure 3.7. Top five occupations typically requiring a bachelor’s degree for entry, Idaho, 2022-2032

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications

Title	Avg. annual openings	2023 annual avg. wage
General and operations managers	1,640	\$70,491
Teachers and instructors, all other	1,266	\$61,370
Registered nurses	1,226	\$80,142
Elementary school teachers, except special education	705	\$32,700
Accountants and auditors	440	\$61,630
		\$68,422

Figure 3.8. Top five occupations typically requiring a master’s degree or greater for entry, Idaho, 2022-2032

Source: Idaho Department of Labor, Research and Communications

Title	Avg. annual openings	2023 annual avg. wage
Lawyers	155	\$101,740
Educational, guidance, and career counselors and advisors	152	\$51,410
Rehabilitation counselors	147	\$58,240
Instructional coordinators	140	\$60,340
Physical therapists	133	\$93,100
		\$72,868

Section 4: Regional economic highlights

Northern Idaho

2022-23 population growth: 1.2%

2022-23 job growth: 2.4%

2022-23 average pay growth: 4.2% (not inflation adjusted)

2023 unemployment rate: 3.9%

2022 unemployment rate: 3.4%

Northern Idaho's economy continued a stable pattern of growth in 2023, triggered by a consistently high rate of in-migration population growth. The region's population grew by 1.2% from 2022-2023, reaching roughly 282,500 residents. This rate of growth was the second fastest among Idaho's regions, following Southwestern Idaho and the Boise metropolitan area.

The continued influx of new residents has put pressure on northern Idaho's housing and critical services such as health care, resulting in continued job growth in said industries. From 2022-2023, employment in health care and social assistance grew by 6% — by far the fastest growth rate of any industry in the region. Construction employment, which grew by 3% from 2022-2023, has now doubled over the last decade, with a 100% increase in employment from 2013-2023.

This growth has been driven by a variety of projects, primarily in Kootenai County, where there are a large number of new housing developments in progress along the I-90 corridor, on the prairie in northern Post Falls and in Hayden. Health care also continues to expand its footprint in the county, with openings of new urgent care clinics, a Post Falls outpatient surgery center and a 24/7 emergency room, as well as expansions to Heritage Health's facilities. And finally, the growing population has spurred major infrastructure improvements, including work on Idaho State Highway 41 (connecting Post Falls and Rathdrum) and its heavily trafficked interchange with Interstate 90.

While Kootenai County's population nears 200,000, fueling robust housing developments, hospital constructions and major public works projects, the region's rural counties face challenges amid aging demographics and relatively sluggish growth. In Bonner County, many basic services have become increasingly strained, resulting in residents having to travel elsewhere to find them. Bonner General Hospital closed its labor and delivery services in May 2023 due to a lack of pediatric coverage, while West Bonner School District plans to close Priest River Middle School amid budget deficits and failed levies. While not yet problematic in rural northern Idaho, the closures of these important medical and educational services could cause future difficulties for the area's communities.

These emerging issues, although nonunique to northern Idaho, will likely shape the region's developments for years to come. As Kootenai County continues to experience dramatic growth, northern Idaho will need to address the matter of its rural counties navigating aging populations, limited housing availability and mounting resource constraints.

Other notable developments:

- The city of Coeur d'Alene approved the upcoming 440-acre Coeur Terre development, which will eventually include more than 2,000 housing units along with various businesses, retail spaces, schools and restaurants. This will be among the largest and most centrally located of the many new residential developments coming to Kootenai County and has the potential to link Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls. Construction is projected to happen in phases of 20-30 years and will begin once other regional projects are completed.

Figure 4.1. Average employment and average wage growth by industry, inflation adjusted, northern Idaho, 2013-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census for Employment and Wages

	2023 avg. employment	Job growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	98,755	2%	12%	28%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,366	-3%	22%	50%
Mining	1,140	6%	64%	1%
Utilities	645	0%	10%	16%
Construction	8,837	3%	36%	100%
Manufacturing	8,626	2%	7%	11%
Wholesale trade	2,605	4%	30%	46%
Retail Trade	14,010	1%	9%	15%
Transportation and warehousing	2,072	1%	12%	13%
Information	1,192	-1%	9%	12%
Financial activities	4,049	-5%	-5%	14%
Professional and business services	8,695	1%	10%	21%
Educational services	6,204	1%	6%	17%
Health care and social assistance	15,992	6%	11%	38%
Leisure and hospitality	15,365	4%	16%	41%
Other services	2,660	2%	11%	38%
Public administration	5,297	1%	3%	7%
	2023 avg. wage	Wage growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	\$ 52,186	0%	12%	21%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$ 48,998	2%	0%	4%
Mining	\$ 105,866	-1%	-2%	-2%
Utilities	\$ 86,590	-1%	8%	21%
Construction	\$ 57,286	0%	11%	26%
Manufacturing	\$ 59,358	0%	4%	15%
Wholesale trade	\$ 83,715	5%	18%	36%
Retail trade	\$ 40,373	-3%	9%	11%
Transportation and warehousing	\$ 54,394	-2%	5%	20%
Information	\$ 81,291	7%	28%	50%
Financial activities	\$ 68,503	0%	11%	26%
Professional and business services	\$ 64,472	1%	25%	39%
Educational services	\$ 41,826	-1%	5%	8%
Health care and social assistance	\$ 59,401	0%	14%	28%
Leisure and hospitality	\$ 26,355	0%	16%	23%
Other services	\$ 41,198	5%	13%	38%
Public administration	\$ 63,557	4%	8%	17%

North central Idaho

2022-23 population growth: 0.8%

2022-23 job growth: 1.7%

2022-23 average pay growth: 4.7% (not inflation adjusted)

2023 unemployment rate: 3.1%

2022 unemployment rate: 2.9%

North central Idaho's 2023 population growth rate was 0.8% — approximately half the pace of 2022's 1.5% annual growth. The region is estimated to have added nearly 900 new residents over the last year with a net in-migration of 1,100 residents accounting for all population growth and offsetting natural population declines for the third consecutive year. Residents over the age of 65 made up 21% of the total population, compared to 17% statewide. The growth of 4,000 residents into the region over the last three years from 2020-2023 is essentially equivalent to its growth during the previous 10-year period of 2010-2020. Combined, the five counties of north central Idaho have an estimated 2023 population of 115,000 and account for 6% of Idaho's statewide resident population.

Despite population growth slowing, job growth remained strong as employment gained 1.7% and added over 700 jobs compared to 2022. Manufacturing, education, and health care industry sectors each realized gains of more than 100 jobs during 2023. This growth was offset by minor losses of fewer than 100 jobs each in retail, transportation and warehousing, professional and business services, and public administration. Compared to pre-pandemic employment levels, health care, leisure and hospitality, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, public administration, and information sectors continue to have lower employment levels in 2023 than in 2019.

