Economic Outlook and Trends through March 2025
United States and Colorado

Colorado-based Business and Economic Research, cber.co
Prepared April 22, 2025

Economic Outlook and Trends

Overview

The purpose of this chartbook is to review the outlook and performance of the U.S. and Colorado economies utilizing data available in the public domain.

Since last month, there have been downward revisions in many areas of the base forecast. Tariffs and uncertainty in policy caused reduced projections for economic activity and increased inflation.

This analysis focuses primarily on employment data and metrics that illustrate economic change. There is both good and bad news at the national and state level.

In addition to challenges presented at the federal level, Colorado is in a precarious position because of its weak job growth. The state legislature addressed the $1.2 billion shortfall in the state budget. The most notable reductions in spending were for transportation and economic development.

Colorado is not in a position of strength to deal with federal policies that cause reductions in Colorado employment. We hope for the best!

Contents

This chartbook focuses on the following topics.

What to Look For in the Weeks and Months Ahead

Looking Ahead – Weeks and Months

Some economists have projected there will be a recession in 2025. Others have stated the economy will slow but not enter a recession. It is prudent to be proactive, but caution is appropriate when acting on speculation and uncertainty. The movement of the following metrics over the coming weeks and months will determine the direction of the labor market and economic activity.

Watch for the Following Nationally and Internationally

The following were strengths in the U.S. economy during Q1 of 2025.

- The U.S. labor market was on solid footing through Q1.
- Retail sales were expanding at a faster rate than in 2024 and 2023.
- Real disposable personal income per capita is increasing, albeit more slowly than last year.
- The personal savings rate has increased.
- The change in securitized loans have flattened out.

Will these strengths continue in Q2 and beyond?

Approximately two percent of the three million U.S. civilian federal workers have been part of layoffs. How many more layoffs will occur, and how will they affect Colorado?

Speculation about the impact of tariffs and other policies may or may not accurately reflect what will happen in the months ahead. How will these tariffs and policies affect the U.S. and Colorado economies?

Watch for the Following in Colorado

The Colorado economy was weak in the second half of 2024 and Q1 of 2025.

- Employment is projected to increase by about 35,000 in the near term.
- Net migration will be in that same range (30,000 to 40,000).
- Retail trade sales are expected to remain weak in 2025.
- Building permits in early 2025 were weak.

How will these and other metrics fare in the remainder of the year?

The state’s flagship industry is aerospace, the new kid on the block is quantum.

- Will the state retain the Space Command Center in Colorado Springs?
- How will the Elevate Quantum consortium continue to develop?
- Will other technologies, such as data centers or artificial intelligence, take off?

The legislature struggled with a $1.2 billion shortfall this session.

- How will the state manage appropriate funding in the future?
- What will the legislature’s TABOR lawsuit against the state accomplish?
- How will Coloradans afford the costs of the increased regulation and restrictions?

U.S. Forecast, Gross Domestic Product, and Disposable Income

United States Forecast

The Conference Board Forecast

The Conference Board (TCB) U.S. Forecast

TCB United States Forecast

The Conference Board U.S. economic forecast (April 4, 2025) is the base for this analysis. The following drivers and headwinds will affect the economy in 2025.

Economic Drivers 2025

- The United States labor market was steady entering 2025, and there were concerns about a shortage of workers. Q1 employment was solid.
- Government spending will be less than expected, but it will be sufficient to support GDP growth.
- Consumers will continue spending but at a slower rate.
- Deregulation will extend the economic momentum.
- There will be growth in economic activity, but it will be much lower than previously expected.

Economic Headwinds 2025

- The election uncertainty has morphed into speculation about the impact of the administrative policies regarding regulations, tariffs, trade wars, tax and industrial policies, and proposed spending cuts.
- At times, the speculation is forward-looking and valuable. Other times, it causes unnecessary concerns and is a distraction.
- There is uncertainty about the tariffs placed on specific products. In a recent survey of NABE economists, 84% said the tariffs would lower real GDP.
- Business leaders have geopolitical concerns.
- Inflation will continue to be sticky, but less than 4.0%. In 2026 or 2027, it will approach the 2.0% target rate. The inflation rate is likely to remain lower than it was between 2021 and 2023. A recent survey of NABE economists showed that half put the chances of a recession at 25% to 49%, and 37% think it will be 50% or more. Will we talk ourselves into a recession?

U.S. Real GDP Growth

The Conference Board (TCB) Forecast (April 4, 2025)

Real GDP and Economic Growth

The Conference Board Forecast projects real GDP growth of 1.6% in 2025. Real disposable income will increase by 1.6%, and real personal consumption will increase by 1.7%. Residential investment will change -0.5% in 2025, and non-residential investment will change by 1.8%. Government spending will be 2.1%, down from 3.4% in 2024.

Other Economic Factors

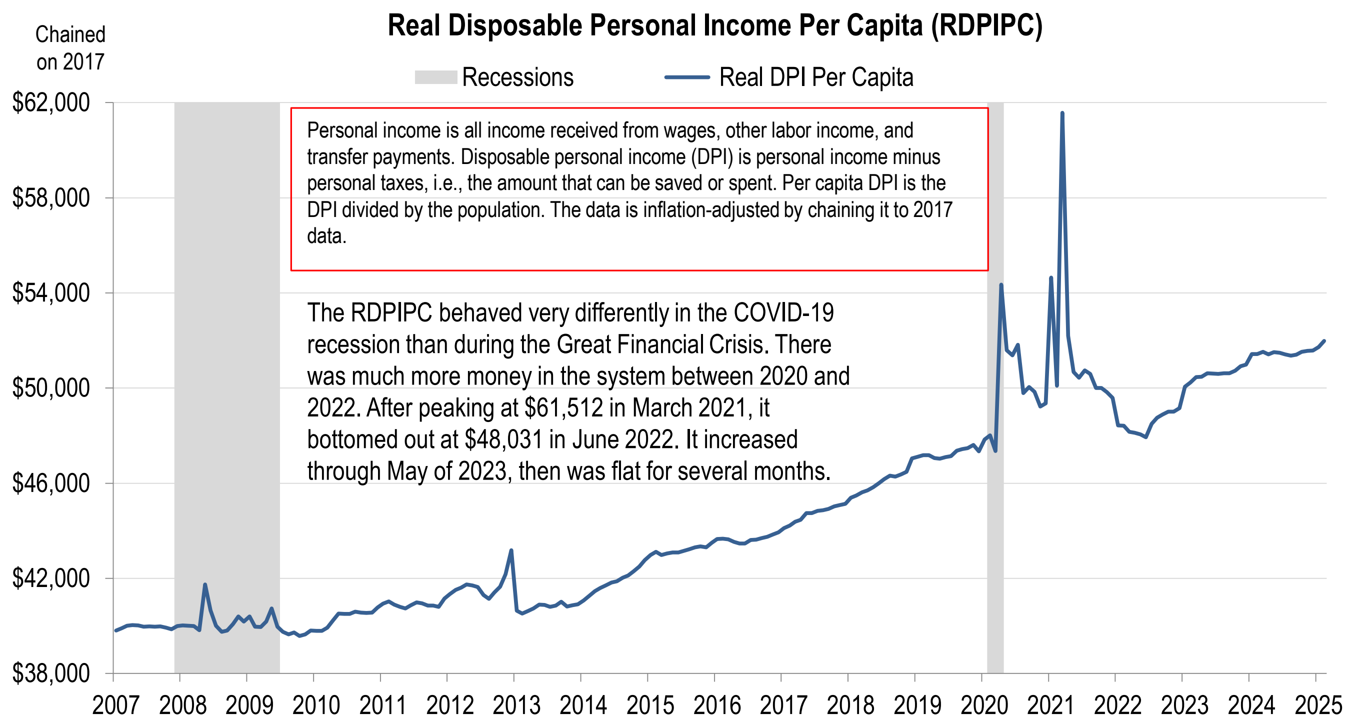
Export growth will be slower in 2025 (2.2%). The U.S. unemployment rate will rise slightly in 2025 to 4.4%. The annual PCE inflation rate will be 2.9% in 2025, and the core rate will be 3.0%. *Note that most of the 2025 annual indicators that should trend upward in a healthy economy are trending downward.*

Conference Board US Real GDP Growth Forecast

	Q1 2024	Q2 2024	Q3 2024	Q4 2024	Q1 2025	Q2 2025	Q3 2025	Q4 2025	2024	2025	2026
Real GDP	1.6%	3.0%	3.1%	2.4%	1.0%	0.5%	1.4%	1.6%	2.8%	1.6%	1.4%
Real Disposable Income	5.6%	1.0%	0.2%	1.9%	2.0%	2.0%	1.7%	1.7%	2.7%	1.6%	1.7%
Real Personal Consumption	1.9%	2.8%	3.7%	4.0%	0.5%	0.2%	0.8%	1.2%	2.8%	1.7%	1.5%
Residential Investment	13.7%	-2.8%	-4.3%	5.5%	0.5%	-3.0%	-2.0%	-1.0%	4.2%	-0.5%	1.7%
Nonresidential Investment	4.5%	3.9%	4.0%	-3.0%	3.9%	1.5%	1.8%	2.6%	3.6%	1.8%	3.0%
Total Gov't. Spending	1.8%	3.0%	5.1%	3.1%	2.0%	1.1%	0.4%	0.0%	3.4%	2.1%	0.2%
Exports	1.9%	1.0%	9.6%	-0.2%	2.5%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	2.2%	0.9%
Unemployment Rate	3.8%	4.0%	4.2%	4.1%	4.1%	4.3%	4.5%	4.7%	4.0%	4.4%	4.5%
PCE Inflation (%Y/Y)	2.7%	2.6%	2.3%	2.5%	2.5%	2.9%	3.1%	3.0%	2.5%	2.9%	2.9%
Core PCE Inflation (%Y/Y)	3.0%	2.7%	2.7%	2.8%	2.8%	3.0%	3.2%	3.1%	2.8%	3.0%	3.0%

Source: The Conference Board, https://www.conference-board.org/publications/Economic-Forecast-US, **cber.co.**

Real Disposable Personal Income Per Capita
United States



Source: FRED, BEA, SAAR, chained on 2017 dollars, cber.co. Note that the RDPIPC was previously chained on 2012 data. In October 2024, revisions were made to data after 2019.

Real Disposable Personal Income Per Capita

In February 2025, RDPIPC was $51,981. It was 1.1% greater than February 2024.

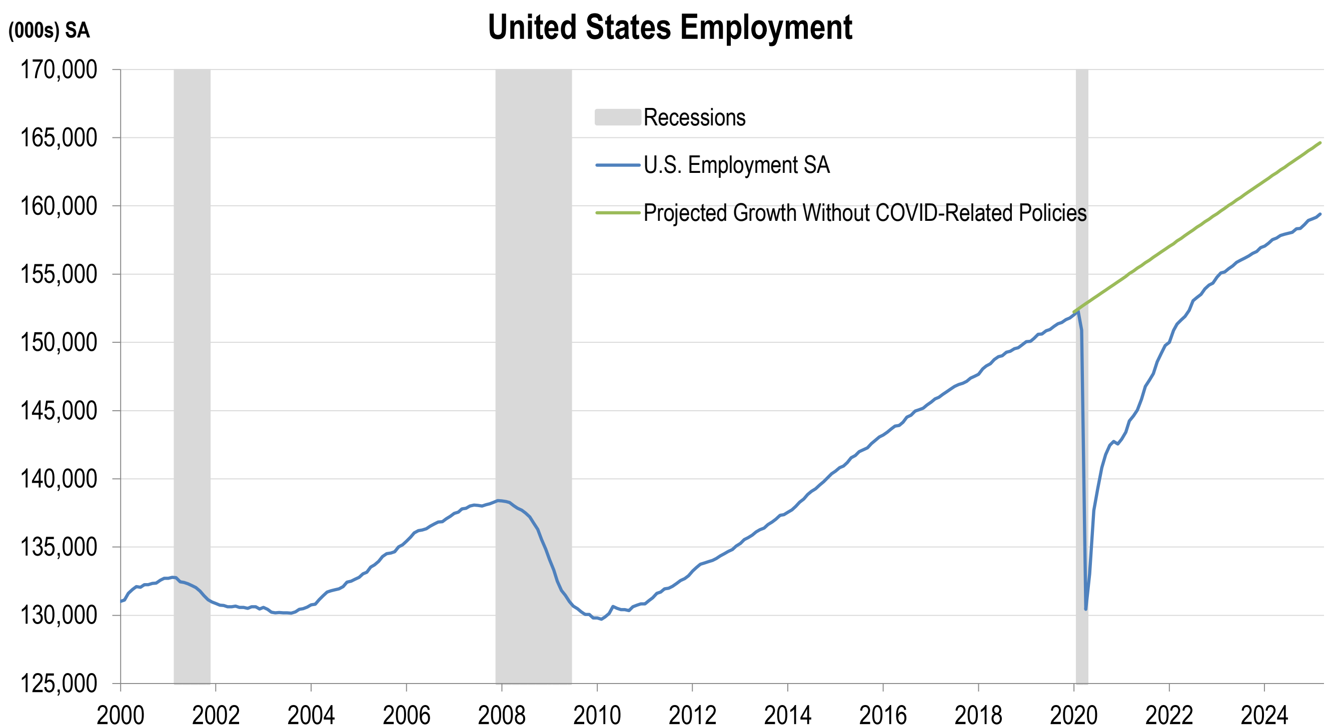
The monthly YOY change has been positive since January 2023. It was between 1.4% and 2.7% in 2024. The YOY rate of growth slowed in the first two months of 2025.

