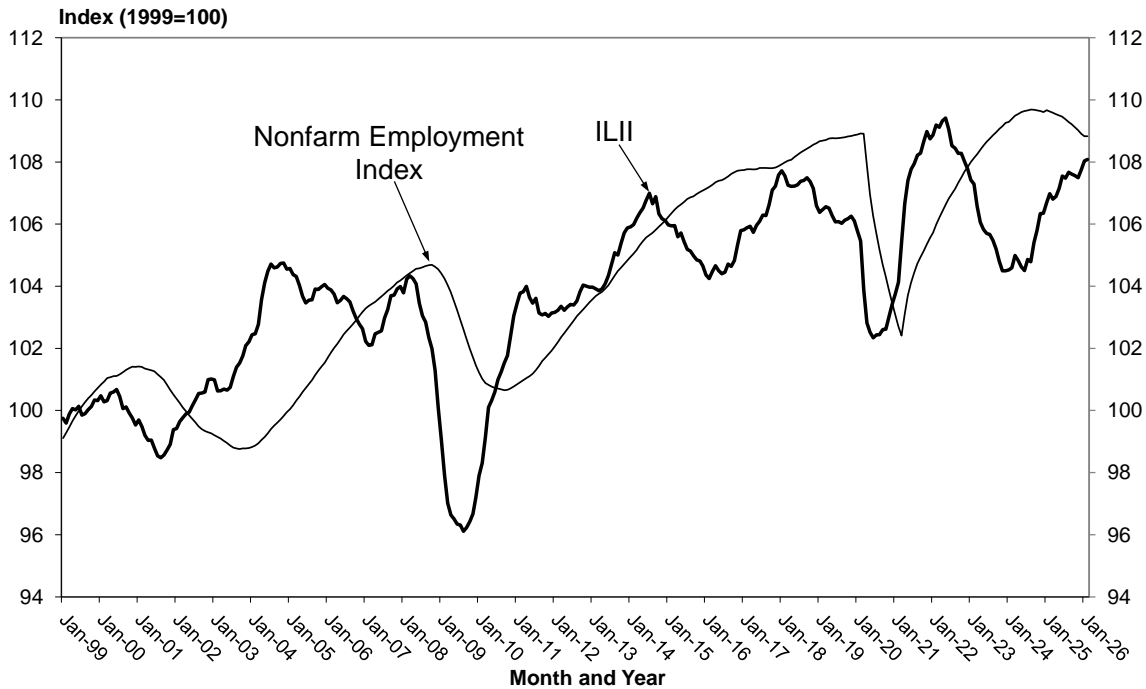


The Iowa Leading Indicators Index (ILII) increased 0.04 percent to 108.1 (100=1999) in February 2026 from 108.0 in January 2026. The monthly diffusion index decreased to 62.5 in February 2026 from 87.5 in January 2026. The federal government shutdown has affected the release of average manufacturing hours and housing data utilized in the ILII and therefore, the February 2026 ILII will present economic analysis based upon available components and neutralize the as yet unavailable components. When the February data become available retroactive revisions will be included in the ILII historical data.

During the six-month span through February 2026, the ILII increased 0.4 percent (an annualized rate of 0.8 percent). The six-month diffusion index decreased to 83.3 in February 2026 from 100.0 in January 2026. The ILII was constructed to signal economic turning points with two key metrics that when seen together are considered a signal of a coming contraction: a six-month annualized change in the index below -2.0 percent and a six-month diffusion index below 50.0. Five of the six component indicators¹ increased more than 0.05 percent over the last half-year: The agricultural futures profits index (AFPI), the national yield spread, the Iowa Stock Market index, new orders index, and initial unemployment insurance claims (inverted). Diesel fuel consumption has decreased by more than 0.05 percent in the last six months and did not contribute to the six-month diffusion index.

Four of the available six components increased month-over-month in February 2026: the Iowa Stock Market Index, the new orders index, AFPI, and average weekly unemployment claims (inverted). Diesel fuel consumption and the national yield spread were detractors from the index. Average weekly manufacturing hours and residential building permits are as yet unrecorded in the monthly ILII.

Figure 1. Iowa Leading Indicators Index and Iowa Nonfarm Employment Coincident Index: January 1999 - February 2026



¹ February 2026 average manufacturing hours and residential building permits data have been delayed and the monthly impact of these components to the ILII have been negated. The 6-month diffusion index has been modified to measure the six available components. As February 2026 data becomes available revisions will be included in future reports.

