

THE DECADE AMERICA’S LAUNDRY INDUSTRY SHRANK

Commercial laundry employment and business counts in every US state, ten years apart, showing where the industry contracted hardest.

Amara Belkaid · APXXO Data — industry · 16 September 2026

DATA AS AT	LAST CHECKED	MEASURED IN	ROWS
2025	2026-09-16	% change in laundry jobs, 2015–2025	47

-35.6%

CONSUMER DRYCLEANING, NATIONALLY

136,813 jobs in 2015 down to 88,162 in 2025.

+10.1%

INDUSTRIAL LAUNDERERS, OVER THE SAME DECADE

The commercial end of the industry grew while the high-street end collapsed.

43 of 47

STATES WHERE LAUNDRY EMPLOYMENT FELL

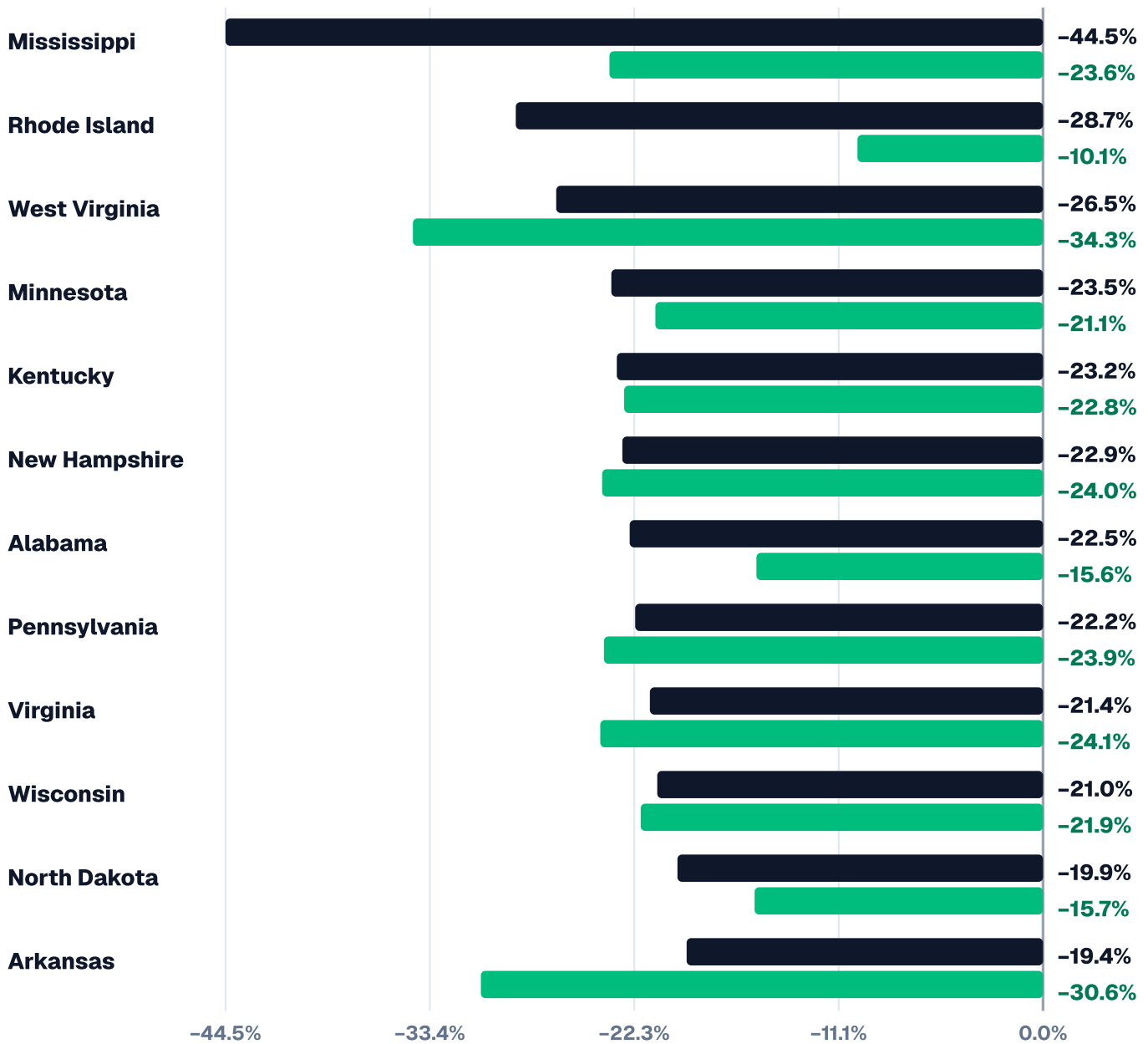
It rose in 3. Overall the 47 states shown changed by -14.0%.

