HNB Mortgage
Real People★Real Service★Real Simple
Real Estate Trends For Realtors, Homeowners and Professionals
February 2026

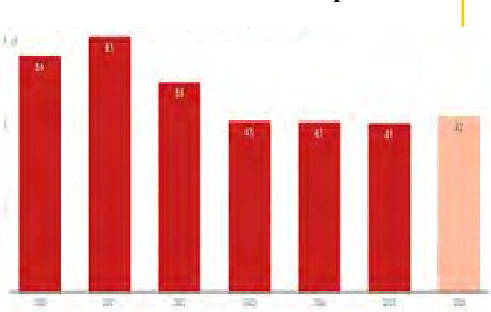
Making Sense of the Jobs Data

The jobs picture has changed dramatically within the last year. The picture has not been so clear throughout the year, especially because of the major disruption due to the government shutdown which delayed and brought employment data into question for the latter portion of the year. In addition, we went through the year witnessing massive layoffs within the Federal Government sector. Yet, when you step back and look at the big picture, there is no doubt about the trends. The question is what do these trends mean?

The number of new jobs created in the U.S. during 2025 fell dramatically from previous years. And this trend deepened as the year progressed. The numbers? In 2024 the economy created about two million jobs. In 2025 just under 600,000 jobs were added. In the first quarter of 2025, the economy created over 300,000 jobs. In the fourth quarter of 2025, around 70,000 jobs were lost. Additionally, the unemployment rate started the year at 4.0% and ended up at 4.4%, statistically a rise of 10%.

From a numerical standpoint, the direction of the job sector within the economy is clear. On the other hand, there is another factor in addition to the government layoffs which beckons us to look at these numbers more closely. That factor is immigration. And we are not focusing upon illegal immigration, but the reduction of legal immigrants. In 2024, the number of legal immigrants emigrating to the U.S. was approximately 2.6 million. In 2025, this number was reduced to around 1.0 million. Between the government layoffs and the reduction of approximately 1.6 million immigrants, it is no wonder that the number of jobs created has been reduced. But what does that mean for the overall economy? Will we continue down the path of muted jobs creation from here and how would this affect economic growth? We will get some of these answers in 2026, but the total picture may not be clear for some time...

Home Sales Will Rise in 2026 per Redfin



Affordability Improving

A Realtor.com analysis shows that down payment affordability improved in 2025, with the typical United States household needing significantly less time to save for a home purchase, easing a major constraint on homebuyer entry.

The report estimates that buyers now require about seven years of savings at the national average personal savings rate to reach a median U.S. down payment, a notable improvement from the roughly 12 years needed in 2022 when affordability pressures peaked. However, the seven-year savings horizon remains well above historical norms — approximately twice the pre-pandemic average — highlighting ongoing affordability headwinds driven by higher down payment requirements and an average consumer savings rate that remains below long-term levels.

It should be noted that in high-cost coastal metros, the time to save a competitive downpayment can stretch to 20 to more than 35 years, effectively pricing many buyers out of homeownership. Conversely, more affordable metros and military-oriented markets — where VA loans and lower median downpayment requirements are more prevalent — frequently deliver timelines under five years, presenting more attainable entry points for homebuyers with more disciplined savings tactics...

Source: Realtor.com

Selected Interest Rates

January 22, 2026

30 Year Mortgages——6.09%
2025 High (Jan 16)——7.04%
2025 Low (Dec 31)——6.15%
15 Year Mortgages——5.44%
10 Year Treasuries——4.25%

Sources—Fed Reserve, Freddie Mac
Note: Average rates do not include fees and points. Information is provided for indicating trends only and should not be used for comparison purposes.

Lock-in Effect To Ease in 2026

For the last few years, many homeowners have felt like they were holding a winning hand, a two to three percent mortgage rate that seemed too good to ever give up. And honestly, who could blame them? Those rates were historic. The average 30-year fixed mortgage rate fell below 3 percent in 2020 and 2021, a level that has only occurred briefly in United States history and has since more than doubled, with rates hovering in the low to mid 6 percent range through late 2025. But as we move onward in 2026, the conversation is shifting.

More homeowners are realizing that holding onto a low rate indefinitely may no longer be the winning strategy it once seemed. Instead of asking, "What rate am I giving up?" they are starting to ask a more important question: "Does my home still fit my life?" Many are evaluating whether their current home still aligns with their lifestyle and long-term goals. That shift in mindset is unlocking movement. Growing families are running out of space. Retirees are ready to simplify. Divorce, blended households, and multi-generational living arrangements are reshaping housing needs. Many of these decisions were put on hold over the last few years.

For a long time, the biggest hesitation was not selling, it was buying the next home. That fear is beginning to fade. Active inventory has improved meaningfully from the extreme lows of 2021 and 2022. Looking ahead, 2026 has the potential to represent true market normalization. Not a boom. Not a bust. Just balance, steadier pricing, improved inventory, more predictable financing options, and decisions driven by life instead of fear. Source: HousingWire

Did You Know…

Zillow has projected that the mortgage payment for a typical home should be affordable in 20 of the nation's 50 largest metros by December, the longest that list has looked since 2022...According to the Census Bureau, the U.S. population grew by 3,304,757 to a total population of 340,110,988 in 2024. The population grew at a rate of 0.98%, the highest rate since 0.99% in 2001.

Compliments of
Suzanne Smith
HNB Mortgage
2101 W. Wadley Ste.36
Midland TX 79705
432-683-0081
Suzanne@HNBMortgage.com
NMLS # 192813
Branch/Company 226999/205935
Se habla Español