

ECONOMIC IMPACT



2025 ECONOMIC OVERVIEW FOR YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

DEMOGRAPHICS AND POPULATION



YELLOWSTONE COUNTY POPULATION

172,789

Montana's Largest County

15.6% of state population
Montana total: 1.11 million

BILLINGS POPULATION

123,290

Montana's Largest City

Population growth trails state average by **53** basis points while exceeding national growth by **7** basis points.

Annual growth rate: **0.57%**
Montana growth rate: **1.21%**
National growth rate: **~0.5%**

INCOME AND WAGE ANALYSIS

AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE:

\$1,314 (Q4 2024)



- Year-over-year growth: **6.2%**
- Annualized wage: **\$68,328**
- National average wages: **\$74,181**
- Growth rate substantially exceeds inflation
- The average annual wage per worker increased **5.3%** in the region. Statewide, Montana is experiencing the highest wage growth nationally

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME:

\$74,400

- Montana median: **\$69,922**
- Differential: **+\$4,478 (+6.4%)**
- National median: **\$83,730**
- Differential: **-\$9,330 (-11.1%)**
- Relative position: **89%** of national median

AVERAGE PER CAPITA INCOME:

\$47,924

- Montana average: **\$39,842**
- Differential: **+\$8,082 (+20.3%)**
- Indicates higher individual earnings and economic productivity
- Montana state ranking: **38th nationally**

POVERTY RATE:

10.23%

- Montana: **11-12%** (varies by source)
- National: **11.1%**
- Differential: **-80 to -190** basis points below state average
- Differential: **-87 basis points** below national average

INCOME ANALYSIS

Yellowstone County's median household income performance demonstrates the county's position as an economic leader within Montana while cost of living adjustments narrow the gap with national medians. Per capita income premium of 20.3% over state average reflects employment concentration in higher-wage sectors including healthcare, energy, and professional services. Below-average poverty rate indicates broad-based economic participation relative to state and national benchmarks.

Let's reflect on the housing market in 2025, a key component of talent attraction and quality of life

MEDIAN SALE PRICE:

\$385,000

(September 2025)

- Year-over-year change: **+2.7%**
- Average home value: **\$381,186**
- Annual appreciation: **3.8%**

MARKET ACTIVITY METRICS:

- September 2025 sales: **161 units**
- September 2024 sales: **120 units**
- Year-over-year volume increase: **34.2%**
- Average days to pending: **11 days**
- Average days on market: **71 days** (prior year: 64 days)

Comparative Housing Analysis

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY VS. MONTANA:

- Yellowstone median: **\$385,000**
- Montana median: **\$463,000-\$540,000** (methodology dependent)
- Price differential: **-\$78,000 to -\$155,000 (-16.8% to -28.7%)**
- Montana 5-year appreciation: **66%** (2020-2025)
- Montana typical home value: **\$378,000-\$463,000**

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY VS. NATION:

- Yellowstone median: **\$385,000**
- U.S. median (existing homes): **\$402,000-\$435,000**
- Price differential: **-\$17,000 to -\$50,000 (-4.2% to -11.5%)**
- Positioning: **Below national median across measurement methodologies**

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY VS. MONTANA METROPOLITAN MARKETS:

- Gallatin County (Bozeman): **\$685,000 (+77.9% premium)**
- Lewis and Clark County (Helena): **\$389,000 (+1.0% premium)**
- Yellowstone County is the most affordable major urban market in Montana**

COST OF LIVING (Average by Household Type)

- 1 Adult: **\$3,581** | 1 Adult, 1 Child: **\$5,973** | 2 Adults: **\$4,664**
- 2 Adults, 1 Child: **\$6,859** | 2 Adults, 2 Children: **\$8,633**



Affordability Analysis

TRADITIONAL MORTGAGE QUALIFICATION (28% DEBT-TO-INCOME FRONT-END RATIO):

- Yellowstone median home (\$385,000): **-\$100,000** annual income required
- Yellowstone median household income: **\$74,400**
- Income adequacy ratio: **74.4%**
- Indicates median household income insufficient for median home purchase under traditional underwriting, without any consideration of existing personal debt obligations

HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS



ECONOMIC SECTOR ANALYSIS

LABOR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

Total Employment:

92,991 (up from 87,800 workers in 2024)

- State employment concentration: **17.1% of Montana total (513,000)**
- Percentage of population that works from home:
 - Yellowstone County:** 8%
 - Montana:** 11.6%
 - National:** 13.5%

Top 5 Active Job Openings in Yellowstone County:

- Registered Nurse (2,195 job openings)
- First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers (944 job openings)
- Medical and Health Services Managers (897 job openings)
- Retail salespersons (794 job openings)
- Sales Representatives of Services, except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel

Fastest Growing Sectors and Job Growth in 2026:



HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE
CONSTRUCTION
ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES
PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

Healthcare concentration exceeds typical metropolitan averages. Construction employment proportion (8.2%) exceeds national norms (5-7%), indicating an active development environment. Manufacturing employment establishes Billings as Montana's primary industrial employment center.

