

Employment Trends FY26



Changes in Employment for Fiscal Year 2026

In FY26 the Franklin Hampshire Workforce Development Area (WDA) experienced a shifting labor market that showed signs of growth in some areas and decline in others. While the region saw improvement in its rate of unemployment it also faces a decreasing labor force participation rate and a decline in total employment. Zooming out, similar trends can be seen at the state level.

Total Employment

	MASSACHUSETTS		FRANKLIN HAMPSHIRE WDA	
	June 2025	June 2026	June 2025	June 2026
Unemployment Rate	4.5%	4.2%	4.1%	3.8%
Labor Force	3,977,527	3,902,150	132,117	128,750
Employed	3,799,721	3,739,986	126,685	123,898
Unemployed	177,806	162,164	5,432	4,852

Mass Department of Economic Research, August 2026

While the unemployment rate at both the state level and regional level are down by 0.3% year over year, the bigger picture is not so clear. During this same time the Franklin Hampshire region saw a decrease in total employment of around 2.2% losing around 2,800 jobs. At the state level, Massachusetts saw a decrease in total employment of 1.57%, resulting in a loss of around 60,000 jobs. Simultaneously, both the state and region saw their labor force participation rates decrease by 1.3% and 1.4% respectively. So, while the rate of unemployment has decreased, the labor force has decreased along with it. This scenario is not exclusive to Massachusetts. The unemployment rate of the United States has remained flat over the past year; however, the labor force participation rate has decreased to it's lowest level since 1976, excluding April and May of 2020.



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Industries Experiencing Employment Growth

Several industries in the Franklin Hampshire region saw total employment increase during FY26. The industries that saw the largest increases to total employment were Education, Public Administration, and Healthcare. Education, Public Administration and Healthcare are some of the largest industries in the region. So, while they saw some of the largest increases to total employment their percentage increases were less significant than some of the smaller industries in the region. The biggest gains on a percentage basis were seen in Warehousing and Delivery, Finance, and Information Based Industries which saw total employment increases of 16%, 15%, and 13% respectively.

Industry	Total/Unique (Jul 2024 - Jun 2025)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
Health Care and Social Assistance	12,134 / 4,587	3 : 1 	29 days
Educational Services	12,125 / 3,722	3 : 1 	34 days
Public Administration	2,038 / 622	3 : 1 	31 days
Industry	Total/Unique (Jul 2025 - Jun 2026)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
Health Care and Social Assistance	8,646 / 4,146	2 : 1 	25 days
Educational Services	10,695 / 3,579	3 : 1 	31 days
Public Administration	929 / 385	2 : 1 	25 days

Franklin Hampshire WDA Job Posting Activity for FY25 and FY26 per Lightcast.io, August 2026

Along with changes in total employment, some of the region's largest industries, Healthcare, Education, and Public Administration, also saw changes in their job posting activity when comparing FY26 to FY25. All of these industries saw total employment grow in FY26 however, they also saw less job posting activity when compared to FY25. Each of these industries saw the median duration of their job postings decrease, and all three industries saw less total job postings. These changes could be the result of many different factors such as improved recruitment techniques, a cooling job market, or formerly unmet employer demand beginning to be met. Regardless, this shift likely leans in favor of the employer and will cause a more competitive job market in these industries for job seekers. These trends will need continued monitoring and analysis to fully understand the long term implications of these shifts.

Industries Experiencing Employment Decline

While some industries in the Franklin Hampshire WDA experienced employment growth, other industries saw losses in total employment during FY2026. Maybe the most impactful losses were those in the Manufacturing and Administrative and Support industries. Decreases in total employment in Manufacturing may be attributed to a shrinking industry now facing additional instability via external factors such as tariffs. While the industry is well represented in the region the macroeconomic situation is placing additional stress on a shrinking industry in an area with high operational costs. For admin work, job cuts have become more common as of late. A major factor could be the implementation of new technology such as artificial intelligence. Many administrative positions, such as Executive Assistants or Secretaries, have been identified as candidates for potential cuts as artificial intelligence technologies are further integrated into the workplace.

On a percentage basis the industries that saw the most significant decreases in the region were Administrative and Support Services, Utilities, and Insurance Carriers and Related Activities. These industries saw percent losses of 18%, 15% and 10% respectively. The industries with the greatest absolute decrease in total employment were Retail, Administrative and Support Services, and Manufacturing. Retail and Manufacturing are two of the largest industries in the region, similar to Education, Public Administration, and Healthcare. So, even though the net change for these industries is the most significant, the percentage change is less than that of some of the smaller industries in the region.

Moving Forward

With labor markets contracting and economic conditions tightening, on both a local and national level, there are currently many challenges being faced by both job seekers and employers. While the Franklin Hampshire region is experiencing many challenges, there are bright spots such as the stability in its priority industries and signs of growth in some of its smaller regional industries. Moving forward, it will be important to monitor these employment trends to support continued growth in the smaller, up and coming industries and maintain strength in the region's priority industries which are the foundation of the local economy.

The analyst platform | Lightcast Knowledge base. (n.d.).
<https://kb.lightcast.io/en/articles/7915348-the-analyst-platform>

Unemployment rates in Massachusetts | mass.gov. (n.d.-b).
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/unemployment-rates-in-massachusetts>

Home - EconoVue™ Workforce Development Business Engagement. (n.d.-a). <https://www.econovue.com/>

Crofoot, Elizabeth, et al. Lightcast, Moscow, Idaho, 2026, pp. 1-82, Fault Lines.

The numbers in the above report reflect information from various data sets originating from multiple sources. Some of these numbers are projections and are not exact.