Wage growth remained elevated at 4.7% on a current dollar basis over the year, to an average of \$49,000 per worker; however, real wages increased by less than 1% after adjusted for inflation. Construction continued to lead wage growth in 2023, after gaining more than 10% in nominal terms to annual average wages of \$52,000, up 33% compared to 2018's average annual wages of \$39,000. No industrial sector within the region reported average annual wage declines on a current dollar basis. In 2023, north central Idaho had the highest average wages statewide for educational services at \$50,000, as well as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting at \$59,000. Simultaneously, the region held the lowest annual average wages statewide for construction and wholesale trade.

The regional unemployment rate rose modestly to 3.1% in 2023 from record lows of 2.9% in 2022. While this rate increased slightly, along with the number of unemployed persons, north central Idaho's 2023 labor force grew by approximately 1,700 participants over the year. This growth comprised of 1,500 more regional jobs and 200 more unemployed persons than in 2022. The average monthly unemployment level of 1,710 in 2023 was essentially aligned with the 1,717 level the region reported from 2017-2019.

Developments for the region in 2023 included a mix of infrastructural disasters and positive economic advancements. The year started off rough with the city of Lewiston's main water reservoir rupturing in January and was bookended by a regional natural gas outage in November. Despite these setbacks, the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board awarded over \$50 million of regional investment to four multi-year broadband projects serving Moscow to Grangeville, Grangeville to Star, Grangeville to Orofino, and the unserved/underserved rural residents of Latah County.

Other notable developments:

- Gritman Medical Center opened the C.L. Gritman Office Building to house Palouse Neurology, Palouse Oncology, and an interventional pain clinic in a single location. The company also acquired the former EMSI building which currently serves as a newly opened location for Gritman Therapy Solutions.
- A two-year construction project began to build an overpass at the Clearwater River Casino.
- Construction began on the new Nez Perce County courthouse and expansion of Memorial Bridge in Lewiston. Construction was completed on the brand new Cherrylane Bridge in eastern Nez Perce County.
- Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories opened its new printed circuit board facility in Moscow and was named the 2023 Top Project of the Year by the Idaho Business Review.
- University of Idaho began construction on the new Meat Science and Innovation Center, and leased land to Home Depot in Moscow. Both projects are expected to be completed in 2025.
- The port of Lewiston and American Cruise Lines established a public-private partnership to build a cruise ship dock at the port, to be completed in 2025.
- The Orofino School District was awarded over \$500,000 by the Idaho Career Ready Students Council to fund a new natural resources and forestry pathway within the Career Technical Education (CTE) program.
- Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) signed a memorandum of understanding with Idaho State University (ISU) to establish ISU physician assistant graduate students at LCSC.

Figure 4.2. Average employment and annual average wage growth by industry, inflation adjusted, north central Idaho, 2013-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census for Employment and Wages

	2023 avg. employment	Job growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	44,926	2%	4%	7%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	944	4%	-3%	-8%
Mining	183	-7%	-10%	-5%
Utilities	154	0%	2%	2%
Construction	2,494	3%	28%	58%
Manufacturing	5,741	4%	18%	22%
Wholesale trade	1,186	3%	-8%	3%
Retail trade	5,326	0%	4%	2%
Transportation and warehousing	1,009	-5%	-13%	-16%
Information	624	-1%	0%	-5%
Financial activities	1,949	2%	4%	-3%
Professional and business services	2,437	0%	10%	21%
Educational services	6,660	4%	-1%	1%
Health care and social assistance	6,807	2%	0%	4%
Leisure and hospitality	4,853	1%	0%	6%
Other services	1,104	0%	6%	17%
Public administration	3,455	0%	-1%	-4%
	2023 avg. wage	Wage growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	\$ 49,328	1%	5%	12%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$ 59,401	1%	0%	11%
Mining	\$ 78,987	6%	9%	21%
Utilities	\$ 87,314	-2%	6%	15%
Construction	\$ 52,074	6%	11%	18%
Manufacturing	\$ 64,033	-1%	-1%	2%
Wholesale trade	\$ 60,062	3%	8%	9%
Retail trade	\$ 34,457	-2%	6%	8%
Transportation and warehousing	\$ 52,384	-1%	-4%	6%
Information	\$ 61,109	13%	42%	59%
Financial activities	\$ 70,009	3%	15%	30%
Professional and business services	\$ 56,889	-2%	20%	26%
Educational services	\$ 50,301	-1%	-4%	6%
Health care and social assistance	\$ 48,843	0%	5%	11%
Leisure and hospitality	\$ 20,746	0%	7%	19%
Other services	\$ 36,321	2%	17%	23%
Public administration	\$ 59,493	5%	6%	13%

Southwestern Idaho

2022-23 population growth: 1.6%

2022-23 job growth: 2.5%

2022-23 average pay growth: 3.7% (not inflation adjusted)

2023 unemployment rate: 3.0%

2022 unemployment rate: 2.6%

Southwestern Idaho is expected to continue developing, but at a more sustainable pace than the last few years. Numerous projects are anticipated to grow within each sector — greatly impacting the 10-county area.

In 2023, southwestern Idaho's population topped 900,000 residents with 910,632. Its over-the-year growth rate was 1.6%, higher than the state's 1.3%, as the region added 14,569 new residents. This is the highest growth rate among Idaho's six regions and was four times the numerical growth of northern Idaho, which ranked second for both number and change. Net migration accounted for 81% of the growth while natural change, or the difference between the number of births and deaths, contributed 19%. About 46.3% of the state's residents are estimated to live in this region, given it is the center of government and numerous corporate headquarters.

Five of the smaller counties experienced negative natural growth, or more deaths than births, including: Adams, Boise, Gem, Valley and Washington counties. Elmore County reported a net loss in domestic migration, yet the international in-migration affiliated with the Mountain Home Air Force Base was able to offset it. Payette and Valley counties indicated slight losses to international net migration that were ultimately offset by domestic net migration. Gem County ranked third statewide in net migration with the addition of 670 residents, behind Ada and Canyon counties.

Since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the pace of growth has slowed for all ten counties with year-over-year growth rates ranging from 0.6% to 3%. From 2022-2023, Canyon County grew the most, adding 6,782 net residents, followed by Ada County with 5,669 and Gem County with 617.

