



First Quarter Economic Update

Leaders for a Better Louisiana

April 2026

Key takeaways for first quarter 2026

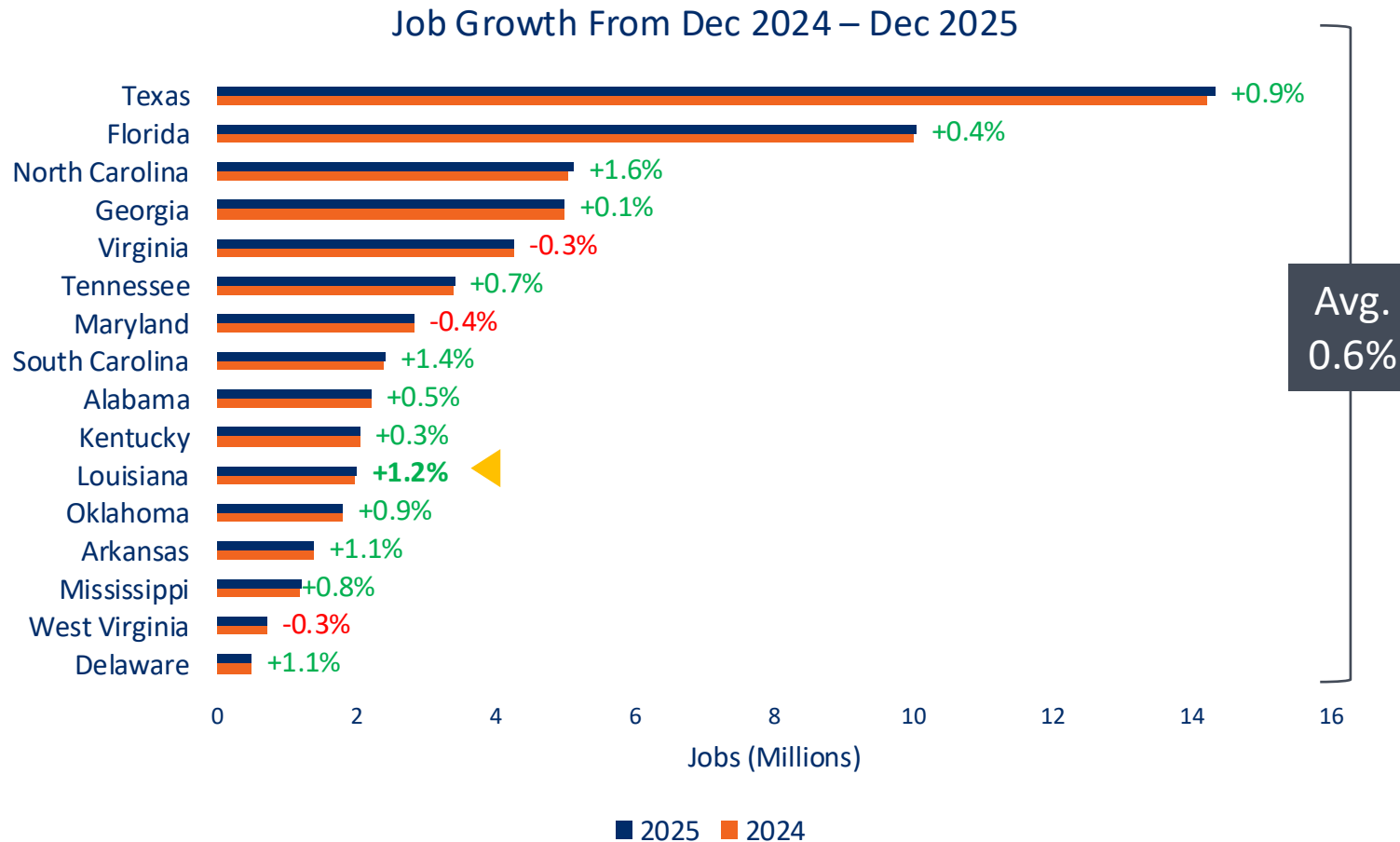


Headlines

1. Louisiana's job growth rate ranked 3rd fastest in the South in 2025
2. Louisiana reached an all-time high in job count, adding almost 23,000 jobs last year
3. Regional growth continues in major metros of north and south Louisiana alike, with declines in only two regions
4. Nearly all (10 of 14) major industries grew jobs over the last year, led by Health Care
5. Louisiana ranked 9th in the US for manufacturing talent pipeline in a new national index from Lightcast and Area Development magazine
6. Louisiana ranked 2nd in the South for domestic population in-migration; possibly due to more affordable housing than the national average
7. Homicide rates in Louisiana fell vastly from 2021 to 2025, with Louisiana seeing the 3rd largest decline of peers with consistent improvement each year.
8. Unemployment rate is lower than before COVID and same time last year
9. Louisiana has increased its highway maintenance spending faster than almost every Southern state over the last decade, ranked #2

