

Job losses in Massachusetts hit retail, biotech, healthcare and education sectors

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More than 11,000 jobs were cut in Massachusetts in September 2025, according to a report from the state's Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). Retail, biotech and healthcare were hit particularly hard. The release of the agency's report was delayed due to the federal government shutdown that ended in November.

This marks the largest monthly loss of jobs since the onset of the COVID pandemic in early 2020. It also represents a sharp downturn from earlier reports. Prior to September, the state showed a net loss of 2,100 jobs. With the inclusion of September's figures, job losses for 2025 now stand at 13,200.

This contrasts sharply with national reports for September, in which the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that the US economy added 119,000 nonfarm payroll jobs. The BLS has been under pressure by the Trump administration to publish more favorable numbers, a campaign culminating in the August firing of BLS Commissioner Erika McEntarfer following a weak jobs report. She was replaced by a right-wing Heritage Foundation economist.

The September BLS report is best contextualized by the National Employment Report published by Automatic Data Processing Inc. (ADP). As a payroll and benefits handling company, ADP bases its monthly reporting on actual client information.

Their data shows a nationwide loss of 32,000 jobs for November. While the ADP report does not break down data by state, it separates data by region. The six-state New England region lost 50,000 jobs in November—the second-worst regional loss identified in the report.

The Trump administration refused to release unemployment data for October as this would have revealed an economy reeling from the government shutdown.

The September losses in Massachusetts impacted many different sectors, including 4,500 jobs in trade, transportation and utilities. AI-driven automation and warehouse consolidations drove layoffs in this sector, mirroring national trends. Education and Health Services, the largest and most important sector in Massachusetts, lost 2,800 jobs. Despite these losses, the overall state unemployment rate dropped from 4.8 percent in October to 4.7 percent in September, only because of a net increase of 2,700 who stopped looking for work and dropped out of the labor force.

Massachusetts has suffered multiple retail closures in 2025, due in part to the Trump administration's tariffs, inflation and the steady increase in online shopping. National retail cuts totaled about 76,000 jobs in the first half of 2025, but state-level monthly retail figures remain unreported in detail. Casualties include Rite Aid (all stores), Joann Fabrics (bankruptcy), all Massachusetts Walgreens locations, Claire's, Smithland Pet & Garden Centers, and Starbucks. Additionally, Yankee Candle plans to shut down 15 Massachusetts locations in 2026.

The biotech sector saw deep cuts. Major firms like Moderna (10 percent workforce cut), Sarepta Therapeutics (36 percent, including 392 jobs in Massachusetts), Thermo Fisher (300 in viral vector sites), and others drove layoffs. They were linked to funding drops—with 17 percent lower venture capital funding in the first half of 2025—empty lab space and federal policy shifts under the anti-vax quack Robert F Kennedy, Jr. MassBio reports research and development jobs fell by 1,100 in 2024. 2025 has so far continued the trend via 48 separate layoffs affecting 2,332 employees.

Major layoffs also occurred at a UPS customer center in South Boston, which closed in May, resulting in the

termination of 62 workers.

Symbolic, a company specializing in AI-powered robotics and automation systems for warehouse operations, laid off 400 workers in June following a takeover of Walmart's robotics unit. Hospital network Mass General Brigham, the state's largest single employer, laid off 1,500 workers in February.

Nationwide, a September survey of 1,000 business leaders by Resume.org revealed that 3 in 10 US corporations intend to conduct layoffs before the year's end, and 6 in 10 plan to lay off employees in 2026. The survey notes that 4 in 10 companies plan to replace workers with AI by 2026. This comes on top of the hundreds of thousands of government workers fired by the Trump administration over the last year.

Analysts have noted a "K-shaped" divide emerging in the economy, as unprecedented social inequality sharply polarizes spending. The bottom 60 percent of the population has seen its standard of living decline, as costs rise while wages stagnate and consumer debt grows.

In Massachusetts, the cost of living is 40–50 percent above the national average, including double the average housing costs. The median home value across the state is around \$600,000, and the median rent is over \$2,200, with even higher costs in areas like Boston. Insurance premiums, transportation, groceries and utility costs have all sharply increased. Average consumer debt per person in Massachusetts reached \$131,500 this year, up from 2024 and well above the national average. Even given these enormous costs, 29 percent of workers in Massachusetts still make less than \$20 an hour.

In contrast, the rich in Massachusetts have experienced a boom. A year ago, the threshold to be in the top 1 percent of earners in Massachusetts was \$903,000. This year, that number increased to \$1.13 million. A study by the Institute for Policy Studies released in April showed a 38.6 percent increase in the number of millionaires from 2022 to 2024, and a 37.7 percent growth in the total income of all millionaires in the state during the same period.

As of 2022, there were 27,270 millionaires in Massachusetts, or 0.39 percent of the state's 7 million residents. In 2022, the "ultra-rich"—those making over \$50 million a year—comprised only 2,642 individuals. 21 billionaires live in Massachusetts, comprising just

0.0003 percent of the population.

The Massachusetts Fair Share Amendment of November 2022, which added a 4 percent surtax on incomes above \$1 million, has been no obstacle to the vast accumulation of wealth by the rich. Despite being promoted by Democrats and unions as a way of achieving an "equitable" Massachusetts, it has coincided with a general decline in living standards for the working class.

The Trump administration's attacks on the working class have seen the consolidation of direct rule by the oligarchy through authoritarian measures, unimpeded by democratic norms and contemptuous of past social concessions.

The oligarchy is riding roughshod over social programs like SNAP, Medicare, Medicaid, and public health, safety and environmental regulations in an effort to make workers pay for capitalism's decline through a vast transfer of wealth.



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