

# Kentucky's Unemployment Rate Was 4.2% In March

Kentucky's seasonally adjusted preliminary March 2026 unemployment rate was 4.2%, according to the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS), an agency within the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet.

The preliminary March 2026 jobless rate did not change from February but was down 0.5 percentage points from one year ago.

The U.S. seasonally adjusted jobless rate for March 2026 was 4.3%, which was down from the 4.4% reported for February and up from the 4.2% recorded in March 2025, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Labor force statistics, including the unemployment rate, are based upon estimates from the Current Population Survey of households. The survey is designed to measure trends in the number of people working and includes jobs in agriculture and individuals who are self-employed. Kentucky's civilian labor force was 2,103,495 in March 2026, a decrease of 5,171 individuals from February.

The number of people employed in March was 2,015,492, a decline of 4,344 from February. The number of unemployed was 88,003, a decrease of 827 from February.

"Kentucky's unemployment rate fell to 4.2% in February and remained at this level in March, but it was not because unemployed workers found jobs," said University of Kentucky's Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) Director Mike Clark, Ph.D. "Estimates indicate that roughly 16,000 workers have exited Kentucky's labor force during the first three months of 2026. Fewer people are reporting that they have a job, but fewer people are also reporting that they are looking for work. These changes could indicate that unemployed workers see limited opportunities to find employment as the economy has slowed. This might cause them to pause their job searches and temporarily leave the labor force."

In a separate federal survey of business establishments that excludes jobs in agriculture and people who are self-employed, Kentucky's seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment increased by 2,000 jobs to 2,034,100 in March compared to February. Kentucky's

nonfarm employment was down 2,000 jobs or 0.1% compared to March 2025.

"While the household survey showed fewer people working in March, businesses reported higher levels of employment," said Clark. "These gains were concentrated primarily in the trade, transportation and utilities sector and the construction sector. The manufacturing sector accounted for most of Kentucky's losses in March."

Nonfarm data is provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Employment Statistics program. According to the survey, employment increased from February to March for six of Kentucky's major nonfarm North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) job sectors, decreased for three and was unchanged for two.

Kentucky's trade, transportation and utilities sector increased by 1,300 positions from February to March. Employment was up 300 jobs in the wholesale trade subsector; up 800 jobs in retail trade; and up 200 positions in transportation, warehousing and utilities. The sector had 3,200 fewer jobs compared to a year ago.

Employment in the construction sector jumped by 1,100 jobs in March compared to February. Construction was up 700 jobs or 0.8% from one year ago.

The other services sector added 900 jobs from February to March and 800 jobs compared to one year ago. This sector includes repairs and maintenance, personal care services and religious organizations.

Kentucky's leisure and hospitality sector grew by 600 jobs from February to March. The arts, entertainment and recreation subsector was up 200 jobs while the accommodations and food services subsector added 400 jobs. Employment in this sector was up 2,100 positions from one year ago.

In the government sector, employment rose by 400 jobs from February to March. Jobs numbers were down by 200 in federal government; unchanged in state government; and up 600 in local government. The total number of government jobs fell by 1,000 positions or 0.3% compared to March 2025.

Kentucky's professional and business services sector increased

by 300 jobs in March 2026. Among the subsectors, employment was down 500 jobs in professional, scientific and technical services; up 100 jobs in management of companies; and up 700 jobs in administrative, support and waste management. The sector had 1,200 more positions compared to March 2025.

Employment was unchanged in Kentucky's information services sector. The industries in this sector include traditional publishing as well as software publishing; motion pictures and broadcasting; and telecommunications. The sector was down 700 jobs in March 2026 compared to one year ago.

Employment in the state's mining and logging sector also did not change in March. This sector had 500 fewer jobs in March 2026 compared to March 2025.

The financial activities sector was down 300 jobs from February to March. Employment fell by 400 jobs in the finance and insurance subsector and was up 100 jobs in the real estate, rental and leasing subsector. This sector had 100 more positions compared to March 2025.

The educational and health services sector reported 700 fewer jobs in March 2026. Employment was down 600 jobs in the health care and social assistance subsector from February to March and down 100 positions in the educational services subsector. Since last March, this sector has grown by 2,800 jobs or 0.9%.

Kentucky's manufacturing sector contracted by 1,600 jobs from February to March. All of these job losses were in durable goods manufacturing. Employment in the non-durable goods subsector was unchanged from February to March. Kentucky's manufacturing employment was down by 4,300 positions compared to March 2025.

"Employment in Kentucky's durable goods manufacturing continued to fall in March," said Clark. "The subsector posted its largest monthly decline since 2023."

Civilian labor force statistics include non-military workers and unemployed Kentuckians who are actively seeking work. They do not include unemployed Kentuckians who have not looked for employment within the past four weeks.

Kentucky's statewide unemployment rate and employment levels are seasonally adjusted. Employment statistics undergo sharp fluctuations due to seasonal events, such as weather changes, harvests, holidays, and school openings and closings. Seasonal adjustments eliminate these influences and make it easier to observe statistical trends. However, due to the small sample size, county unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted.

## THE STURGIS NEWS

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Published every Wednesday and periodical postage paid at the post office in Sturgis, Union County, Kentucky 42459. Address all mail, subscriptions, changes of address and other correspondence to: The Sturgis News, P.O. Box 218, Sturgis, KY 42469. Subscription Rates: Union and Surrounding Counties, \$30.00 Elsewhere in Kentucky, \$32.00; Out-of-State, \$36.00.

