



Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cochise County Jobs Slide Continues in 2026

BENSON — Cochise County's job market is showing signs of strain in 2026, according to the latest data from the Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity. For January through June, the first half of the year, total nonfarm employment averaged 33,317, down 1,283 jobs, or 3.7%, compared to the same first six months in 2025. This marks the second consecutive year of decline, following a 3.4% drop in 2025, and signals a challenging period for the county's workforce.

The downturn is broad-based, affecting both the private and public sectors during the first six months of 2026. Total private employment averaged 23,250 from January through June, down 700 jobs, or 2.9%, from last year's first half. Government jobs have seen an even steeper decline, falling by 600 jobs, or 5.6%, to an average of 10,067. The government sector's losses are driven primarily by a sharp reduction in federal jobs, which dropped by 500 jobs, or 11.6%, to 3,800, while state and local government employment slipped by 100 jobs, or 1.6%, to 6,267.

Goods producing industries, which include mining, construction, and manufacturing, have remained relatively stable in the January-through-June period. The sector averaged 2,683 jobs in the first half of 2026, down 17 jobs, or 0.6%, from the previous year. Mining and construction jobs edged down by 17 jobs, or 0.8%, to 2,083, while manufacturing employment held steady at 600.

The service-providing sector, which makes up the majority of jobs in the county, has not been immune to the downturn. Service-providing employment averaged 30,633 during the first six months of 2026, down 1,267 jobs, or 4.0%, from the same period in 2025. Within this category, private service-providing jobs fell by 667 jobs, or 3.1%, to 20,567. Some industries within this group have fared better than others. Trade, transportation, and utilities added 50 jobs, a modest increase of 0.8%, rising to 6,517 jobs. However, information sector jobs fell by 267 jobs, or 27.6%, to just 700, representing the largest percentage decline among all sectors. Professional and business services also experienced a significant drop, falling by 283 jobs, or 7.5%, to 3,483 jobs. Financial activities, private education and health services, and leisure and hospitality all posted smaller declines, while other services added 33 jobs, or 4.4%, rising to 783 jobs.

The employment mix in Cochise County for the first half of 2026 reflects these trends. Goods producing industries account for 8.1% of total employment, private service-providing jobs make up 61.7%, and government positions represent 30.2%. The data suggest that while the goods producing sector has

remained relatively resilient, the service and government sectors are bearing the brunt of the current downturn.

Looking back over the past several years, Cochise County's January-through-June employment picture has fluctuated. After a pandemic-driven dip in 2020 and 2021, the county saw modest gains in 2022 and 2023, with total nonfarm employment peaking at 35,242 in the first half of 2024. Since then, however, the trend has reversed, with job losses accelerating in both 2025 and the first six months of 2026. For now, the data paint a picture of a community facing economic headwinds, with particular challenges in the public sector and key service industries.

For more information on the Cochise County economy, including current and historical data, visit CochiseEconomy.com, a partnership project of Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group, Arizona G&T Cooperatives, and community sponsors.

Cochise County Employment Trends (Year-to-Date 2026)

Sector	Avg. Employment 2026 YTD Through June	Jobs Gained/Lost from 2025 YTD Through June	% Change from 2025 YTD Through June
Total Nonfarm Employment	33,317	-1,283	-3.7%
Total Private Employment	23,250	-683	-2.9%
Goods Producing	2,683	-17	-0.6%
Mining & Construction	2,083	-17	-0.8%
Manufacturing	600	0	0.0%
Service-Providing	30,633	-1,267	-4.0%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	6,517	+50	+0.8%
Information	700	-267	-27.6%
Financial Activities	1,000	-17	-1.6%
Professional & Business Services	3,483	-283	-7.5%
Private Education & Health Services	4,683	-33	-0.7%
Leisure & Hospitality	3,400	-150	-4.2%
Other Services	783	+33	+4.4%
Government	10,067	-600	-5.6%
Federal Government	3,800	-500	-11.6%
State & Local Government	6,267	-100	-1.6%

Source: Arizona Office of Economic Opportunity and US Economic Research

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