Between 2022 and 2023, the average wage, adjusted for inflation, declined in just two state regions — southwestern, down 0.3%, and eastern, down 0.1%. Both areas have had commonalities over the last decade such as a booming population and job growth; yet the flat growth of wages could reasonably reflect a stabilizing period after exuberant growth during the pandemic. In 2023, the unadjusted wage growth was 3.7%, a significant decline from the previous year's 6.5% growth rate. The slightly negative real average wage growth of 2023 is a sign that inflation has eroded into wage gains, as overall levels of job hopping have reduced, and service job growth is slowing.

Southwestern Idaho industries experiencing higher average wages lean toward smaller employment levels. The top three industries with average wages exceeding \$90,000 in 2023 were information, mining, and wholesale trade. Combined, these three industries comprised less than 7% of the area's 400,000 jobs.

The lower average wage sectors in southwestern Idaho tend toward larger employment industries including leisure and hospitality with an 11% share — clearly employing part-time workers with its 2023 average wage of \$25,080.

Information rebounded after experiencing five years of employment and wage volatility as print and broadcast media became digitalized. In 2023, the average wage grew by 14% over the year, the highest among the 16 industries. The number of business establishments increased by 19%. The companies reporting under this sector range across more than 200 entities with single employees earning average wages of \$225,000 to larger companies including libraries, theatres, software developers and communication companies earning lower average wages due to the vast occupational mix.

Utilities experienced the most significant drop in average wage, a decline of 23%, which can mainly be attributed to a noneconomic coding change in the administrative records.

Southwestern Idaho's average 2023 employment was at a record level, surpassing 400,000 jobs. It carried the second highest average employment growth rate, following eastern Idaho. The region's average employment gain was double the level of eastern Idaho with an increase of approximately 8,800. Gains were led by health care and social services followed closely by professional and business services, with one out of every four jobs in the region found in these two industries. Other notable employment gains occurred in leisure and hospitality and retail trade — both industries with front-facing jobs that fell out of favor during the pandemic.

Industries experiencing downward employment trends in 2023 included retail trade, transportation and warehousing, and financial activities. Since the pandemic, the consumer spending pattern shifted from goods to services, negatively impacting both retailers and warehouse-to-door deliveries.

Utilities, mining, information, and leisure and hospitality were the industries that reported the fastest employment growth rates in 2023, at 6% or more. Most of the growth in mining was tied to sand and ready-mix concrete plants and the heavy construction industry's infrastructure projects funded by the American Relief Plan Act. These projects were awarded funds during the pandemic with projects currently under construction or in the design or bidding process.

Other notable developments:

- Falcon's Landing in Mountain Home is a private-public partnership creating 120 units of affordable housing with 16 units at market prices.
- The city of Boise's Housing Land Trust broke ground on Wilson Station, an apartment complex that will open 102 new affordable units. The Franklin is still under construction and will onboard 184 affordable apartments along with an onsite childcare center.
- Sunset Landing opened in Caldwell offering a 76-unit apartment complex for those earning 60% or less of the median household income. Partners included The Housing Company, Idaho Housing and Finance Association and Caldwell Housing Authority.
- Stowe Company in Nampa hired 200 workers and invested \$243 million in a 555,000 square-foot production facility. The company designs and creates closet storage and organizational furniture.
- The WaterWalk in Meridian opened a new hotel with 126 rooms intended for extended stay residency options, particularly those checking out the area for relocation purposes. It is billed as a conversion property.
- The Avery Hotel and Brasserie opened its boutique property in downtown Boise with 39 rooms, a French-inspired restaurant and a 'gastrotavern' with an English pub ambiance.

- Terry Reilly Health Center completed construction and assumed occupancy of new clinics in Homedale and Meridian, offering medical, dental, behavioral health and pharmacy services in one central location.
- Vallivue School District's \$78 million bond was approved by over 70% of voters. The school district encompasses rural Nampa and Caldwell.
- West Ada School District patrons rejected a \$500 million plant facilities reserve fund that was to be distributed over 10 years. Emmett School District's extension of its supplemental levy was voted down at the polls. For the first time ever, Emmett School District will have no support from its patrons. Kuna and Caldwell School Districts, both high growth areas, also encountered a lack of financial support for supplemental levies by taxpayers.
- The Nampa School District patrons failed to reach a super majority to pass a \$210 million bond for deferred maintenance of existing schools and new schools in growing pockets of Nampa. The loss of funding potential and the shift in student levels at various ages led to the school board decision to close or repurpose four schools that were past their functional life and needed significant investment.

Figure 4.3. Average employment and annual average wage growth by industry, inflation adjusted, southwestern Idaho, 2013-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census for Employment and Wages

	2023 avg. employment	Job growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	400,035	2%	17%	39%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	6,226	3%	-9%	-2%
Mining	394	6%	47%	72%
Utilities	1,937	9%	14%	21%
Construction	34,523	3%	40%	116%
Manufacturing	33,002	1%	5%	25%
Wholesale trade	17,916	1%	22%	37%
Retail trade	42,581	-1%	8%	23%
Transportation and warehousing	17,235	-1%	52%	98%
Information	4,363	6%	-7%	-14%
Financial activities	21,135	-3%	21%	49%
Professional and business services	56,002	4%	17%	42%
Educational services	29,118	2%	15%	29%
Health care and social assistance	57,673	4%	19%	39%
Leisure and hospitality	43,882	6%	18%	54%
Other services	11,275	5%	18%	45%
Public administration	22,774	3%	3%	9%
	2023 avg. wage	Wage growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	\$ 60,177	0%	8%	19%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$ 44,934	-1%	4%	26%
Mining	\$ 91,107	4%	18%	-5%
Utilities	\$ 77,238	-23%	-25%	-19%
Construction	\$ 63,529	3%	14%	19%
Manufacturing	\$ 84,472	-3%	-11%	3%
Wholesale trade	\$ 90,167	-1%	14%	29%
Retail trade	\$ 42,442	-3%	9%	19%
Transportation and warehousing	\$ 53,192	1%	-1%	3%
Information	\$ 96,273	14%	52%	57%
Financial activities	\$ 81,679	2%	12%	25%
Professional and business services	\$ 75,021	1%	25%	42%
Educational services	\$ 43,464	-2%	0%	8%
Health care and social assistance	\$ 60,918	-1%	7%	15%
Leisure and hospitality	\$ 25,080	1%	17%	35%
Other services	\$ 43,968	0%	16%	34%
Public administration	\$ 68,700	5%	5%	14%

South central Idaho

2022-23 population growth: 1.1%

2022-23 job growth: 2.3%

2022-23 average pay growth: 4.8% (not inflation adjusted)

2023 unemployment rate: 3.0%

2022 unemployment rate: 2.5%

South central Idaho's economy continued to experience consistent population and employment growth in 2023. Population increased by 1.1% and added 2,300 residents, compared to 2022's 1.4% population growth rate and 2,900 net new residents. Total employment increased by nearly 3,700 jobs and reported a 3.9% growth rate, led by utilities, up 8%, manufacturing, up 5%, and construction, also up 5%.

