

# BY THE NUMBERS: ECONOMIC INDICATORS

May 2026

## Executive Summary

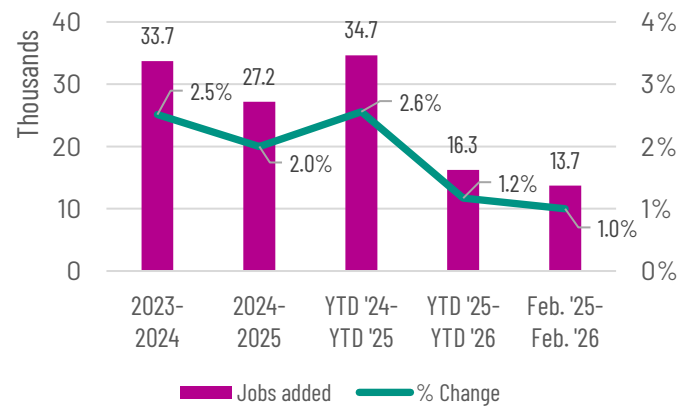
This month Opportunity Austin returns to a full edition of our economic indicators report. After a brief break in reporting for annual revisions, agencies have resumed regular releases. All of the datapoints now extend through 2025, and the current Bureau of Labor Statistics' jobs and unemployment reports extend through February. Here are some takeaways from the most up-to-date releases :

- Austin's YOY job growth totaled 13,700 in February 2026, ranking as the third fastest growing of the Top 50 largest metros at 1.0%, exceeding Texas' growth rate of 0.5%.
- Austin's unemployment rate of 3.7% in February 2026 was the seventh lowest among the Top 50 largest metros.
- February 2026 was the best performing February in AUS airport's history with 1.48 million passengers, exceeding the previous best of 1.46 million passengers in February 2024.

## Non-Farm Payroll Job Growth

Job growth in Austin boosted in Feb. '26 with an additional 2,100 jobs from Jan. '26 in the non seasonally adjusted series. Feb. '26 saw 13,700 jobs added to the region since the previous year, Feb. '26.

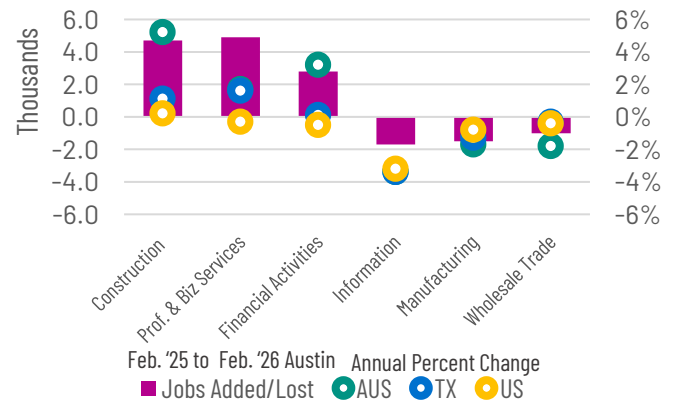
Austin's job growth of 1.0% from Feb. 2025 to Feb. 2026 exceeded the overall rate in TX at 0.5% and the US which was only 0.03%. Austin was ranked as the 3rd best performing of the Top 50 metros in February 2026 for job growth. The only metros with fast job growth were Las Vegas, 2.0% and San Jose, 1.5%. With growth of 0.6%, Dallas was the only other metro in Texas within the Top 10. Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), CES.



## Top Job Gains/Losses by Industry, Feb 2026

The best performing industries in Austin over the last year were Professional & Business Services (4,900 additional jobs, 1.7%), Construction, Natural Resources, & Mining (4,700, 5.2%), and Financial Activities (2,600, 3.2%). Austin's growth rate for Professional & Business Services, Construction, and Financial Activities jobs outperformed both TX and the US.

The worst performing industries within the Austin region were Information (-1,700, -3.4%), Manufacturing, (-1,500, -1.7%), and Wholesale Trade (-1,000, -1.8%). Each of these performed worse this past year compared to TX and the US and were the only major industry sectors within Austin that saw negative growth rates. Source: U.S. BLS, CES.

