



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MORE THAN 150,000 PEOPLE RETURNED TO WORK DURING 2021

Weaker than normal hiring kicks off 2022 in the Houston-area

(HOUSTON) Houston-area employers grew their payrolls by 5.3 percent during 2021 according to [data](#) released this morning by [Workforce Solutions](#). The 159,700 jobs added during the previous year is the largest ever December to December increase on record in the region, said Parker Harvey, Workforce Solutions principal economist. “At the end of 2020, the year-over-year loss was 185,000 jobs; we have come a long way in the last 12 months.”

Annual benchmark revisions covering 2021 shows that despite the ongoing pandemic, employers added an additional 7,900 jobs that previously reported. Government sector employment, which includes public schools and universities, saw the most gains (+14,800) compared to original estimates while the Leisure and Hospitality sector added an additional 9,000 jobs. Upward revisions to these and other sectors were partially offset by 9,100 Mining and Logging and 7,200 fewer Professional and Business Services jobs being added last year although both continue to show positive over-the-year growth.

Typical January over-the-month job losses due to post-holiday seasonal cutbacks to retail workers and statistical adjustments were larger than normal, resulting in a 51,700-job loss to kick off the new year. Job losses were spread across nearly every industry sector with Trade, Transportation, and Utilities seeing the greatest losses. The sector encompasses retail trade and the logistical and warehouse operations that keep product on store shelves. Both staff up heavily in the months prior to the Christmas shopping season, then cut back at the beginning of every year. Excluding seasonal losses and adjustments, the Houston area added 1,300 jobs over the month compared to a pre-pandemic average of 3,600 jobs in the month of January.

The unemployment rate in the Houston area rose nearly one point over the month to a not-seasonally-adjusted 5.5 percent, which is typical for January and is consistent with historical trends. A year ago, the January NSA unemployment rate stood at 7.9 percent.

Service industry workers in need of childcare assistance have only a few days left to apply. Applications are being accepted through Tuesday, March 15. To apply visit www.wrksolutions.com/sir.

Additional labor market information, including the detailed December report, can be found at www.wrksolutions.com/localstats. The February jobs report will be released by Workforce Solutions on March 25, 2022.

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ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Workforce Solutions is dedicated to keeping the Gulf Coast region a great place to do business, work, and live. Our employer-driven, people-focused approach elevates the economic and human potential of the region to attract and retain the best employers, afford everyone the dignity of a job, and remain indispensable to the global economy. As the public workforce system for 13 counties in the Houston-Galveston region, we work in tandem with the Texas Workforce Commission and the statewide Workforce Solutions network to maintain the state’s largest job-match database – www.WorkInTexas.com.