RDPIPC (Average)

Year	RDPIPC	% Change
2016	$43,659	1.1%
2017	$44,710	2.4%
2018	$46,057	3.0%
2019	$47,251	2.6%
2020	$50,056	5.9%
2021	$51,698	3.3%
2022	$48,534	-6.1%
2023	$50,579	4.2%
2024	$51,491	1.8%

United States Employment

Employment
United States



Source: BLS, SA, cber.co.

U.S. Employment

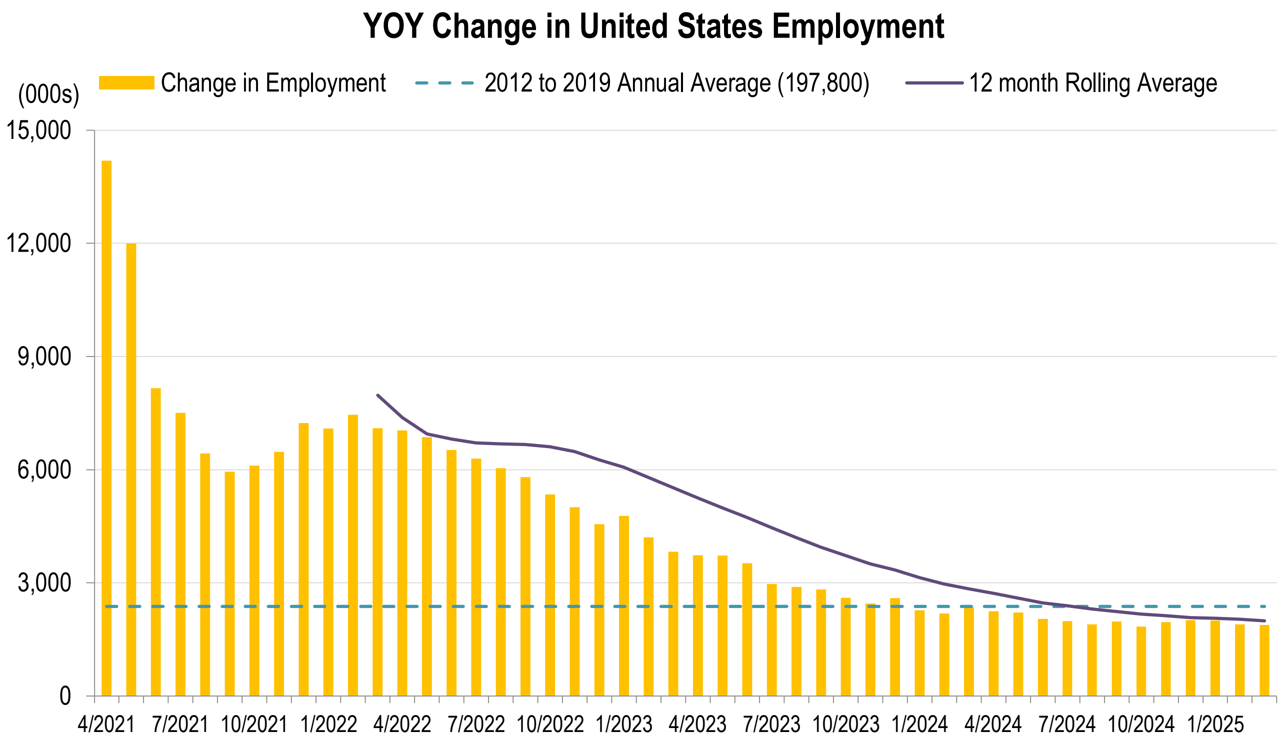
Between 2012 and 2019, average monthly U.S. employment increased by 197,800. The green line projects what employment would have been if that rate had continued through 2025.

Between 2020 and 2024, the range of the change in monthly YOY employment was -20.2 million to 14.2 million. The monthly change in employment from 2020 to 2024 averaged about 127,000 per month.

Average YTD employment through March 2025 (blue line) was 159.2 million, 1.2% more than for the same period last year.

YOY Change in Employment

United States



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, NSA cber.co.

Change in U.S. Employment

From 2012 to 2019, the average annual employment was 2,373,900 (blue dotted line), and the average monthly change was 197,800.

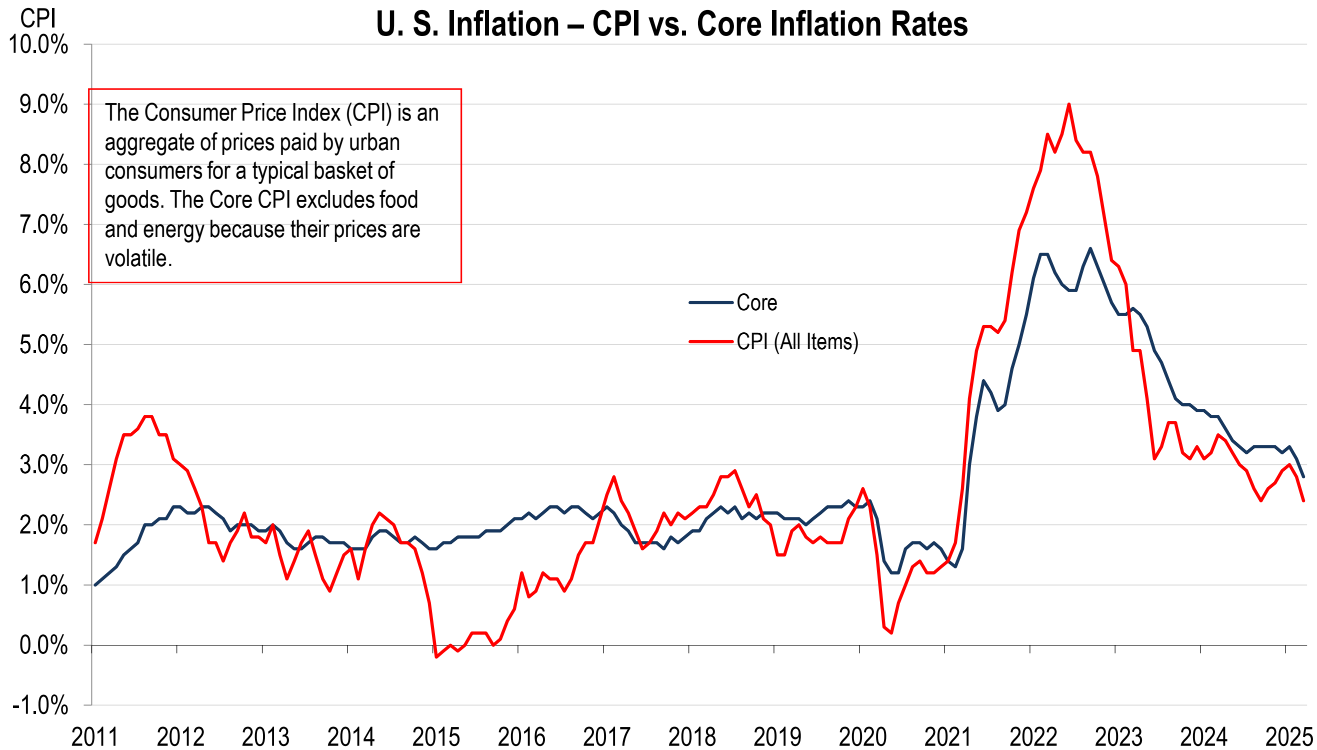
April 2021 was the first month after the pandemic that the change in YOY employment (yellow bars) was positive (14.1 million). Since then, it has trended downward. In February and March 2025, the YOY monthly change was about 1.9 million.

In March 2022, the 12-month rolling average (purple solid line) peaked at 7.9 million. It has since trended downward and was slightly less than 2.0 million in March 2025. The average annual job growth for 2025 will be at or below 1.6 million annually or 133,000 monthly.

United States and Colorado Inflation

CPI Inflation

U.S. CPI vs. Core Inflation



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Core Inflation is the CPI less food and energy; CPI All Items City Average SA, cber.co.

U.S. CPI vs. Core Inflation

In March 2025, the U.S. CPI rate was 2.4%, and the core rate was 2.8%. Both are down slightly from their 2024 annual total. In 2024, the annual CPI rate (red) was 2.9%, and the core rate (blue) was 3.4%.

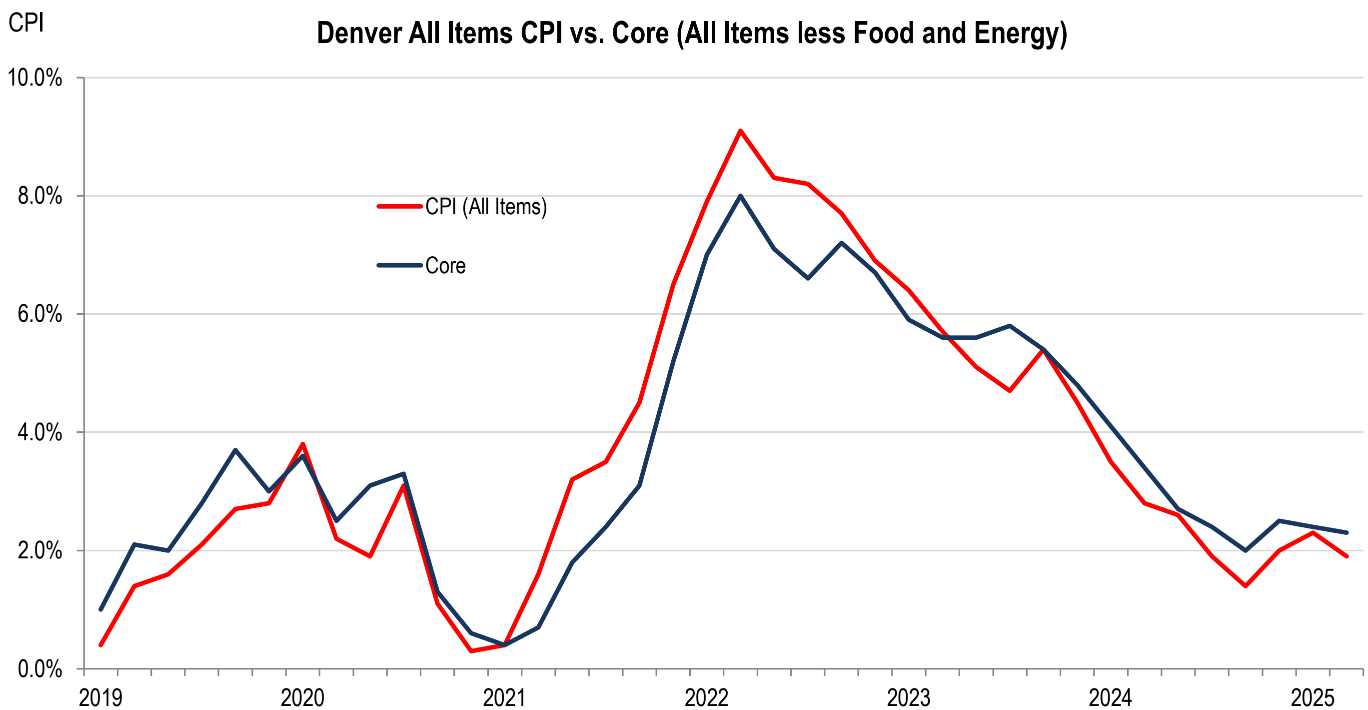
U.S. and Denver Annual CPI and Core

Year	U.S.	U.S. Core	Denver	Denver Core
2015	0.1%	1.8%	1.2%	3.3%
2016	1.3%	2.2%	2.8%	4.0%
2017	2.1%	1.8%	3.4%	3.1%
2018	2.4%	2.1%	2.7%	2.5%
2019	1.8%	2.2%	1.9%	2.5%
2020	1.2%	1.7%	2.0%	2.3%
2021	4.7%	3.6%	3.5%	2.5%
2022	8.0%	6.2%	8.0%	7.1%
2023	4.1%	4.8%	5.2%	5.4%
2024	2.9%	3.4%	2.3%	2.7%

Source: BLS, cber.co

Bi-Monthly Change in Denver-Aurora-Lakewood CPI

All Items vs. Core



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI All Items, NSA, Note: Colorado NSA data is only available on a bi-monthly basis since 2019, cber.co.

Denver-Aurora-Lakewood CPI vs. Core Inflation

The Denver inflation rate has generally been higher than the U.S. rate, but the trend reversed in 2024 (not shown). The Denver CPI was the same or greater in 8 of the 10 years between 2015 and 2024.

The Denver CPI rate was 1.9% in March 2025 and the core rate was 2.3%.

