

Chattanooga MSA Employment and Unemployment Data Release, December 2024 **Release date: February 5, 2025**

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has released its first [estimates of metropolitan area employment and unemployment](#) for December 2024. According to the seasonally adjusted estimates, total nonfarm employment in the six-county Chattanooga MSA was 290.4 thousand in December 2024 and was 200 jobs lower than a month earlier. Note that the November 2024 number was revised down by 100 from the preliminary estimate in the previous report. Year over year, total employment growth was 5,300.

Despite there being a slight decrease in jobs in December, growth has been relatively solid for the past year. The largest job gains on a year-to-year basis were in education and health services (1,800), leisure and hospitality (1,400), and financial activities (1,100). Professional and businesses services saw the largest loss of jobs over the period (700).

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was unchanged from November at 3.4 percent, which was 0.2 above its December 2023 level. The unemployment rate has been creeping up since May 2024 when it was at a record low 2.9 percent. Although the December rate is low by historic standards, it is at its highest level since March 2022, when it was also 3.4 percent.

Conclusions: Today's jobs and unemployment report provides a mixed picture of the Chattanooga MSA's labor market: Job growth has been solid over the past twelve months, although it was essentially zero for two straight months. The unemployment rate kept steady for two months, but is half a point higher than in May of last year. Overall, the data indicates that the local growth has been solid but has slowed down somewhat. The increase in the unemployment rate is a concern but has been driven by an increase in the rate at which people are entering the labor force.

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Nonfarm Employment, Chattanooga MSA, December 2024

	December 2024	Monthly change (level)	Year-to-year change (level)	Year-to-year change (%)
Total (seasonally adjusted)	290,400	-200	5,300	1.9%
Total	291,400	-1,800	4,800	1.7%
Mining, logging, and construction	13,500	0	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	40,000	-100	100	0.3%
Wholesale trade	9,300	0	100	1.1%
Retail trade	30,300	200	600	2.0%
Transportation and utilities	17,600	0	-200	-0.6%
Information	3,300	0	-100	-2.9%
Financial activities	25,800	-200	1,100	4.5%
Professional and business services	28,400	-600	-700	-2.4%
Education and health services	45,400	-300	1,800	4.1%
Leisure and hospitality	31,300	-600	1,400	4.7%
Other services	12,900	0	300	2.4%
Government	33,400	-400	400	1.2%

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment, January 3, 2025. Note that the BLS does not provide seasonally adjusted data at the industry level.

Unemployment, Chattanooga MSA, November 2024

	December 2024	November 2024	December 2023	Year-to-Year Difference
Unemployment rate (seasonally adjusted)	3.4%	3.4%	3.2%	0.2
Unemployment rate	3.4%	3.4%	2.9%	0.5
Employed persons	277,429	278,926	272,949	4,480
Unemployed persons	9,641	9,868	8,022	1,619
Civilian labor force	287,070	288,794	280,971	6,099

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment, January 3, 2025. Note that the BLS does not provide seasonally adjusted data for the number of persons employed, unemployed, or in the labor force.

Estimating Employment and Unemployment

Estimates of the number of jobs in the United States are provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and are based on the BLS's Current Employment Statistics (CES) program. Each month, about 122,000 nonfarm businesses and government agencies are asked how many employees they have on their payrolls. The CES is often called the "establishment survey" and its output is often called "payroll employment," "nonfarm employment," or simply "jobs." The CES survey is used also to estimate employment for states and metro areas. For the Chattanooga MSA, employment data are provided for broad supersectors such as manufacturing, retail trade, and financial activities.

The BLS also surveys households with its Current Population Survey (CPS), which asks 60,000 households across the country about the labor market status of household members. The main output of the CPS is the unemployment rate, but it also used to estimate the number of people employed, the number unemployed, and in the number in the labor force (the sum of those employed and unemployed).

Payroll and household employment tend to move together over time, but their levels necessarily differ. The CES surveys nonfarm establishments, so payroll employment does not include farm employees or the self-employed, whereas household employment does. Also, a person who is employed according to the household survey can hold more than one of the jobs counted in the establishment survey.