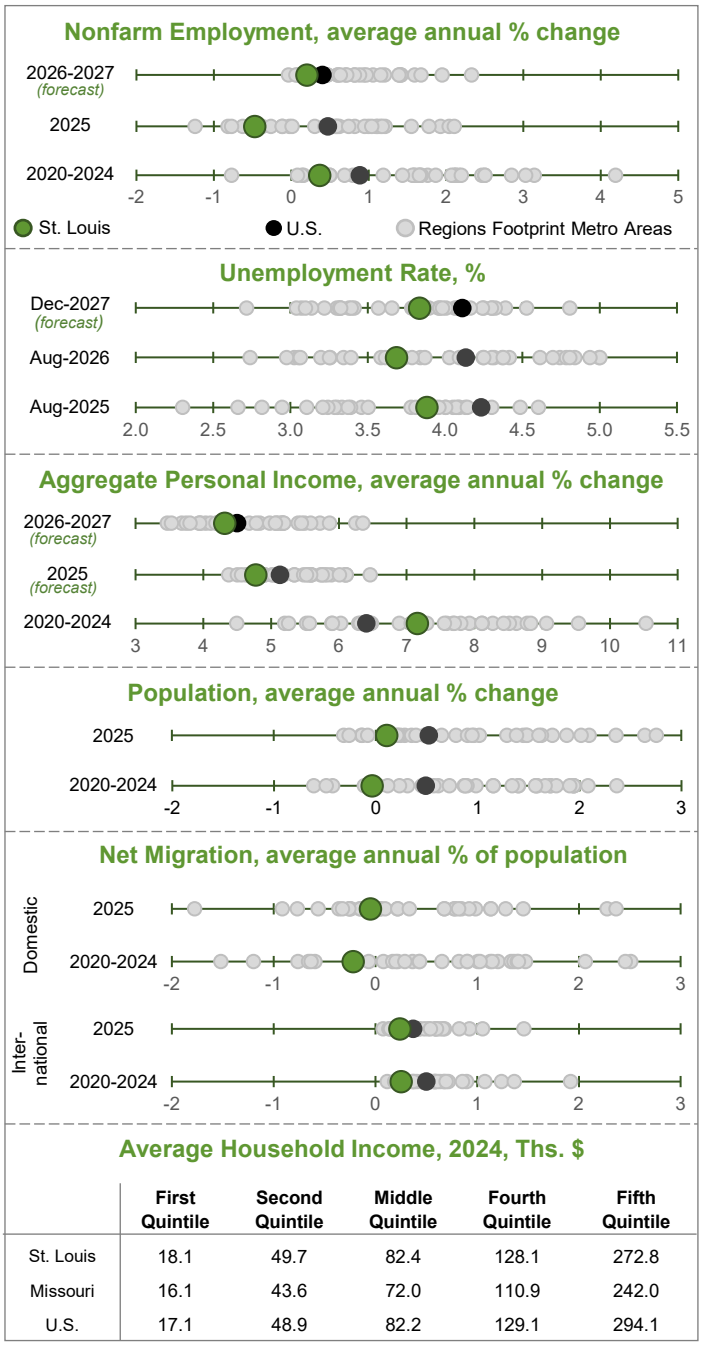
# St. Louis MO

Metro Area Economic Update - Q4 2026

**Overview:** Job growth in St. Louis has trailed the national average, with mixed support from the region's top employers. While population outflows remain a persistent headwind to growth, the metro area's relative housing affordability advantage and further manufacturing investment could position St. Louis for stronger gains.

**Demographics:** Compared to a 6.2 percent increase nationally, the local population has remained flat over the last decade, with modest positive contributions from international migration and natural change – the net between births and deaths – offset by net outflows to other U.S. cities. This pattern has dampened demand for local services – such as education, health care, and leisure and hospitality – keeping the pace of job growth across these industry groups in the bottom quartile among U.S. metro areas with populations of one million or more. Outgoing residents have been drawn to markets experiencing more robust job creation – particularly Florida and Texas – thanks to healthy business migration into those states. As a result, outflows from St. Louis have been concentrated within the prime working-age population – including ages 25 to 54 – which has declined 3.9 percent over the last 10 years, limiting growth in the local labor force. The net outflow of residents, however, has narrowed more recently, coming close to even last year. This likely reflects the metro area's sustained affordability advantage over many Sunbelt markets, where rising insurance premiums and elevated mortgage interest rates – applied to considerably higher home prices – have driven up housing costs. Should interest rates remain near current levels, as our forecast anticipates, St. Louis could continue to capitalize on this advantage, though stronger job creation will still be needed to promote healthier population inflows.