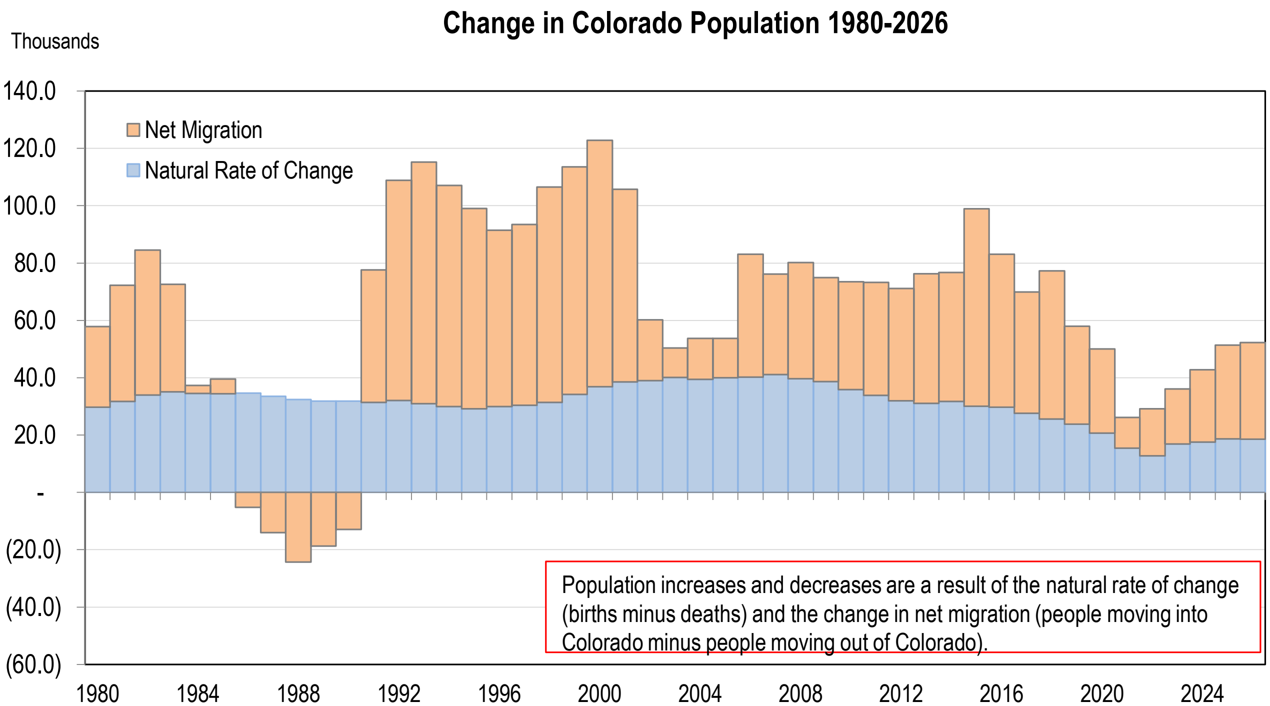
The March 2025 CPI rate for the United States was 2.4%, and core inflation was 2.8% in March 2025.

Note that the Colorado rate is only published bi-monthly and is NSA.

Colorado Population

Colorado Population

Components of Change



Components of Change

Since 2000, the population of Colorado has increased at a decreasing rate. There are fewer than anticipated people because of higher death rates, a lower fertility rate, and lower net migration. In 2020 and 2021, more significant population changes occurred because of pandemic-related policies, such as altered migration patterns and fewer births.

In 2025, the net migration (orange) will increase by 32,700, the natural rate (blue) will add 18,700, and the population will increase by 51,400. The total Colorado population will be 5,970,544 in 2025 and 6,022,777 in 2026.

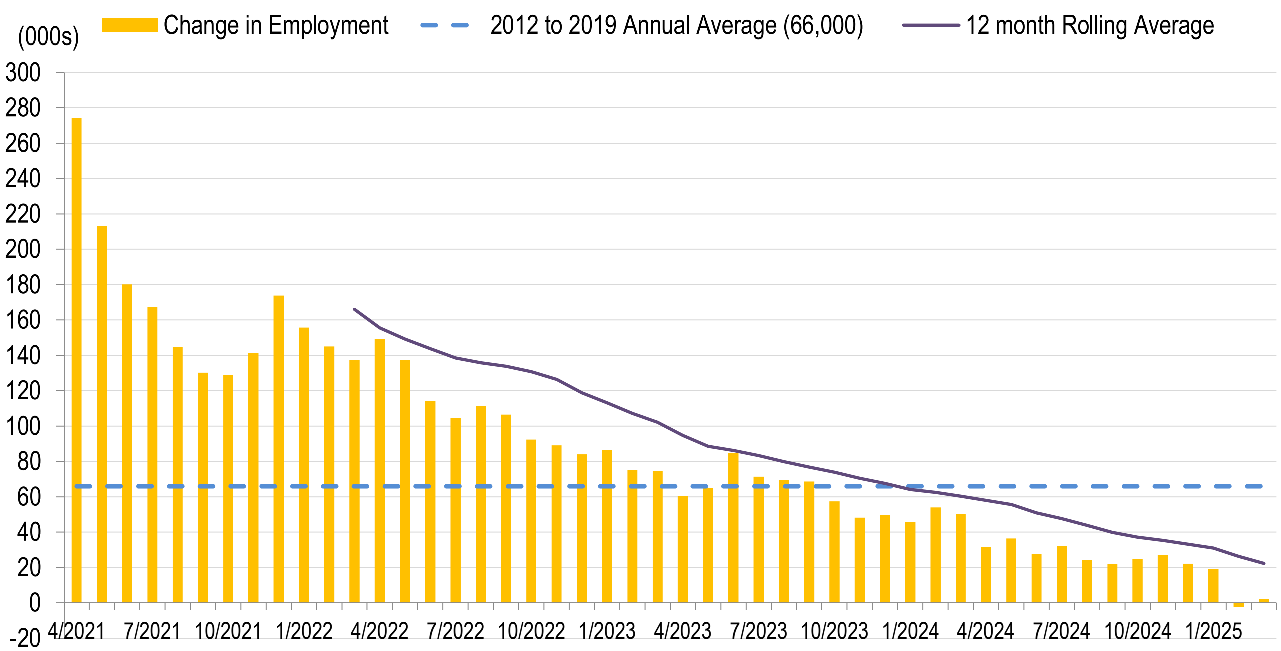
Sources: State Demography Office and cber.co.

Colorado Employment and Wages

YOY Change in Employment

Colorado

YOY Change in Colorado Employment



Change in Colorado Employment

From 2012 to 2019, average annual employment was 66,000 (blue dotted line). The average monthly change was 5,500.

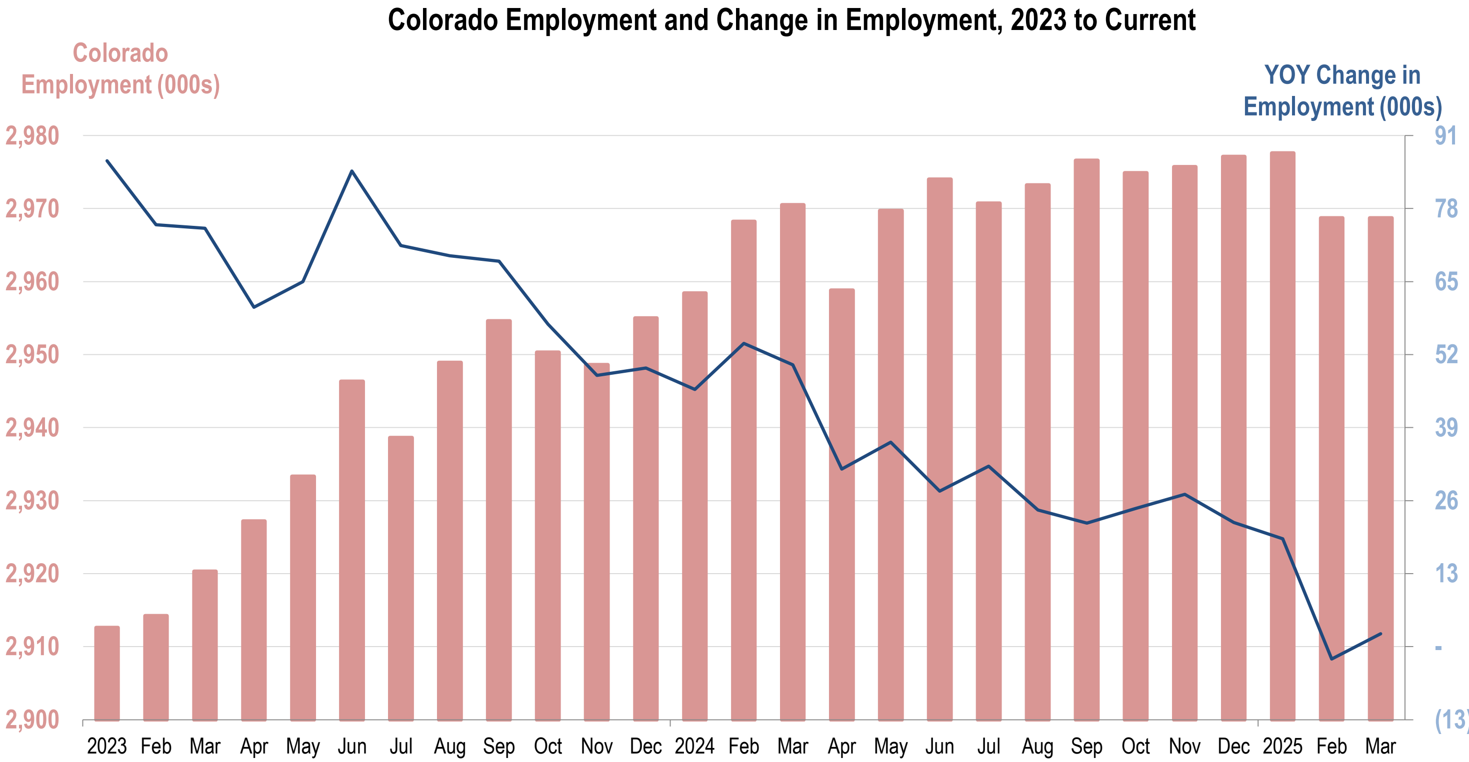
April 2021 was the first month after the pandemic that the change in YOY employment was positive (274,300 – yellow bars). Since then, the YOY monthly employment has trended downward. Employment changed by -2,200 in February 2025 and +2,300 in March.

In March 2022, the 12-month rolling average (purple solid line) peaked at 166,020. It has since trended downwards and was 22,270 in March 2025.

The labor market in Colorado is growing at a much slower rate than the rate for the United States.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, NSA cber.co.

Colorado Employment
2023 to Current



Source: BLS, SA, cber.co.

Colorado Employment 2023 to Current

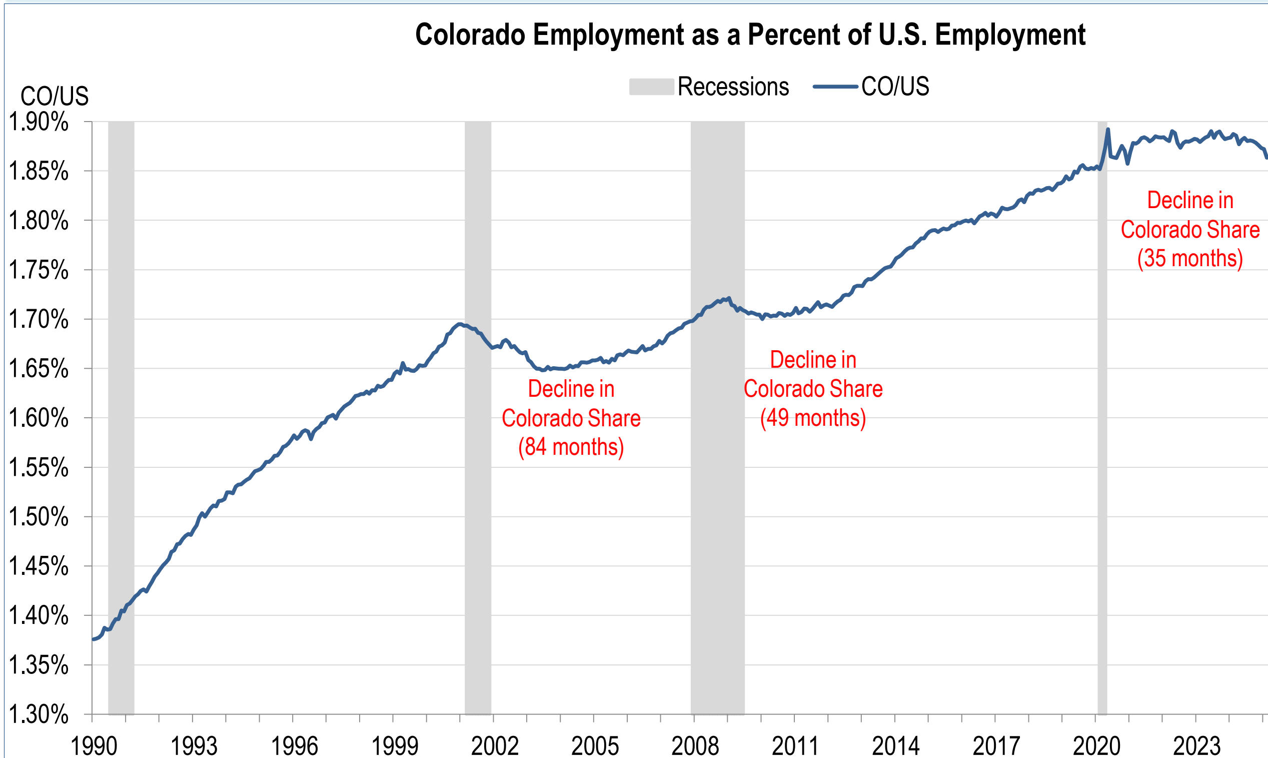
There was strong monthly employment growth in 2023, ranging from 48,300 to 86,500 (blue line). Employment was between 2.91 million to 2.96 million (pink bars).

In 2024, the employment range was 2.96 million to 2.98 million.

In February 2025, employment changed by -2,200. In March, it improved by 2,300.

Employment in Colorado has increased more slowly than U.S. employment. The decline in 2024 and Q1 2025 was precipitous.

Colorado Employment as a Percent of U.S. Employment



Colorado Employment as a Percent of U.S. Employment

This chart shows Colorado employment as a share of U.S. employment. Colorado's share of U.S. employment declined following the 2001 Recession, the Great Financial Crisis, and the COVID-19 recession.

The first trough began at 1.69%. It was at or below that value for 84 months, from September 2000 to August 2027.

The second trough began at 1.72%. It was at or below that value for 49 months, from August 2008 to August 2012.

The third trough began at 1.89% in May 2020. The Colorado share has been at or below that value for 36 months.

Source: BLS, S.A.cber.co.

