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Technical information: (202) 691-6555 • cesinfo@bls.gov • www.bls.gov/ces

Media contact: (202) 691-5902 • PressOffice@bls.gov

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS PRELIMINARY BENCHMARK (NATIONAL) – MARCH 2025

The preliminary estimate of the Current Employment Statistics (CES) national benchmark revision to total nonfarm employment for March 2025 is -911,000 (-0.6 percent), the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. The annual benchmark revisions over the last 10 years have an absolute average of 0.2 percent of total nonfarm employment. In accordance with usual practice, the final benchmark revision will be issued in February 2026 with the publication of the January 2026 Employment Situation news release.

Each year, CES employment estimates are benchmarked to comprehensive counts of employment from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). These counts are derived primarily from state unemployment insurance (UI) tax records that nearly all employers are required to file with state workforce agencies.

The preliminary benchmark revision reflects the difference between two independently derived employment counts, each subject to their own sources of error. It serves as a preliminary measure of the total error in CES employment estimates from March 2024 to March 2025. Preliminary research, which is not comprehensive and is subject to updates in QCEW data, indicates that the primary contributors to the overestimation of employment growth are likely the result of two sources—response error and nonresponse error. First, businesses reported less employment to the QCEW than they reported to the CES survey (response error). Second, businesses who were selected for the CES survey but did not respond reported less employment to the QCEW than those businesses who did respond to the CES survey (nonresponse error). Estimates of other errors, such as the forecast error from the net birth-death model, are not available at this time. Information on how the net birth-death forecasts have reduced benchmark revisions historically are available on the CES Birth-Death Model Frequently Asked Questions page in question 10, www.bls.gov/web/empsit/cesbdqa.htm.

The preliminary benchmark revisions in table 1 are calculated only for March 2025 for the major industry sectors. As is typically the case, many of the individual industry series show larger percentage revisions than the total nonfarm series, primarily because statistical sampling error is greater at more detailed levels than at an aggregated level.

Official establishment survey estimates are not updated based on this preliminary benchmark revision. The final benchmark revision will be incorporated into official estimates with the publication of the January 2026 Employment Situation news release in February 2026.

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Table 1. National Current Employment Statistics March 2025 Preliminary Benchmark Revisions by Major Industry Sector

Industry	Benchmark revision (in thousands)	Percent benchmark revision ¹
Total nonfarm.....	-911	-0.6
Total private.....	-880	-0.7
Mining and logging.....	-4	-0.7
Construction.....	-29	-0.4
Manufacturing.....	-95	-0.8
Trade, transportation, and utilities.....	-226	-0.8
Wholesale trade ²	-110.3	-1.8
Retail trade ²	-126.2	-0.8
Transportation and warehousing ²	6.6	0.1
Utilities ²	3.7	0.6
Information.....	-67	-2.3
Financial activities.....	-39	-0.4
Professional and business services.....	-158	-0.7
Private education and health services.....	-35	-0.1
Leisure and hospitality.....	-176	-1.1
Other services.....	-51	-0.9
Government.....	-31	-0.1

¹ Values of 0.0 indicate a value between plus or minus 0.05 percent.

² Series are part of trade, transportation, and utilities.

Technical Note

The preliminary March revision amounts presented in this release are intended to give a preview of the revisions to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Employment Statistics data released in February of each year. Currently published CES data have not been adjusted to new levels based on these preliminary revision amounts.

The preliminary March revisions are calculated by comparing not seasonally adjusted CES employment for March of the benchmark year to universe employment counts derived mostly from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wage (QCEW) data. Additional employment not covered by the QCEW is calculated from several sources including County Business Patterns and Annual Survey of Public Employment and Payroll data from the Census Bureau, state employment data, and data from the Railroad Retirement Board. This noncovered employment is added to QCEW employment to arrive at a universe employment total. The preliminary March CES revision amounts are the universe employment minus the CES estimated employment. More information about CES benchmarking is available in the Handbook of Methods in the Calculations section on Benchmarking, www.bls.gov/opub/hom/ces/calculation.htm#benchmark. More information about noncovered employment is available in the Handbook of Methods in the Calculations section on Noncovered employment, www.bls.gov/opub/hom/ces/calculation.htm#noncovered-employment.

As with all surveys, the CES survey is subject to several types of error including sampling and nonsampling error. Sampling error measures how different the sample is from the population. Nonsampling error includes frame error (how different the population is now from when the sample was drawn), non-response error (how different those units who responded to the survey are from those units that did not respond), and response error (how different responses were to the survey versus the population for units that responded to both). Nonsampling errors can come from either the survey data or the population data. In the case of the CES survey, the benchmark revision is the difference between two independently derived employment counts, each subject to its own error sources.

Universe employment for March is calculated and compared to the CES estimates at the basic cell level and then aggregated up to the major industry sector, total private, and total nonfarm levels. More information about aggregating CES data is available in the Handbook of Methods in the Calculations section on Aggregation procedures, www.bls.gov/opub/hom/ces/calculation.htm#aggregation-procedures.

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