AT A GLANCE

TOP 12 OF 47

The twelve steepest falls in laundry employment. Where the two bars differ, jobs and operators moved at different rates — which is consolidation rather than plain contraction.

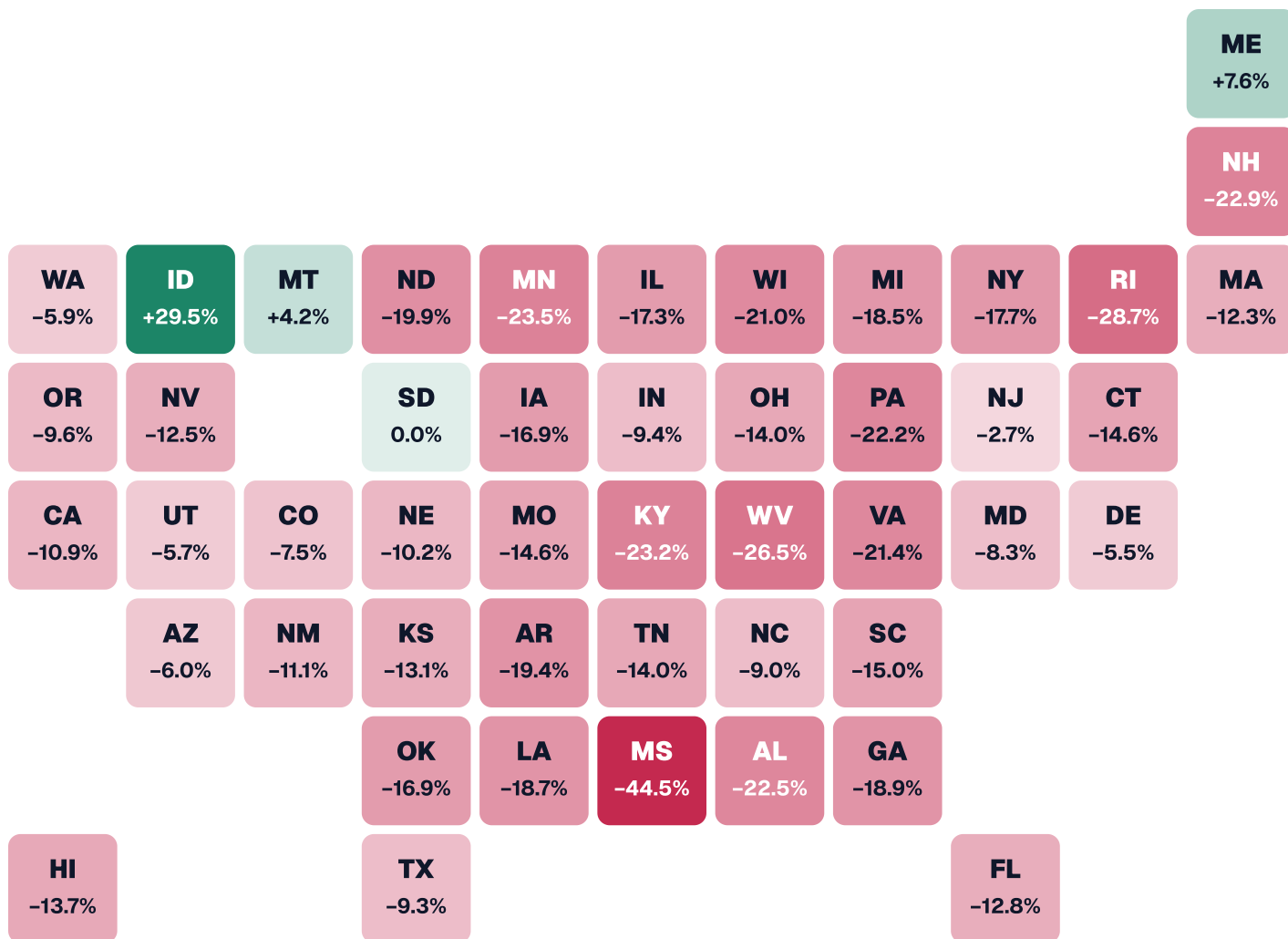
■ CHANGE IN JOBS (%) ■ CHANGE IN BUSINESSES (%)



ON THE MAP

47 OF 47 SHOWN

Change in laundry employment over the decade. Red is where the industry contracted; green is where it grew.



SCALE ■ -44.5% ■ +29.5% Every tile carries its own figure, so the map reads without the colour.

HOW THEY SPREAD OUT

Each bar counts how many of the 47 states fall in that band. Where the two distributions sit apart, capacity and ownership moved at different speeds.

