



## Oklahoma's labor force participation surpasses the nation

October 02, 2024

---

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 2, 2024

CONTACT: [Sarah Dickson](#)

**OKLAHOMA CITY-** The Oklahoma City Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City released its latest issue of the quarterly publication the *Oklahoma Economist*, titled “[Oklahoma's Rising Labor Force Participation Driven Largely by Native Americans.](#)”

Oklahoma's labor force participation recently moved higher than the U.S. rate for the first time in over three decades, according to Chad Wilkerson, senior vice president and branch executive at the Oklahoma City Branch of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

“In recent decades, Oklahoma's labor force participation rate has typically been around 2-3 percentage points lower than the national average, with the gap narrowing slightly during recessions,” he said. “Oklahoma's labor force participation overtook the U.S. average in 2023 for the first time in over 30 years, as its labor force grew faster than the nation's even as its population growth was similar.”

Wilkerson said Oklahoma's increase in labor force participation since 2021 has been primarily driven by heightened participation among the Native American population, both in metro and non-metro areas.

“The state's Native American population contributed to over two-thirds of this increase in participation since 2021, with many who entered the workforce finding employment in schools, hospitals, and government,” he said. “Because Native Americans' contribution to labor force gains during this time is greater than their contribution to population growth, they have accounted for 71% of the total increase in Oklahoma's labor force participation rate.”

The complete issue is available at [www.kansascityfed.org/oklahomacity/oklahoma-economist](http://www.kansascityfed.org/oklahomacity/oklahoma-economist).

The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City serves the Tenth Federal Reserve District, encompassing the western third of Missouri; all of Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Wyoming; and the northern half of New Mexico. As part of the nation's central bank, the Bank participates in setting national monetary policy, supervising and regulating numerous commercial banks and bank holding companies, and providing financial services to depository institutions. More information is available online at [www.kansascityfed.org](http://www.kansascityfed.org).

###

---