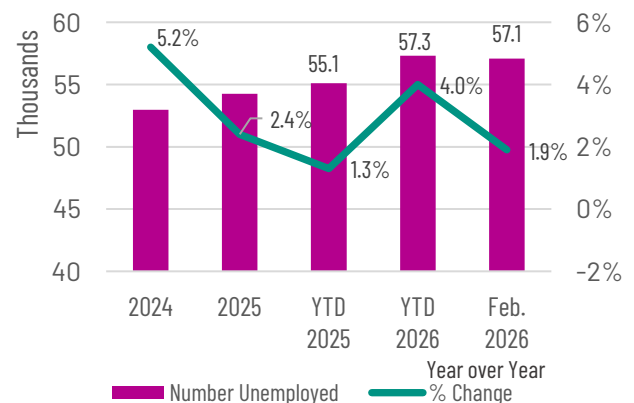


## Unemployment

After a steep 5.2% increase in the number of unemployed individuals in 2024, the number increased at a slower rate in 2025. The number of unemployed is 1.9% higher than one year ago, while the increase in TX and US were sharper at 4.1% and 6.3%, respectively.

In Feb. 2026, the number unemployed totaled 57,071 in Austin, which is 1,066 more than one year ago. In TX, the state experienced 27,377 more unemployed over the past year, while the total across the US was 480,000 higher.

Source: U.S. BLS, LAUS.



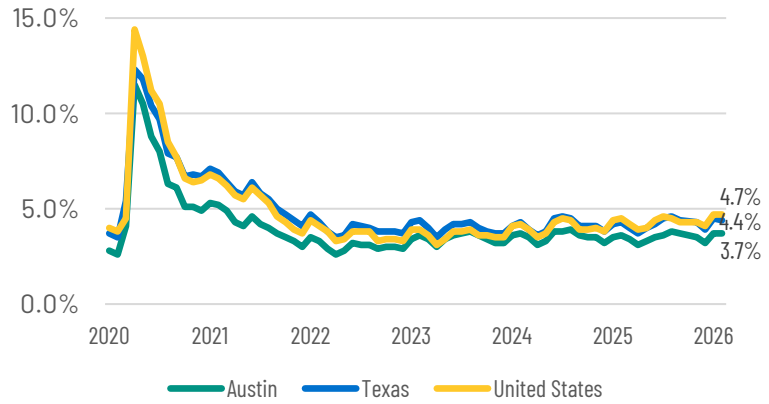


## Unemployment Rate Comparison

The unemployment rate for the Austin region was 3.7% in February 2026, which is 0.1 higher from one year ago. Austin's rate continues to perform better than that of TX at 4.4% and the U.S. at 4.7%. Other TX metros including Fort Worth, 4.1%, Dallas, 4.2%, San Antonio, 4.3% and Houston, 4.7% were all higher than Austin's rate. In Feb. 2026, Austin had the seventh lowest unemployment rate of the Top 50 US metros.

Since recovering from a peak of 11.5% during COVID, Austin's rate averaged 3.5% in 2023, 2024, and 2025. TX's rate rose to 12.3% during COVID and declined to 4.0% in 2023 and has since averaged 4.2% in 2025. The US rate reached 14.4% in COVID and declined to 3.6% in 2023 but has since risen to 4.3% in 2025.

Source: U.S. BLS, LAUS.

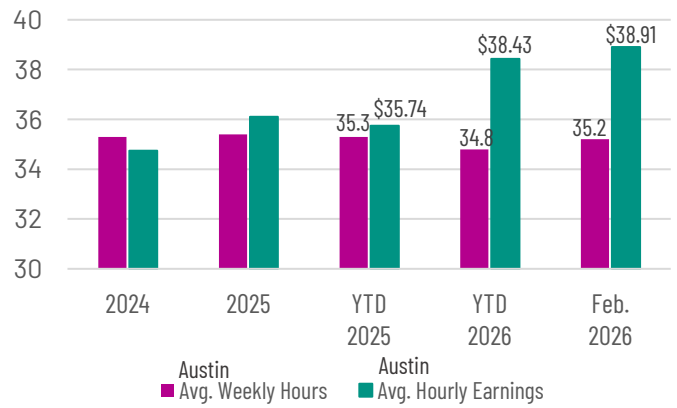


## Workforce Hours & Earnings

The average number of hours worked for payroll jobs in the Austin region in Feb. 2026 was 35.2, down from 35.7 this time last year. For 2026 YTD, hours worked is down 2.2% from 2025 YTD. Texas employees worked more hours this year at 36.1, compared to last; while the US average was 34.2.

