



# Labor Market & Economy Report

## April 2025

### Sharp insights for well-rounded people.

Actalent's monthly Labor Market and Economy Report connects important dots between data and trends in engineering and sciences. The report corresponds with the monthly release of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Employment Situation, though lends further insight into specific employment trends in engineering and sciences. Specifically, readers can expect to learn about:

- + Job growth in engineering and sciences by industry
- + Unemployment trends in engineering and sciences labor categories and industries
- + Labor force participation
- + Job quits and layoffs
- + Engineering and sciences employment trends by industry
- + Wages
- + Other important news stories impacting the labor market overall and engineering and sciences specifically



### Jobs Gained in April

U.S. employment increased by 177,000 jobs in April, with significant gains in healthcare, transportation and warehousing, financial activities, and social assistance.



### Labor Force Participation Rate

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) increased slightly from 62.5% in March to 62.6% in April. The LFPR has yet to recover to its pre-pandemic rate of 63.3%.



### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate was unchanged at 4.2% between March and April. Although the unemployment rate is higher than in recent years, it remains below the median rate of 5.0% observed over the past 20 years.



### March Layoffs

Layoffs declined to 1.6 million in March from 1.8 million in February. Quits were relatively unchanged at 3.3 million. Note that quits and layoffs data lag one month behind other employment data.