As the region continues to grow, the demand for housing creates an additional need for construction and utilities. Manufacturing, one of the region's most crucial industries, experienced strong growth as food processing is a major economic driver in the region. Slight declines of less than 2% were experienced in both the information and professional and business services sectors. Transportation and warehousing, financial activities, educational services, and other services all had flat employment throughout the year, neither growing nor declining.

Average annual real wages in south central Idaho grew nearly 1% in 2023. As inflation fell, real wages grew in a positive manner, instead of decreasing like in recent years. Industries that realized at least 5% real wage growth over the year included mining, up 11%, information, up 7%, and professional and business services, up 5%. The industries with wages that grew the slowest were agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, up 1%; manufacturing, up 2%; and transportation and warehousing, up 2%. New from last year, some industries experienced over-the-year wage declines, including financial activities, down 10%; utilities, down 8%; retail trade, down 2%; health care and social assistance, down 1%; and other services, also down 1%. As labor demands slow, wages have declined in some industries as employers slowly regain bargaining power in the labor market. In 2023, the industries with the highest annual wages were utilities at \$76,306, wholesale trade at \$74,150 and financial activities at \$68,040.

Other notable developments:

- Suntado LLC. began construction of a 190,000 square-foot plant in Burley to produce private label beverages and create over 100 jobs. Phase one began in May 2024, processing up to one million pounds of milk per day. Suntado is a manufacturer of alternative beverages and shelf-stable milk products.
- Twin Falls began its on-demand micro transit service "Ride TFT" in July 2023. The program ended the pilot phase and became a permanent city program in early 2024. The service reported 3,200 riders in the first month.
- Groundwork started on the University of Idaho's Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (CAFE) in Rupert. With expected completion in 2025, it will serve as the nation's largest research dairy.
- Advanced Biofuel broke ground on a renewable natural gas facility in Heyburn. The company is using a semi-completed ethanol plant that closed before it was finished. Construction on the existing facility is planned to be completed by January 2025.

Figure 4.4. Average employment and annual average wage growth by industry, inflation adjusted, south central Idaho, 2013-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census for Employment and Wages

	2023 avg. employment	Job growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All Industries	97,749	2%	9%	20%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	11,171	2%	5%	17%
Mining	210	2%	23%	37%
Utilities	636	8%	6%	9%
Construction	7,048	5%	37%	88%
Manufacturing	12,104	5%	19%	32%
Wholesale trade	3,808	2%	5%	16%
Retail Trade	11,063	1%	8%	18%
Transportation and warehousing	4,261	0%	4%	6%
Information	893	-2%	-8%	-14%
Financial activities	2,842	0%	2%	13%
Professional and business services	7,588	-1%	-5%	-4%
Educational services	7,089	0%	5%	12%
Health care and social assistance	11,717	4%	12%	30%
Leisure and hospitality	10,648	4%	13%	32%
Other services	2,504	0%	-3%	12%
Public administration	4,167	1%	-1%	1%
	2023 avg. wage	Wage growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	\$ 48,971	1%	9%	19%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$ 46,280	1%	4%	19%
Mining	\$ 54,424	11%	12%	34%
Utilities	\$ 76,306	-8%	-7%	-2%
Construction	\$ 55,947	4%	11%	24%
Manufacturing	\$ 60,461	2%	3%	12%
Wholesale trade	\$ 74,150	2%	14%	25%
Retail trade	\$ 37,093	-2%	5%	15%
Transportation and warehousing	\$ 55,340	2%	10%	20%
Information	\$ 61,739	7%	18%	36%
Financial activities	\$ 68,040	-10%	17%	30%
Professional and business services	\$ 55,265	5%	21%	40%
Educational services	\$ 39,046	0%	4%	9%
Health care and social assistance	\$ 52,411	-1%	11%	13%
Leisure and hospitality	\$ 25,359	3%	16%	27%
Other services	\$ 42,843	-1%	7%	22%
Public administration	\$ 52,610	3%	8%	15%

Southeastern Idaho

2022-23 population growth: 1.0%

2022-23 job growth: 2.1%

2022-23 average pay growth: 4.2% (not inflation adjusted)

2023 unemployment rate: 3.1%

2022 unemployment rate: 2.6%

In southeastern Idaho, the economy saw continued employment and population growth while also maintaining steady wages in 2023. Average annual wages in the region increased by 4.2%, outpacing the 3.8% wage growth of Idaho statewide. The region's 3.1% unemployment rate matched that of the state's. Population growth slowed slightly to 1%, down from 1.8% in 2022.

The annual population was estimated to have increased by about 3,000 residents in 2023. Approximately one-third of total population growth was attributable to natural growth and two-thirds was a result of positive net in-migration. Southeast Idaho accounted for 13% of statewide population growth over this period.

Average employment in 2023 rose 2% from 2022. The top industry for growth was health care which saw a 5% increase and added nearly 500 new jobs. Other growth industries included education, up 4%, business services, up 4%, hospitality, up 3%, and agriculture, also up 3%. The industries that declined in 2023 were utilities, down 2%, retail, also down 2%, and finance, down 4%. The overall job growth contrasts with the backdrop of an increase in unemployment regionally and statewide.

Southeast Idaho's average wages grew 4.2% in 2023 but were up only a slight 0.3% after adjusting for inflation. Despite slow overall wage growth, growth not only kept up with inflation but also surpassed it for a handful of industries. Some industries with positive inflation-adjusted wage changes were wholesale trade, up 4%, manufacturing, up 2%, agriculture, also up 2%, and public administration, also up 2%. Utilities experienced a substantial decrease in real wages by 10%. Other industries where wages fell were in construction, down 3% and education, also down 3%.

Other notable developments:

- The multiyear regional drought ended in March 2023 with a moist winter leaving only Bingham, Caribou, and Bear Lake areas in drought conditions. The Willow-Blackfoot-Portneuf basin reported a 260% snowpack increase from the seasonal average. Additionally, the Bear River Basin was 180% over its typical seasonal level. When the snow began to thaw, median summer streamflow for the Portneuf and Bear Lake rivers were also 200% over historic levels.
- In agriculture, near outbreak levels of crickets and grasshoppers caused substantial economic losses to rangeland forage and other agriculture-use lands. Oneida County was hit particularly hard with economic and agricultural damages.
- In 2023, Idaho State University celebrated the opening of the Idaho Central Credit Union Bengal Alumni Center in May. The university also reported a 26% increase in Fall 2023 enrollment (with the largest incoming class in over five years), hired a new president at the conclusion of the calendar year, and partnered with the University of Utah to train resident psychiatry physicians in a two-part program. The resident physicians rotate from Salt Lake City, Utah, to Pocatello to complete their final two years of training.