Average hourly earnings rose in Austin were \$36.11 in 2025, up 3.9% compared to increases of 4.6% in Texas and 4.0% in US. For the first 2 months of 2026, average earnings in Austin were up 7.5% from \$35.74 to \$38.43. Increases both in the TX and the US were less profound at 2.8% and 3.7%, respectively.

Source: U.S. BLS, CES.

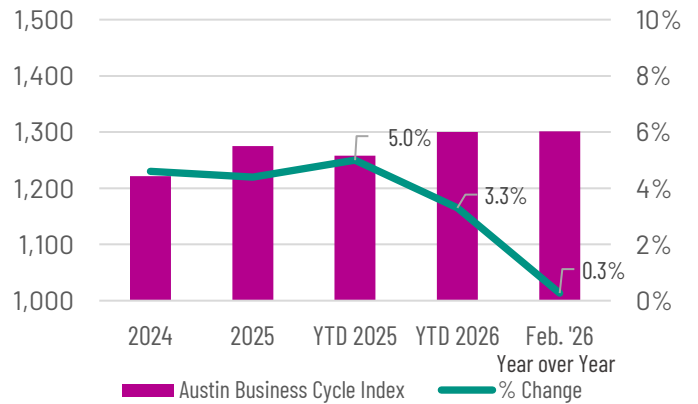


## Metro Business Cycle Index

The Austin metro's business cycle index continues to show growth in both the YTD and YoY comparison through February. After growth of 4.4% in 2025, the rate slowed to 3.3% for YTD 2026 compared to YTD 2025 growth of 5.0%.

Statewide, the business cycle index growth grew by 2.0% from YTD 2025 to YTD 2026, compared to growth of 3.0% from YTD 2024 to YTD 2025. Across Texas, YTD growth in the other major metros was between 1.1% in Houston to 2.0% in Dallas and 2.2% in Ft. Worth. San Antonio was at 1.1%. Produced by the Federal Reserve of Dallas, the business cycle index reflects broad economic conditions including unemployment, inflation-adjusted wage and retail sales growth.

Source: Dallas Federal Reserve.

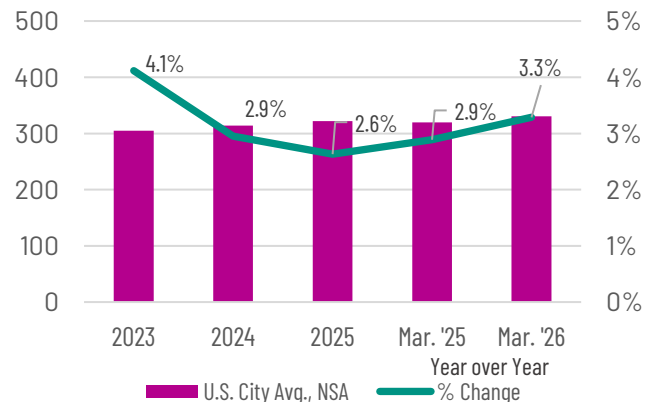


## Consumer Price Index

After reaching a 40-year high of 8.0% in the annual percent change in 2022, the U.S. Consumer Price Index growth fell to 2.9% in 2024 and 2.6% in 2025. In March 2026, CPI was up 3.3% from last year. The biggest contributors to the increase were Energy, up 12.5% from last year with Fuel oil up 44.2% and Gasoline up 18.9%. Shelter and Medical services were each up 3.0% and 3.7% from last year.