Colorado Employment and Change in Employment
Private vs. Government Employment

Colorado Employment YOY Change (000s), YOY Percent Change				
Industry Sector	**Employment and YOY Change**			
Private vs. Government employees	**Mar. 2024 (000s)**	**Mar. 2025 (000s)**	**YOY Change**	**Percent YOY**
Total Employment	2,970.5	2,972.8	2.3	0.1%
Private Employment	2,487.2	2,475.7	-11.5	-0.5%
Government Employment	483.3	497.1	13.8	2.9%

Highlights
Private vs. Government

In March 2025, 16.3% of employment was in the Government Sector, and 83.7% was in the Private sector. In February, retail employment was down by 10,000 because of the strike by King Soopers workers. Those workers returned to work and are in the March data.

YOY March employment for the Government Sector increased by 13,800, and the Private sector changed by -11,500.

Overall employment increased by 2,300 or 0.1%.

Source: BLS, SA, cber.co.

Colorado Employment and Change in Employment

Sectors with more than 145,000 Employees

Colorado Employment YOY Change (000s), YOY Percent Change				
Industry Sector	**Employment and YOY Change**			
Sectors with more than 145,000 employees	**Mar. 2024 (000s)**	**Mar. 2025 (000s)**	**YOY Change**	**Percent YOY**
Healthcare	332.5	338.3	5.8	1.7%
Prof., Scientific, and Tech, Services (PST)	292.6	292.4	-0.2	-0.1%
Local Government	286.5	291.3	4.8	1.7%
Food and Accommodation (F&A)	289.4	289.9	0.5	0.2%
Retail Trade	273.9	273.6	-0.3	-0.1%
Construction	185.8	184.7	-1.1	-0.6%
Financial Activities	178.5	177.2	-1.3	-0.7%
Administrative Services	162.9	152.8	-10.1	-6.2%
Manufacturing	149.9	150.1	0.2	0.1%
State Government	139.8	148.5	8.7	6.2%
Total Sectors >145,000 Employees	2,291.8	2,298.8	7.0	0.3%

Highlights

Sectors with > 145,000 Employment (Sorted by Size – 2025)

YOY employment for the ten largest sectors increased by 7,000 or 0.3%. Employment increased in four of the largest sectors.

The leaders in absolute job growth were state government, healthcare, and local government. Total YOY employment in these three sectors increased by 19,300.

Administrative services employment changed by -10,100, financial activities by -1,300, and Construction by -1,100. The total change in these three sectors was -12,500.

Source: BLS, SA, cber.co.

Colorado Employment and Change in Employment

Sectors with less than 145,000 Employees

Colorado Employment YOY Change (000s), YOY Percent Change				
Industry Sector	**Employment and YOY Change**			
Sectors with less than 145,000 employees	**Mar. 2024 (000s)**	**Mar. 2025 (000s)**	**YOY Change**	**Percent YOY**
Other Services (Personal)	132.0	130.9	-1.1	-0.8%
Transp., Warehousing, and Utilities (TWU)	116.1	118.0	1.9	1.6%
Wholesale Trade	117.2	113.7	-3.5	-3.0%
Information	75.3	74.0	-1.3	-1.7%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation (AER)	63.2	64.1	0.9	1.4%
Federal Government	57.0	57.3	0.3	0.5%
Mgmt. of Corporations/Enterprises (MCE)	46.6	48.5	1.9	4.1%
Education (Private)	49.8	45.5	-4.3	-8.6%
Extractive Industries	21.5	22.0	0.5	2.3%
Total Sectors <145,000 Employees	678.7	674.0	-4.7	-0.7%

Highlights

Sectors with < 145,000 Employment (Sorted by Size - 2025)

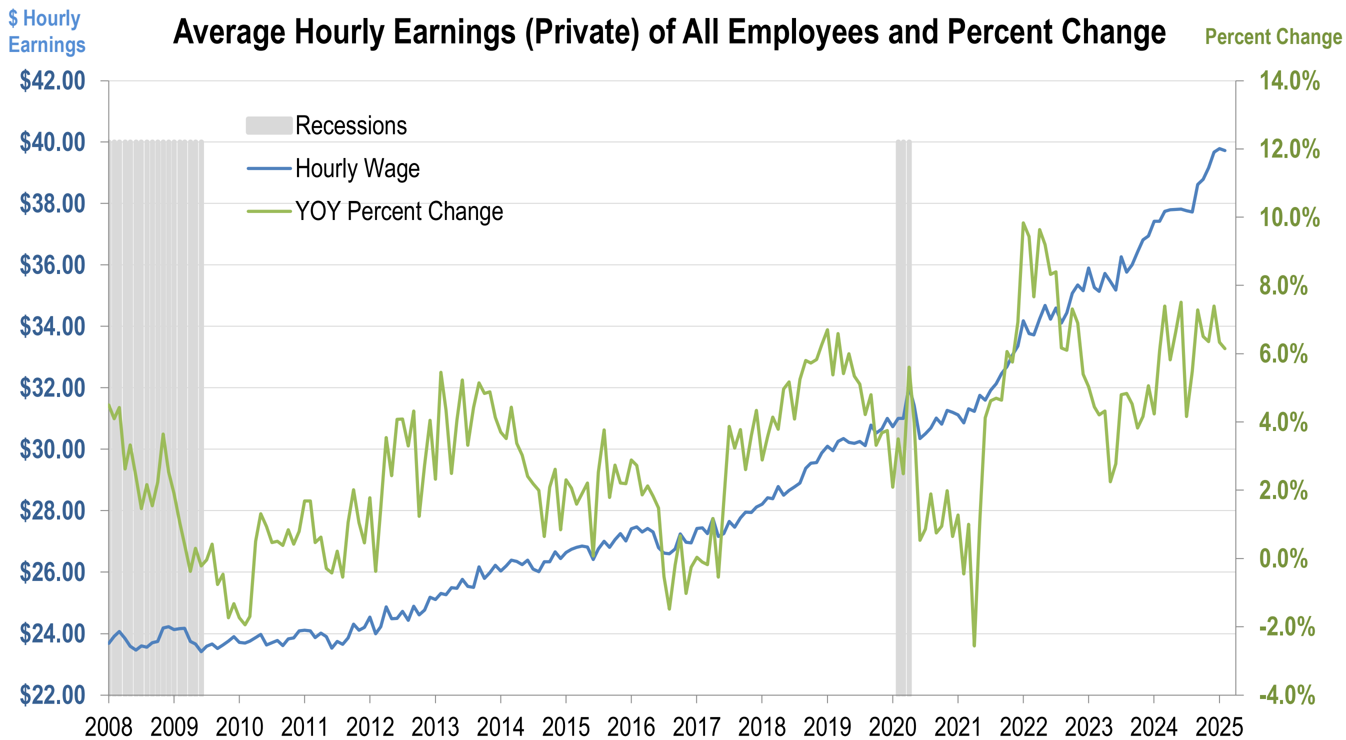
YOY employment for these nine sectors changed by –4,700, or -0.7%. Employment increased in five of these areas.

TWU and MCE were the leading sectors (private) in absolute job growth. Employment in these two sectors increased by 3,800. Employment in private education changed by -4,300, wholesale trade by -3,500, and information by -1,300. These three sectors changed by -9,100.

Source: BLS, SA, cber.co.

Average Hourly Earnings of All Employees (Private)

Colorado



Source: BLS, NSA, cber.co.

Hourly Earnings, Percent Change, and CPI

The March 2025 private hourly earnings for Colorado (blue) were $39.20, a YOY increase of 3.9% (green). Hourly earnings decreased in February and March. The rate of YOY earnings growth peaked at 9.4% in February 2022. For 2021 through 2023, the change in YOY hourly earnings was less than the increase in inflation. The increase in 2024 wage rates is above the inflation rate.

Colorado Hourly Earnings and Change

Year	CO CPI	Earnings	Change
2017	3.4%	$27.60	2.0%
2018	2.7%	$28.92	4.8%
2019	1.9%	$30.37	5.0%
2020	2.0%	$30.99	2.0%
2021	3.5%	$31.97	3.2%
2022	8.0%	$34.47	7.8%
2023	5.2%	$35.91	4.2%
2024	2.3%	$38.10	6.1%

Source: BLS, cber.co

Layoffs

WARN Listing vs. Federal Worker Claims Filed

CDLE WARN Listing			
https://cdle.colorado.gov/employers/layoff-separations/layoff-warn-list			
Business	**Date**	**Employees CO**	**NAICS**
West Pines Behavioral Health	1/8/2025	132	62, 1330: Offices of Mental Health Practitioners (Except Physicians)
Battelle	1/16/2025	232	56,2910: Remediation Services
Total Frac Solutions	1/28/2025	11	21,3112: Support activities for oil & gas operations
Amentum	1/28/2025	40	54,1330: Engineering Services
Quantum Scape Battery	1/28/2025	1	33,591: Battery Manufacturing
Johnstown Heights Behavioral Health	1/30/2025	158	62, 1330: Offices of Mental Health Practitioners
Sherwood Food Distributors	2/18/2025	45	42,4470: Meat & Meat Product Merchant Wholesalers
West Springs Hospital	2/24/2025	187	62,2110 Healthcare & Social Services
Microchip	3/4/2025	238	33,4413: Semi-Conductor & Related Manufacturing
Meati	3/7/2025	150	42,4470: Meat & Meat Product Merchant Wholesales
Amentum	3/24/2025	93	56,2910: Remediation Services
Block Inc.	3/25/2025	21	13,7331: Concrete Block & Brick Manufacturing
Vail Corporation	4/2/2025	64	71,3920: Skiing Facilities (HR Shared Services Unit)
JVS Masonry	4/1/2025	44	23: Construction
Robert Russell Retirement Camps	4/1/2025	89	62: Healthcare
Thule Inc.	4/16/2025	22	31-33: Manufacturing
Total		1,527	

Unemployment Claims Filed by Workers Separated from a Federal Agency	
Week of Claim Filing	**Weekly Total**
1/19/2025 - 1/25/2025	19
1/26/2025 - 2/1/2025	26
2/2/2025 - 2/8/2025	26
2/9/2025 - 2/15/2025	66
2/16/2025 - 2/22/2025	249
2/23/2025 - 3/1/2025	146
3/2/2025 - 3/8/2025	73
3/9/2025 - 3/15/2025	46
3/16/2025 - 3/22/2025	14
3/23/2025 - 3/29/2025	10
3/30/2025 - 4/5/2025	10
4/6/2025 - 4/12/2025	16
Total	701
https://cdle.colorado.gov/resources-for-federal-workers/federal-claims-data	

Top 5 Agencies of Claimants
1. 134 (19.2%) Dept. of Agriculture
2. 113 (16.2%) Dept. of Treasury/IRS
3. 45 (6.4%) Dept. of Interior/NPS
4. 40 (5.7%) Dept. of VA
5. 31 (4.4%) Dept of Energy

Top 5 Counties of Claimants
1. 112 (16.0%) Denver
2. 80 (11.4%) Jefferson
3. 78 (11.2%) Larimer
4. 69 (9.9%) Arapahoe
5. 67 (9.6%) El Paso

WARN letters were issued to 1,527 workers between January 8 and April 16. Between January 19 and April 12, about 701 federal employees filed unemployment claims. Layoffs occurred for about 1.2% of federal workers in Colorado. The number of public sector workers who have been laid off is greater than federal workers.

Colorado Federal Employees by County

Colorado Federal Employees by County				
County	**2001**	**2023**	**Change**	**Avg. Annual Pay**
Denver	15,248	13,340	(1,908)	$105,770
El Paso	10,320	12,835	2,515	$89,915
Jefferson	8,577	7,391	(1,186)	$112,104
Adams	2,724	3,598	874	$111,947
Arapahoe	2,565	3,236	671	$100,726
Larimer	2,292	2,630	338	$103,513
Boulder	2,654	2,042	(612)	$131,545
Mesa	1,158	1,928	770	$92,763
Pueblo	682	1,060	337	$79,607
Douglas	186	668	482	$103,324
Weld	591	636	45	$83,208
Broomfield	0	171	171	$92,705
Total 12 County	46,997	49,535	2,497	
Colorado Federal	52,910	55,211	2,301	$100,903
Colorado Total (Private)	1,872,850	2,432,875	560,025	$78,321

Colorado Federal Employees by County

The table on the left contains annual federal employment by county from the 2001 and 2023 QCEW data series. It provides an estimate of the counties where most federal employees are working. It does not reflect contract workers.

Key insights from the data follow.