**Labor Market:** St. Louis is beginning to build this support through ongoing investments in manufacturing. Boeing's Advanced Combat Aircraft Facility – the first phase of the company's broader expansion – is expected to come online this year, kicking off production of the U.S. Air Force's next-generation F-47 fighter jet. Increases in national defense budgets have bolstered order books for many of Boeing's product lines, prompting the company to ramp production of munitions kits and double F-15EX assemblies across local facilities. Boeing also supports the local community as lead corporate sponsor for AMICSTL – a nonprofit group focused on workforce development programs. Next year, the organization will open an advanced manufacturing facility offering students hands-on training with leading-edge robotics and digital tools. With businesses commonly citing availability of skilled labor as a key impediment to growth, a deeper talent pool would bolster the appeal for St. Louis, which already offers among the lowest industrial rents in the U.S. according to data from CoStar. Expanding on these efforts could attract more high-paying manufacturing jobs, with the resulting boost to household incomes creating stronger demand for local businesses.



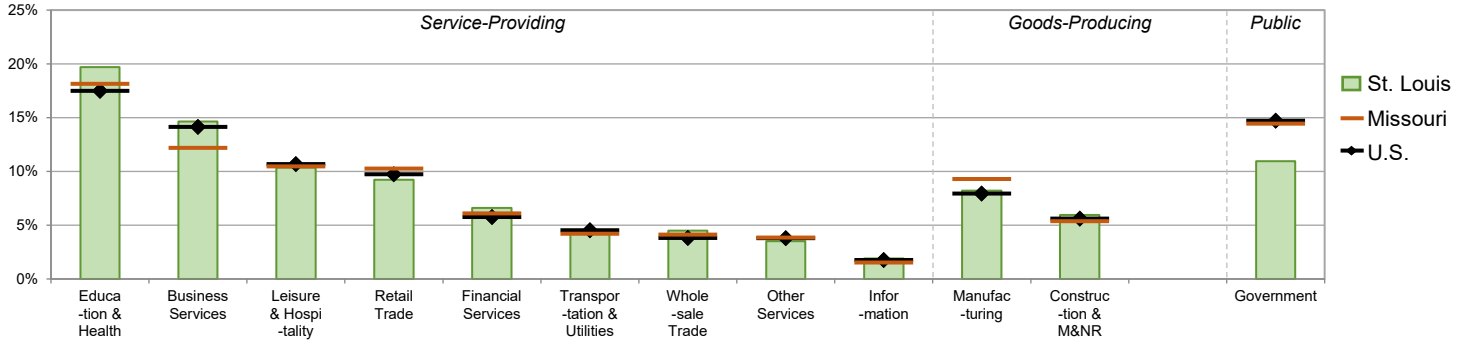

## Average Household Income, 2024, Ths. $

| | First Quintile | Second Quintile | Middle Quintile | Fourth Quintile | Fifth Quintile |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St. Louis | 18.1 | 49.7 | 82.4 | 128.1 | 272.8 |
| Missouri | 16.1 | 43.6 | 72.0 | 110.9 | 242.0 |
| U.S. | 17.1 | 48.9 | 82.2 | 129.1 | 294.1 |

*3-month moving average for Unemployment Rate; Annual totals for all others*

*continued on the next page . . .*

## Employment by industry, share of total nonfarm employment, trailing 12-month average




Employment data for the Construction, Mining, and Natural Resources industry groups are published only as a combined total for the St. Louis metro area.

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Bureau of Labor Statistics; U.S. Census Bureau; Regions Financial Economics Division. Forecast as of October, 2026.