While a CPI is not produced for the Austin metro, the Houston and Dallas metro indices were both up by 1.3% in 2025, which is improved from inflation rates of 2.5% and 3.9% in 2024, respectively.

Source: U.S. BLS, CPI.

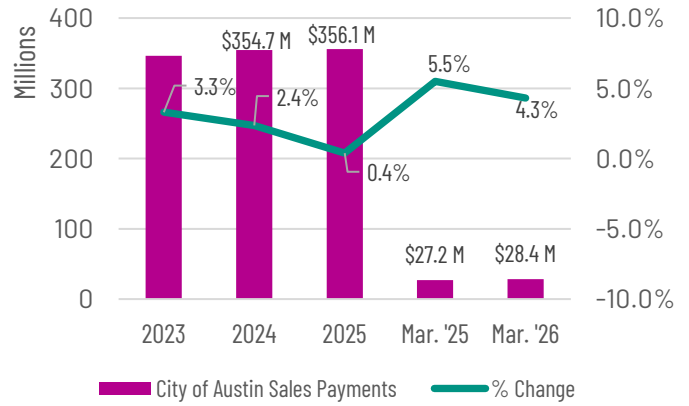




## Sales Tax Receipts

Sales tax allocation payments to the City of Austin totaled \$356 million in 2025, a slight increase of 0.4% over 2024. Previously, payments were up 2.4% in 2024 and 3.3% in 2023. For March 2026, the City of Austin received \$28.4 million, up 4.3% from March 2025.

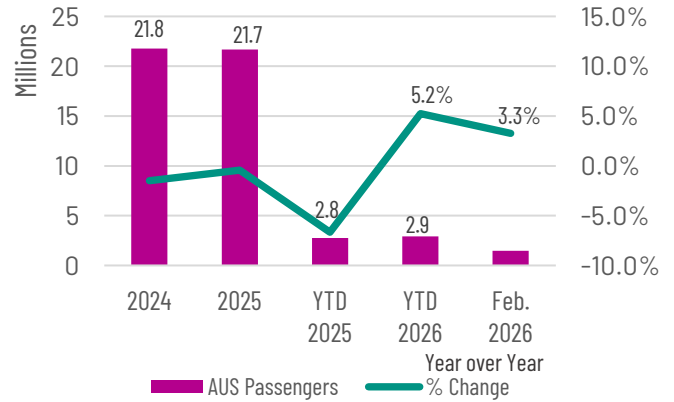
In Round Rock, receipts totaled \$129M and were up 10.5% in 2025 following a drop of -1.4% in 2024 and growth of 1.4% in 2023. San Marcos received 0.5% more in sales tax receipts in 2025 to \$39M, which follows a decline of -2.1% in 2024 and growth of 4.2% in 2023. For March 2026, receipts were down 13.7% in Round Rock and up 0.3% in San Marcos year over year. Source: Texas Comptroller



## AUS Airport Passenger Activity

Annual passenger counts through the Austin airport hit 21.6 million passengers in 2025, a drop of 0.4% from 2024. Through Feb. 2026, YTD totals are 2.9 million, up from the same time last year at 2.8 million. Feb. 2026 was the busiest February of all time with 1.48 million passengers, surpassing the previous record set in 2024 of 1.46 million.

Total cargo (including Belly freight, cargo and mail) totaled 276.4 million pounds in 2025, down 8.5% from 301.9 million pounds in 2024. The annual record for total cargo occurred in 2022 with 310.1 million pounds transported. For Feb. 2026, cargo totaled 22.2 million pounds, which was a 12.0% increase from last year. Source: City of Austin.