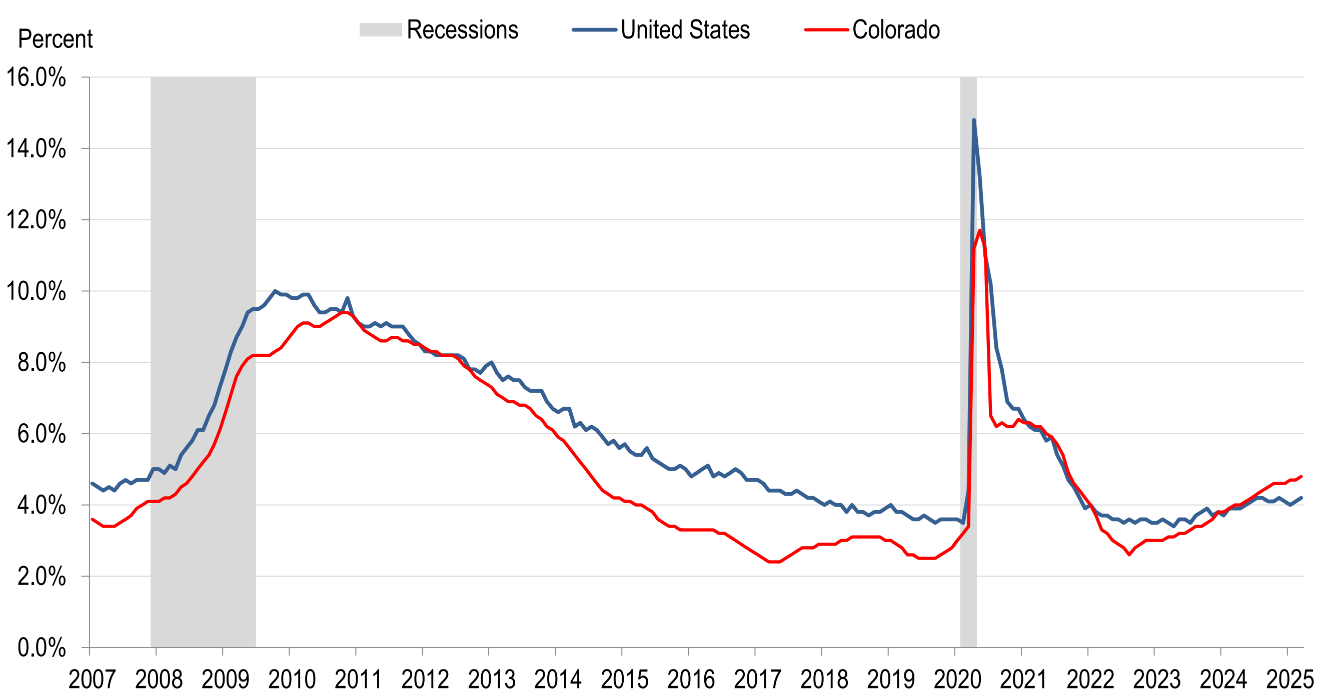
- In 2023, there were about 55,000 federal employees in Colorado. About 90% are in 12 counties.
- About 40,000 federal employees are in Denver, El Paso, Jefferson, Adams, and Arapahoe counties.
- Federal workers have higher average annual pay than most workers.
- The highest volatility in employment is in Denver and Adams counties (as measured by the coefficient of variation).
- Denver, Jefferson, and Boulder had decreases in employment for this period.

Source: BLS, cber.co. Note QCEW data is used.

Unemployment Rate

United States and Colorado

U.S. and Colorado Unemployment



Source: BLS, SA, cber.co.

Unemployment Rate

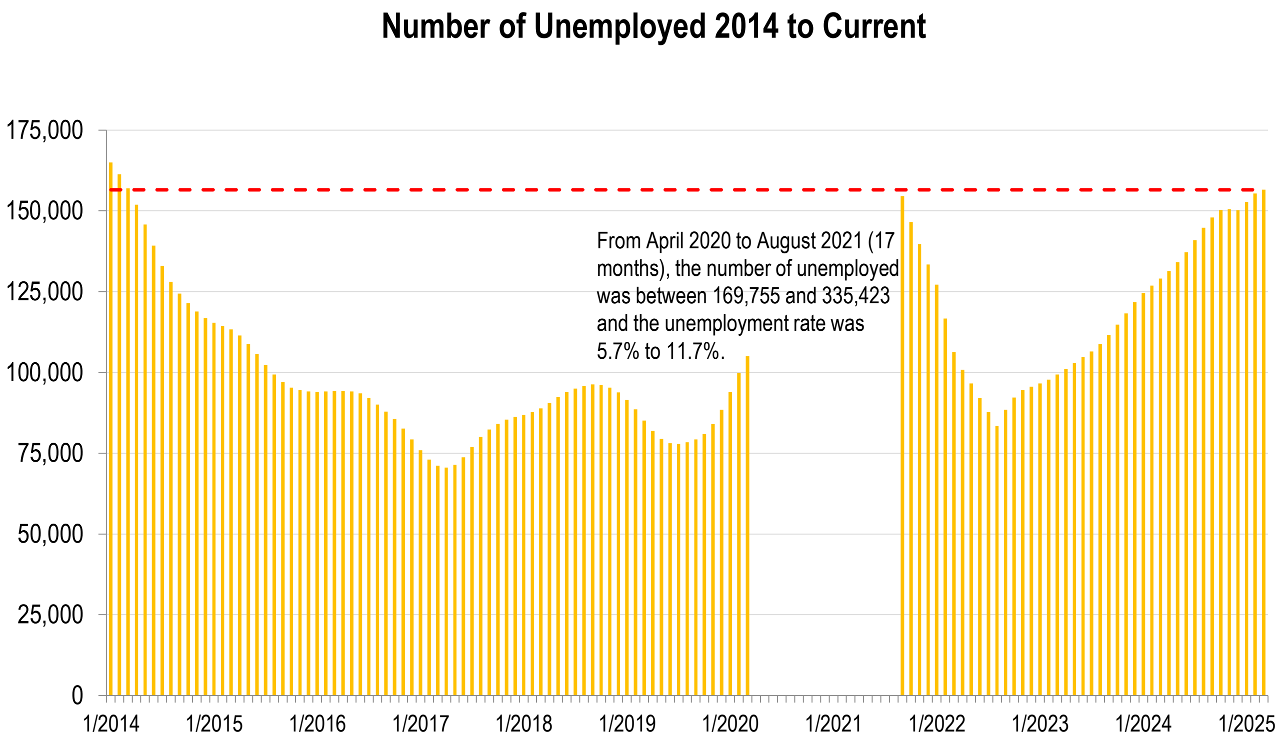
The Colorado unemployment rate was 4.8% in March 2025, and the U.S. rate was 4.2%. About 90 percent of the time since 2007, the Colorado unemployment rate was less than the U.S. rate. That was not the case in 2024, and it is not the case in 2025.

Annual Unemployment Rate

Year	United States	Colorado
2016	4.9%	3.1%
2017	4.4%	2.6%
2018	3.9%	3.0%
2019	3.7%	2.7%
2020	8.1%	6.8%
2021	5.3%	5.5%
2022	3.6%	3.1%
2023	3.6%	3.3%
2024	4.0%	4.3%

Number of Unemployed 2014 to Current

Colorado



Number of Unemployed

In March 2025, the number of unemployed in Colorado was 156,539 (red dotted line), and the unemployment rate was 4.8%.

In Q1 2014, the number of unemployed was between 156,983 and 164,986, and the unemployment rate was between 5.6% and 5.9%. This period was the final stages of the recovery from the Great Financial Crisis.

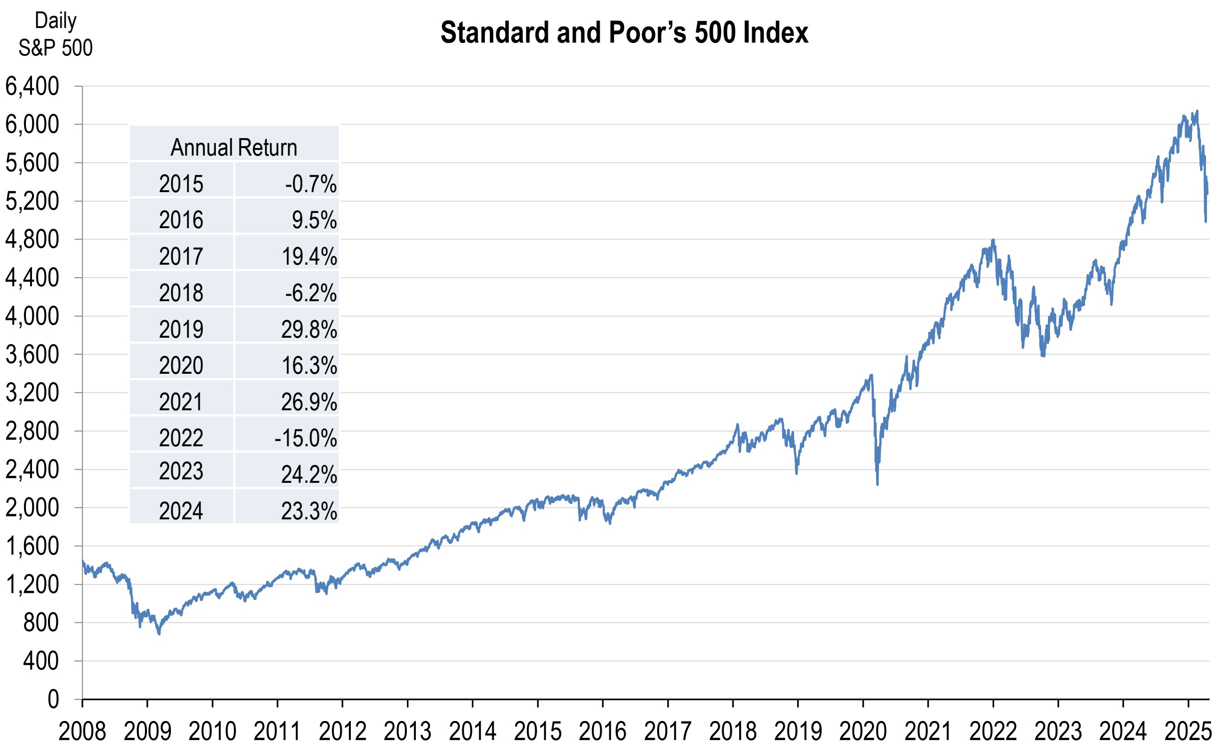
For this period of 134 months, the number of unemployed was more than 156,539 (the March 2025 total) in Q1 2014, and the 17 months of peak unemployment related to COVID-19 policies (blank area on chart).

In August 2022, the number of unemployed was 83,375. It has risen significantly since then, and the unemployment rate has increased from 2.6% to 4.8%.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, SA cber.co.

Saving, Borrowing, Consumption, and the Wealth Effect

Standard and Poor's 500 Index



Annual Return	
2015	-0.7%
2016	9.5%
2017	19.4%
2018	-6.2%
2019	29.8%
2020	16.3%
2021	26.9%
2022	-15.0%
2023	24.2%
2024	23.3%

Source: FRED, S&P 500, cber.co.

Market Returns

2020 COVID-19 Policies

February 19, 2020 3,386
March 23, 2020 2,237 a change of **-34%** to 1,148
August 18, 2020 3,386 bear market was 149 days
2020 change was **+16.3%**

2021 COVID Recovery Bull Market

For most of 2021 – steady growth
December 31, 2021 4,766, a change of **+26.9%**

2022 Bear Market

December 31, 2022 3,839, a change of **-15.0%**

2023 Bull Market

Helped by a Santa Claus rally in December
December 29, 2023 4,739, a change of **+24.2%**

2024 Bull Market

December 31, 2024 5,882, YTD change **+23.3%.**

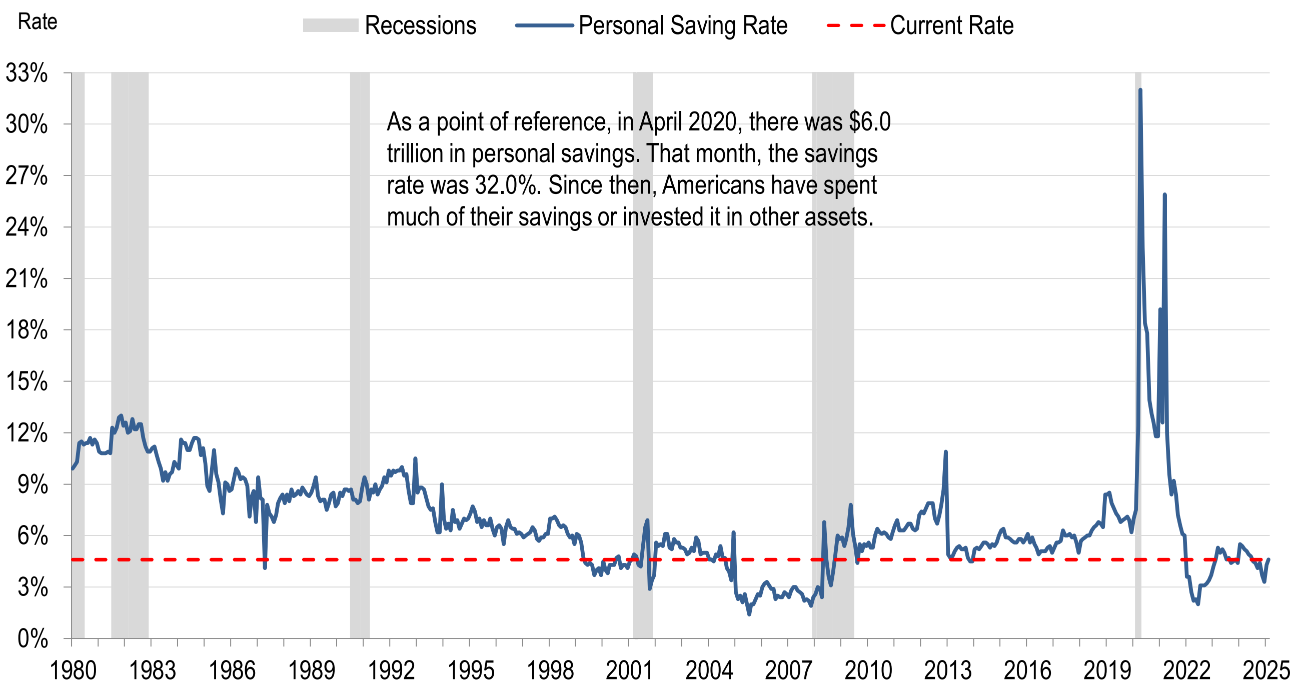
2025

April 17,2025 5283, YTD change **-10.2%**

U.S. Personal Saving Amount and Rate

Percentage of Disposable Personal Income (DPI)

Personal Saving Rate



Source: Federal Reserve, FRED, cber.co. Note: In October 2024 the data was updated, going back to 2019.

