



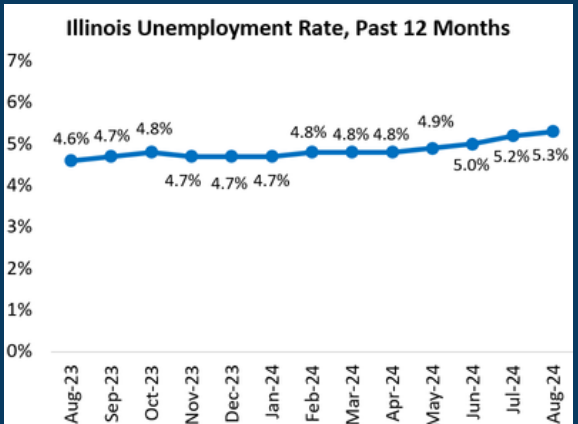
U.S. ADDED UNION MEMBERS FOR SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR

According to the [2024 State of the Unions](#) report by ILEPI and the Project for Middle Class Renewal, the U.S. saw an increase in union membership for the second consecutive year, with Illinois experiencing its highest number of successful union petitions in a decade. Despite challenges like the 2018 Supreme Court *Janus* decision and “right-to-work” laws that have affected union membership in the public sector, private sector unions have shown growth in Illinois. The passage of the Workers’ Rights Amendment in 2022 has contributed to these gains, with Illinois’ unionization rates rising, especially in new industries and workplaces. The report also finds that unions improve job quality. Unions boost worker earnings by 13% on average while expanding health insurance coverage, retirement security, and paid leave.

However, unionization rates across the U.S. continue to decline. The *Janus* decision imposed “right-to-work” conditions on public sector unions, reducing membership as unions are required to represent non-members without compensation. Despite this, Illinois continues to maintain one of the highest unionization rates in the country, with union members better able to withstand economic challenges like inflation. Unionized workers in Illinois have seen faster wage growth compared to neighboring “right-to-work” states, underscoring the benefits of collective bargaining in improving job quality and wages.

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ILLINOIS ECONOMIC INDICATORS



Jobs added (rank), Aug-23 to Aug-24 = **+36,300 jobs (21)**

State unemployment rate (rank), Aug-24 = **5.2% (48)**

Average private sector wage (rank), Aug-24 = **\$33.72 (17)**

Private sector wage growth from Aug-23 to Aug-24 (rank) = **+1.2% (47)**

Illinois Flash Index (as of Sep-24) = **102.0**

ILEPI'S SPRINGFIELD SEMINAR & FUNDRAISER

Please join us in Springfield on Wednesday, November 13!

First, we will be hosting a **FREE** seminar from 8:00am-9:30am at the Illinois AFL-CIO.

Then, join us from 6:00pm-8:00pm at the Wyndham Springfield City Centre. Tickets and sponsorships still available!

Visit www.illinoiseipi.org/events to register and pay online.

We appreciate your support!



OTHER RESEARCH:

- **Broadband infrastructure projects in Minnesota** lag behind other public works projects in terms of local hiring, job quality, and accountability. Despite receiving significant taxpayer funding, most broadband projects are exempt from the state's prevailing wage law, leading to fewer opportunities for Minnesota-based contractors and lower wages for workers. Expanding prevailing wage coverage to more broadband projects could improve these outcomes, boosting local business participation, worker earnings, and project productivity.



SOUTH SUBURBAN AIRPORT WOULD CREATE JOBS & BOOST ECONOMY

A new study by ILEPI, *The South Suburban Airport: Exploring the Economic Impact of a Cargo-Only Chicagoland Airport*, reveals that the development of a cargo-only airport in Will County could create nearly 8,000 jobs and generate over \$1.3 billion in regional economic activity. This long-discussed project, known as the South Suburban Airport (SSA), is gaining traction following recent legislative actions that direct the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) to begin a prequalification process for vendors. The study emphasizes the potential for this airport to become a key player in the growing e-commerce industry, as the demand for air cargo services continues to rise. With Will County already serving as a major transportation hub, the construction of the SSA could further bolster the region's logistics capabilities and drive significant economic growth.

The report highlights key investments and legislative actions that have advanced the project, including a \$162 million allocation for an interchange at I-57 and Eagle Lake Road under the Rebuild Illinois program. The SSA could generate approximately 80 full-time jobs annually and add \$24 million in yearly economic activity post-construction. By providing a dedicated cargo airport, the SSA would alleviate pressure on existing facilities at O'Hare and Rockford airports, both of which have seen a 90% increase in cargo activity since 2010. The SSA would strategically position Will County to serve major integrators like FedEx, UPS, and Amazon Air, supporting continued growth in the region's e-commerce and logistics sectors.

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