Table 1. Iowa Leading Indicators Index: Six Month Overview

Monthly Values	2025				2026	
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
ILII	107.6	107.6	107.5	107.7	108.0	108.1
Percentage Change ^a	-0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%
Diffusion Index ^b	50.0	37.5	62.5	75.0	87.5	62.5
Six-Month Values	Apr to Sept	May to Oct	Jun to Nov	Jul to Dec	Aug to Jan	Sep to Feb
ILII						
Percentage Change	0.8%	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	0.5%	0.4%
Annualized Percentage Change	1.5%	1.3%	0.6%	0.4%	1.0%	0.8%
Diffusion Index	100	93.8	62.5	50.0	100	83.3

Source: Tax Research Bureau, Iowa Department of Revenue, produced April 8, 2026.

a. Percentage changes in the ILII do not always equal changes in the level of the ILII due to rounding.

b. A diffusion index measures the proportion of components that are rising based on the actual changes (not the standardized contributions to the ILII). Components experiencing increases greater than 0.05 percent are assigned a value of 1.0, components that experience changes less than an absolute value of 0.05 percent are assigned a value of 0.5, and components experiencing decreases greater than 0.05 percent are assigned a value of 0.0.

Table 2. Iowa Leading Indicators Index Components: Six Month Overview

Component Series Monthly Values ^a		2025				2026	
		Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
AFPI ^b	↑ ^c						
Corn Profits (cents per bushel)		12.9	15.5	18.2	22.6	24.7	26.1
Soybean Profits (cents per bushel)		-121.4	-110.3	-93.0	-77.1	-65.6	-52.5
Hog Profits (cents per pound)		35.8	34.0	30.3	32.6	35.4	35.4
Cattle Profits (cents per pound)		3.0	-0.2	0.3	0.2	-3.2	-1.8
Iowa Stock Market Index (10=1984-86)	↑	168.25	167.51	171.04	178.14	182.35	190.32
Yield Spread (10-year less 3-month)	↓	0.05	0.08	0.15	0.46	0.54	0.44
Residential Building Permits	*	1,103	1,140	1,092	1,100	1,094	1,094
Average Weekly Unemployment Claims ^d	↑	2,483	2,447	2,423	2,342	2,313	2,268
Average Weekly Manufacturing Hours	*	41.18	41.18	41.12	41.14	41.18	41.18
New Orders Index (percent)	↑	49.4	48.7	49.0	48.7	49.1	49.8
Diesel Fuel Consumption (mil gallons)	↓	65.78	65.62	66.10	65.62	65.98	65.57

Source: Tax Research Bureau, Iowa Department of Revenue, produced April 8, 2026.

a. For all component series except for the yield spread and the Iowa stock market index, the values represent 12-month backward moving averages.

b. The agricultural futures profits index is computed as the sum of the standardized symmetric percent changes in the four series, each weighted by the commodity's annual share of Iowa cash farm income (updated September 2, 2025).

c. Arrows indicate the direction of the series' contribution to the ILII for the latest month.

d. Changes in average weekly initial unemployment insurance claims are inverted when added to the ILII, thus a negative change in the series contributes positively to the index.

* Data currently unavailable due to delay in release of housing statistics and employment condition statistics. Data from February 2025 was used for February 2026 in order to neutralize impact of components. Most recent data for these components through January 2026 have been updated retroactively.