Personal Saving Rate

Americans drained their savings accounts in 2022 as the saving rate dropped to 2.0%. The February 2025 personal savings rate was 4.6%, and savings were $1,019.8 billion.

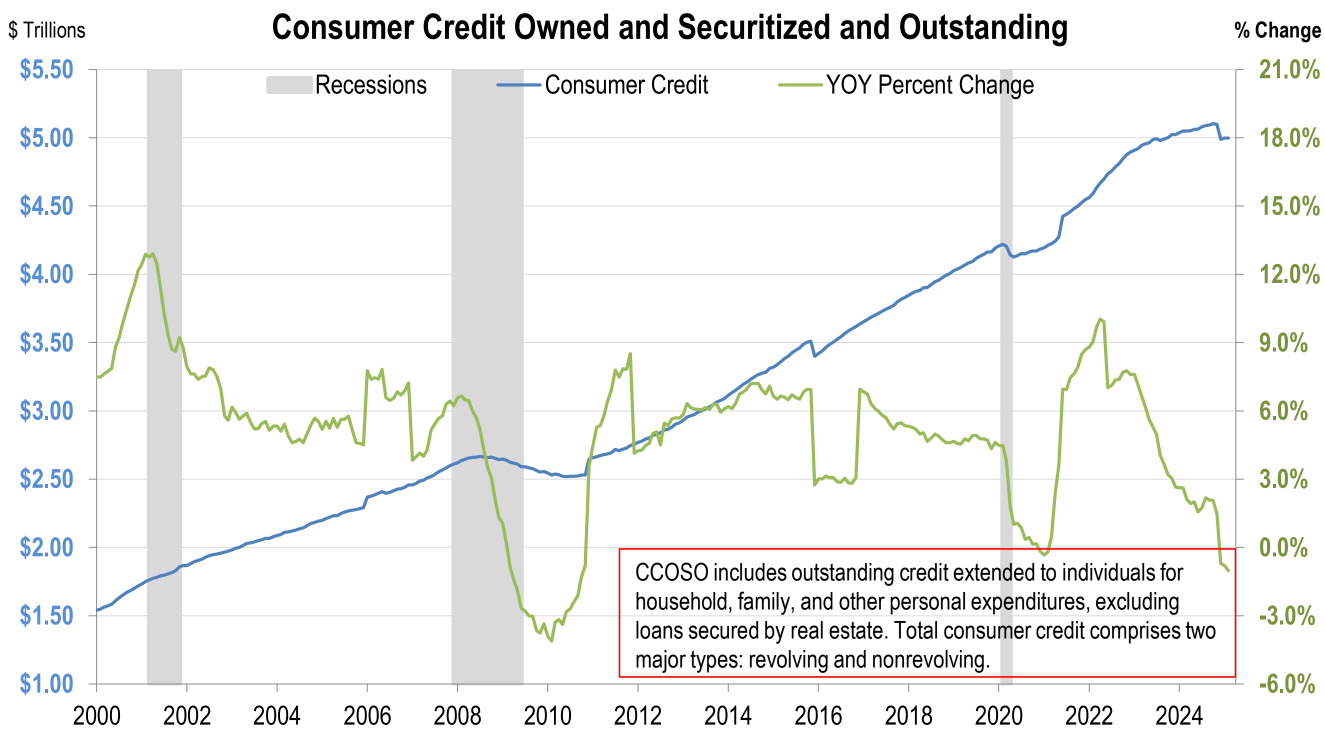
Year End Personal Savings (Billions) and Rate

2017	$748.0	5.0%
2018	$1,338.9	8.4%
2019	$1,020.1	6.2%
2020	$2,038.0	11.8%
2021	$1,119.6	6.0%
2022	$715.8	3.7%
2023	$919.9	4.4%
2024	$724.1	3.3%

Source: BEA, cber.co

U.S. Consumer Credit Outstanding

United States



Source: FRED, Federal Reserve, G.19, SA.

Colorado-based Business and Economic Research https:cber.co

Consumer Credit

In February 2025, the YOY rate of outstanding consumer credit (including consumer loan defaults) changed by -1.0% (green). Securitized credit is about $5.0 trillion. It had declined slightly for three consecutive months (blue).

From Q3 2008 to Q4 2010, consumers deleveraged and decreased the amount of consumer debt. The amount of credit authorized increased in 2018 and 2019 and declined in 2020 as consumers reduced expenditures and paid off debt during the pandemic (blue).

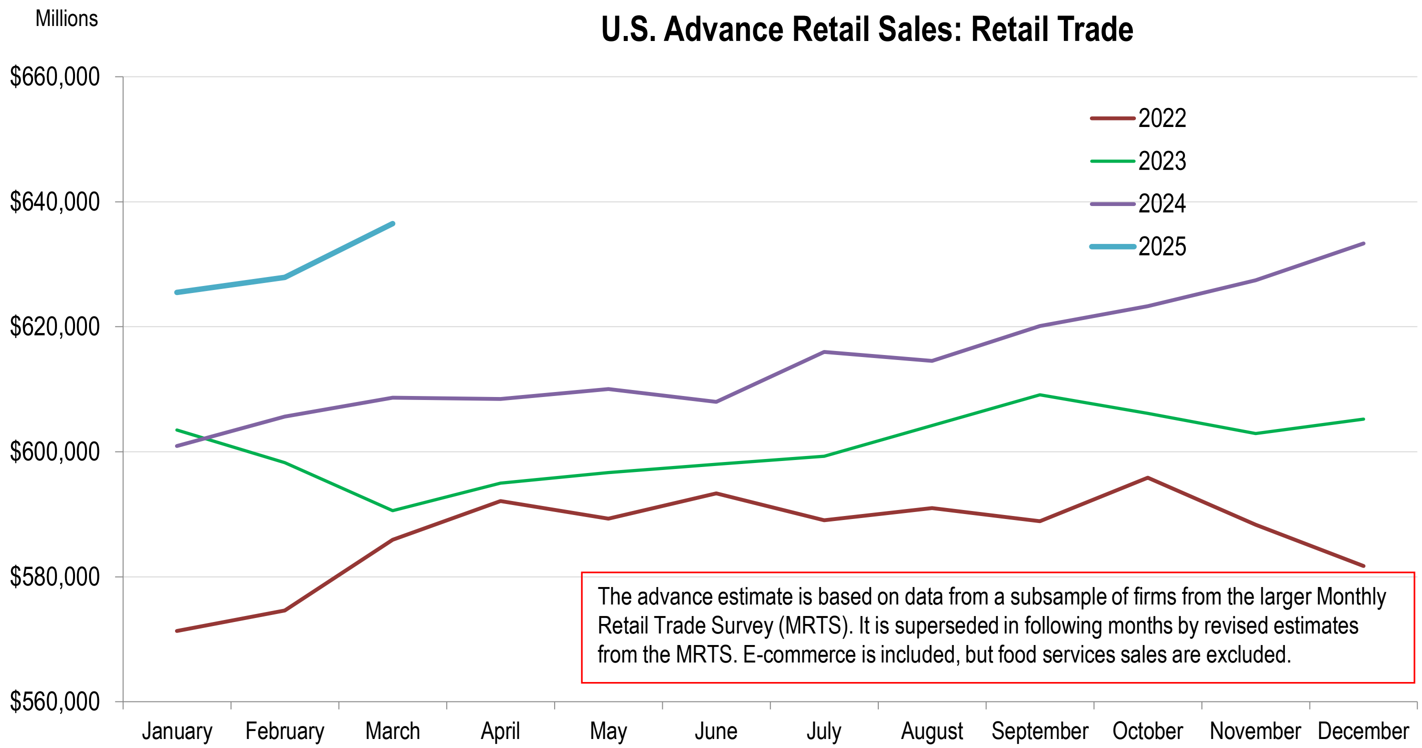
Outstanding Credit (Billions) and Percent Change

2017	$3,830.8	5.3%
2018	$4,007.0	4.6%
2019	$4,192.2	4.6%
2020	$4,184.9	-0.2%
2021	$4,548.5	8.7%
2022	$4,894,3	7.6%
2023	$5,023l7	2.6%
2024	$4,998.9	-0.7%

Source: FRED, G-19, Year-end, cber.co

U.S. Advance Retail Sales: Retail Trade

Monthly



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, FRED, cber.co. Data updated in April 2024. Note: Not adjusted for inflation.

Advance Retail Sales

Retail sales were weak in 2023 and 2024. YTD Q1 2025 sales through November (light blue) were $1.89 trillion, 4.1% greater than for the same period in 2024 (purple).

Consumers are spending. Time will tell whether the uptick in March is an anomaly to avoid higher prices caused by tariffs.

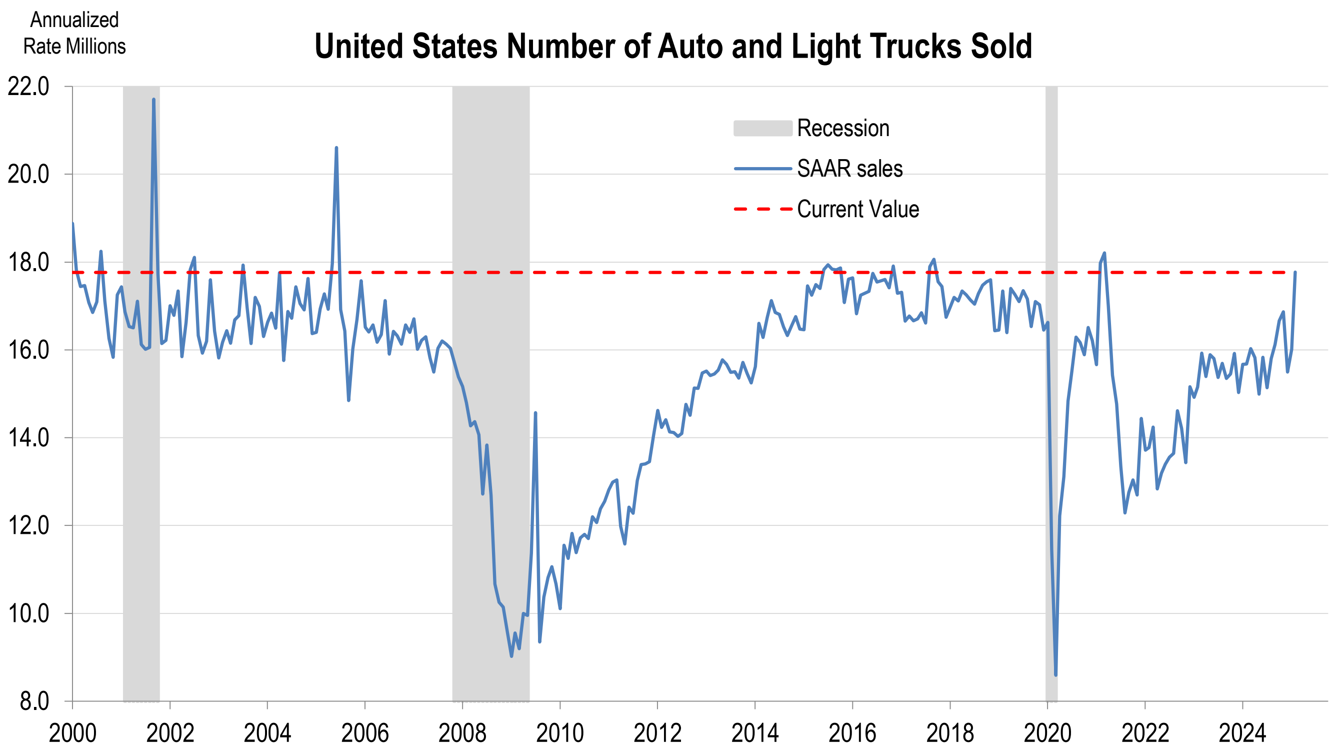
Annual Retail Sales (Trillions)

2017	$5.04	4.4%
2018	$5.25	4.2%
2019	$5.40	2.8%
2020	$5.56	3.0%
2021	$6.51	17.0%
2022	$7.04	8.2%
2023	$7.21	2.4%
2024	$7.38	2.3%

Source: Census, cber.co

U.S. Auto and Light Truck (ALT) Sales

Monthly (Seasonally Adjusted Annualized Rate in Millions)



Source: FRED, BEA, Seasonally Adjusted Annualized Rates (SAAR), cber.co.

Auto and Light Truck Sales SAAR

In March 2025, auto and light truck sales increased to 17.7 million (red dotted line). Monthly unit sales accelerated in March as consumers purchased vehicles to avoid higher prices caused by tariffs. It is unlikely this level is sustainable. The industry faces challenges from high insurance costs, potential tariffs, and a lack of enthusiasm for electric vehicles.