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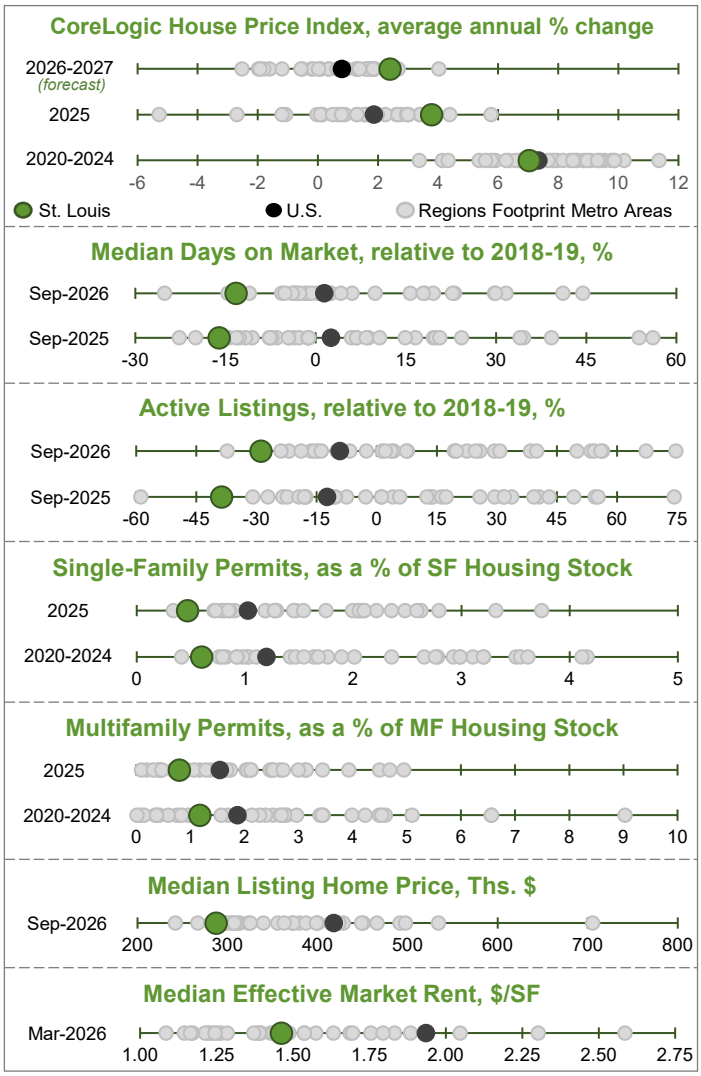
Hosting corporate offices for Edward Jones, Wells Fargo Advisors, and multiple international reinsurance companies, St. Louis carries outsized exposure to insurance and financial services. Brokerage firms have benefited from consecutive years of strong equity market performance, with higher client portfolio balances and increased demand for wealth advisory services facilitating robust revenue growth and continued hiring. Insurance companies, by contrast, have reported softer profit margins lately – a result of more aggressive pricing as insurers compete for market share. These businesses have offset margin pressures by leaning more heavily into automation tools, resulting in a sharp decline in payrolls this year that has overwhelmed job gains among other financial services. The local workforce is also heavily concentrated within education and health care, supported by the metro area's universities, health systems, and research facilities. After expanding rapidly over the previous five years, Washington University – one of the nation's top NIH grant recipients – curtailed hiring last year after federal agencies announced cuts to research funding. This adds to broader pressures on education and health care employment stemming from slow population growth, contributing to our forecast for total job growth to remain below the national average.

**Housing Market:** The local housing market has remained resilient amid elevated mortgage interest rates, with annual house price appreciation topping the national average since 2022. While median home prices rank in the bottom quartile among U.S. metro areas, median household income is roughly in line with the national median, giving St. Louis a significant affordability advantage that has helped mitigate the impact of higher borrowing costs. At the same time, a measured pace of residential construction has limited growth in housing supply, with single family permits averaging 0.6 percent of the existing housing stock – roughly half the national average – over the past five years. As of September, active listings for sale and median days on market each remain considerably below their pre-pandemic benchmarks, indicating continued market tightness that should keep house price gains ahead of the U.S. average over the near term. Maintaining this outperformance, however, may require healthier labor demand to drive net population inflows.




