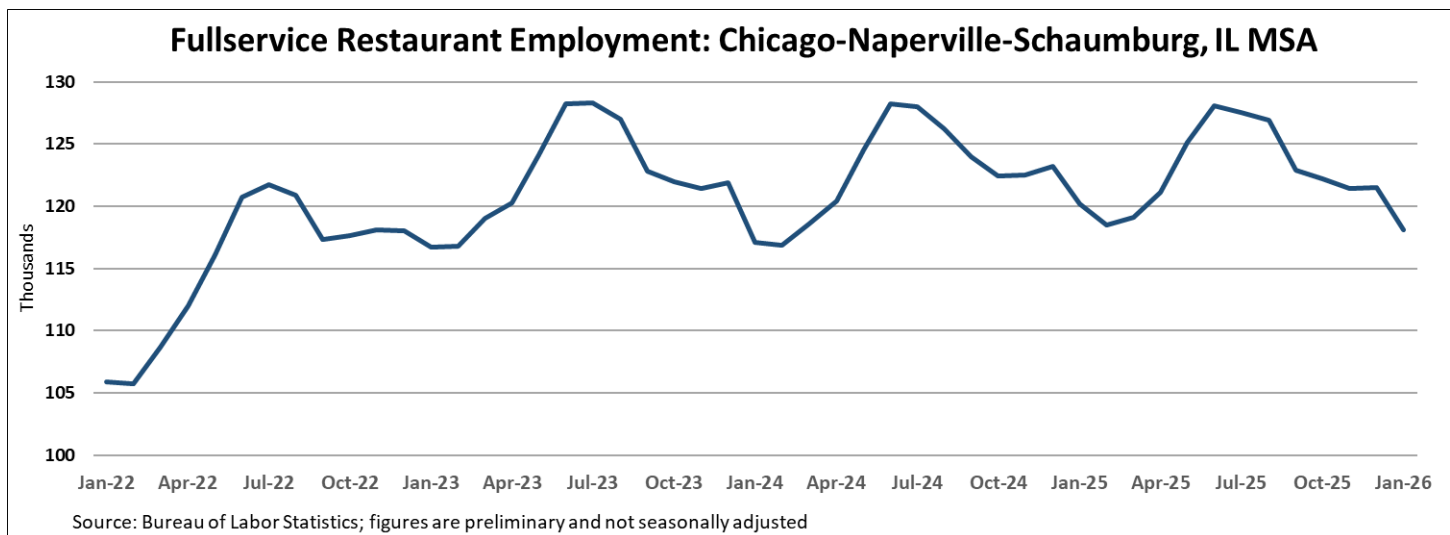
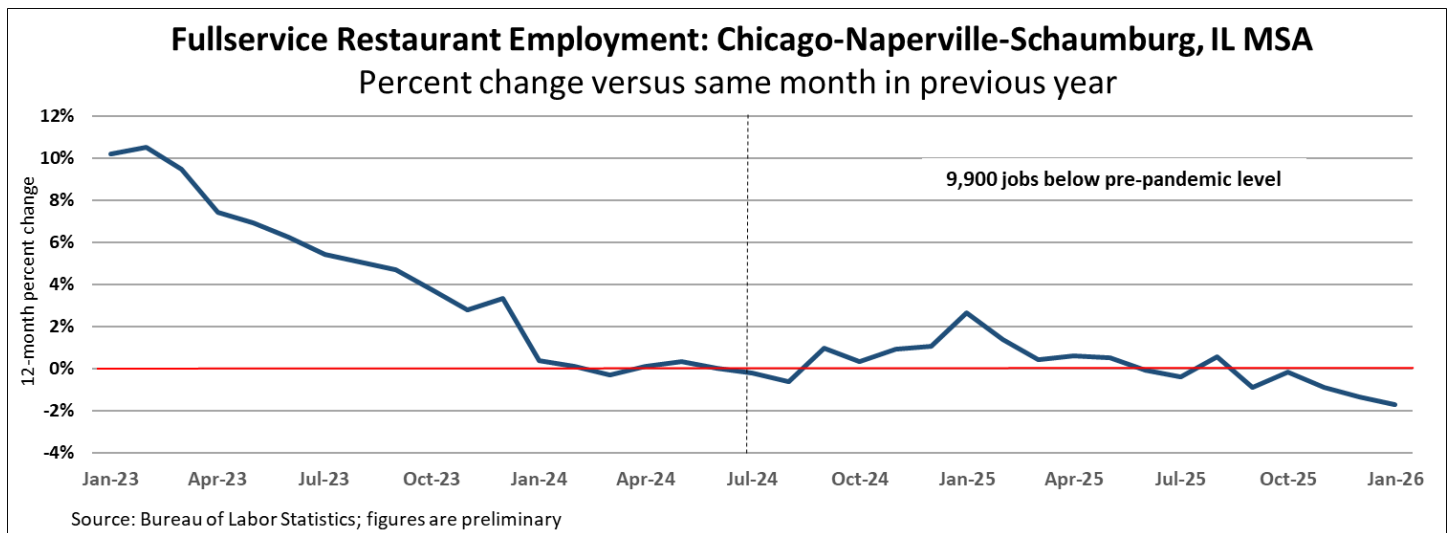


Chicago Fullservice Restaurant Employment Trends

April 2026

Chicago's fullservice restaurants remain nearly 10,000 jobs below pre-pandemic level

- Job growth in the Chicago-Naperville-Schaumburg fullservice restaurant segment stalled in early 2024, after posting strong growth coming out of the pandemic.
- In the 12 months ending July 2024, Chicago's fullservice segment lost 300 jobs (a 0.2% decline).
 - That was well below the gain of 6,600 jobs (a 5.4% increase) in the 12 months ending July 2023.
- Employment levels initially remained relatively flat after July 2024, before turning sharply negative in the second half of 2025. In the 12 months ending January 2026, Chicago's fullservice segment lost another 2,100 jobs (a 1.7% decline).
- As a result, fullservice restaurant staffing levels in Chicago remain well below pre-pandemic readings.
- As of January 2026, Chicago's fullservice restaurant segment was 9,900 jobs – or 7.7% – below its pre-pandemic employment level.



Data source: <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/SMU17169847072251101>

Note: Figures are shown for the Chicago-Naperville-Schaumburg, IL MSA, because monthly data is not available for Chicago City. Fullservice restaurant employment in Chicago City makes up the vast majority of total fullservice restaurant employment in the Chicago-Naperville-Schaumburg, IL MSA.