



# Labor Market & Economy Report

November 2024

## 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 November

U.S. employment increased by 227,000 jobs in November, with significant gains in healthcare, leisure and hospitality, government, and social assistance.



### Labor Force Participation Rate

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



### Unemployment Rate

The unemployment rate increased slightly from 4.1% to 4.2% between October and November.



### October Layoffs

Between September and October, layoffs decreased slightly from 1.8 million to 1.6 million and quits increased from 3.1 million to 3.3 million. Note that quits and layoffs data lag one month behind other employment data.

# November 2024 Market Trends

A closer look at  
unemployment by industry  
and labor category



Overall Unemployment Rate

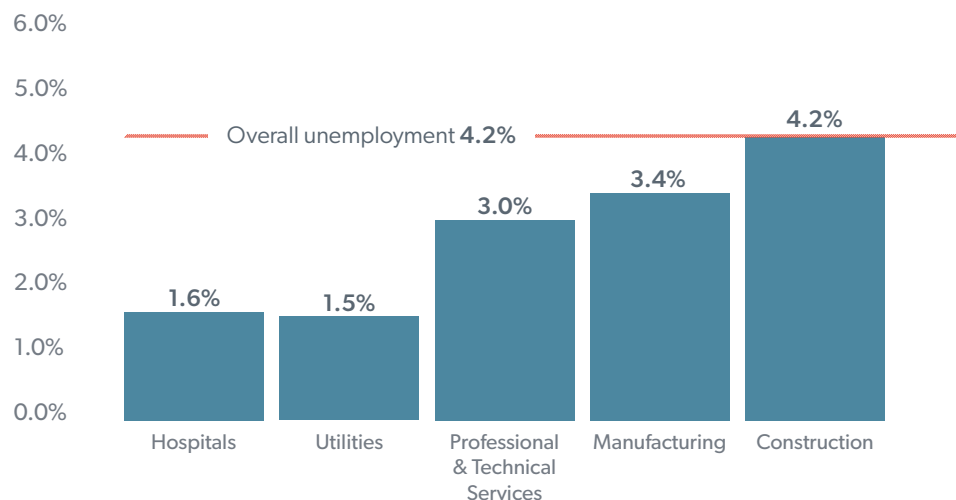


Unemployment Rate for Degreed  
Workers

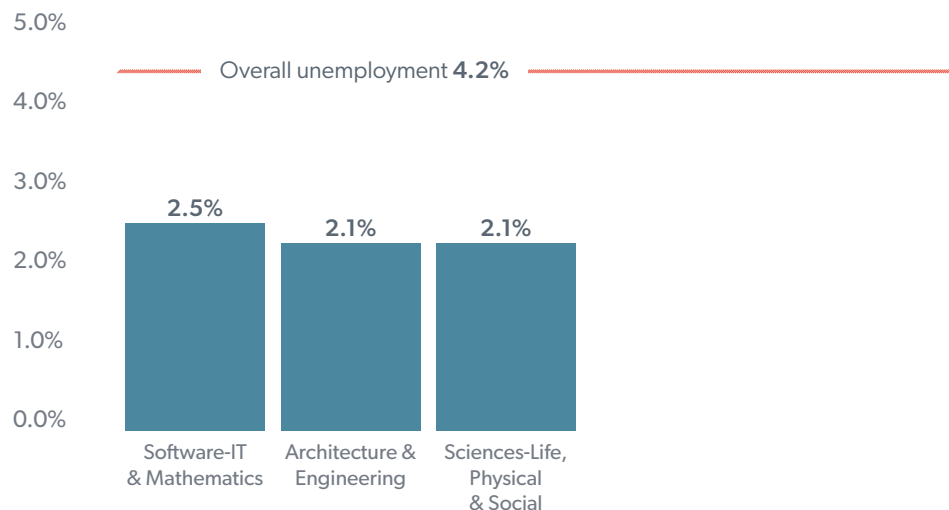


Ratio of unemployed workers  
(Software-IT & Mathematics,  
Architecture & Engineering,  
Sciences) available per job  
opening.

### 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. added 227,000 jobs in November, returning to normalcy after a weak October jobs report due to strike and hurricane impacts. Employment changes were revised up from +223,000 to +255,000 for September and from +12,000 to +36,000 for October. Over the last 12 months, healthcare, social assistance and government accounted for 61% of total U.S. employment growth, indicating that job growth in other sectors has weakened this year. Inflation increased by 2.7% year-over-year in November, slightly above October's reading of 2.6%. The Federal Reserve has made it clear that they are not in a rush to lower interest rates and will act carefully regarding future rate cuts.