Louisiana Saw Relatively High Job Growth Among Peers

Analysis



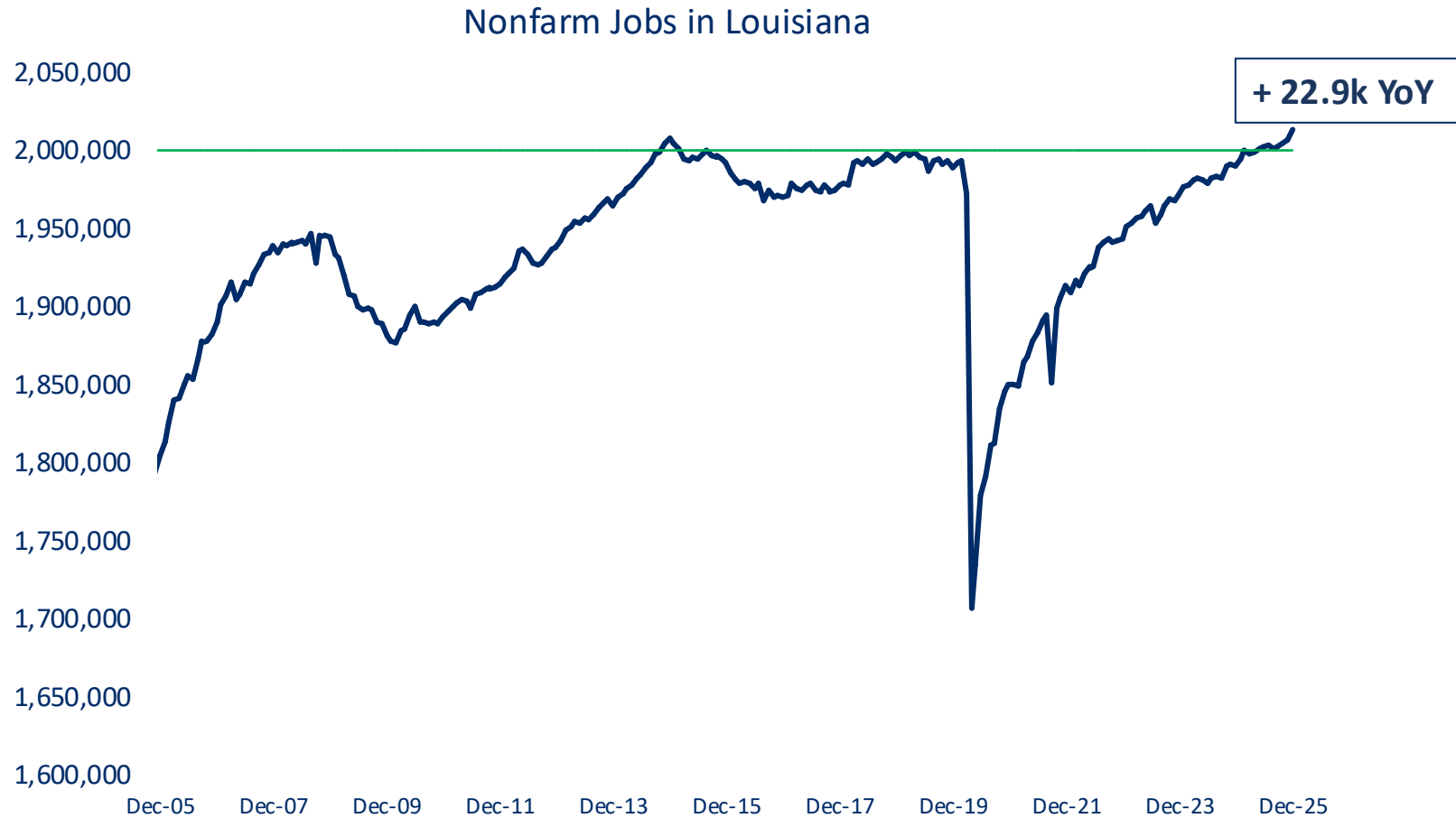
- Louisiana's job growth ranks 3rd among 16 Southern States, behind only North and South Carolina, and grew faster last year than Texas and Florida by percentage growth
- Much of Louisiana's job growth is being fueled by major projects ramping up, with growth likely continuing as more big projects get underway

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; 2024 and 2025 employment totals are captured in December of each year. Figures are seasonally adjusted
 Southern States include all states within the US Census Bureau's South Census Region: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia



Louisiana Continues to Reach All-Time Highs in Jobs

Analysis



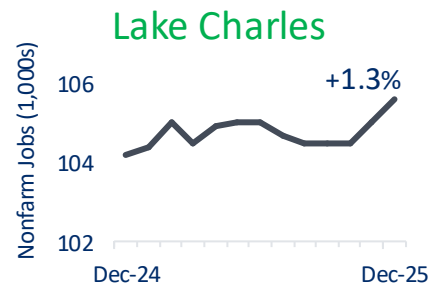
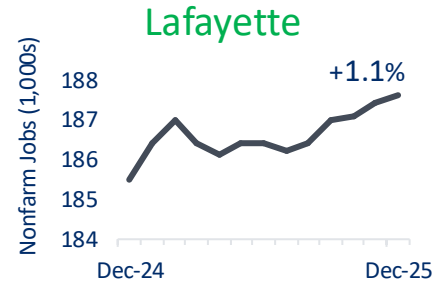
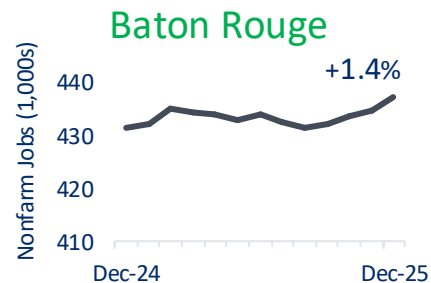
- The state added 22,900 jobs (+1.2%) since Dec 2024
- Louisiana has seen 57 consecutive months of over-the-year job gains
- This is slightly slower than Dr. Loren Scott's 2025 forecast of 1.4% growth (28.3K jobs)
- Louisiana has remained above 2 million jobs for a record 8 months

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; seasonally adjusted; 20-year data goes through December 2025