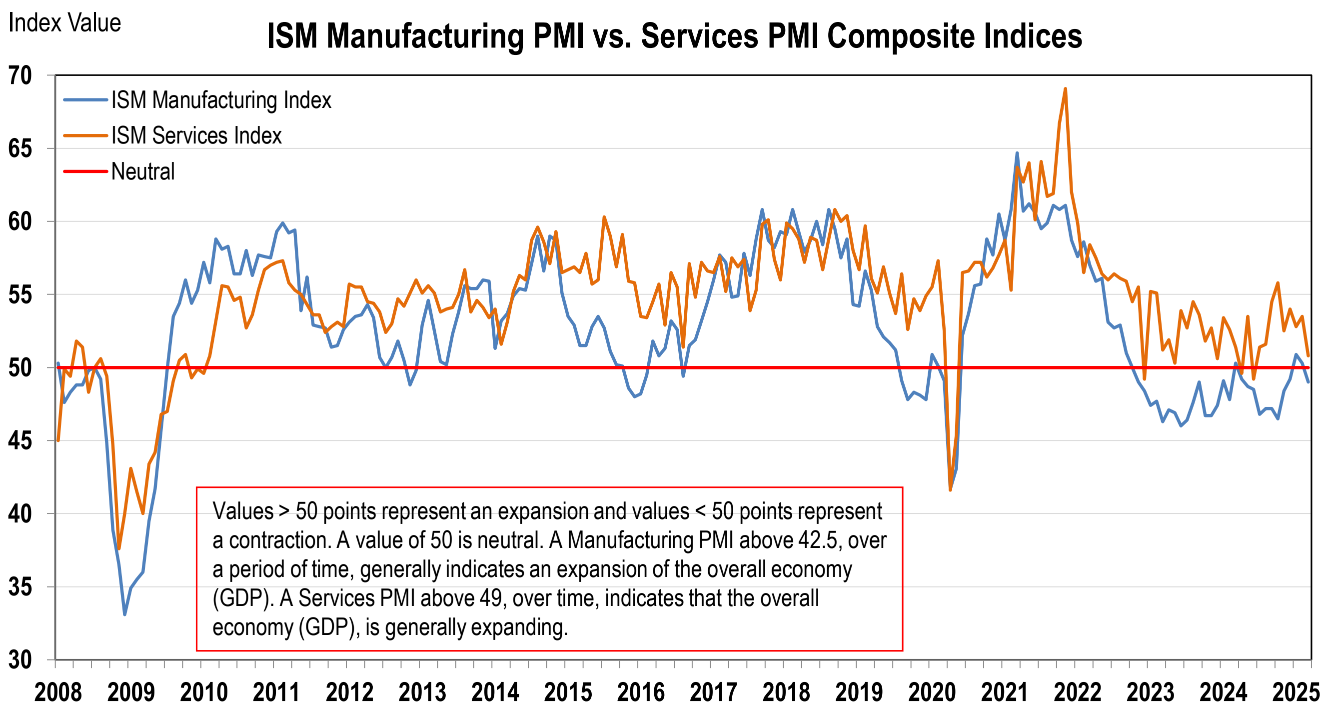
ALT Unit Sales

Year	Units Sold (Millions)
2016	17.5
2017	17.2
2018	17.2
2019	17.0
2020	14.5
2021	14.9
2022	13.8
2023	15.5
2024	15.8

U.S. Indicators

ISM Purchasing Managers Composite Indices

Manufacturing vs. Services



Source: Institute of Supply Management, cber.co.

Manufacturing and Services PMI

The ISM manufacturing index (blue) was below 50 for all but three months since November 2022.

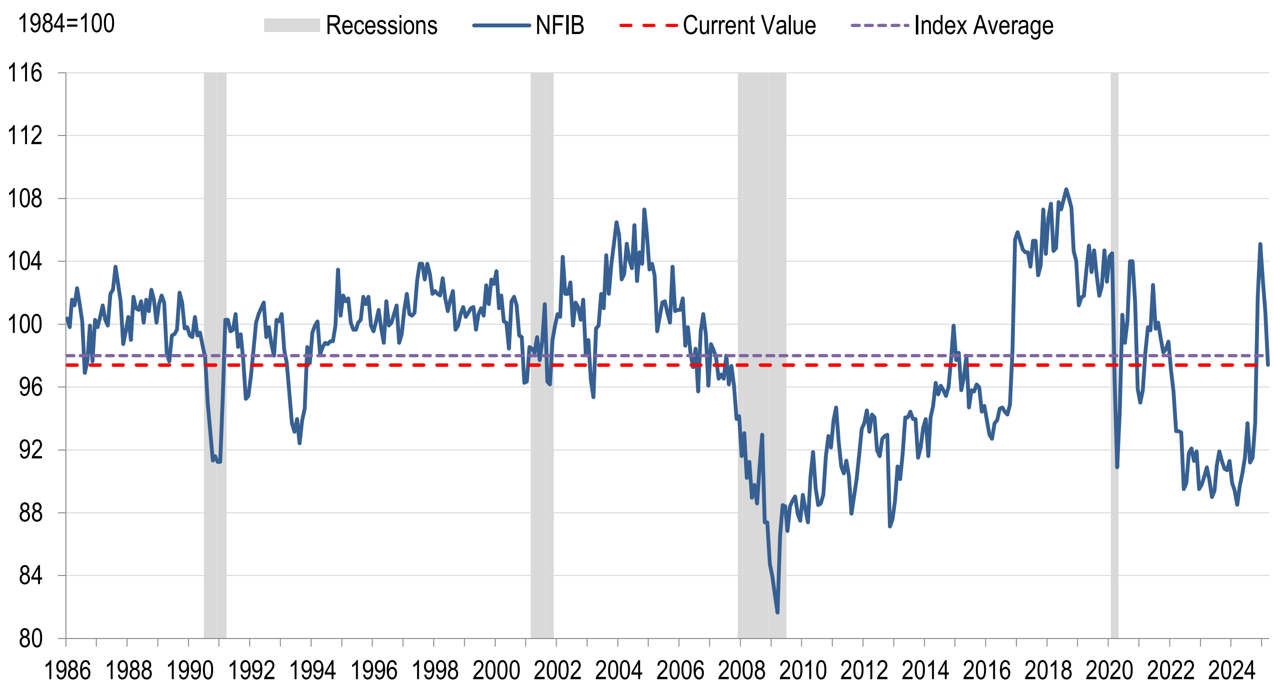
Demand and production were weak, and businesses reacted to demand confusion. About 46% of manufacturing GDP declined, up from 24% in February. Nine of fourteen sectors in the survey reported gains. The Index value for March dropped to 49.0.

In November 2021, the ISM service index (orange) peaked at 69.1. In 2024 and 2025, the index was between 49.2 and 55.8.

In March, the service index fell to 50.8. Ten of fourteen service industries posted gains. New orders, employment, and supplier deliveries were areas of weakness in March. Business activity had the highest rating.

NFIB Small Business Optimism Index

United States



Source: NFIB, cber.co.

NFIB Small Business Index

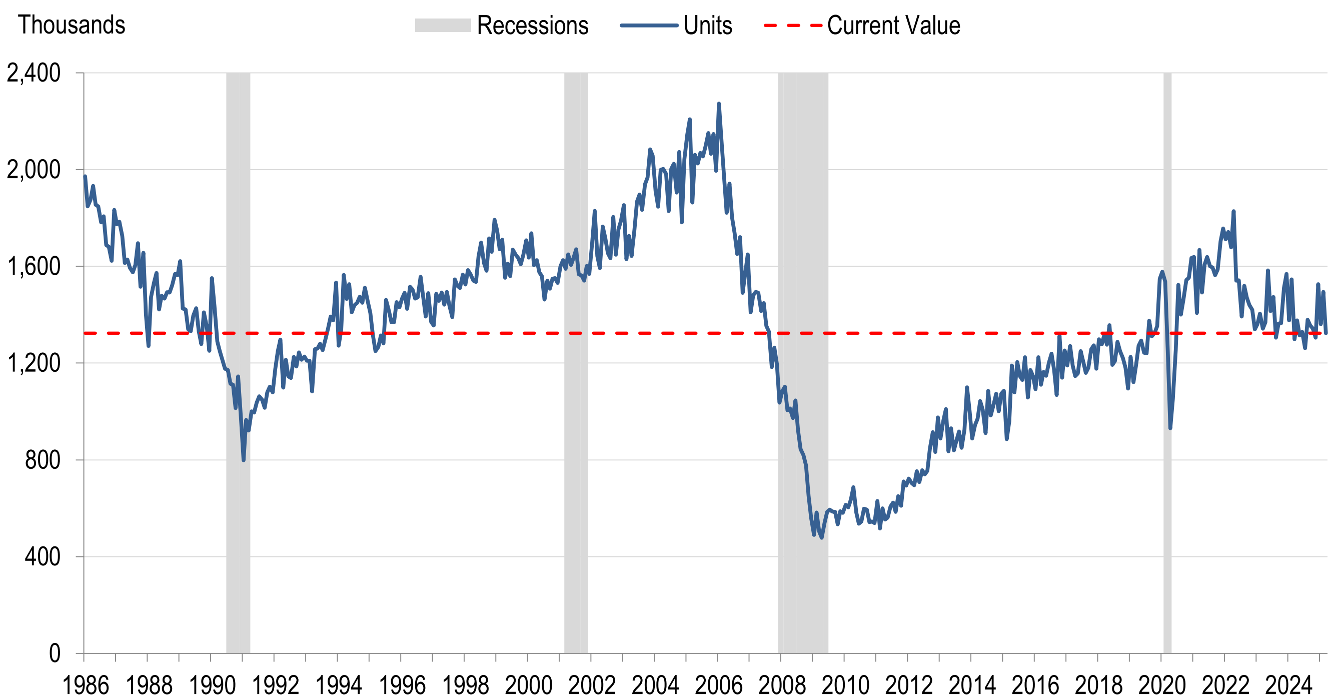
In March 2025, the NFIB index dropped to 97.4 (red dotted line). It is again below the 50-year average of 98.0 for the index (purple dotted line). In March, two of the ten index optimism components increased, seven decreased, and one was unchanged.

The uncertainty index fell sharply in March.

Labor quality was the most significant problem for the second consecutive month. Taxes, inflation, and labor costs were also concerns. For more details, the NFIB monthly SBET report is available at https://www.nfib.com/.

New Privately-Owned Housing Units Started

United States



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, FRED, NAHB, cber.co.

New Privately Owned Housing Units Started

The demand for housing is high. There were 1.32 million starts in March 2025 (red-dotted line). Since 2019, the number of housing starts has been volatile. Starts have been below 1.83 million units SAAR since April 2022.

Despite the need for housing, NAHB projects market uncertainty and slower growth in 2025.

Units Started (Annual)1

Year	Units		Year	Units
2005	2,073		2016	1,177
2006	1,812		2017	1,205
2007	1,342		2018	1,247
2008	900		2019	1,292
2009	554		2020	1,394
2010	586		2021	1,605
2011	612		2022	1,552
2012	784		2023	1,421
2013	928		2024	1,368
2014	1,000			
2015	1,107			

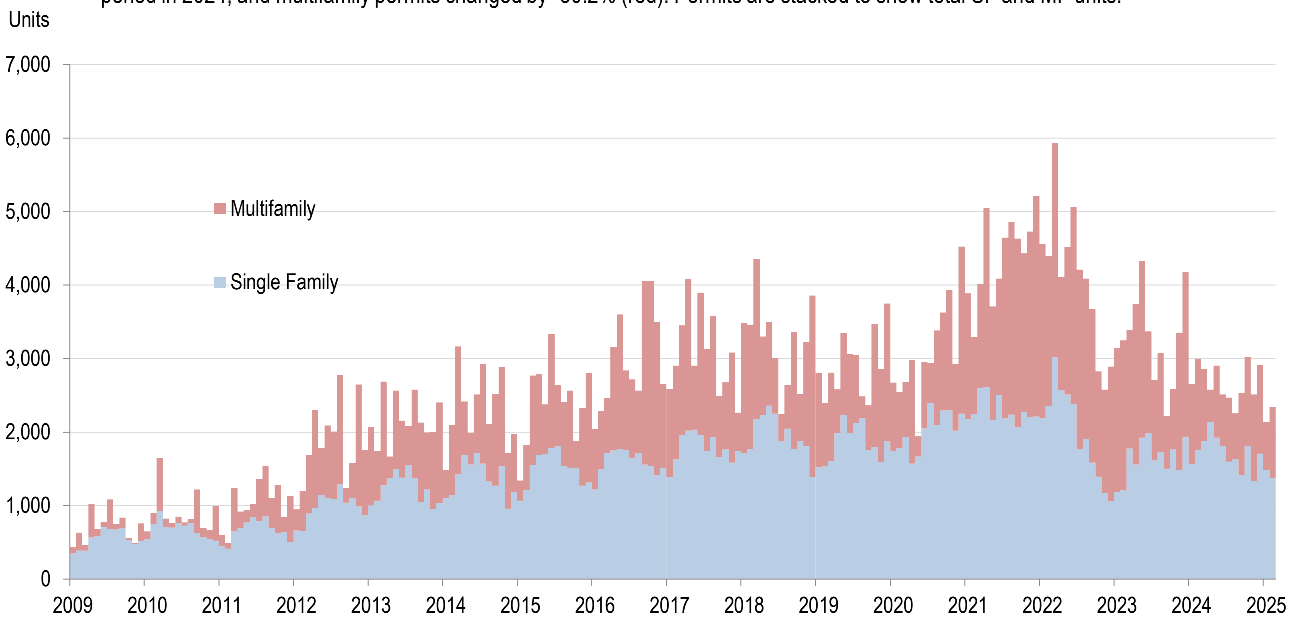
Colorado Indicators

Colorado Residential Building Permits

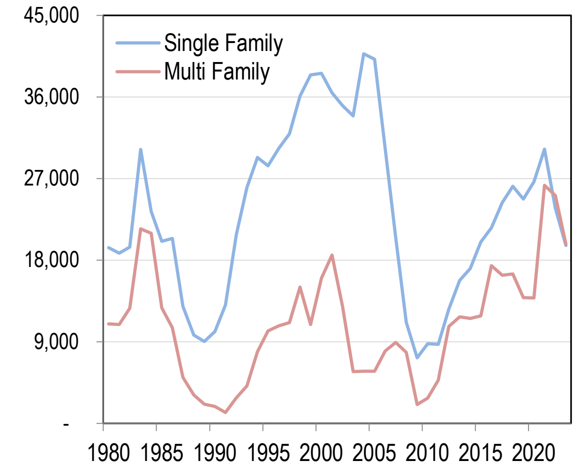
Single Family and Multifamily Units

Total Colorado Single Family and Multifamily Building Permits (Monthly) – Permits are Stacked Showing Total Permits

The total number of single-family permits for the first two months of 2025 changed by -13.9% (blue) compared to the same period in 2024, and multifamily permits changed by -30.2% (red). Permits are stacked to show total SF and MF units.