## UTILITIES

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is funding a new Artificial Intelligence for Interconnection program, which will leverage AI to "modernize the interconnection application process and significantly reduce the time required to review, approve and commission new generation interconnections across the country." PG&E is deploying Atomic Canyon's AI solutions at its Diablo Canyon Power Plant to "transform document search and retrieval" and deliver cost savings and efficiency. Despite uncertainty about the future of clean energy policies and federal funding, Forbes predicts that private businesses will keep investing in clean energy. SEIA claims corporate procurement currently represents over 18% of total U.S. solar capacity. Any continuation of clean energy investments would likely mean that clean energy jobs will continue to grow.



## CONSTRUCTION

Construction sector job openings were down by 164,000 for the year ending October (latest data available). In response to lower job openings, the Associated Builders and Contractors stated, "there's reason to suspect that election uncertainty, combined with the expectation that borrowing costs will decline over the next several quarters, delayed staffing decisions over the past few months." Still, construction employment is up 2.6% year-over-year, outpacing the overall economy's growth of 1.4%. Big project wins in November included a \$2 billion Ohio data center campus expansion awarded to Turner Construction, a \$746 million Texas highway rebuild awarded to Balfour Beatty and a \$1.18 billion Newark AirTrain replacement project awarded to a joint venture between Tutor Perini and O&G Industries.



## ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING

After declining for 20 months, the AIA Architectural Billings Index was flat at 50.3 in October (latest data available), indicating a balance between firms experiencing a decline in architectural billings and those experiencing an increase. Architectural firms surveyed by AIA said that many clients were awaiting the outcomes of national and local elections in November before committing to new projects. Deloitte's 2025 Engineering and Construction Industry Outlook notes that "44% of the current skill requirements in infrastructure are expected to evolve over the next five years," and sector demand for digital skills such as software development and automation engineering are increasing.



MoM = Month over month  
YoY = Year over year

# Industry Trends, continued

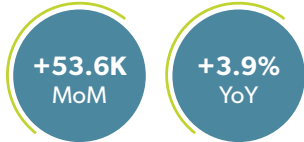
## AEROSPACE & DEFENSE

Since employment data for the aerospace manufacturing industry lags one month behind, the strike that took place in October is now reflected in the latest data. The strike ended on November 5, when the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union members voted to accept a contract offer. The union members were told to return to work by November 12. As part of its previously announced plans to cut 17,000 jobs, or 10% of its global workforce, Boeing sent over 2,500 layoff notices to workers in Washington, Oregon, South Carolina and Missouri, including several hundred engineers and technicians. To address civil service mariner recruitment and retention challenges, the U.S. Navy has launched an initiative “to restore the health of the Military Sealift Command (MSC) workforce and generate more logistics support for fleet operations worldwide.”



## HEALTHCARE

As mentioned in Actalent’s last labor market report, job openings for healthcare workers have declined in 2024, but the healthcare sector still leads job growth month to month. Hospitals added 19,300 jobs in November and have added 213,400 jobs since November 2023. The Mount Sinai Health System opened its Hamilton and Amabel James Center for Artificial Intelligence and Human Health, which will combine AI with data science and genomics to enhance doctors’ abilities to diagnose and treat patients. Surveys continue to reveal distrust among healthcare workers towards the use of AI in healthcare. Health systems will need to find ways to build trust as they develop and implement AI technology.



## SCIENTIFIC R&D

Walgreens plans to close 1,200 stores to cut costs and refocus on its strengths in retail pharmacy, but Walgreens’ chief clinical trials officer has confirmed that these closures will not affect their 20 clinical trials centers. Merck reported positive results from the Phase 3 trial for its injectable version of Keytruda. With the current intravenous version of Keytruda losing patent protection in 2028, Merck sees potential for the new injectable version to mitigate revenue declines. AstraZeneca announced a \$3.5 billion capital investment in the U.S., which will create over 1,000 new jobs as the company expands its footprint in Maryland, Massachusetts, Texas and the East and West coasts. 195 Bristol Myers Squibb workers and 1,300 Charles River Labs workers will be laid off due to cost-cutting measures at both companies.



## AUTOMOTIVE

Several automakers made cost-cutting announcements in November as financial troubles mounted. After experiencing a net-loss in the latest quarter, Nissan announced plans to lay off 9,000 employees and cut manufacturing capacity, although the timeline and exact locations of the layoffs were not disclosed. Roughly 1,000 Nissan workers in the U.S. have accepted early retirement packages as part of the layoffs. Slow sales have prompted Stellantis to cut one of two shifts at its Jeep Gladiator plant in Toledo, Ohio, laying off about 1,100 workers. General Motors is laying off 1,000 workers, including over 200 engineering roles, to cut costs. Meanwhile, Rivian and Volkswagen formally launched their joint venture to bring next-generation electrical architecture and software to both automakers electric vehicles.



