

Unemployment and Labor Force Participation Rate Trends for Men and Women in Delaware

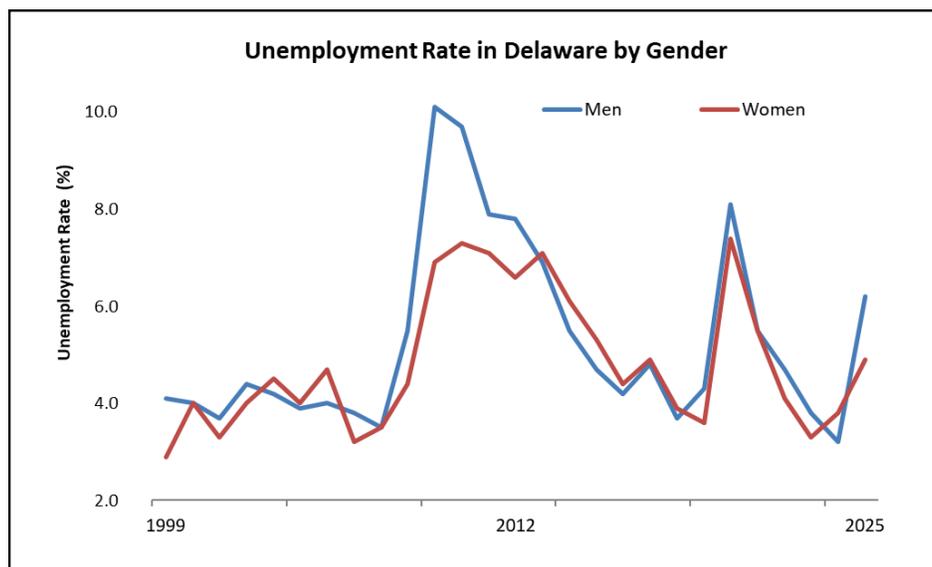
In 2025, Delaware’s official annual average unemployment rate increased to 4.5 percent, the highest level since 2021, when it stood at 5.4 percent. The official unemployment rate is produced through the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program. However, detailed demographic labor market data are available only from the Current Population Survey (CPS), which is used for the comparison between men and women below.

Current Population Survey (CPS)

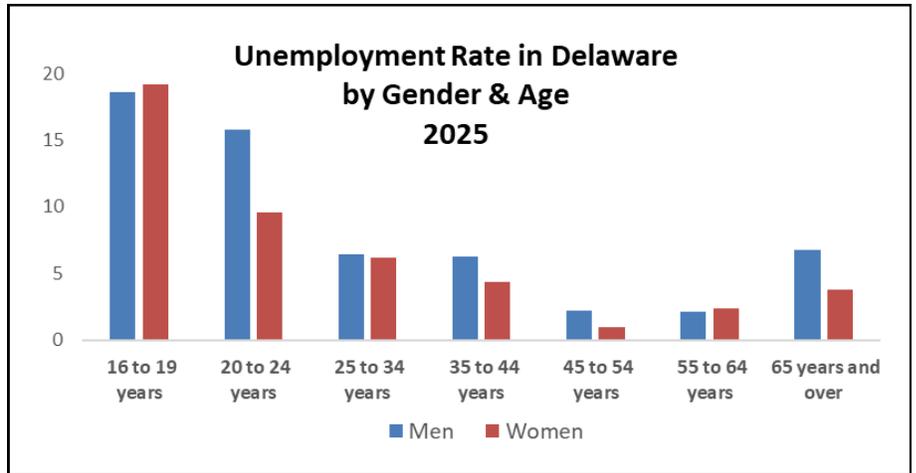
The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a monthly survey of approximately 60,000 households nationwide and serves as the primary source for calculating the national unemployment rate. In Delaware, about 850 households participate in the CPS each month. This sample is too small to independently produce the state’s official unemployment rate. Instead, CPS data are incorporated into an econometric model used to estimate Delaware’s unemployment rate. Detailed labor market information—such as the demographic labor force data shown in the graphs below—comes directly from the CPS. Because monthly CPS estimates are based on a small sample, the estimates have a lot of variation from month to month. By using annual averages, this provides a more stable and consistent view of trends in the estimate.

Unemployment Rates

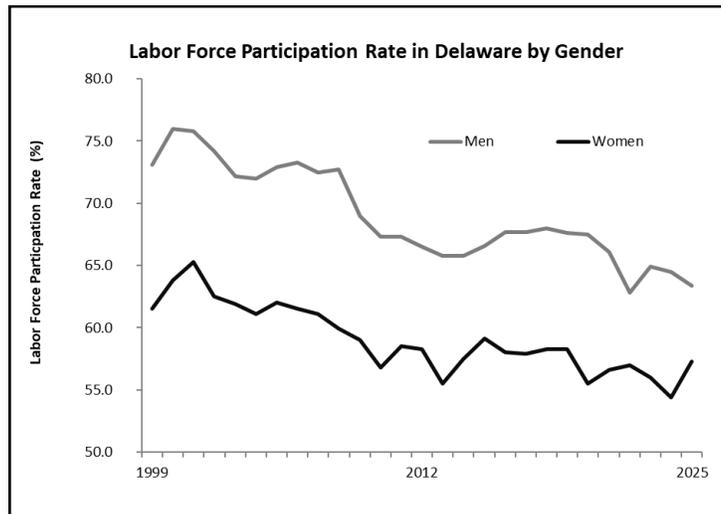
Unemployment increased for both men and women in 2025. The unemployment rate for men rose to 6.2 percent, up 3.0 percentage points from 2024. For men, this was the highest unemployment rate since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The unemployment rate for women increased by 1.1 percentage points over the year to 4.9 percent, the highest level since 2021.



Among men, those ages 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 experienced the highest unemployment rates in 2025 at 18.6 and 15.8 percent, respectively, while men ages 45 to 64 had the lowest rates at 2.1 percent. Among women, those ages 45 to 54 recorded the lowest unemployment rate at 1.0 percent, while the highest rate was among women ages 16 to 19, at 19.2 percent.



Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR)



The Labor Force Participation rate (LFPR) among men declined slightly from 2024 to 2025, declining from 64.5 percent to 63.4 percent, while the LFPR among women increased from 54.4 percent to 57.3 percent over the same period. As a result, the participation rate gap between men and women narrowed to 6.1 percentage points in 2025, down from 10.1 percentage points in 2024. Since 1999, the widest gap occurred during the 2008 recession, when the LFPR for men was 72.7 percent compared with 59.9 percent for women. On average, 519,500 Delaware residents participated in the labor force during 2025, with men and women represented in nearly equal numbers.

In 2025, the Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for both men and women was highest among workers ages 25 to 34, at 90.3 percent for men and 89.9 percent for women. Participation was lowest among those ages 65 and older, at 20.6 percent for men and 15.5 percent for women. The largest participation gap between men and women occurred among workers ages 35 to 44, where men's LFPR exceeded women's by 7.4 percentage points.