Almost Every Louisiana Metro Saw Job Growth Over the Last Year

Analysis

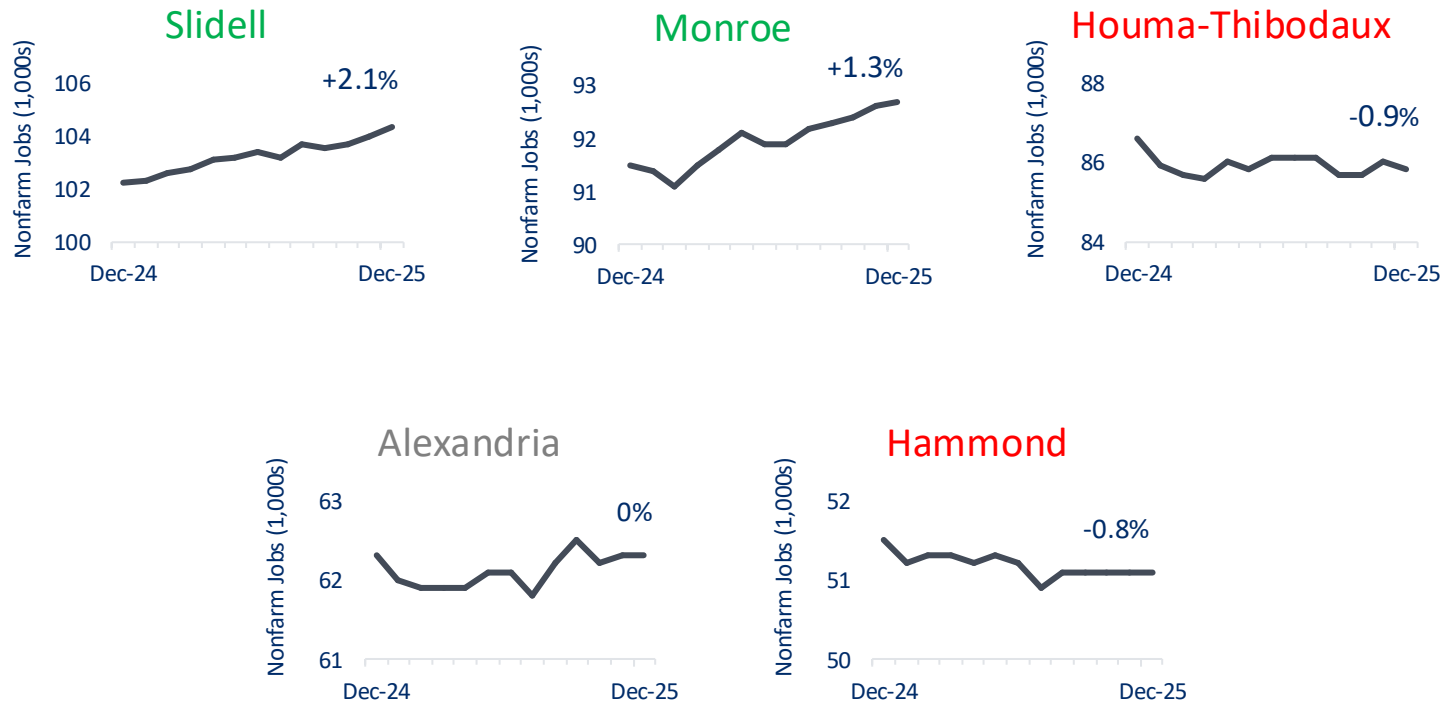


- All large Louisiana metros and two smaller metros saw year over year growth
- 2025's fastest regional growth rates were in Slidell, Baton Rouge, Lake Charles and Monroe
- Of all metros in Louisiana, Baton Rouge added the most total jobs (+6,000), driven primarily by service-based industries and Prof./Bus. Services



Almost Every Louisiana Metro Saw Job Growth Over the Last Year

Analysis

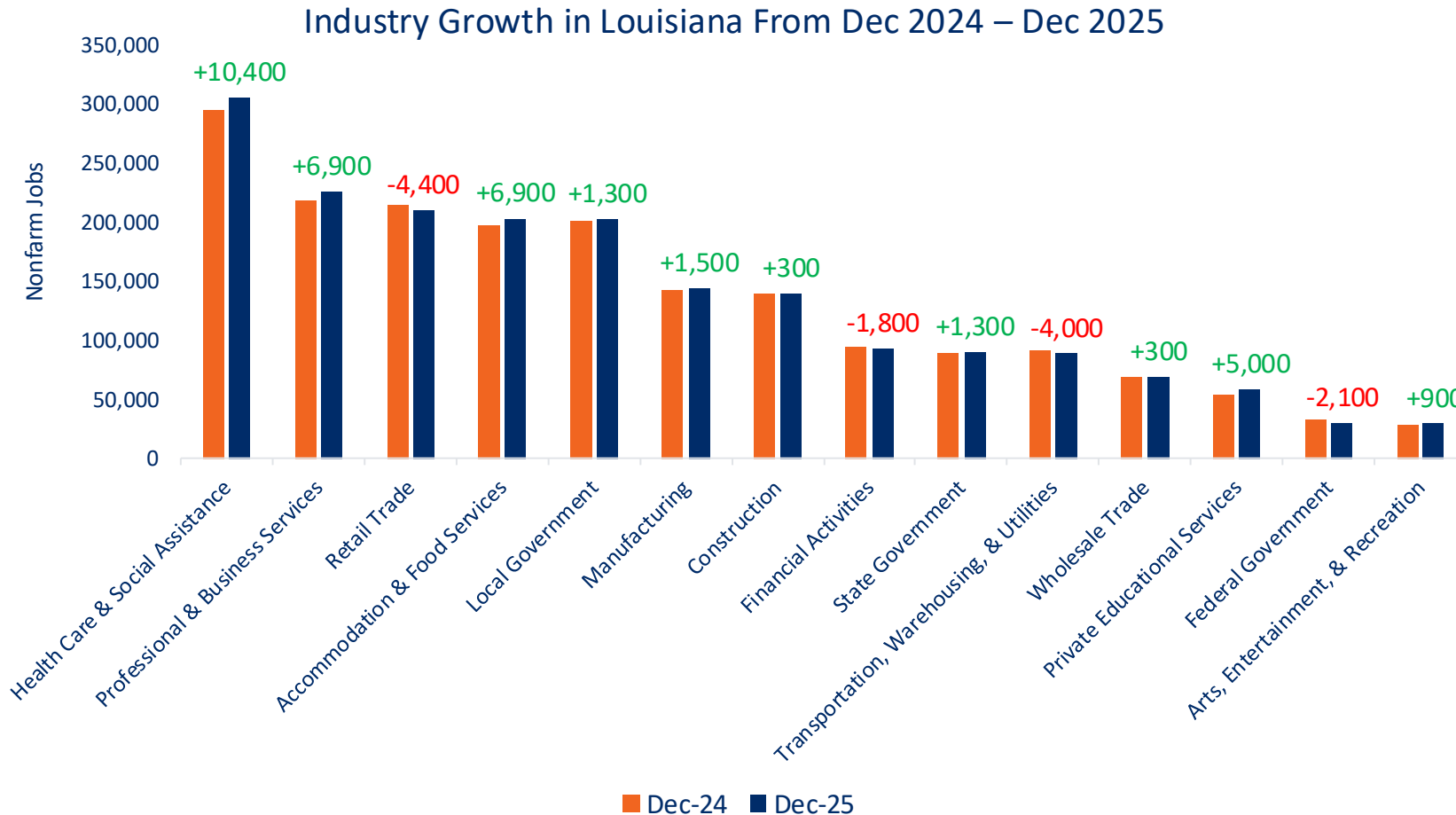


- Meta’s data center construction is fueling Monroe growth
- Slidell saw the fastest growth of all metros in LA (+2,100)
 - St. Tammany Parish is experiencing strong population growth
- Bayou Region’s (Houma) decline was almost entirely in Trade, Transportation, & Utilities sector



Louisiana is Seeing Job Growth in Almost Every Industry

Analysis



- Health Care & Social Assistance leads growth (+10,400 jobs); Retail Trade saw the largest decline (-4,400 jobs)
- 10 of 14 sectors grew; 4 declined over the year
- Construction has been steadily growing since August 2025, and year-over-year growth has turned positive