- The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes announced their partnership with the Idaho National Guard to create an accredited military science program for high school students in the Fort Hall School District, which began in January 2024.

Figure 4.5. Average employment and annual average wage growth by industry, inflation adjusted, southeastern Idaho, 2013-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census for Employment and Wages

	2023 avg. employment	Job growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	67,783	2%	9%	16%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2,509	3%	-2%	-2%
Mining	796	0%	16%	42%
Utilities	290	-2%	-4%	-4%
Construction	4,483	2%	40%	69%
Manufacturing	7,150	2%	4%	16%
Wholesale trade	2,611	0%	2%	-2%
Retail trade	7,531	-2%	4%	10%
Transportation and warehousing	1,869	3%	8%	17%
Information	489	2%	-14%	-27%
Financial activities	2,055	-4%	-21%	-22%
Professional and business services	5,515	4%	9%	16%
Educational services	8,521	4%	12%	17%
Health care and social assistance	10,721	5%	13%	28%
Leisure and hospitality	7,054	3%	20%	34%
Other services	1,558	3%	20%	20%
Public administration	4,632	0%	0%	-1%
	2023 avg. wage	Wage growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	\$ 46,576	0%	5%	11%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$ 44,331	2%	6%	12%
Mining	\$ 83,563	1%	6%	11%
Utilities	\$ 88,296	-10%	-9%	-1%
Construction	\$ 52,234	-3%	7%	13%
Manufacturing	\$ 65,794	2%	2%	4%
Wholesale trade	\$ 65,145	4%	16%	18%
Retail trade	\$ 32,865	-1%	7%	17%
Transportation and warehousing	\$ 51,959	-1%	5%	17%
Information	\$ 38,243	1%	3%	5%
Financial activities	\$ 60,397	-1%	16%	25%
Professional and business services	\$ 55,780	1%	29%	36%
Educational services	\$ 39,081	-3%	-3%	2%
Health care and social assistance	\$ 48,670	1%	3%	13%
Leisure and hospitality	\$ 18,963	0%	3%	11%
Other services	\$ 37,647	1%	9%	18%
Public administration	\$ 51,129	2%	1%	7%

Eastern Idaho

2022-23 population growth: 1.0%

2022-23 job growth: 3.2%

2022-23 average pay growth: 3.9% (not inflation adjusted)

2023 unemployment rate: 2.6%

2022 unemployment rate: 2.3%

In 2023, eastern Idaho exhibited agility amidst relative economic slow-downs and workforce scarcity elsewhere in the state and nation. With the state's lowest regional unemployment rate of 2.6%, labor market tightness resulted in some local employers upskilling and cross-training existing employees to fill vacancies. By the end of 2023, some key labor market indicators exceeded 2022 measures, including growth in employment, up 3% and the labor force, up 3.2%. The region also showed long-term growth over the past five years, despite weathering a short recession, with increases in average wages, up 5%, employment, up 17% and the labor force, up 11.6%.

Year-over-year employment in the nine-county region grew by 3%, or 3,282 workers. Among the industry sectors with the largest employment gains from 2022-2023 were transportation and warehousing, up 12%; construction, up 7%; information, up 7%; health care and social assistance, up 6%; and leisure and hospitality, up 6%. Manufacturing employment declined by 1% in 2023, whereas wholesale trade and retail trade employment were unchanged over the year.

Inflation-adjusted average annual wages in eastern Idaho slowed to zero net growth from 2022-2023, compared to 6% wage growth from 2021-2022. However, average annual wage growth was realized among certain industry sectors including mining, up 6%, construction, up 5%, utilities, up 4%, and information, up 3%. Conversely, other regional industries such as manufacturing, down 4%, educational services, down 2%, and retail trade, unchanged, exhibited both negative or zero average wage change, and unchanging or declining employment between 2022 and 2023. Transportation and warehousing, health care and social assistance, and leisure and hospitality industries enjoyed employment gains despite relative declining wage trends.

The purchasing power of a typical eastern Idaho worker's wage in 2023 was weaker than it was the year prior as total wages were relatively unchanged. While regional employment growth has generally been robust, wage disparity relative to the cost of living is a concern to many local workers.

Other notable developments:

- Custer County started construction of the new Custer County Sheriff's Office and courthouse annex. Challis is building new sidewalks, bridges, water meters, a well and a pump house.
- Lost Rivers Medical Center in Arco reopened the Mackay Clinic, adding two nurse practitioners to its staff. It is also expanding the surgery suite to include pain management and orthopedic surgery. The medical center received a \$260,000 grant from the Idaho Department of Workforce Development to help fund a new childcare center on site for recruitment and retention of health care workers.
- Amazon opened a new delivery station in Idaho Falls, where packages are dispatched for delivery. It created 150 jobs locally.

- The state approved \$8 million for College of Eastern Idaho’s Future Tech building project to open Fall 2025. It will serve about 1,000 students and programs will include cybersecurity, health physics and AgriTech.
- In March, Jervois suspended final construction at their Idaho Cobalt Operations mine due to low cobalt prices and inflationary pressures, affecting approximately 250 laid-off workers.
- In April, the Progrexion call center in Rexburg closed permanently, affecting approximately 150 laid-off employees.
- A permanent layoff of 100 to 150 employees occurred in December at Intermountain Packing in Idaho Falls. They previously staffed 294 employees.
- Idaho National Laboratory (INL) was granted \$150 million through the Inflation Reduction Act for construction of new advanced research facilities, laboratories and testing sites. Their need is for both a permanent and temporary construction workforce, including 400 to 800 construction contractors. The demand for office space, manufacturing facilities and housing for employees has spurred commercial and residential construction projects within the local economy. Over the next five years, INL projects 3,000 job openings — about half of which are new growth and the other half replacement workers.
- A new fire station opened in Idaho Falls that will staff 15 personnel, the first since 1994. The Idaho Falls Fire Department has experienced 1,000 more calls per year in the past four years.
- The new Idaho Healthcare Institute opened in Idaho Falls, partnering with the College of Eastern Idaho, Mountain View Hospital and Idaho Falls Community Hospital to answer the state’s shortage of health care professionals. It provides three levels of certification — Certified Nursing Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse and Registered Nurse. The goal is to boost the number of nursing graduates to 500 per year with a short-tracked, financially achievable health care career path.
- The second-largest gold find in America was confirmed at Revival Gold’s Beartrack-Arnett gold project near Salmon. The mine could provide 200 to 300 full-time jobs.
- Idaho Falls Regional Airport was awarded a Small Community Air Service Development Grant of \$950,000 to offer additional flights. It provides a revenue guarantee to pursue and develop future air service to the Los Angeles area and further reduce airfare costs while providing greater regional connectivity.
- The Idaho Career Ready Students grant awarded \$5.8 million to fund a Career Technical Education (CTE) expansion at Rigby High School; \$2.7 million to support the Sugar-Salem Regional CTE facility; and \$253,120 to fund a greenhouse initiative at South Fremont High School.