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## Union County District Court

The following persons were scheduled on the docket in Union County District Court on Thursday, May 7 before District Judge Ben Leonard.

Stephen Aams, fleeing or evading, third degree, fined \$100.00 plus court costs plus 365 days in jail probated per order.

William Grant Hartsock, operating on suspended or revoked operator's license, pre-trial conference on May 14.

Derek L. Hedgepath, wanton endangerment, first degree, preliminary hearing on May 14, public defender appointed.

Joshua Lee Taylor, operating on suspended or revoked operator's license, pre-trial conference on May 14, public defender appointed.

Travis Anthony Hagan, no or expired registration plates and no tail lamps, both charges dismissed based on verified proof and payment of \$25.00 DCE fee.

Patrick McGuire, no

operator's license, fined \$100.00 plus court costs plus 90- days in jail probated per order.

Seth K. Nally, criminal littering, fined \$50.00 plus court costs plus \$50.00 in restitution.

Melissa S. Short,

theft by deception, including cold checks, pre-trial conference on May 21.

Raven Mary Elizabeth Ricketson, failure to produce insurance card and failure to register transfer of motor vehicle, pre-trial conference on June 25.

Jaden Marie Walker, no or expired Kentucky registration receipt, no or expired registration plates, and failure to produce insurance card, failed to appear.

Camron Lovell, all terrain vehicle violations, operating motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol, second offense, aggravator, and reckless driving, fined \$50.00 on first charge, second and third charges

merged, fined \$350.00 plus court costs plus 180 days in jail, seven days to serve, balance probated per order and enrollment in ADE classes, and operator's license suspended per Department of Transportation regulations.

Braden Lindsey, disregarding stop sign, careless driving, failure of owner to maintain required insurance, first offense, and all terrain vehicle violations, continued to May 21.

Rachel Lynch, no operator's license, failure to or improper signal, and license to be in possession, continued to June 18.

Rowan Shockley, license to be in possession and buying or possessing drug paraphernalia, first charge previously dismissed with proof provided, completed MEP on second charge.

Corey A. Butler, preliminary hearing, probable cause established, referred to grand jury.

## Agriculture Notes

Submitted by Katie Hughes

### National Beef Month Highlights

#### Kentucky Cattle and Beef Nutrition

May is National Beef Month, and in Kentucky it is an opportunity to recognize the state's cattle farmers while also highlighting beef's role in a healthy diet.

Cattle production is Kentucky's largest agricultural enterprise, with beef cattle raised in every county of the Commonwealth. Kentucky consistently ranks among the top beef cow-calf states east of the Mississippi River, with the majority of operations being familyowned farms that rely on pasturebased systems. These farms help support rural communities, protect farmland, and contribute millions of dollars annually to the state's economy.

Kentucky's rolling hills and grasslands are well suited for cattle grazing. Much of the land used for beef production is not ideal for rowcrop farming, allowing cattle to convert grasses and forages into highquality protein. This efficient use of natural resources has helped beef remain a cornerstone of Kentucky agriculture for generations. Most cattle farms in Union County are small to mid-size operations, managed by families who have cared for the land and livestock for generations. These farms contribute to the community by supporting local businesses, preserving open space, and helping maintain the county's agricultural heritage.

Beyond the farm gate, beef is valued for its nutritional benefits. A threeounce serving of lean beef—about the size of a deck of cards—provides nearly half of the recommended daily value of protein, helping build and maintain muscle. Beef is also a

rich source of iron, zinc, and vitamin B12, nutrients essential for oxygen transport in the blood, immune system support, and healthy nerve function.

Nutrition research shows that lean beef can fit into a balanced, hearthealthy diet when eaten in moderation and paired with fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Many popular beef cuts meet federal guidelines for "lean" or "extralean" protein options.

National Beef Month serves as a reminder that Kentucky cattle farmers not only raise a nutritious food product, but also serve as stewards of the land. As families across the state celebrate the month with backyard cookouts or homecooked meals, they are also supporting farm families who play a vital role in Kentucky's agricultural heritage.

Make sure to check out the two different beef giveaways being done by the Union County Cattlemen's Association and Union County Extension Office with the help of different sponsors. Check out the Union County KY Ag Extension Facebook page.

Sources: USDA, UNL Extension and KY Dept of Agriculture.

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

### ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Union County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on June 15, 2026, at the Union County Central Building, 510 South Mart Street, Morganfield, Kentucky to consider a proposed amendment to the Morganfield, Sturgis, and Waverly Municipal Zoning Ordinance.

The Proposed zoning text amendment will modify Section 708 Accessory Uses to exclude and prohibit storage containers, shipping containers, PODS, and other similar containers – whether temporary or permanent as an accessory structure.

All interested persons are invited to attend and may submit comments in person or in writing. Written comments may be sent to Susie Robertson, Zoning Administrator, at 510 S Mart St., Morganfield, KY 42437 or susie.robertson@unioncountky.gov and must be received by June 1, 2026.

For additional information, please contact Susie Robertson, Zoning Administrator at 270-389-2093 or susie.robertson@unioncountky.gov.

Union County Planning Commission  
William Rose, Chairperson  
5/13c

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