# April 2025 Market Trends

A closer look at  
unemployment by industry  
and labor category



Overall unemployment rate

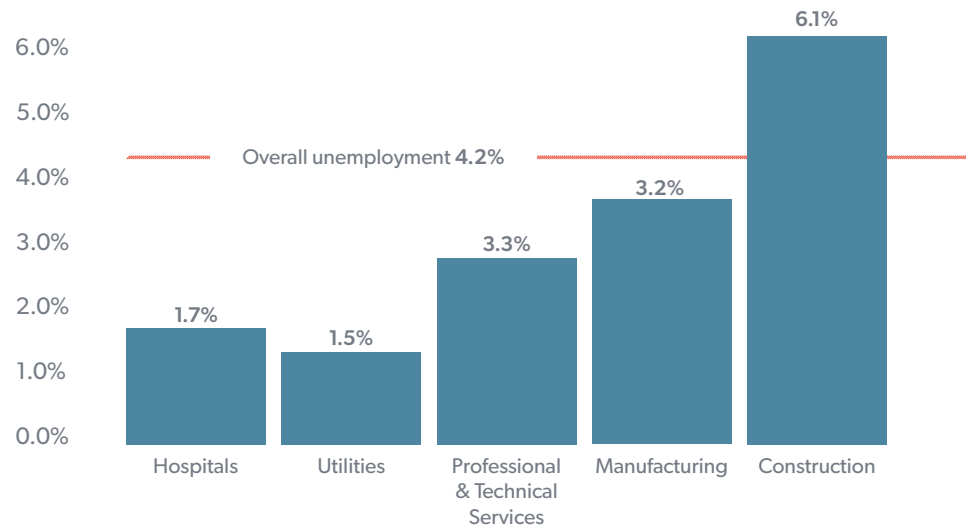


Unemployment rate for  
degreed workers

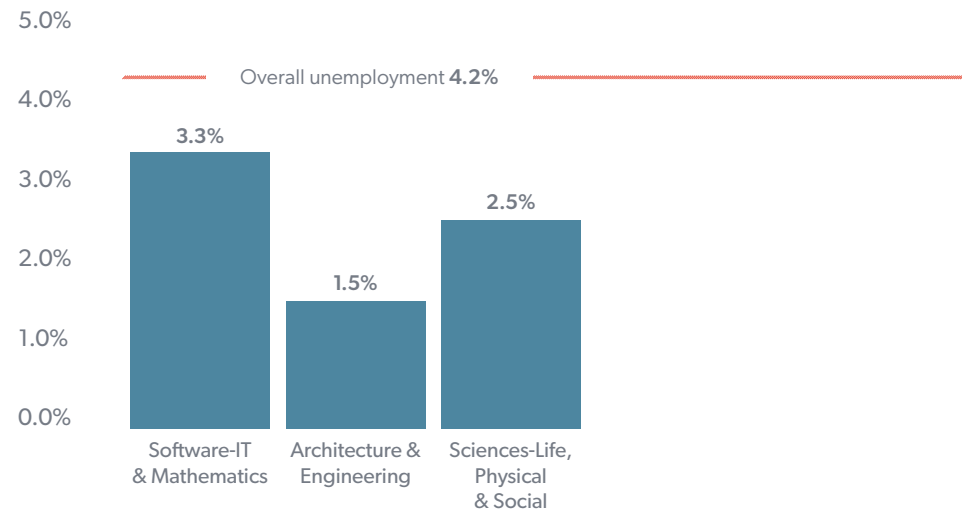


Ratio of unemployed workers  
(Software-IT & Mathematics,  
Architecture & Engineering, Sciences)  
available per job opening

■ Unemployment rates by industry



■ Unemployment rates by labor category



*Due to frequent data revisions and statistical noise on a month-to-month basis, Actalent employs a rolling 3-month average to best represent unemployment by labor category or industry.*

# Industry Trends

## OVERALL ECONOMY

The U.S. economy added 177,000 jobs in April. Job growth was led by healthcare, transportation and warehousing, financial activities and social assistance, while federal government employment declined for the third consecutive month. After revisions, employment in February and March combined is 58,000 lower than previously reported. Other key industries, such as manufacturing and construction, experienced minimal changes to employment levels as companies dealt with ongoing financial, economic and political uncertainty.

+177K  
MoM

+1.2%  
YoY

## UTILITIES

In April, Schneider Electric launched its EcoConsult for Data Centers, a consulting service supported by over 250 consultants and more than 6,500 service representatives. Homer City Redevelopment and Kiewit Power Constructors Co. plan to transform a retired power plant in Pennsylvania into a natural gas-powered data center campus to support growing artificial intelligence and high-performance computing demands. The project is expected to create over 10,000 direct on-site construction-related jobs and roughly 1,000 total direct and indirect permanent positions in technology, operations and energy infrastructure. Chevron plans to lay off 600 employees at its California headquarters as the company prepares to relocate to Texas. Chevron's layoffs are part of an ongoing workforce reduction announced in February.

-600  
MoM

+1.2%  
YoY

## CONSTRUCTION

In March 2025 (latest data available), construction job openings fell by 38,000 month-over-month and 90,000 year-over-year. Construction spending also fell in March but was 2.8% higher than a year ago. The Associated General Contractors of America suggested that hesitance to start new construction projects is due to "uncertainty over tariffs, government funding, and other policy upheavals." The Associated Builders and Contractors reported higher construction input prices in the first quarter of 2025 and warned that ongoing uncertainty or rising costs could delay or cancel projects. Despite these challenges, construction companies including Balfour Beatty, Fluor, Jacobs and Skanska won contracts for infrastructure projects in April, suggesting that workers will remain in demand.

+11K  
MoM

+1.7%  
YoY

## ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING

The AIA Architectural Billings Index declined further in March (latest data available), indicating slowing conditions at most architecture firms due to ongoing uncertainty. Many architecture firms still have healthy backlog levels. While job postings and employment in the architectural services industry have fallen year-over-year (YOY), the engineering services industry has seen a 2.0% increase in postings and a 4.0% rise in employment YOY, driven by infrastructure projects and PFAS contamination projects. In April, Stantec was chosen to design a PFAS treatment system in Vancouver, Washington, and the U.S. Air Force selected Weston-CDM Smith JV, LLC for environmental architect and engineering services related to contaminants such as PFAS.