Figure 4-6. Average employment and annual average wage growth by industry, inflation adjusted, eastern Idaho, 2013-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census for Employment and Wages

	2023 avg. employment	Job growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	109,414	3%	17%	36%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2,233	5%	-1%	1%
Mining	147	5%	26%	-48%
Utilities	293	5%	1%	0%
Construction	7,790	7%	39%	97%
Manufacturing	6,627	-1%	14%	44%
Wholesale trade	4,367	0%	9%	-21%
Retail trade	12,854	0%	9%	27%
Transportation and warehousing	3,830	12%	21%	43%
Information	1,046	7%	-6%	-14%
Financial activities	3,851	1%	23%	44%
Professional and business services	19,363	2%	13%	42%
Educational services	9,669	1%	15%	29%
Health care and social assistance	17,252	6%	32%	65%
Leisure and hospitality	12,379	6%	26%	57%
Other services	2,487	3%	6%	24%
Public administration	5,225	2%	1%	3%
	2023 avg. wage	Wage growth 2022-23	2018-23	2013-23
All industries	\$ 51,496	0%	5%	11%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$ 44,561	2%	5%	24%
Mining	\$ 102,452	6%	16%	-25%
Utilities	\$ 90,344	4%	6%	9%
Construction	\$ 54,805	5%	11%	17%
Manufacturing	\$ 52,637	-4%	2%	14%
Wholesale trade	\$ 63,477	2%	10%	24%
Retail trade	\$ 35,515	-1%	8%	16%
Transportation and warehousing	\$ 48,737	-3%	7%	13%
Information	\$ 52,643	3%	9%	19%
Financial activities	\$ 59,632	0%	6%	22%
Professional and business services	\$ 86,310	2%	6%	11%
Educational services	\$ 41,468	-2%	0%	1%
Health care and social assistance	\$ 45,209	-2%	2%	7%
Leisure and hospitality	\$ 20,248	-2%	11%	23%
Other services	\$ 36,647	2%	14%	25%
Public administration	\$ 60,971	2%	3%	12%

Section 5: Economic comparisons with other states

Idaho consistently ranks among the top states in the country in key categories such as population growth, job growth and business creation. The following tables compare Idaho to the top 12 and bottom 12 states for the following measures: population growth, GDP growth, job growth, unemployment rates, entrepreneurship rates and per capita income.

- Figure 5.1. Population growth rates for Idaho compared with other states and the nation.
 - In 2023, Idaho's population grew 1.3%, ranking fourth highest nationwide.
- Figure 5.2. Annual GDP growth rates for Idaho compared with other states and the nation.
 - In 2023, Idaho's GDP grew by 7.1%, ranking ninth in the country.
- Figure 5.3. Average annual job growth rate of each state.
 - In 2023, Idaho nonfarm employment grew by 2.3%, ranking 17th in the country.
- Figure 5.4. Unemployment rate for Idaho compared to other states and the nation.
 - In 2023, Idaho's unemployment rate was 3.1%, ranking the 22nd lowest in the country.
- Figure 5.5. Number of new businesses established per 1,000 persons in the labor force, also known as the entrepreneurship rate.
 - In 2023, Idaho's entrepreneurship rate ranked second highest in the nation. Idaho saw 3.4 new business establishments open per 1,000 people in the civilian labor force.
- Figure 5.6. Compares per capita income by state.
 - In 2023, Idaho had one of the lowest per capita personal incomes, ranking 41st in the country.

Population growth

Figure 5.1. Highest and lowest state population growth rates, U.S. and Idaho, 2022-2023

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

Rank	State	Population growth
	United States*	0.5%
1	South Carolina	1.7%
2	Florida	1.6%
3	Texas	1.6%
4	Idaho	1.3%
5	North Carolina	1.3%
6	Delaware	1.2%
7	District of Columbia	1.2%
8	Tennessee	1.1%
9	Utah	1.1%
10	Georgia	1.1%
11	South Dakota	1.0%
12	Arizona	0.9%
-		
39	Vermont	0.1%
40	New Mexico	0.0%
41	Michigan	0.0%
42	Mississippi	0.0%
43	Alaska	0.0%
44	Pennsylvania	-0.1%
45	Oregon	-0.1%
46	California	-0.2%
47	West Virginia	-0.2%
48	Illinois	-0.3%
49	Hawaii	-0.3%
50	Louisiana	-0.3%
51	New York	-0.5%

* Includes the District of Columbia.

Gross domestic product growth

Figure 5.2. Highest and lowest state gross domestic product growth rates, U.S. and Idaho, 2022-2023

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Rank	State	GDP growth
	United States*	6.3%
1	Florida	9.8%
2	Washington	8.6%
3	South Carolina	8.3%
4	Nebraska	8.2%
5	Kansas	8.0%
6	Tennessee	7.7%
7	Nevada	7.4%
8	Kentucky	7.2%
9	Idaho	7.1%
10	North Carolina	7.1%
11	Arizona	6.9%
12	Hawaii	6.9%
-		
39	Montana	5.2%
40	New York	5.1%
41	Georgia	5.0%
42	Oklahoma	4.7%
43	Mississippi	4.6%
44	Wisconsin	4.5%
45	Iowa	4.4%
46	Delaware	3.8%
47	New Mexico	3.7%
48	Alaska	2.5%
49	Wyoming	2.2%
50	West Virginia	2.1%
51	North Dakota	2.0%

* Includes the District of Columbia.

Nonfarm employment growth

Figure 5.3. Highest and lowest state average annual job growth rates, nonfarm employment, U.S. and Idaho, 2022-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics

Rank	State	Job growth rate
	United States*	2.0%
1	Nevada	3.4%
2	Florida	3.4%
3	Texas	3.3%
4	Alaska	3.0%
5	Oklahoma	2.9%
6	South Carolina	2.8%
7	New Mexico	2.7%
8	Arizona	2.6%
9	North Carolina	2.6%
10	Delaware	2.6%
11	Colorado	2.5%
12	Kentucky	2.5%
-		
17	Idaho	2.3%
-		
39	Connecticut	1.6%
40	Indiana	1.5%
41	Ohio	1.5%
42	Rhode Island	1.4%
43	Wisconsin	1.4%
44	Illinois	1.4%
45	Louisiana	1.2%
46	Mississippi	1.2%
47	Maryland	1.1%
48	Massachusetts	1.1%
49	Iowa	1.1%
50	District of Columbia	0.9%
51	California	0.9%

* Includes the District of Columbia.