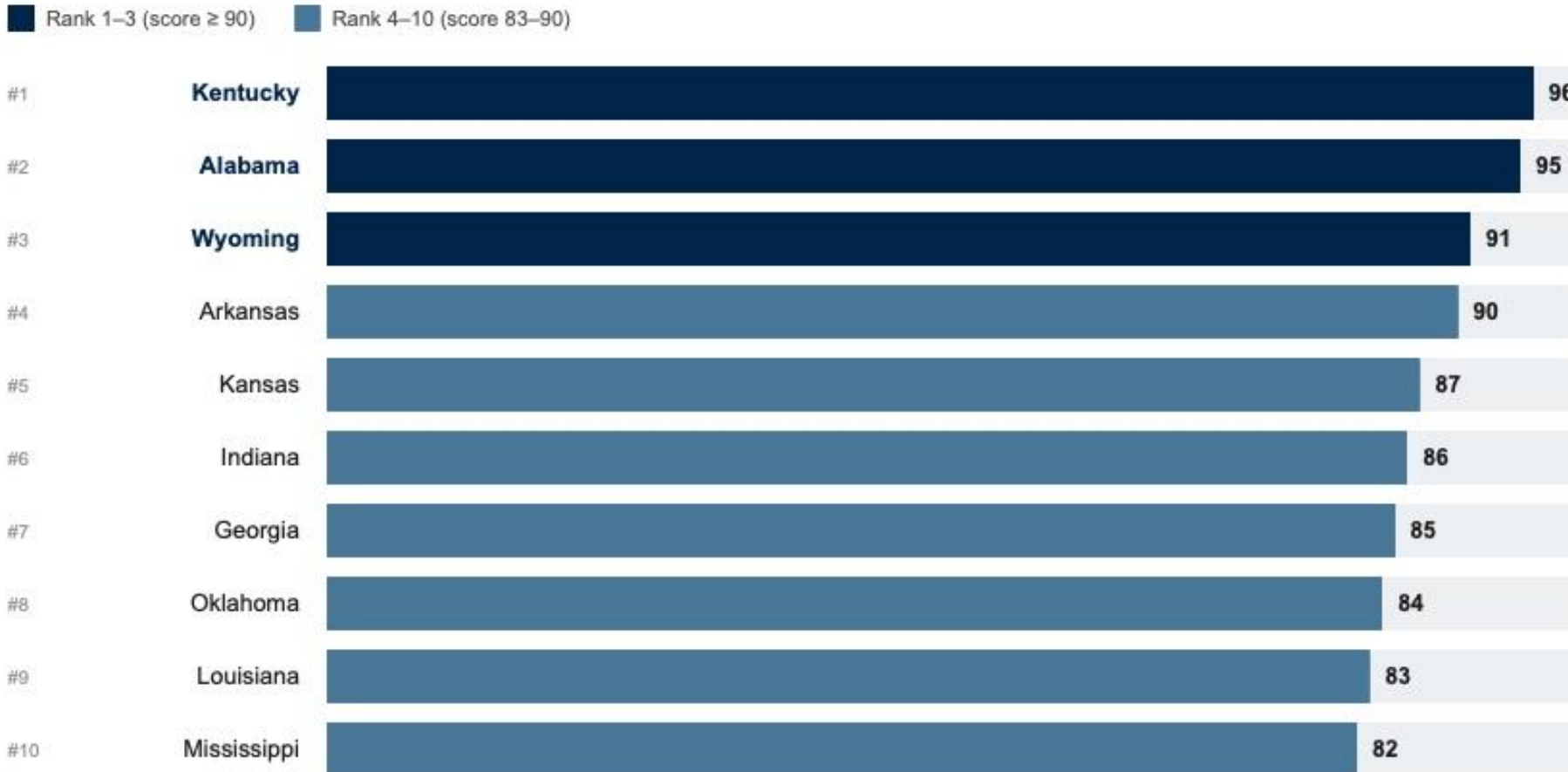


Louisiana ranks #9 in US for new manufacturing talent pipeline index

New ranking from Area Development magazine measures state's ability to produce, align, and sustain industrial workforce talent

Analysis

- Louisiana punches above its weight. It has modest workforce numbers yet ranks #9 overall, ahead of much larger states.
- The state outranks major industrial powerhouses in that it scores higher than Michigan, Ohio, Texas, Florida, and California, signaling superior pipeline alignment over raw volume.



Louisiana Ranked Second in South For Domestic Interstate In-Migration

State	2023 In-Migration	2024 In-Migration	YoY Change
West Virginia	42,020	43,945	4.6%
Louisiana	69,464	72,028	3.7%
Mississippi	64,610	65,391	1.2%
Maryland	162,674	164,424	1.1%
Alabama	119,421	119,890	0.4%
Oklahoma	107,679	107,523	-0.1%
North Carolina	327,487	315,498	-3.7%
Virginia	276,161	265,514	-3.9%
Tennessee	203,156	192,215	-5.4%
South Carolina	203,674	189,333	-7.0%
Texas	611,942	556,156	-9.1%
Florida	636,933	573,876	-9.9%
Kentucky	106,797	95,793	-10.3%
Delaware	39,006	34,602	-11.3%
Arkansas	73,123	62,908	-14.0%
Georgia	310,452	266,483	-14.2%