*3-month moving average for Median Days on Market and Active Listings; 12-month moving average for Median Listing Home Price and Effective Market Rent; Annual totals for all others*

| Residential Sales and Construction | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2025 ytd* | 2026 ytd* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Existing Home Sales, ths. units | 63.6 | 66.7 | 67.6 | 59.4 | 53.7 | 54.9 | 53.5 | 30.2 | 30.5 |
| New Home Sales, ths. units | 3.3 | 3.7 | 3.5 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 1.9 | 1.2 | 1.0 |
| Single-Family Permits, ths. units | 5.2 | 5.7 | 5.7 | 4.7 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 4.1 | 2.9 | 2.9 |
| Multifamily Permits, ths. units | 1.9 | 2.1 | 2.6 | 4.4 | 2.5 | 2.4 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 1.8 |

| | St. Louis | | | Missouri | | | U.S. | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Housing Characteristics** | **2014** | **2019** | **2024** | **2014** | **2019** | **2024** | **2014** | **2019** | **2024** |
| **Occupied Housing Units, mil.** | **1.104** | **1.127** | **1.160** | **2.361** | **2.415** | **2.508** | **116.211** | **120.756** | **129.227** |
| Homeownership rate, % | 69.9 | 68.9 | 70.4 | 67.9 | 66.8 | 68.1 | 64.4 | 64.0 | 65.2 |
| **Occupied Single-Family Units, mil.** | **0.839** | **0.853** | **0.887** | **1.784** | **1.822** | **1.901** | **80.136** | **83.028** | **88.845** |
| % renter-occupied | 14.3 | 15.0 | 13.7 | 17.8 | 18.7 | 16.8 | 17.8 | 17.8 | 16.0 |
| **Occupied Multifamily Units, mil.** | **0.230** | **0.239** | **0.241** | **0.436** | **0.461** | **0.491** | **29.188** | **30.921** | **33.621** |
| % of total occupied units | 20.8 | 21.2 | 20.8 | 18.5 | 19.1 | 19.6 | 25.1 | 25.6 | 26.0 |
| **Demographics** | **2005** | **2015** | **2025** | **2005** | **2015** | **2025** | **2005** | **2015** | **2025** |
| **Population, mil.** | **2.730** | **2.816** | **2.814** | **5.790** | **6.077** | **6.271** | **295.517** | **321.815** | **341.785** |
| 10-year cumulative growth, % | 4.3 | 3.1 | 0.0 | 8.7 | 5.0 | 3.2 | 12.3 | 8.9 | 6.2 |
| 15-24 age cohort share, % | 13.9 | 12.8 | 12.4 | 14.5 | 13.8 | 13.4 | 14.4 | 13.9 | 13.3 |
| 25-44 age cohort share, % | 27.5 | 25.9 | 26.2 | 26.8 | 25.1 | 25.7 | 28.0 | 26.1 | 26.7 |
| 45-64 age cohort share, % | 25.4 | 27.5 | 24.5 | 25.2 | 26.5 | 23.7 | 24.7 | 26.2 | 24.0 |
| 65+ age cohort share, % | 12.8 | 15.2 | 19.6 | 13.4 | 15.7 | 19.2 | 12.4 | 14.9 | 18.5 |

Shading relative to U.S.

* Year-to-date through July for home sales; year-to-date through August for building permits.

Sources: CoreLogic; CoStar; Realtor.com® Economic Research; U.S. Census Bureau; Regions Financial Economics Division.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## Total Nonfarm Employment, % change year ago

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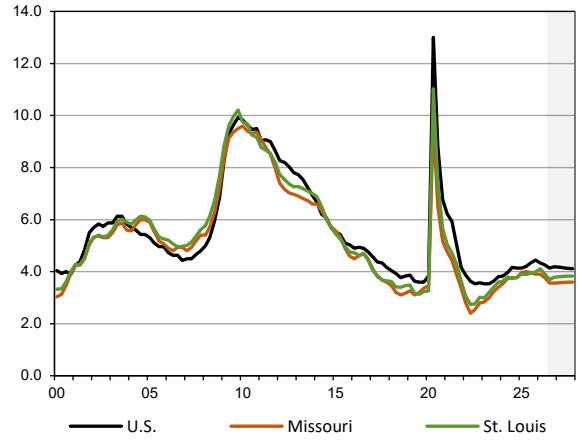
## Unemployment Rate, %