Unemployment rates

Figure 5.4. Lowest and highest state unemployment rates, not seasonally adjusted, U.S. and Idaho, 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Rank	State	Unemployment rate
	United States*	3.6%
1	North Dakota	1.9%
2	South Dakota	2.0%
3	Vermont	2.0%
4	Maryland	2.1%
5	New Hampshire	2.2%
6	Nebraska	2.3%
7	Alabama	2.5%
8	Utah	2.6%
9	Kansas	2.7%
10	Minnesota	2.8%
11	Florida	2.9%
12	Iowa	2.9%
-		
22	Idaho	3.1%
-		
39	Michigan	3.9%
40	Texas	3.9%
41	West Virginia	3.9%
42	Delaware	4.0%
43	Washington	4.1%
44	Alaska	4.2%
45	Kentucky	4.2%
46	New York	4.2%
47	New Jersey	4.4%
48	Illinois	4.5%
49	California	4.8%
50	District of Columbia	4.9%
51	Nevada	5.1%

* Includes the District of Columbia.

Entrepreneurship rates

Figure 5.5. Highest and lowest establishment births* per 1,000 persons in the labor force, seasonally adjusted, U.S. and Idaho, 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Business Employment Dynamics

Rank	State	Entrepreneurship rate
	United States*	2.0
1	District of Columbia	4.2
2	Idaho	3.4
3	Wyoming	3.1
4	Montana	3.1
5	Colorado	2.8
6	California	2.7
7	Florida	2.7
8	Vermont	2.7
9	Utah	2.6
10	Nevada	2.6
11	Rhode Island	2.5
12	Missouri	2.5
-		
39	Maryland	1.6
40	Louisiana	1.6
41	Texas	1.6
42	Mississippi	1.5
43	Washington	1.5
44	Massachusetts	1.5
45	Minnesota	1.4
46	Illinois	1.4
47	Michigan	1.4
48	Iowa	1.4
49	Pennsylvania	1.3
50	Indiana	1.3
51	Ohio	1.2

* Does not include non-employer establishments.

* Includes the District of Columbia.

Personal income

Figure 5.6. Highest and lowest state per capita personal income, U.S. and Idaho, 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

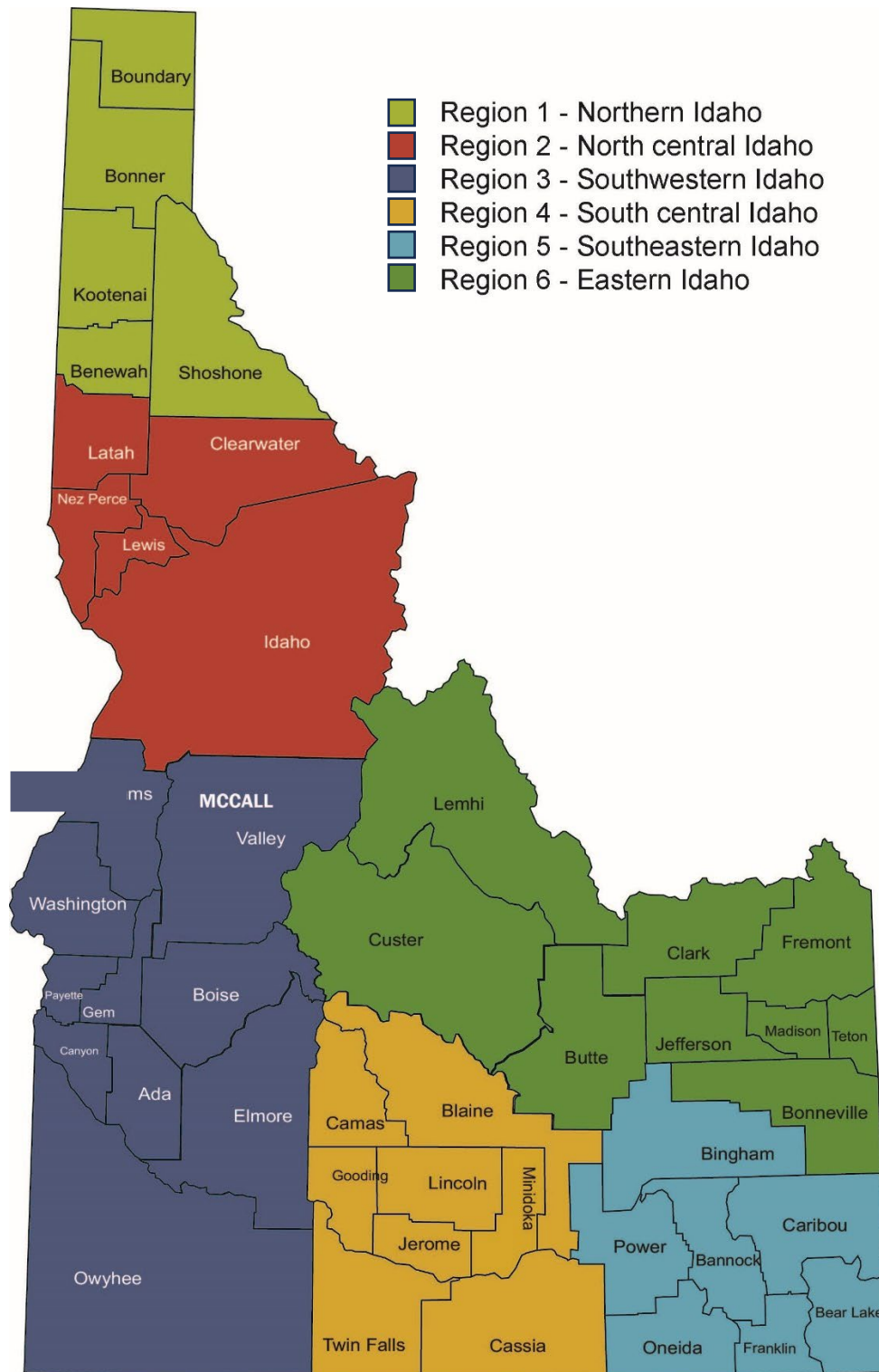
Rank	State	Per capita income
	United States*	\$68,531
1	District of Columbia	\$100,909
2	Massachusetts	\$87,812
3	Connecticut	\$87,447
4	New Jersey	\$80,724
5	California	\$80,423
6	Washington	\$79,659
7	New York	\$79,581
8	Colorado	\$78,918
9	Wyoming	\$77,837
10	New Hampshire	\$77,260
11	Maryland	\$73,849
12	North Dakota	\$73,341
-		
39	Indiana	\$60,038
40	Michigan	\$59,714
41	Idaho	\$59,035
42	Georgia	\$58,581
43	Oklahoma	\$58,499
44	Louisiana	\$57,100
45	South Carolina	\$56,123
46	New Mexico	\$54,428
47	Arkansas	\$54,347
48	Kentucky	\$54,326
49	Alabama	\$53,175
50	West Virginia	\$52,585
51	Mississippi	\$48,110