+5.1K  
MoM

+3.2%  
YoY

MoM = Month over month  
YoY = Year over year

# Industry Trends, continued

## AEROSPACE & DEFENSE

Tariff uncertainty sparked concern across the aerospace industry in April, threatening to disrupt the Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft that has enabled largely tax-free cross-border trade of aircraft and parts since 1980. While the future of tariffs is unclear, analysts have warned that any pause or shift in the aerospace supply chain could disrupt jet deliveries. Responses have varied: airlines such as Delta Air Lines and American Airlines have withdrawn their financial guidance, while companies like RTX Corp. have issued dual outlooks, and General Dynamics has deemed any commentary on the tariffs as premature speculation. Over the last three months, the aerospace and defense industry has shown strong demand for jobs including systems engineers, manufacturing engineers and project managers.



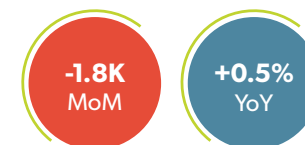
## HEALTHCARE

Healthcare and social assistance job openings declined twice in the first quarter of 2025, but the sector continues to report more job openings and higher employment gains than any other sector. More life sciences organizations are utilizing large language models (LLMs) for medical writing, but industry experts do not expect this technology to replace medical writers in the near future. While LLMs have proven to be more efficient with drafting documents such as clinical trial study protocols and reports, medical writers are still needed to oversee the technology, make complex decisions and ensure ethical and regulatory compliance.



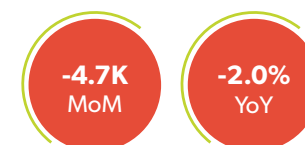
## SCIENTIFIC R&D

Biotech companies have reported that mass layoffs at the FDA have resulted in delays in FDA approvals, setting clinical trials and drug testing behind. The FDA is reportedly reversing some of its recent layoffs due to the disruptions in drug and food safety work. While some companies like Boston Scientific, Johnson & Johnson and Merck have reported estimated financial impacts from tariffs, many still expect to perform well in 2025. Roche will invest \$50 billion in U.S. pharmaceutical and diagnostics manufacturing and R&D over the next five years, which the company estimates will create over 12,000 jobs. Regeneron and Thermo Fisher also announced significant investments in U.S. manufacturing in April.



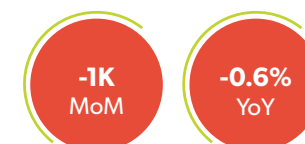
## AUTOMOTIVE

Automotive sales surged in March and April, likely driven by consumers looking to buy before potential price increases due to tariff uncertainty. Automakers including GM and Honda are shifting some of their production to the U.S. in response to tariffs. After a two-week pause to assess tariff impacts, Stellantis resumed production at its Windsor, Ontario plant and has called back over half of the 900 U.S. workers who had been temporarily laid off. Volvo Group is reportedly planning to lay off up to 800 workers due to market uncertainty and potential changes in regulations and tariffs, impacting employees at Volvo and Mack Trucks facilities in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. Waymo and Toyota are exploring a collaboration that would be focused on developing autonomous driving technologies for personally owned vehicles (POVs).



## C&IP *Manufacturing of Durable Goods, Technology, Chemicals, Food Products, etc.*

Manufacturing indexes pointed to slower industry conditions in April that likely resulted from apprehension in response to policy uncertainty. Whirlpool Corp. will lay off 651 workers from its manufacturing facility in Iowa in response to reduced consumer demand for its refrigeration appliances. The Information reported that Google laid off hundreds of employees from its platforms and devices unit in April as part of an effort to run more efficiently. IBM plans to invest \$150 billion in the U.S. over the next five years, which will include over \$30 billion in research and development “to advance and continue IBM’s American manufacturing of mainframe and quantum computers.” NVIDIA plans to invest up to \$500 billion in building AI servers in the U.S. over the next four years, anticipating significant job creation as part of this initiative.