CHANGE IN JOBS



CHANGE IN BUSINESSES



WHAT THE FIGURES SHOW

The industry did not shrink so much as move

Taken as a whole, laundry employment across the 47 states shown changed by -14.0% between 2015 and 2025. That single figure hides the only thing on this page worth knowing.

Split into its parts, the sub-sectors went in opposite directions: Coin-operated laundries +13.1%; Industrial launderers +10.1%; Linen supply -6.2%; Drycleaning and laundry services -35.6%.

The high-street drycleaner lost 35.6% of its jobs. The industrial launderers who wash for hotels and hospitals gained 10.1%. Work has moved from the shop on the corner to commercial contracts, and the aggregate hides it completely. **Our cost index** (</en-us/data/cleaning-laundry-cost-index/>) tracks the consumer end nationally, which is why its workforce line falls so much faster than this page's.

Consumer drycleaning -36%. Industrial laundering +10%. The industry did not shrink — it changed who it works for.

Where the capacity went

Employment fell in 43 states and rose in 3. The steepest fall is Mississippi at -44.5%, alongside a -23.6% change in the number of operators.

At the other end, Idaho gained 29.5%. A state losing a third of its laundry employment has not stopped needing laundry; the linen travels further, or it is washed on site by people whose job is something else. **Where that demand sits now** (</en-us/data/laundry-capacity-by-state/>) is the companion to this page.

Jobs and operators do not move together

The two columns are shown side by side because they can diverge, and the divergence is the interesting part. A state that keeps its employment while losing operators has consolidated: the same work, done by fewer, larger businesses. A state losing both has lost capacity outright.

For anyone buying laundry as a service, those are different problems. Consolidation means fewer suppliers to negotiate with. Lost capacity means the nearest plant is further away, which shows up as logistics rather than as price.

What this is useful for, and what it is not

A ten-year window spans the pandemic, which closed hotels and the laundries serving them. Some of the fall between 2015 and 2025 is that shock rather than a settled trend, and the two cannot be separated from these figures alone.

4 states are missing because BLS withheld a figure in at least one of the two years to protect employer confidentiality. QCEW counts jobs rather than people, and a hotel that launders its own linen is counted under accommodation, not here.

A state that lost a third of its laundries still generates the same dirty linen. It has simply lost the places that used to wash it.

HOW WE WORKED THIS OUT

Both years are annual averages from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages for NAICS 8123, drycleaning and laundry services, private ownership, at state level. QCEW counts every establishment covered by unemployment insurance, so this is a census rather than a survey.

Across the 47 states shown, laundry employment changed by -14.0% between 2015 and 2025. It fell in 43 states and rose in 3.

The headline figure is the change in jobs. The change in the number of businesses is shown alongside it, because the two can move apart: a state can keep its capacity while losing operators, which is consolidation rather than contraction.

The aggregate hides the real movement, so the sub-sectors are worth stating. Nationally over the same ten years: Coin-operated laundries +13.1%; Industrial launderers +10.1%; Linen supply -6.2%;

Drycleaning and laundry services, except coin-operated -35.6%.

In other words the industry has not simply shrunk - it has moved. Consumer drycleaning lost 35.6% of its jobs while industrial laundering gained 10.1%. Work has shifted from the high street to commercial contracts.

This also explains an apparent contradiction with our cost index page, which reports the laundry workforce falling much faster. That figure covers NAICS 812320 alone, the consumer sub-sector, which is the part that collapsed. This page covers all of NAICS 8123.

4 states are not shown because BLS withheld a figure in at least one of the two years to protect employer confidentiality: District of Columbia, Vermont, Wyoming, Alaska.

A ten-year comparison spans the pandemic, which closed hotels and the laundries serving them. Some of the fall between 2015 and 2025 is that shock rather than a settled trend.

THE NUMBERS

47 ROWS · AS AT 2025

REGION	% CHANGE IN LAUNDRY JOBS, 2015-2025	CHANGE IN BUSINESSES (%)	JOBS 2015	JOBS 2025	BUSINESSES 2015	BUSINESSES 2025
Mississippi	-44.5%	▼ -23.6%	3,320	1,844	259	198
Rhode Island	-28.7%	▼ -10.1%	1,672	1,192	168	151
West Virginia	-26.5%	▼ -34.3%	1,002	736	105	69
Minnesota	-23.5%	▼ -21.1%	4,960	3,796	375	296
Kentucky	-23.2%	▼ -22.8%	3,680	2,825	347	268
New Hampshire	-22.9%	▼ -24.0%	1,766	1,362	150	114
Alabama	-22.5%	▼ -15.6%	4,703	3,644	391	330
Pennsylvania	-22.2%	▼ -23.9%	10,173	7,912	1,118	851
Virginia	-21.4%	▼ -24.1%	8,739	6,873	995	755
Wisconsin	-21.0%	▼ -21.9%	5,356	4,233	374	292
North Dakota	-19.9%	▼ -15.7%	724	580	51	43
Arkansas	-19.4%	▼ -30.6%	2,397	1,931	242	168
Georgia	-18.9%	▼ -22.7%	8,716	7,066	1,245	962
Louisiana	-18.7%	▼ -16.3%	4,428	3,599	392	328
Michigan	-18.5%	▼ -18.5%	8,412	6,854	859	700