ILII Components

- **Iowa stock market index:** Capitalization-weighted index of 27 Iowa-based or Iowa-concentrated publicly-traded companies. During February 2026, 21 of the 27 companies increased in value, and six of the nine financial-sector companies increased in value. With over two-thirds of the stocks experiencing gains, the index increased to 190.32 in February 2026 from 182.35 in January 2026, contributing 0.07 to the ILII.
- **New orders index:** Diffusion index measuring the share of purchasing managers in Iowa reporting increases in orders received for manufacturing output. Changes are calculated based on a 12-month moving average. In February 2026, the new orders index increased to 56.0 from 51.4 in January 2026. Likewise, the 12-month moving average of the new orders index increased to 49.8 from 49.1 in January, and contributed 0.04 to the ILII.
- **Agricultural futures profits index:** Composite measure of corn and soybean expected profits, measured as the 12-month moving average of the futures price less estimated breakeven costs, and cattle and hog expected profits, measured as the average of the crush margin for the next 12 months, weighted by the respective share of Iowa annual cash receipts averaged over the prior ten calendar years. During February 2026, this component contributed 0.04 to the ILII; expected profits increased in corn, soybean, hogs and cattle. Compared to last year, new crop corn prices were 1.8 percent lower and soybean prices were 5.2 percent higher. The February 2026 crush margin for cattle increased 43.6 percent from January 2026, while the crush margin for hogs increased 0.1 percent from January 2026.
- **Average weekly unemployment claims:** Weekly average of initial claims for unemployment insurance in Iowa. Changes are calculated based on a 12-month moving average and are inverted when added to the ILII. This component contributed 0.03 to the ILII value, with the 12-month moving average of claims declining from 2,313 to 2,268. Unemployment claims were 23.2 percent below February 2025 claims, and 39.7 percent below average historical claims for February (1988-2025).
- **Yield spread:** Difference between the yield on 10-year Treasury bonds and 3-month Treasury bills. During February 2026, the yield spread detracted from the ILII, but remained out of inversion territory (below 0.00 percent), down from 0.54 percent in January 2026 to 0.44 percent in February 2026. The long-term rate decreased by 8 basis points in February while the short-term rate increased by 2 basis points. For the month, the yield spread detracted 0.04 from the ILII value.
- **Diesel fuel consumption:** Number of taxable gallons of diesel fuel sold in Iowa. Changes are calculated based on a 12-month moving average. Diesel fuel consumption decreased 7.3 percent between February 2025 and February 2026. The 12-month moving average decreased to 65.57 million gallons in February 2026 from 65.98 million in January 2026, detracting 0.10 from the ILII value.
- **Average weekly manufacturing hours:** Weekly average of hours worked in the manufacturing sector in Iowa. Changes are calculated based on a 12-month moving average. For February 2026, this component contributed 0.00 to the ILII, as the Bureau of Labor Statistics has not yet released employment condition data for February 2026, due to the federal government shutdown.
- **Residential building permits:** Number of total permits issued in Iowa for the construction of residential housing units. Changes are calculated based on a 12-month moving average. In February 2026, this component contributed 0.00 to the index as the U.S. Census Bureau has not yet released housing data for February 2026 due to the federal government shutdown.

Table 3. ILII Components and Standardization Factors for FY 2026

Iowa Leading Indicator Index Components	Standardization Factor
Agricultural Futures Profits Index	0.034
Iowa Stock Market Index	0.016
Yield Spread	0.350
Residential Building Permits	0.032
Average Weekly Unemployment Claims	0.015
Average Weekly Manufacturing Hours	0.325
New Orders Index	0.065
Diesel Fuel Consumption	0.162

Source: Tax Research Bureau, Iowa Department of Revenue, produced September 5, 2025

The standardization factors are the inverse of the standard deviation of the month-to-month changes in each component over the January 1999 to June 2025 period. These factors equalize the volatility of the contribution from each component and are normalized to one. The month-to-month changes are based on 12-month backward moving averages for all components except the agricultural futures profits index, the Iowa stock market index, and yield spread. The yield spread and new orders index changes are simple arithmetic changes; month-to-month changes for the rest of the components are computed as symmetric percentage changes.

The factors are updated annually during August.

Comments

The Iowa Leading Indicators Index (ILII) is designed to forecast the future direction of economic activity in the state of Iowa. The techniques used to build the ILII follow those used by The Conference Board to construct the national Leading Economics Index (LEI) prior to the 2001 revisions. A one-month movement in such an index does not produce a clear signal, rather it is necessary to consider the direction of the index over several consecutive months. A contraction signal in the ILII is considered reliable when two conditions are met: 1. The index declines by at least two percent over a six-month period (using an annualized rate); and, 2. A majority of the individual components decline over those six months (the six-month diffusion index less than 50.0).

The Iowa nonfarm employment coincident index measures the change in non-seasonally adjusted, total nonfarm employment in the state of Iowa. Changes are based on a 12-month moving average of employment and are computed as symmetric percentage changes. The index is a representation of overall economic activity in Iowa.

The employment index and the ILII are constructed to have a value of 100.0 in the year 1999.