* Includes the District of Columbia.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Idaho labor regions

Figure A1.1. Idaho labor regions



Appendix 2: Estimating labor underutilization for Idaho counties

To develop estimates of the alternative measures of labor underutilization for Idaho counties, the model draws from the following data sources:

- County labor force and unemployment statistics from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program.
- Statewide measures of marginally attached workers and involuntary part-time workers from Current Population Survey estimates.

To estimate discouraged workers and marginally attached workers by county, the model assumes each county has the same ratio of unemployment to total state unemployment as the state in its entirety. Similarly, the number of part-time workers in each county is estimated by multiplying each county's unemployment percentage by the number of statewide involuntary part-time workers.

It is important to remember these are only estimates based on simplifying assumptions about the distribution of discouraged and part-time workers around the state. However, they are the best ballpark estimates of labor underutilization in Idaho counties that limited data allow. Regional data is a simple sum of county estimates.

Figure A2.1. Alternative measures of labor underutilization: labor force, unemployed, discouraged workers, all other marginally attached workers, involuntary part-time workers and U-6 rate (unemployed with marginally attached workers and involuntary part-time), Idaho and counties, 2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, American Community Survey five-year estimates

Area	Labor force	Unemployed residents	Discouraged workers	Other marginally attached	Involuntary part-time	U-6
State of Idaho	971,800	32,200	2,889	5,082	24,494	6.6%
1: Northern	125,753	4,928	362	662	3,169	7.2%
Benewah	4,263	214	13	23	107	8.3%
Bonner	22,417	974	60	118	565	7.6%
Boundary	5,517	257	20	29	139	8.0%
Kootenai	87,777	3,182	252	460	2,212	6.9%
Shoshone	5,779	301	18	31	146	8.5%
2: North Central	54,936	1,710	177	287	1,385	6.4%
Clearwater	3,430	195	12	18	87	9.0%
Idaho	7,410	297	23	39	187	7.3%
Latah	20,714	558	66	108	522	6.0%
Lewis	1,664	57	4	9	42	6.7%
Nez Perce	21,718	603	72	113	548	6.1%
3: Southwest	458,326	13,927	1,298	2,389	11,550	6.3%
Ada	286,174	7,848	760	1,487	7,211	6.0%
Adams	1,868	113	7	10	47	9.4%

(Table continues.)

Area	Labor force	Unemployed residents	Discouraged workers	Other marginally attached	Involuntary part-time	U-6
State of Idaho	971,800	32,200	2,889	5,082	24,494	6.6%
3: Southwest	458,326	13,927	1,298	2,389	11,550	6.3%
Boise	4,077	172	12	22	103	7.5%
Canyon	116,741	3,974	359	611	2,943	6.7%
Elmore	12,575	410	44	66	317	6.6%
Gem	8,774	332	29	46	221	7.1%
Owyhee	5,585	216	20	29	141	7.2%
Payette	11,581	442	34	61	292	7.1%
Valley	6,379	236	20	34	161	7.0%
Washington	4,572	184	14	24	115	7.3%
4: South Central	105,765	3,181	318	551	2,666	6.3%
Blaine	13,823	373	43	72	348	6.0%
Camas	561	18	2	3	14	6.5%
Cassia	12,340	326	33	64	311	5.9%
Gooding	8,159	246	24	43	206	6.3%
Jerome	11,905	367	39	62	300	6.4%
Lincoln	2,509	98	7	13	63	7.2%
Minidoka	11,986	327	34	62	302	6.0%
Twin Falls	44,482	1,425	136	232	1,121	6.5%
5: Southeast	88,277	2,717	286	461	2,226	6.4%
Bannock	44,267	1,370	140	231	1,116	6.4%
Bear Lake	2,920	83	10	15	74	6.2%
Bingham	23,849	731	83	125	601	6.4%
Caribou	3,677	114	12	19	93	6.4%
Franklin	7,105	191	23	37	179	6.0%
Oneida	2,428	73	7	13	61	6.3%
Power	4,031	154	12	21	102	7.1%
6: Eastern	128,450	3,297	411	667	3,238	5.9%
Bonneville	65,279	1,698	201	339	1,645	5.9%
Butte	1,196	47	3	6	30	7.2%
Clark	474	15	1	2	12	6.5%
Custer	2,017	76	7	11	51	7.1%
Fremont	7,884	203	27	41	199	5.9%
Jefferson	15,546	398	54	81	392	5.9%
Lemhi	4,072	154	14	21	103	7.1%
Madison	24,051	523	80	124	606	5.5%
Teton	7,931	182	25	41	200	5.6%

All six labor regions had slight increases in U-6 rates in 2023 compared to 2022. With the COVID-19 pandemic causing major economic disruptions, all six regions saw U-6 rates climb in 2020, but the

growth experienced in 2022 brought rates back down to pre-pandemic levels. In 2023, three of Idaho's six labor regions had U-6 rates that were at or below those of 2019.

Figure A2.2. Alternative measures of labor underutilization: U-6 rate (unemployed with marginally attached workers and involuntary part-time), Idaho Labor Regions, 2013-2023

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, American Community Survey five-year estimates

Region	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1: Northern	14.9	12.1	10.1	9.4	8.5	7.5	7.2	10.9	9.1	6.7	7.2
2: North central	13.6	11.1	9.4	8.6	8.0	7.3	7.1	10.0	7.6	6.2	6.4
3: Southwestern	12.4	10.1	8.4	7.6	6.8	6.0	5.8	9.1	7.2	5.9	6.3
4: South central	10.8	8.8	7.2	6.7	6.0	5.5	5.4	8.2	6.9	5.8	6.3
5: Southeastern	12.4	10.2	8.6	7.8	7.0	6.2	6.0	8.3	6.7	5.9	6.4
6: Eastern	12.9	10.5	8.5	7.6	6.9	6.1	5.9	8.1	5.8	5.6	5.9

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