REGION	% CHANGE IN LAUNDRY JOBS, 2015–2025	CHANGE IN BUSINESSES (%)	JOBS 2015	JOBS 2025	BUSINESSES 2015	BUSINESSES 2025
New York	–17.7%	▼ –20.2%	23,708	19,506	4,841	3,864
Illinois	–17.3%	▼ –36.8%	11,647	9,636	1,578	997
Iowa	–16.9%	▼ –32.7%	2,005	1,667	217	146
Oklahoma	–16.9%	▼ –12.4%	3,716	3,088	315	276
South Carolina	–15.0%	▼ –16.9%	4,699	3,995	402	334
Missouri	–14.6%	▼ –20.3%	5,346	4,564	508	405
Connecticut	–14.6%	▼ –24.0%	4,219	3,603	533	405
Ohio	–14.0%	▼ –24.2%	11,260	9,686	914	693
Tennessee	–14.0%	▼ –20.7%	5,249	4,515	459	364
Hawaii	–13.7%	▼ –3.8%	2,031	1,753	79	76
Kansas	–13.1%	▼ –20.4%	2,322	2,018	186	148
Florida	–12.8%	▼ –14.5%	19,206	16,748	2,051	1,754
Nevada	–12.5%	▼ –12.0%	4,991	4,368	274	241
Massachusetts	–12.3%	▼ –25.6%	8,037	7,047	1,006	748
New Mexico	–11.1%	▼ –19.8%	1,752	1,558	172	138
California	–10.9%	▼ –13.7%	34,371	30,623	3,875	3,344
Nebraska	–10.2%	▼ –31.5%	1,677	1,506	149	102
Oregon	–9.6%	▼ –15.8%	2,849	2,576	266	224
Indiana	–9.4%	▼ –22.6%	5,989	5,424	530	410
Texas	–9.3%	▼ –14.1%	27,183	24,662	2,657	2,282
North Carolina	–9.0%	▼ –20.5%	8,920	8,113	918	730
Maryland	–8.3%	▼ –20.1%	5,623	5,154	766	612
Colorado	–7.5%	▼ –23.2%	4,722	4,370	555	426
Arizona	–6.0%	▼ –16.6%	5,460	5,132	373	311
Washington	–5.9%	▼ –29.6%	4,411	4,152	577	406
Utah	–5.7%	▼ –12.6%	2,314	2,183	183	160
Delaware	–5.5%	▼ –1.0%	862	815	97	96
New Jersey	–2.7%	▼ –16.7%	10,601	10,311	1,667	1,389
South Dakota	0.0%	0.0%	515	515	51	51
Montana	+4.2%	▼ –15.1%	694	723	73	62
Maine	+7.6%	▼ –17.4%	841	905	115	95

REGION	% CHANGE IN LAUNDRY JOBS, 2015–2025	CHANGE IN BUSINESSES (%)	JOBS 2015	JOBS 2025	BUSINESSES 2015	BUSINESSES 2025
Idaho	+29.5%	▲ +28.7%	966	1,251	87	112

COLOUR KEY ▲ rises once adjusted ▼ falls once adjusted dearer than the US average cheaper than the US average

The arrow carries the same meaning as the colour, so neither is needed on its own.

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY

Read the aggregate and you will conclude the laundry industry is dying. Split it and the truth is sharper: the consumer end fell 36% while the commercial end grew 10%. The work did not disappear — it moved to contracts and to scale.

WHERE IT CAME FROM

US Bureau of Labor Statistics — Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) (<https://www.bls.gov/cew/>)

US federal government — public domain · published annual

WHEN THIS PAGE CHANGES NEXT

QCEW publishes annual averages roughly nine months after the year ends, so this page changes once a year. Quarterly figures appear sooner and are not used here, because a quarter is too short to read a trend from. The pipeline checks every week.

LAST CHECKED 16 SEPTEMBER 2026

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Amara Belkaid, "The decade America's laundry industry shrank", APXXO, 2026.
<https://apxxo.com/en-us/data/laundry-capacity-change/>

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