Edwardsville Unemployment Rate Dips To 3.1 Percent In September 2026, Alton's Mark Also Drops To 4.2 Percent

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EDWARDSVILLE - Unemployment fell in September 2026 across Madison, St. Clair, Calhoun, Greene, Jersey and Macoupin counties, as well as Edwardsville, Alton, Granite City and East St. Louis, while the Illinois portion of the St. Louis metropolitan area added 500 jobs compared with a year earlier.

The declines were part of a broader statewide pattern: Unemployment rates dropped in 11 of Illinois' 12 metropolitan areas and 96 of its 102 counties. In the Illinois section of the St. Louis metro area, gains in private education and health services led overall job growth.

"Illinois continues to show economic resilience, with bright spots like Champaign-Urbana, Lake and Peoria," said Deputy Governor Andy Manar. "But that progress is unfolding against a backdrop of harmful economic policies from the federal government that create unnecessary obstacles for workers, employers, and families. We will continue to invest in the strength of our workforce and businesses, building on successes and working to ensure our communities can thrive despite the challenges created in Washington."

Calhoun County recorded the largest unemployment rate decline among the six counties, falling 1.5 percentage points to 3.7% from 5.2% in September 2025. Macoupin County's rate fell 1 percentage point to 3.6%.

Madison County's rate declined to 3.4% from 4.1%, while St. Clair County's fell to 3.8% from 4.6%. Jersey County's rate dropped to 3.1% from 3.8%, and Greene County' s decreased to 3.2% from 3.8%.

Among the four cities, East St. Louis recorded the largest decline, dropping 1.2 percentage points to 6.2% from 7.4%. It continued to have the highest unemployment rate of the four.

Alton's rate fell to 4.2% from 5.1%, and Granite City's declined to 3.9% from 4.8%. Edwardsville's rate decreased to 3.1% from 3.8%.

The unemployment rate for the Illinois portion of the St. Louis metropolitan area was 3.5%, down from 4.2% a year earlier. Total nonfarm employment rose 0.2% to 246,000 jobs from 245,500.

Private education and health services added 1,100 jobs over the year. Financial activities gained 300 jobs, mining and construction added 200 and government added 100.

Those gains were partly offset by losses in professional and business services, which shed 600 jobs. Transportation, warehousing and utilities, along with wholesale trade, each lost 200 jobs. Manufacturing and leisure and hospitality each lost 100.

Statewide, the unemployment rate declined to 4.2% from 4.3%. Total nonfarm employment increased by 14,600 jobs to 6,193,500.

Despite the statewide employment gain, nonfarm jobs increased in only four metropolitan areas, declined in seven and remained unchanged in one.

Along with the Illinois portion of the St. Louis metro area, job gains occurred in Lake, Peoria and Champaign-Urbana. Lake added 2,800 jobs, a 0.8% increase, marking its 10th consecutive month of year-over-year growth. Peoria added 800 jobs, up 0.5%, for its fourth consecutive month of growth.

Champaign-Urbana added 200 jobs, a 0.2% increase, reaching a record September employment total of 122,400.

Kankakee had the largest metropolitan unemployment rate decline, falling 1.2 percentage points to 4.2%. Chicago-Naperville-Schaumburg was the only metro area with an increase, rising 0.4 percentage points to 4.5%.

The figures are not seasonally adjusted. September 2026 metropolitan figures are preliminary, while September 2025 figures are revised. Because seasonal factors can affect employment, the data should be compared with the same month in prior years rather than with the preceding month.

The unemployment rate measures people who are out of work and actively seeking employment, including those who have exhausted unemployment benefits or are ineligible for them.