

Albuquerque Hiring Accelerates Sharply in March as Seasonal Surge and Broad-Based Growth Push Panel to Strongest Month of the Year

Albuquerque, N.M., April 2, 2026 – Albuquerque-area employers posted their strongest hiring month of the year in March, with new hires nearly tripling separations, according to the Payday HCM Albuquerque Jobs Report. Across a representative panel of 571 local businesses, the report recorded 1,271 new hires against 519 separations, a net gain of 752 positions within the sample. The findings mark a significant acceleration from February and reflect both seasonal momentum and broad-based confidence, with more than a third of panel firms expanding their workforce during the month.

Key Insights

- **Performing arts and entertainment posted a seasonal surge.** The sector led all industries in the panel with a net gain of 260 positions across just nine businesses, reflecting the seasonal ramp-up typical of spring event and production schedules. While concentrated in a small number of employers, the magnitude of the gain made it the single largest contributor to March's overall growth.
- **Food services continues to lead among broad-based sectors.** Food services and drinking places added a net 139 positions across 65 businesses, the largest sector by employer count. Combined with accommodation (+46 across 41 businesses), the broader hospitality industry accounted for nearly a quarter of the panel's total net gains, reinforcing the pattern of steady consumer-facing demand heading into spring.
- **Growth is the widest it has been this year.** The share of panel firms expanding their workforce rose from 29.5% in February to 36.3% in March, while the share contracting dropped from 16.0% to 11.6%. The diffusion index, which measures the breadth of employment change, nearly doubled from 13.5 to 24.7. More than a third of all businesses in the panel added at least one employee during the month.
- **Turnover continues its downward trend.** The monthly turnover rate within the panel fell from 2.81% in February to 2.11% in March, the third consecutive monthly decline. Lower turnover paired with the strongest hiring of the year suggests improving workforce stability across the Albuquerque market.

Top Growing Sectors, March 2026

Sector-level data from Payday HCM's employer panel, classified by NAICS code.

Sector	Businesses	Net Change	Hires / Separations
Performing Arts & Entertainment	9	+260	+266 / -6
Food Services & Drinking Places	65	+139	+284 / -145
Ambulatory Health Care	54	+50	+118 / -68
Accommodation (Hotels)	41	+46	+100 / -54
Repair & Maintenance	8	+41	+67 / -26
Educational Services	17	+39	+52 / -13
Social Assistance	23	+33	+44 / -11

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Notable declines within the panel: Credit intermediation (-8) posted the largest contraction, followed by furniture manufacturing (-3) and construction of buildings (-3). Only 10 of 69 sectors tracked showed any decline, and none exceeded single digits. March was the narrowest month for sectoral declines in the current year.

What We're Seeing

"This is the kind of month that tells you something real is happening in the local economy. It is not just one sector carrying the numbers. We are seeing growth across food services, health care, education, and social services all at the same time. When more than a third of the businesses in our panel are adding people in the same month, that is broad-based confidence, not a seasonal blip. The performing arts surge is seasonal, and we expect that to level off, but the underlying trend across the rest of the economy is genuinely encouraging for Albuquerque."

– Andy Siegel, Founder and CEO, Payday HCM

About this report:

The Payday HCM Albuquerque Jobs Report is a monthly analysis of anonymized payroll data from a representative panel of Albuquerque-area businesses with five or more employees. The panel currently includes 571 employers representing approximately ten percent of qualifying businesses in the region. The report identifies local employment trends based on this cross-section and should not be interpreted as a count of all jobs in the Albuquerque metro area. Full methodology is available [here](#). For questions or to schedule an interview with Andy Siegel, contact reports@paydayhcm.com.