Top Employers Currently Hiring

INTERMOUNTAIN HEALTHCARE **CYNETH HEALTH**
ALBERTSONS **COAST MEDICAL SERVICES** **LOCUMJOBSONLINE**
BILLINGS PUBLIC SCHOOLS **BILLINGS CLINIC**
TOWN PUMP **FIRST INTERSTATE BANK**
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BILLINGS

Top 5 Degrees Noted in Job Openings:

- Nursing
- Business
- Engineering
- Accounting
- Business Administration

Top Soft Skill Listed in Openings:

- Communication (Listed over 12,952 times)
- Unemployment Rate: **3%** (August 2025)
- Montana: **2.7-2.9%** (seasonally adjusted)
- United States: **4.5%**
- Montana national ranking: **3rd lowest unemployment**
- Yellowstone County differential: **-140 to -150 basis points** below national rate

Veteran Spotlight:

- 6.4% of Yellowstone County's workforce are veterans, higher than the state of Montana's average (6.3%) and national average (4.2%). Veteran participation in the workforce is 14.2 percentage points higher than the overall labor force participation rate (80.3% for veterans versus 66.1% overall)

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Overview

- The GDP in Yellowstone County has expanded by **4.2%**. This follows growth of **4.4%** in 2023. As of 2024, the total GDP in Yellowstone County was **\$13,974,905,000**.
- Sectors contributing the largest portion of GDP:
 - Manufacturing: **\$2,082,064,000**
 - Healthcare and Social Assistance: **\$1,734,731,000**
 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing: **\$1,636,488,000**
 - Wholesale Trade: **\$1,264,954,000**

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS AND INVESTMENTS

HEALTHCARE:

- Regional medical hub serving eastern Montana and adjacent states
- Intermountain Health, St. Vincent's Regional Hospital: Montana's largest healthcare construction project in state history
- Billings Clinic: Montana's largest independent healthcare system and employer



ENERGY:

- Phillips 66: **300 employees** (major refinery operation)
- Par Pacific Holdings: **250 employees** (Billings refinery)
- High-wage employment with extensive supply chain multipliers



MANUFACTURING:

- Employment: **3,855 workers** (4.4% of total)
- Montana's largest manufacturing employment base by municipality
- Benefits from transportation infrastructure and regional market access

TOURISM SECTOR

- Economic Impact:**
- Annual visitor spending: **\$621 million**
 - Annual visitors: **2.6 million**
 - Tourism-supported employment: **10,000 jobs** (11.4% of total employment)

Market Position: Billings was **#2 trending domestic destination** on Google Flights

Infrastructure Investment:

- Billings Logan International Airport: **\$55 million** expansion completed
- Hotel inventory: **5,100+** guest rooms (7 new properties opening)

AGRICULTURE SECTOR

- Economic Contribution:**
- Value-added: **\$211.8 million** (2017 data)
 - GDP contribution: **2% of county GDP** (\$8,898 million total)
 - Direct employment: **3,323 workers** (4% of labor force)
 - Tariff uncertainty remains a factor going into 2026

Agricultural multiplier effect:

Each **\$1.00** of agricultural value-added generates **\$3.41** in total county economic activity, reflecting Billings' function as regional agricultural service center.

RETAIL TRADE SECTOR

Employment: 10,555 workers (12.0% of total employment)

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

- Employment: 7,199 workers** (8.2% of total employment)
- Exceeds typical construction employment proportion (5-7%)
 - Driven by population growth, commercial development, major infrastructure projects
 - Leading indicator of future economic activity

Construction employment elevation indicates active development environment and positive economic expectations.



INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT: YELLOWSTONE COUNTY HAS THE FOUNDATIONAL FACTORS FOR ECONOMIC EXPANSION

TRANSPORTATION:

- Billings Logan International Airport: Regional hub with expanded facilities
- Interstate 90: Primary east-west corridor
- Rail service: National freight network connectivity

STRATEGIC POSITION:

- Eastern Montana commercial and distribution center
- Regional logistics hub
- Infrastructure capacity supports continued economic expansion

LOOKING AHEAD: RISK FACTORS AND GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

RISK FACTORS

- Energy Sector Volatility:**
- Commodity price sensitivity
 - Regulatory environmental changes
 - Periodic employment fluctuations in related industries

Housing Affordability Constraints:

- 66% Montana home value appreciation (2020-2025)
- Median home prices require income above county median
- First-time buyer and lower-income household barriers
- Despite relative affordability vs. state/national benchmarks

Labor Market Tightness:

- 2.8% unemployment constrains business expansion
- Wage pressure on employers
- Workforce availability challenges

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Regional Hub Advantages

Cost Competitiveness:

- Housing costs **17-30% below Montana averages**
- Housing costs **4-12% below national medians**
- Overall cost of living **8% below state average**
- Attracts business relocation and expansion

Labor Market Strength:

- Low unemployment indicates economic vitality
- 6.2% wage growth** demonstrates value creation
- Tight market supports continued wage appreciation
- Quality of life supports workforce attraction/retention