MoM = Month over month  
YoY = Year over year

# Wages in the United States

How they've changed

+2.3%



## Consumer Price Index

The consumer price index, a measure of inflation, increased by 2.3% for the 12 months ending April, slightly down from 2.4% in March. Over the past three months, inflation has made further progress toward the Federal Reserve's 2.0% target. However, due to heightened economic uncertainty, the Federal Reserve has not yet cut interest rates in 2025, emphasizing the importance of a cautious approach to policy adjustments.

+3.8%



## Wage Increases

Average hourly earnings increased by 3.8% for the 12 months ending April, unchanged from the increase recorded in March.

+1.4%



## "Real" Earnings

Real average hourly earnings increased by 1.4% between April 2024 and April 2025. In other words, despite average hourly earnings increasing by 3.8% year-over-year, workers may only feel as if they're making about 1.4% more, on average, due to the effects of inflation.

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# References

## Read more about trends in Engineering & Sciences

**UTILITIES:** [Schneider Electric Unveils EcoConsult for Data Centers...](#); [Homer City Redevelopment and Kiewit Announce Country's Largest...](#); [Chevron Announces Job Cuts as Headquarters Move to Houston](#)

**CONSTRUCTION:** [Job Openings: Construction](#); [Construction Spending Declines 0.5 Percent In March...](#); [ABC: Tariffs Drive Surge in March Construction Materials Prices](#); [April 2025: Contractors report their latest awards](#)

**ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING:** [ABI March 2025: Business conditions at architecture firms soften further](#); [Lightcast Job Posting Analytics](#); [Stantec to design largest PFAS treatment system in Northwestern US](#); [U.S. Air Force Selects Weston-CDM Smith JV, LLC to Provide Environmental Architect and Engineering Services](#)

**AEROSPACE & DEFENSE:** [Who Pays for Aerospace Tariffs? Maybe No One](#); [The Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft \(Aircraft Agreement\)](#); [Trump Tariff Chaos Means Earnings Forecasts Are Already Wrong](#); [Lightcast Job Posting Analytics](#)

**HEALTHCARE:** [Job Openings: Health Care and Social Assistance](#); [Job openings, hires, and total separations by industry, seasonally adjusted](#); [Can AI replace medical writers? Experts say not immediately](#)

**SCIENTIFIC R&D:** [Drug Development Is Slowing Down After Cuts at the FDA](#); [FDA to undo some layoffs, after cuts to inspections and drug safety](#); [Boston Scientific is 'very bullish' on 2025 despite \\$200M tariff hit](#); [Sanofi stays on course amid tariff turmoil](#); [Roche to invest USD 50 billion in pharmaceuticals and diagnostics in the United States over the next five years](#); [Thermo Fisher Investment Reinforces Confidence in American Innovation](#); [Regeneron Announces New Investment in Manufacturing of its Industry-Leading Biologic Medicines](#)

**AUTOMOTIVE:** [Pre-tariff stampede delivers double-digit retail gains](#); [March SAAR hits 17.8 million](#); [Car buyers trying to beat tariff price hikes did a 'bank run' on dealers' lots in April](#); [Exclusive: GM to increase truck production in Indiana following Trump's tariffs](#); [Honda to shift production of Civic hybrid from Japan to U.S. on tariffs](#); [Stellantis restarts Canada plant, brings back hundreds of laid-off U.S. workers...](#); [Mack, Volvo Trucks Laying Off as Many as 1,000](#); [Waymo and Toyota Outline Strategic Partnership...](#)

**C&IP:** [April 2025 Manufacturing ISM® Report On Business®](#); [S&P Global US Manufacturing PMI®](#); [Whirlpool Corp. announces Iowa's largest layoff of 2025 in Amana manufacturing facility](#); [Google Layoffs Affect Hundreds in Division Working on Chrome Browser, Pixel Phones](#); [IBM Unveils \\$150 Billion Investment in America to Accelerate Technology Opportunity](#); [Nvidia to produce AI servers worth up to \\$500 billion in US over four years](#)

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