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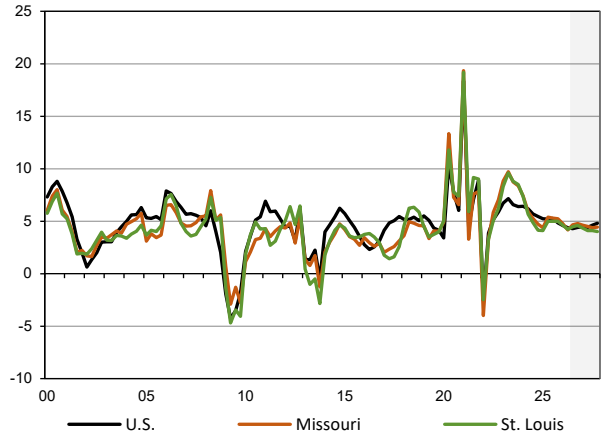
## Total Personal Income, % change year ago

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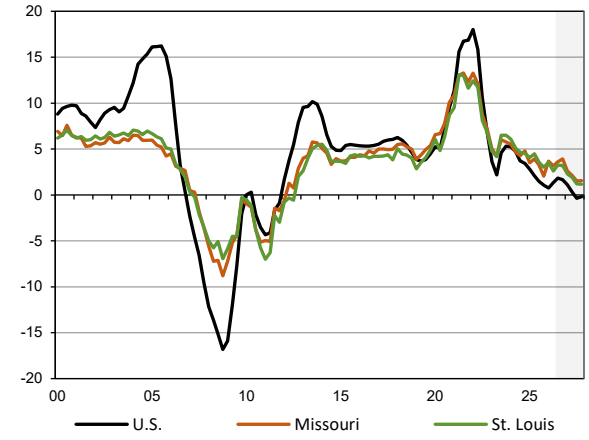
## CoreLogic House Price Index, % change year ago




| Key Economic Indicators | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 (F) | 2027 (F) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total Employment, ths.** | **1,407.5** | **1,333.5** | **1,368.1** | **1,404.3** | **1,425.4** | **1,433.4** | **1,426.7** | **1,428.6** | **1,432.4** |
| Annual % change | 0.9 | -5.3 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 1.5 | 0.6 | -0.5 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| Missouri, annual % change | 0.8 | -4.8 | 2.4 | 2.7 | 1.6 | 0.7 | -0.1 | 0.7 | 0.5 |
| U.S., annual % change | 1.4 | -5.8 | 2.9 | 4.3 | 2.2 | 1.2 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.5 |
| **Unemployment Rate, %** | **3.3** | **6.8** | **4.4** | **2.9** | **3.3** | **3.7** | **3.9** | **3.9** | **3.8** |
| Missouri, % | 3.2 | 6.2 | 4.1 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 3.7 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 3.6 |
| U.S., % | 3.7 | 8.1 | 5.4 | 3.7 | 3.6 | 4.0 | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.1 |
| **Personal Income, $ bil.** | **159.9** | **172.7** | **191.2** | **196.8** | **214.2** | **225.9** | **236.7** | **247.3** | **257.5** |
| Annual % change | 3.9 | 8.0 | 10.7 | 3.0 | 8.8 | 5.5 | 4.8 | 4.5 | 4.1 |
| Missouri, annual % change | 4.0 | 8.0 | 9.3 | 2.9 | 8.9 | 5.8 | 5.1 | 4.6 | 4.5 |
| U.S., annual % change | 4.8 | 6.9 | 9.6 | 3.0 | 6.7 | 5.9 | 5.1 | 4.4 | 4.6 |
| **CoreLogic HPI, annual % change** | **3.9** | **6.5** | **11.8** | **9.7** | **5.5** | **5.1** | **3.8** | **3.1** | **1.6** |
| Missouri, annual % change | 4.7 | 7.8 | 12.4 | 10.2 | 5.3 | 4.8 | 3.2 | 3.6 | 1.9 |
| U.S., annual % change | 4.0 | 6.8 | 15.2 | 12.6 | 3.9 | 4.3 | 1.9 | 1.4 | 0.2 |

Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis; Bureau of Labor Statistics; CoreLogic; Regions Financial Economics Division. Forecast as of October, 2026.

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