Annual SF and MF Permits



Source: TAMU Real Estate Center, U.S. Census Bureau, cber.co.

Colorado Single Family Market Review
November

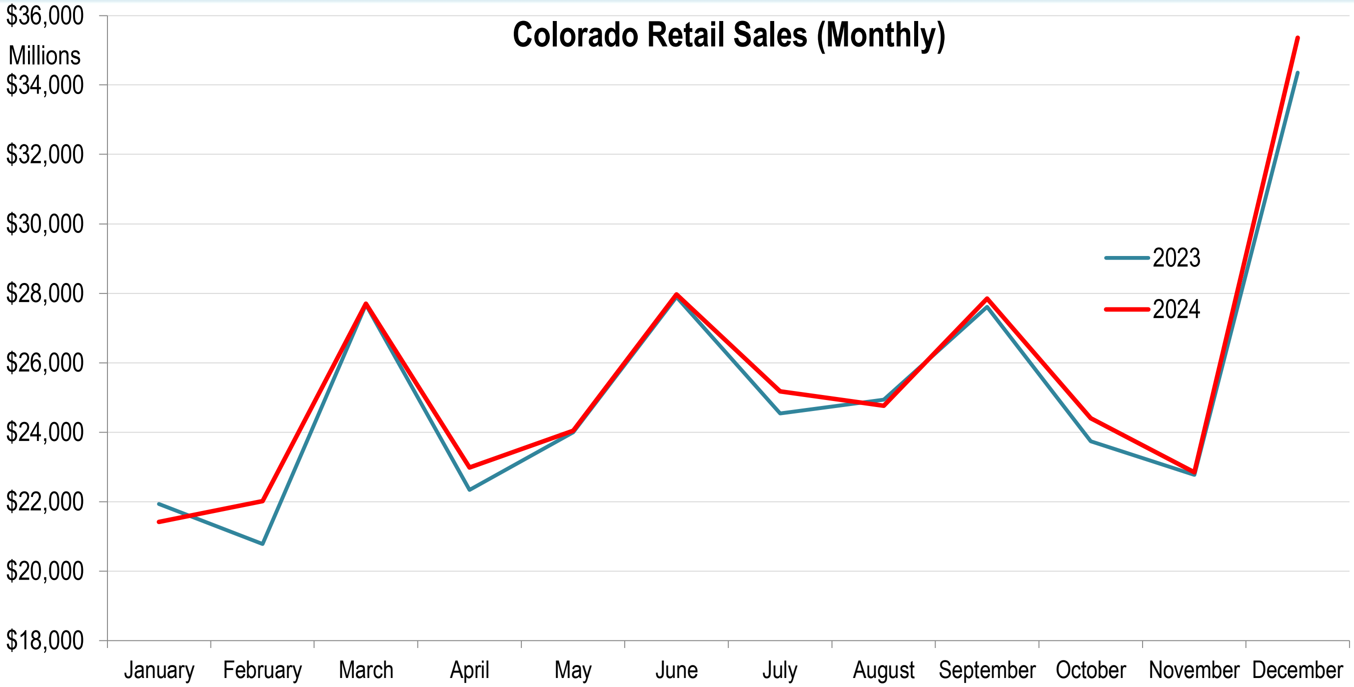
Colorado Single Family Market Review						
March 2024	**March 2025**	**% Change**		**YTD 2024**	**YTD 2025**	**% Change**
7,607	9,350	22.9%	**New Listings**	19,448	23,043	18.5%
6,236	7,492	20.1%	**Pending/Under Contract**	16,203	17,477	7.9%
5,485	5,610	2.3%	**Sold Listings**	13.465	13,700	1.7%
$ 575,000	$ 584,990	1.7%	**Median Sales Price**	$ 562,000	$ 578,000	2.8%
$ 712,916	$ 754,030	5.8%	**Average Sales Price**	$ 716,631	$ 748,115	4.4%
99.2%	98.9%	-0.3%	**Percent of List Price Received**	98.8%	98.6%	-0.2%
57	64	12.3%	**Days on Market Until Sale**	61	70	14.8%
71	71	0.0%	**Housing Affordability Index**	73	72	-1.4%
13,263	16,235	22.4%	**Inventory Active Listings**			
2.5	2.9	16.0%	**Months Supply of Inventory**			

Colorado Single Family Market Review
The YTD data through March reports increases in new listings, pending contracts, and sold listings. Median sales prices were higher than a year ago. In March 2025, there were 2.9 months of inventory.

New Listings – Measures new supply coming onto the market.
Pending/Under Contract – A leading indicator of buyer demand.
Sold Listings – Home sales that are closed during the period.
Median Sales Price – It is the midpoint. Half of the activity is above the median, and half is below this value.
Average Sales Price – The average is the sum of all home sales prices divided by the number of houses sold.
Percent of List Price Received – The percent difference between the last list price and the sales price.
Days on Market Until Sale – The average number of days it takes homes to sell.
Affordability Index – A higher number means greater affordability.
Inventory of Active Listings – The number of homes available for sale at a given time. The inventory level may affect home prices.
Supply of Inventory – Measure of the balance between buyers and sellers. A balanced market ranges from four to seven months. A buyer's market has a higher number.

Source: CAR, https://coloradorealtors.com/, cber.co.

Colorado Retail Sales
Monthly



Colorado Retail Sales

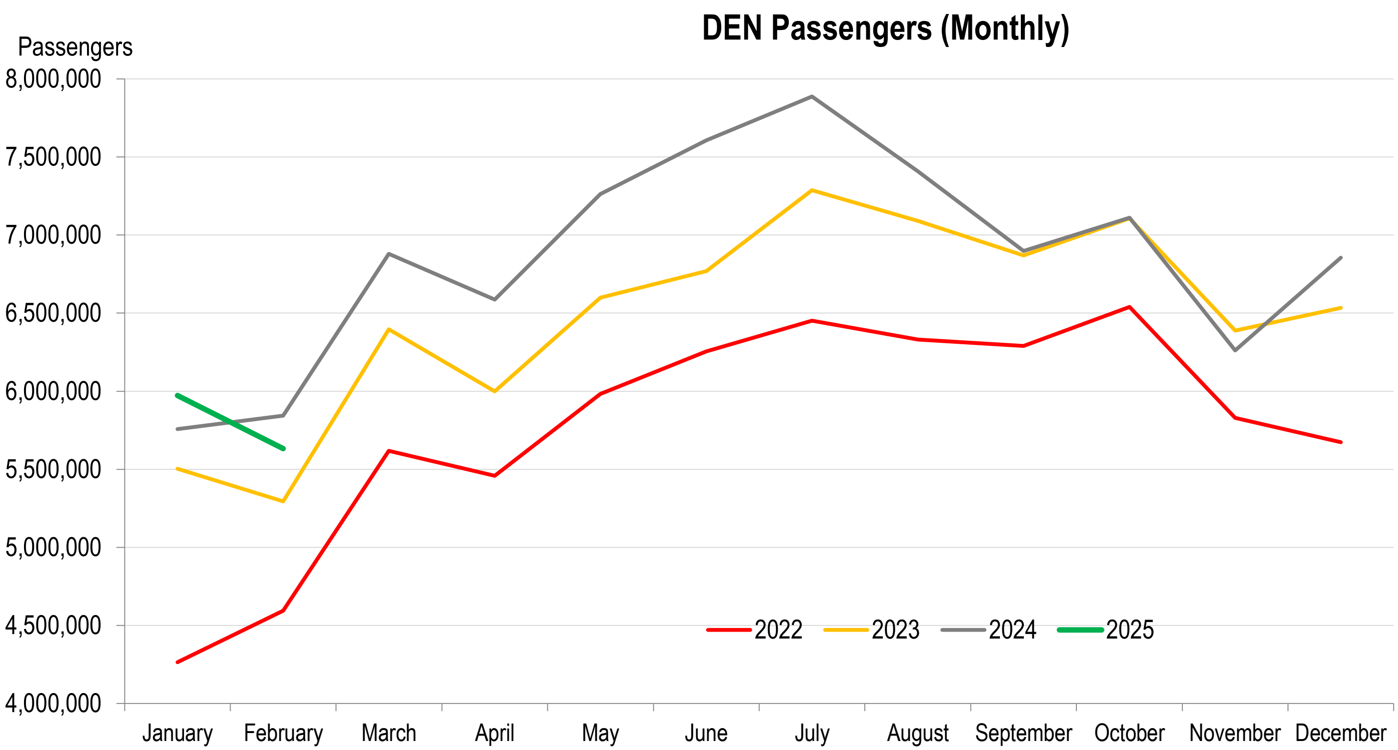
The year-over-year retail sales growth rates for 2023 and 2024 were weaker than in 2020 when COVID-19 began.

The 2025 growth rate will be historically weak but more than in 2025.

Annual Retail Sales (Billions)		
2017	$194.6	5.4%
2018	$206.2	5.9%
2019	$224.6	9.0%
2020	$228.8	1.9%
2021	$268.3	17.3%
2022	$299.9	11.8%
2023	$302.6	0.9%
2024	$306.5.	1.3%

Source: Colorado Department of Revenue, https://cdor.colorado.gov/retail-sales-reports, cber.co. Note: Not adjusted for inflation.

DEN and COS Passengers
Monthly



Air Travel

There were 82.4 million passengers through DIA in 2024 (grey line), an increase of 5.8% compared to 2023. The goal is to surpass 100 million passengers in the near term. Through the first two months of 2025, there were 11.0 million passengers, the same as in 2024.

There were 2.47 million passengers through COS in 2024 compared to 2.35 million in 2023.

Year	DIA Passengers
2016	58,266,515
2017	61,379,396
2018	64,494,613
2019	69,015,703
2020	33,741,129
2021	58,828,552
2022	69,286,461
2023	77,837,917
2024	82,358,744

Source: flydenver.com, https://www.flydenver.com/about-den/governance/reports-and-financials/, administration/governance, COS airport, https://coloradosprings.gov/flycos/monthly-traffic-reports, cber.co.

Colorado Forecast

Colorado Economic Forecast 2025

Real GDP growth (Colorado) slowed in 2024. There will be a slower growth rate in 2025.

The population (Colorado) will increase by only 49,800 people in 2025, or 0.8%.

Colorado employment will increase by about 31,000 in 2025. Unemployment will be weak through 2027. The unemployment rate increase may be higher than the U.S. rate.

Consumers will continue to be resilient. Retail sales for 2024 were sluggish. Sales for 2025 will improve. The inflation rate has declined, but the accumulated effect is problematic for many. Inflation for Colorado will be 2.8% in 2025, a rate much lower than 2021 through 2023.

Colorado Economic Forecast

	2022	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**
Real GDP Value (billions) (chained 2017)	$418.8	$437.1	$447.10	$455.5
% Change Real GDP	3.0%	4.4%	2.3%	1.9%
Colorado Population	5,840.2	5,876.3	5,920.3	5,970.1
Annual Change (thousands)	29.1	36.1	44.0	49.8
CES Employment (thousands)	2,869.7	2,937.5	2,971.0	3,002.0
Annual Change (thousands)	118.7	67.8	33.5	31.0
% Change	4.3%	2.4%	1.1%	1.0%
Unemployment Rate	3.1%	3.2	4.3%	4.6%
Retail Sales (billions)	$299.9	$302.6	$306.4	$314.1
% Change	11.8%	0.9%	1.3%	2.5%
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	304.4	320.3	327.6	336.7
% Change	8.0%	5.2%	2.3%	2.8%
DIA Passengers (millions)	69.3	77.8	82.3	86.0
Single Family (SF) Permits	23,728	19,641	20,500	18,000
Multi-family (MF) Permits	25,111	19,763	11,600	14,000
Oil Production (thousands) barrels	160,472	166,790	170,000	175,000

In 2024, 82.3 million passengers flew through DIA. Officials project it might be possible to have 100 million passengers by 2027. More than 2.5 million passengers will travel through the Colorado Springs (COS) airport in 2025.

In 2024, the total number of permits declined (20,000 SF permits and 11,500 MF unit permits). There will be 18,000 SF permits in 2025, and 14,000 MF unit permits.

The volatility in housing and real estate markets may ease if interest rates continue to be lower in 2025.

Annual production of crude oil has increased since 2021. Fossil fuels will play an integral role in the U.S. and Colorado economies in the future.

cber.co
Economic Outlook and Trends For 2025
Colorado and the United States, March 2025

For additional information contact cber.co at cber@cber.co , gary@garyhorvath.com, or garyhorvath@hotmail.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
A special thank you to Ana and Allyson Horvath for their review and comments on this publication.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gary Horvath has produced annual employment forecasts of the state economy for over 30 years. They have been supplemented by monthly economic updates and indices that track economic performance over the short term. In addition, he has directed three statewide analyses that included reviews of all 64 county economies.

Horvath was the principal investigator for a state and federally funded project to prepare a nanotechnology roadmap for Colorado. As well, he was a co-founder of the Colorado Photonics Industry Association, a trade group for Colorado's Photonics cluster. Horvath has been an active board member of the group since its inception.

Horvath has also served on the Board of Directors for the Economic Development Council of Colorado, Northwest Denver Business Partnership, Adams County Regional Economic Partnership, and Broomfield Economic Development Corporation. Horvath has also been the chair of the photonics/electronics committee in the Governor's Office of Economic Development and International Trade early stage and proof of concept Advanced Industries grant program, and he served on the 2021 Colorado Legislative Redistricting Commission.