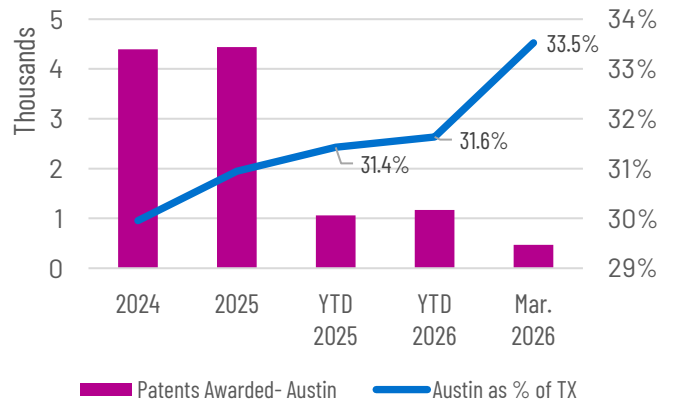


## Patent Activity

Austin inventors are averaging 4,520 patents applied each year during the 2020's, which is higher than the 3,762 averaged during the 2010's. Patent activity totaled 4,442 in 2025, up 1.1% from 2024. Texas saw a 2.2% drop in patents in 2025, while the US was up 0.3%. For Mar. 2026, a total of 467 patents were applied, up from 377 in Feb. 2026.

Austin represents approximately 33% of patent activity in TX. This is a truly remarkable data point since the Austin MSA only represents around 8% of the entire population of the State. Austin's share of TX patents increased to 30.9% in 2025, up from 30.0% in 2024 and 29.5% in 2023.

Source: U.S. Patent & Trademark Office.



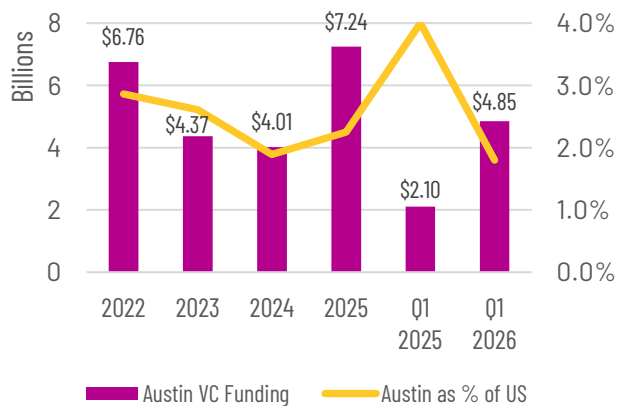
## Venture Capital Investment

Venture Capital funding in Austin reached record levels with a total \$7.24 billion raised in 2025, up 80.4% from \$4.01 billion in 2024. Previously, Austin's record VC funding year was 2021 when \$6.88 billion was raised.

With it's best year ever in 2025, Austin moved up a spot to the fifth highest amount of VC investment of any metro in the US. Austin's share of VC funding nationwide increased to 2.3% in 2025, up from 1.9% in 2024.

Strong VC activity continued in 2026 with first quarter VC raised of \$4.85, the single largest quarter recorded in Austin history. The largest deals were Saronic, \$1.75B; Apptpronik, \$935M; CesiumAstro, \$470M; and inKind, \$450M.

Source: Pitchbook, Page 3



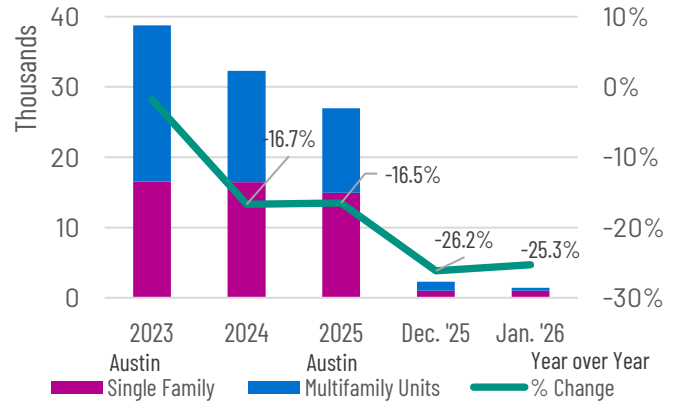


## Housing Permit Activity

Building permits issued in the Austin region came down from historic highs of between 42,000 to 51,000 units in 2021 and 2022. Last year a total of 27,000 units were issued, down 16.5% from 2024. In Jan. 2026, 1,425 permits were issued, down from 2,269 permits in Dec. 2025., a 37.2% decrease. Nationally, permits were down 3.3% in Jan. 2026.