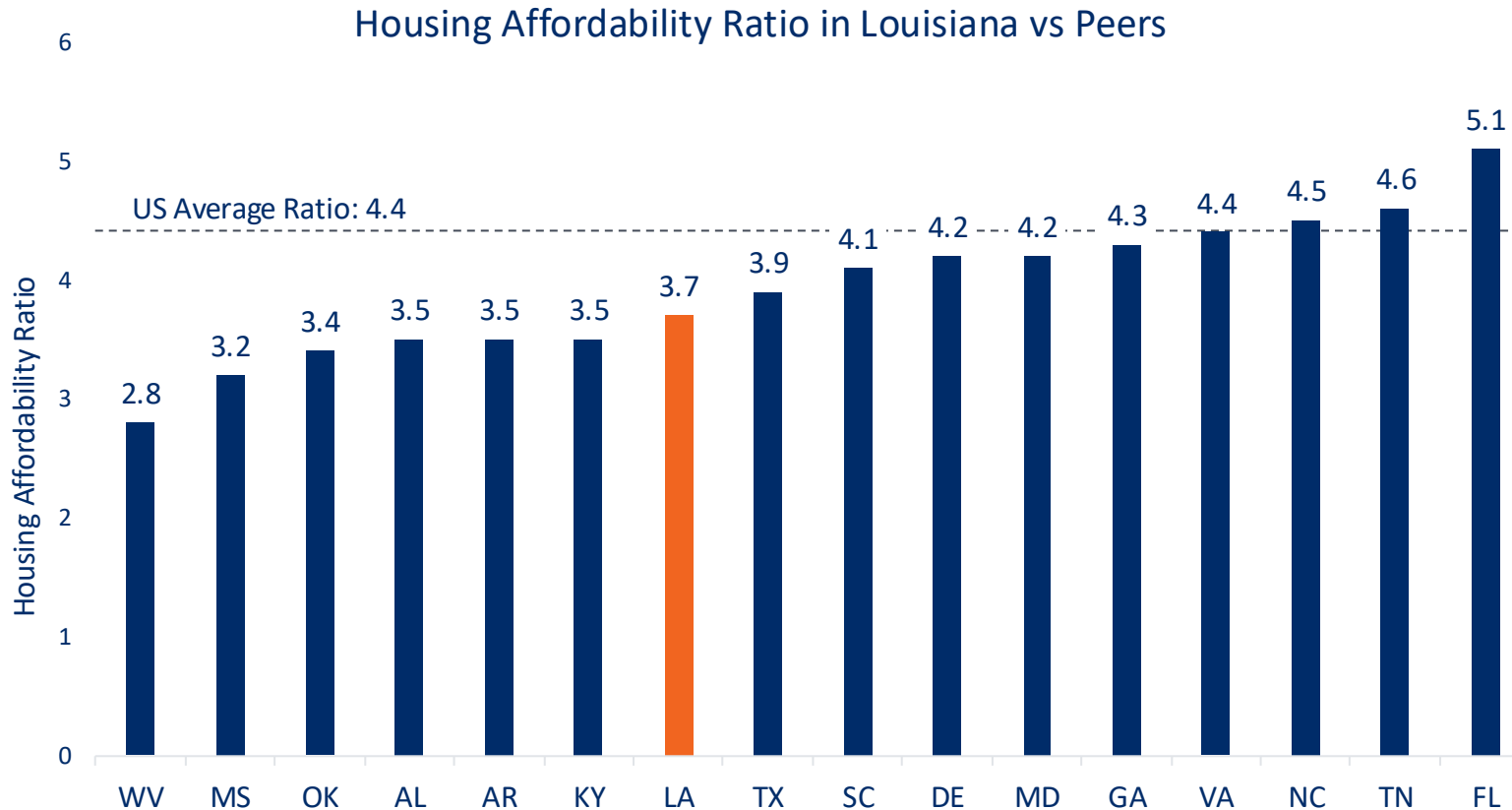
Source: Census American Community Survey 1-year estimates; 2024 data (most recently available)

Analysis

- Louisiana experience strong in-migration from other states
- Population movement between states slowed in 2024, the most recently available data
- More affordable housing may have insulated against in-migration slowdowns. States that were less affordable declined faster (-7%), while states that are the same or more affordable than LA had smaller declines (-2.1%)

Louisiana Housing Was More Affordable Than Many Peers and the National Average in 2024

Analysis



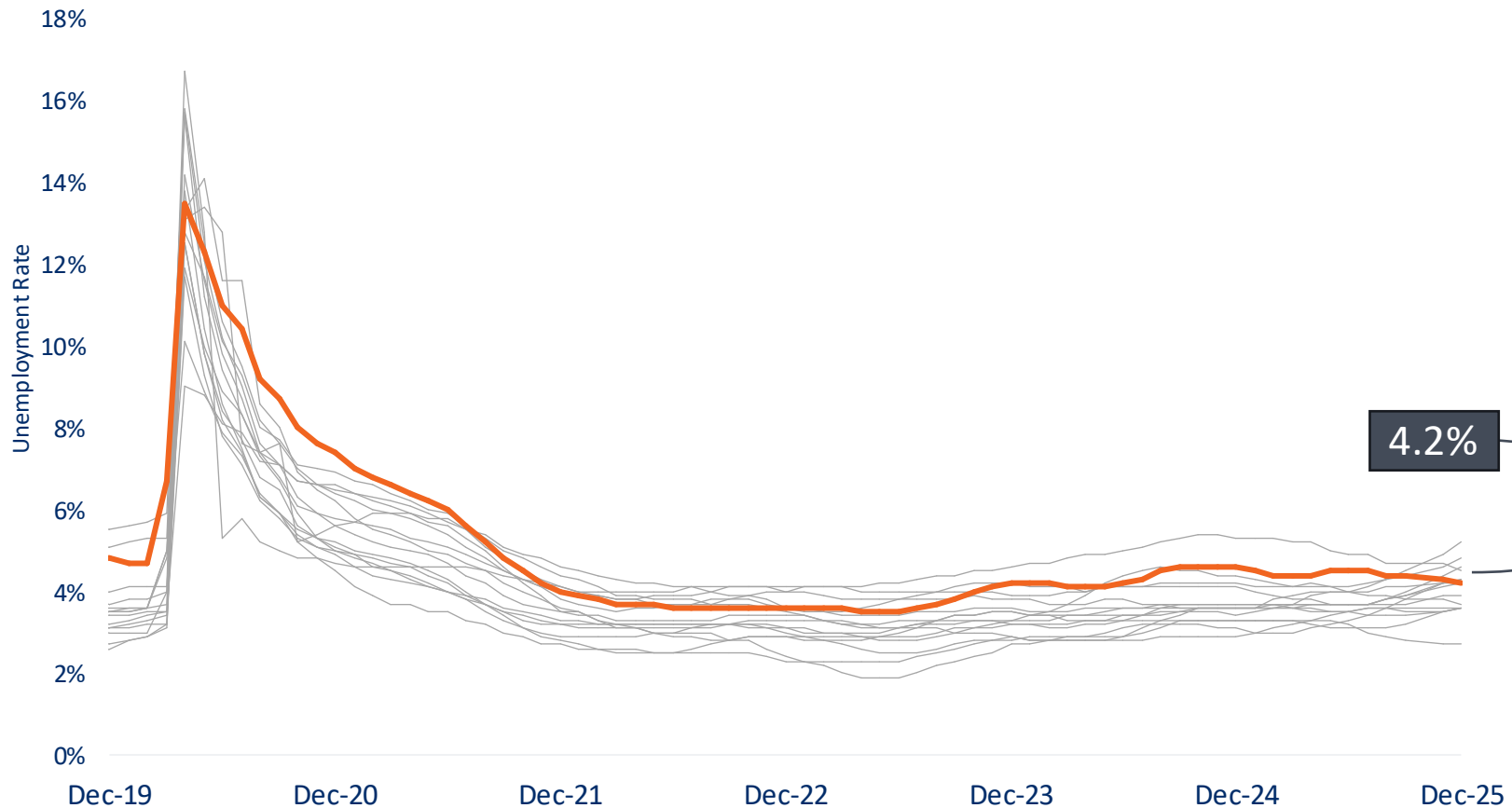
- The “housing affordability ratio” means that, based on gross income, the median time to earn the median value of a home in Louisiana is 3.7 years
- This is better than over half of Southern states, and about 16% more affordable than the national average