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

Manufacturing indexes reported further contraction in the manufacturing sector in November, but the rate of contraction has slowed. The Institute for Supply Management noted that the chemical products and fabricated metal products industries, which supply other industries across the manufacturing sector, continue to show weakness, “indicating that recovery may still be two to three months away.” AMD announced plans to cut about 1,000 jobs as it restructures to invest resources into the AI and data center markets. Cisco raised its revenue outlook for fiscal 2025, citing rising AI-related orders. Reuters explained that investments in AI have raised demand for data centers, “which use Cisco’s products such as ethernet switches and routers.”



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# Wages in the United States

How they've changed

+2.7%



## Consumer Price Index

The consumer price index, a measure of inflation, increased by 2.7% for the 12 months ending November, slightly above October's reading of 2.6%. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has made it clear that the Fed is not in a rush to lower interest rates and will act carefully in regard to future rate cuts.

+4.0%



## Wage Increases

Average hourly earnings increased by 4.0% for the 12 months ending November, unchanged from the increases recorded in September and October.

+1.3%



## "Real" Earnings

Real average hourly earnings increased by 1.3% between November 2023 to November 2024. In other words, despite average hourly earnings increasing by 4.0% year-over-year, workers may only feel as if they're making about 1.3% more, on average, due to the effect of inflation.

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# References

## Read more about trends in Engineering & Sciences

**UTILITIES:** [Biden-Harris Administration Announces \\$30 Million to Ease Interconnection Backlog...](#); [PG&E Launches First Commercial Deployment of On-Site Generative AI Solution for the Nuclear Energy Sector...](#); [How Trump's Victory Will Impact The Energy Sector](#); [SEIA: Solar Means Business 2024](#)

**CONSTRUCTION:** [ABC: Construction Job Openings Down Nearly 40% From a Year Ago](#); [ABC: Construction Adds Just 10,000 Jobs in November, Industry Employment Growth Still Outpaces Economy](#); [November 2024 wins: Contractors report their latest awards](#)

**ARCHITECTURE & ENGINEERING:** [ABI October 2024: Business conditions at architecture firms begin to moderate](#); [Deloitte 2025 Engineering and Construction Industry Outlook](#); [Deloitte: Building the engineering and construction workforce](#)

**AEROSPACE & DEFENSE:** [Boeing strike ends as workers accept new contract](#); [Boeing's machinists strike is over...](#); [Boeing to lay off over 2,500 workers in US as part of sweeping cuts](#); [Navy Launches Military Sealift Command Workforce Initiative](#)

**HEALTHCARE:** [Mount Sinai Opens the Hamilton and Amabel James Center for Artificial Intelligence and Human Health...](#); [2024 Nurse Survey: Navigating The New Era Of Nurse Engagement](#)

**SCIENTIFIC R&D:** [Will Walgreens' store closures disrupt its clinical trial aims?](#); [Merck's Cancer Shot Works. Its Post-Keytruda Plans Are Shaping Up Again.](#); [Merck's Subcutaneous Keytruda Meets Expectations in Phase III](#); [AstraZeneca invests \\$3.5 billion in R&D and manufacturing in the United States](#); [Bristol Myers Squibb hands pink slips to 195 workers in New Jersey...](#); [Charles River Labs cuts 1,300 workers; will close more than a dozen sites](#)

**AUTOMOTIVE:** [Nissan to cut 9,000 jobs as CEO Uchida shifts to 'emergency mode'](#); [Nissan says about 1,000 US staff accept early retirement](#); [Jeep Gladiator hits sales wall, prompting 1,100 layoffs](#); [GM cuts about 1,000 jobs globally](#); [Rivian announces formal launch of \\$5.8 billion joint venture with Volkswagen Group](#)

**C&IP:** [S&P Global US Manufacturing PMI®](#); [November 2024 Manufacturing ISM® Report On Business®](#); [AMD Cuts 4% Of Workforce In Push Toward AI Dominance...](#); [Cisco First-Quarter Sales Fall, But AI Investments Lift Outlook](#); [Cisco beats earnings expectations as AI spurs networking gear demand](#)

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### About Actalent

Actalent is a global leader in engineering and sciences services and talent solutions. We help visionary companies advance their engineering and science initiatives through access to specialized experts who drive scale, innovation and speed to market. With a network of almost 30,000 consultants and more than 4,500 clients across the U.S., Canada, Asia and Europe, Actalent serves many of the Fortune 500.

7301 Parkway Drive S., Hanover, MD 21076

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