Last year in the Austin region, the share of single-family units exceeded multifamily, a continuation from 2024. Previously from 2021 to 2023, multifamily permits exceeded single family. In Jan. 2026, 991 single family permits were issued compared to 434 multifamily.

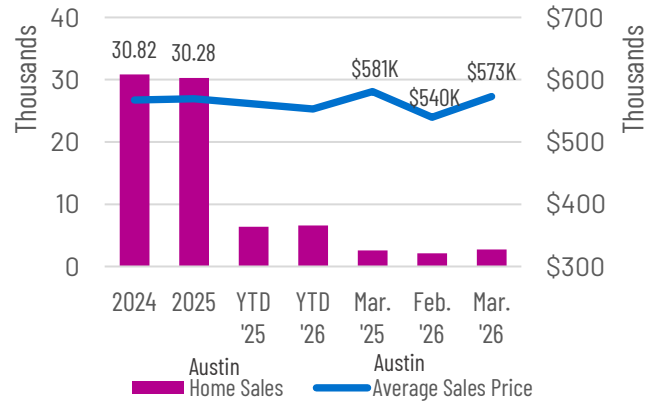
Source: U.S. Census Bureau Building Permits Survey.



## Home Sales

Home sales in the Austin region peaked at 41,094 in 2021. In the past 4 years, total sales each year have been on average 31,323. However, for YTD 2026, sales are up by about 199 or 3.1% compared to the same time last year. Statewide, YTD sales are up 11.0% compared to 2025, while U.S. sales are up 0.2%.

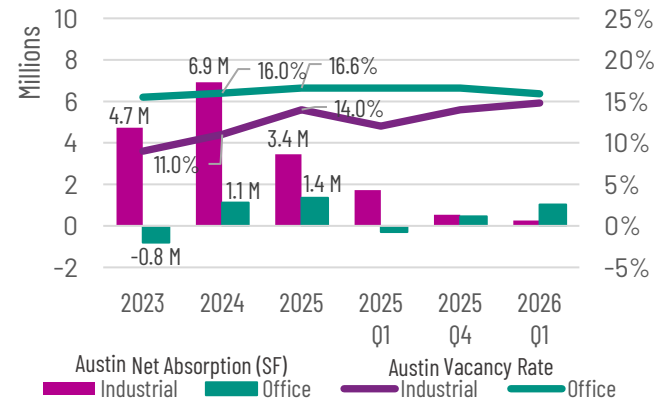
The average sales price in the Austin region average \$569,447 in 2025, a slight increase of about \$2,000 from 2024. In March 2026, the average sales price was \$572,908, which was down from \$580,948 one year ago.. In Mar. 2026, months on inventory in Austin was 4.8 months, which was 0.3 months higher than one year ago. Source: TX A&M Real Estate Research Center.



## Commercial Real Estate Activity

After having office vacancy rates of around 7 to 8% just before COVID in the Austin region, continued new construction delivery and softened leasing activity has brought the office vacancy rate up to 16.6% in 2025 compared to 16.0% in 2024. The current office market totals 138M SF, having added 18.4M SF of new inventory since 2020 Q2. Quoted lease rates in 2026 Q1 ticked down to \$43.70 from \$44.15 in 2025 Q4.

Likewise, the Austin industrial market has grown to 176M SF, adding 63M SF since 2020 Q2 or 55% growth over 5 years. The vacancy rate reached 14.0% in 2025, up from 11.0% in 2024. Quoted lease rates were \$14.78 in 2026 Q1. Source: CoStar.



## Upcoming Releases

On May 15, the BLS will release an important annual data set called the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics. The data is the most comprehensive federal release of wage estimates for 830 occupations for US metro areas. Additionally, the US Census Bureau will release its 2025 population estimates for US cities sometime in May 2026. Other release dates include:

- U.S. BLS Metropolitan Area Employment and Unemployment Statistics for March 2026 on May 19, 2026.
- Metro Sales & Housing release from Texas A&M Real Estate Center for April 2026 on May 20, 2026,
- New Residential Housing Permits release from U.S. Census for April 2026 on May 28, 2026.

## Contact Us

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