Louisiana's Unemployment Rate is Middle of the Pack Among Peers

Analysis

Unemployment Rate in Louisiana vs Peers



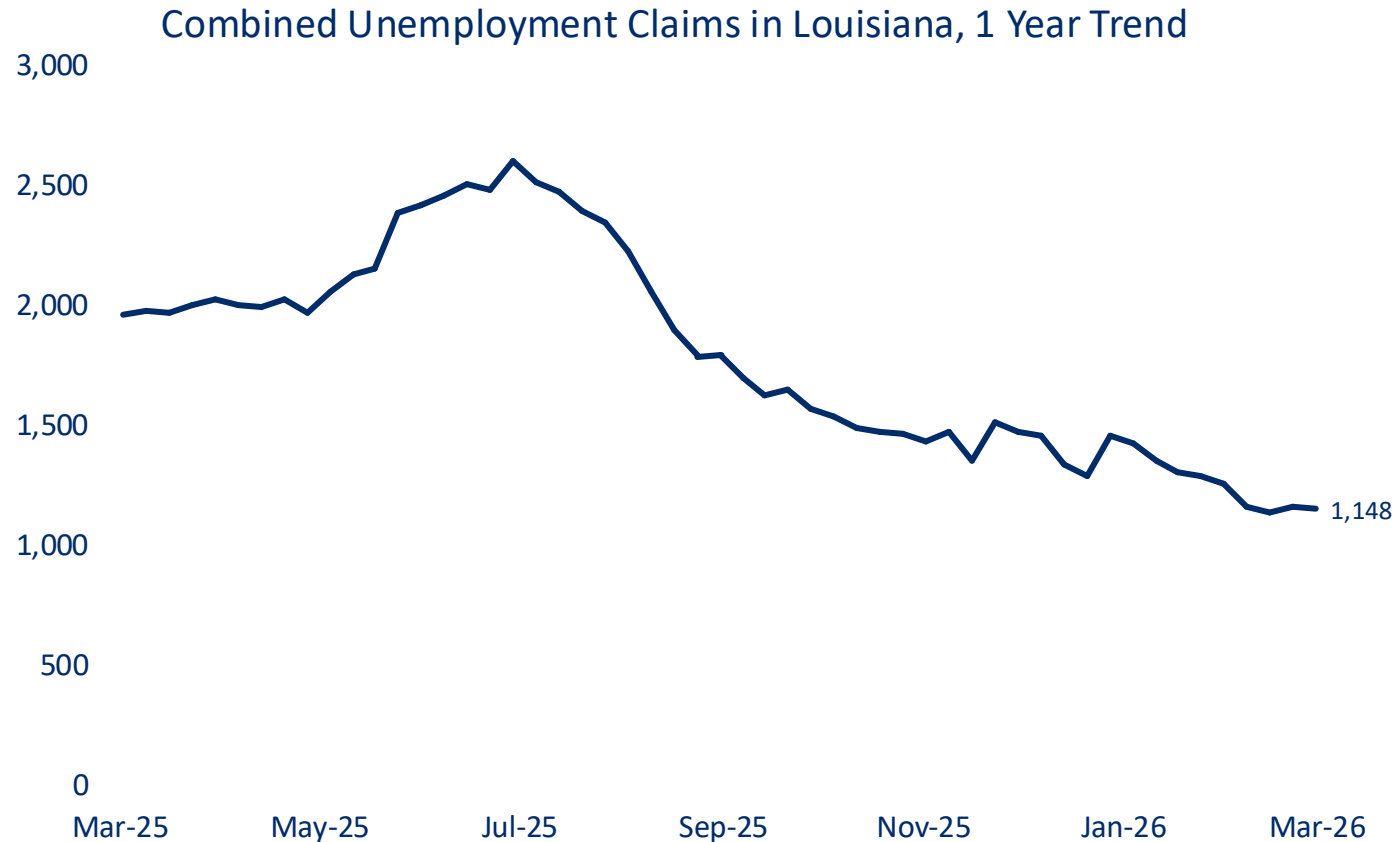
- The state's unemployment rate is lower today than prior to COVID (4.7% in Feb 2020) and one year ago (4.6% in Dec 2024)
- Louisiana sits in a tight cluster with Arkansas, Texas, Florida, and Delaware, all near the middle of the pack

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics; seasonally adjusted, Dec 2025

Southern States include all states within the US Census Bureau's South Census Region: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia



Unemployment Claims in Louisiana Are Down Over the Last Year



Source: Louisiana Works, Mar 2026

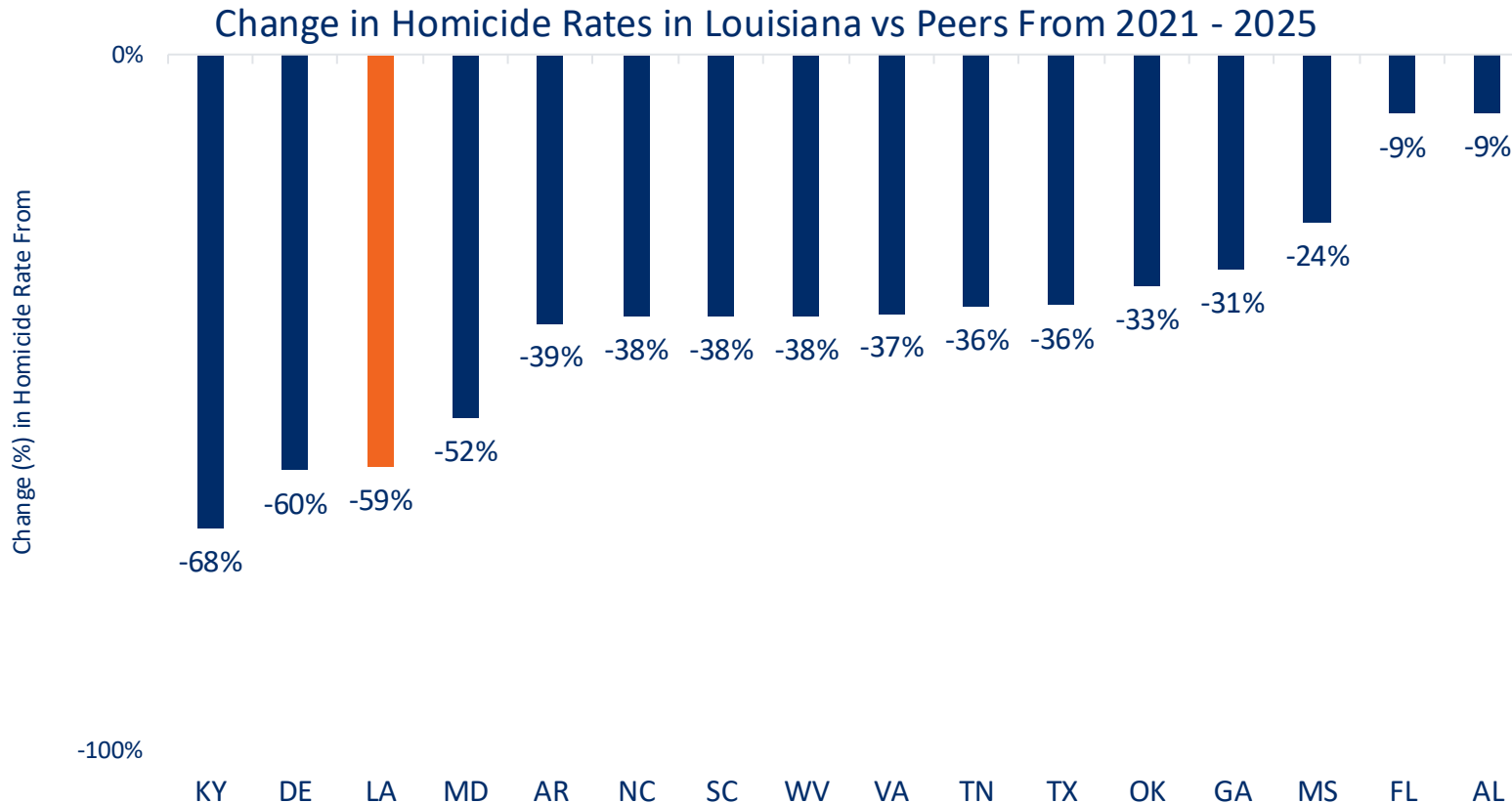
Analysis

- Unemployment claims are down -41% from March 2025 to 2026
- Claims peaked in Summer 2025; this is a typical seasonal pattern related to education
- Claims for 2026 will again peak in the coming months, but if trends hold consistent, 2026's peak may be lower than 2025



Louisiana Saw the 3rd Greatest Drop in Homicides Among Peers from 2021 to 2025

Analysis



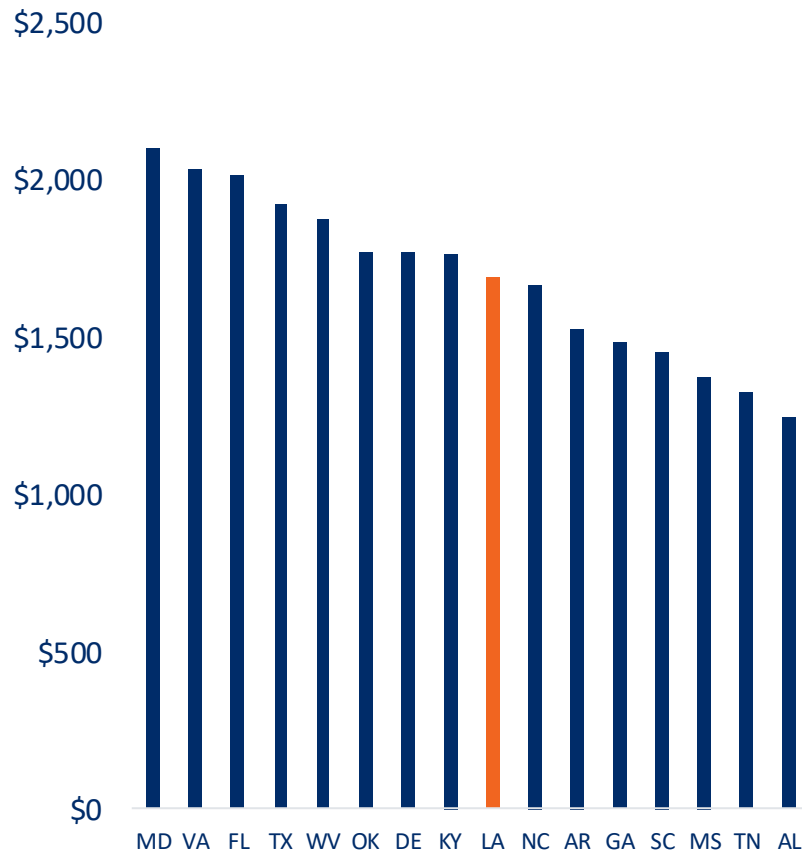
- Louisiana's homicide rate fell from 19.9 to 8.1 per 100,000 people from 2021 to 2025
- Homicide rates declined every single year, showing consistent progress



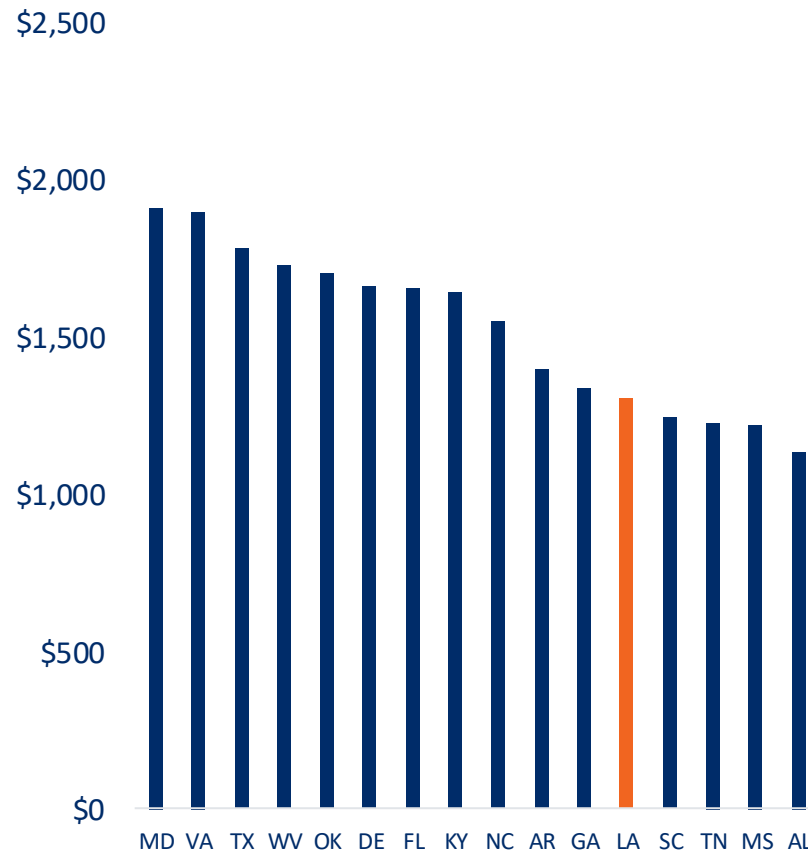
Spending on Core Infrastructure is Among the Lowest of Peers

Analysis

Total Infrastructure Spending Per Capita



Core Infrastructure Spending Per Capita



- Louisiana ranks low in spending on core infrastructure per capita, compared to US South
- Core infrastructure means those things that most people interact with in their daily lives
- Comparatively, much of Louisiana's infrastructure spending goes to natural resources (ex. coastal protection) and ports

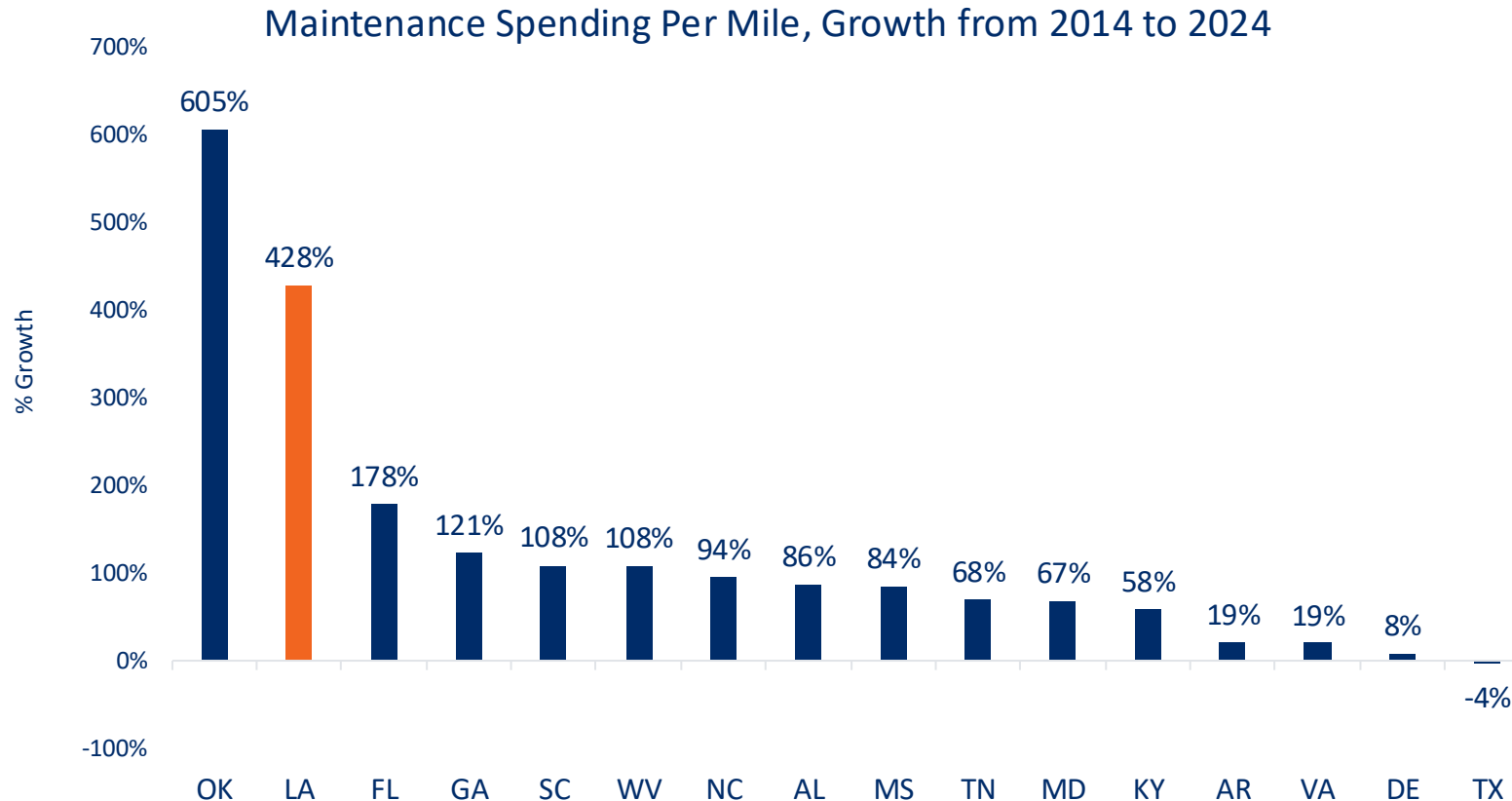
Source: Census State & Local Government Finances, 2017-2023

Core infrastructure includes highways, airports, water supply, sewerage, solid waste management, transit, parks and recreation, and parking facilities; this excludes natural resources and port facilities.



Louisiana is Increasing Its Highway Maintenance Spending *Faster*

Analysis



- Louisiana has gone from among the lowest of peers in highway maintenance (12th in 2014) to firmly in the upper half (7th in 2024)
- While Louisiana's overall core infrastructure spendings ranks low among peers, LA has prioritized highway maintenance, with spending consistently increasing since 2014

