



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STRONG JOB GROWTH FORECAST FOR 2022 AS REGION CONTINUES ITS POST-PANDEMIC RECOVERY

(HOUSTON) As of November, the Greater Houston area has regained nearly 75 percent of jobs lost at the outset of the Coronavirus pandemic according to analysis released today by Workforce Solutions. After being down as much as 360,000 jobs in spring 2020, the region has narrowed the employment gap to just under 100,000 with the month's job figures.

"As we head into the third year of the pandemic, I expect we'll see job growth return to normal levels," said Parker Harvey, regional economist at the workforce development agency. "If we manage to stay on this course, we'll be back to our pre-pandemic employment level – one of the single most important milestones in our recovery," he said.

In November, employers added more than 33,000 workers to their payrolls, with seasonal hiring by retailers and warehouses contributing half of all new jobs added last month. The oil field-heavy Mining and Logging sector contributed another 4,300 jobs, the second highest sector for growth. "This segment of our economy has lagged behind, despite the increase in oil prices," Harvey explained. "After 18 months, it's finally managed to post a positive recovery rate." He forecasts additional growth of nearly 9,000 jobs in this sector during 2022.

The not-seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate currently stands at 5.1 percent, down slightly from October's 5.4 percent figure. More than 178,000 people remain unemployed in November; but, for the first time since the pandemic began, the number of job openings exceeds the number of unemployed people in the Houston.

2022 Outlook for greater Houston area

Harvey's overall prediction for 2022 is that by next December, Houston's over-the-year job growth will come in at 71,200. This is admittedly a much lower number than our current 138,800 as of November 2021. However, the 100,000 plus year-over-year growth that we've seen throughout 2021 is a byproduct of the extreme drop in 2020 rather than a true reflection of our job market's health.

Harvey said, "As we get further and further from year one of the pandemic, we will begin to see more reasonable growth. As a bonus, if we manage to stay the course, this will also get us back to our pre-pandemic level of 3.2 million jobs by next December."

Childcare Scholarships for Service Industry Workers

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Leisure, Hospitality and other Service industries, such as beauty salons and repair services, will be closely watched in 2022, and is expected to grow at a more normal pace of around 11,000 jobs month-over-month.

On November 30, 2021, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation issued a report titled: [Untapped Potential: Economic Impact of Childcare Breakdowns on U.S. States](#). Regarding the economic impact of childcare, the report states, "Without suitable childcare options, many Texans will be forced to exit the workforce, which has negative financial impacts on their household and limits the talent pool available to businesses in an already competitive labor environment.

The report included the following key findings for Texas:

- An estimated \$1.80 billion is lost annually in tax revenue due to childcare issues
- Approximately 7 percent of parents voluntarily left a job due to childcare issues
- Thirty percent of respondents reported that they or someone in their household has left a job, not taken a job, or greatly changed jobs because of problems with childcare in the last 12 months
- Fifty-five percent of parents who voluntarily leave their jobs do so when their child(ren) is two years old or younger, indicating that childcare for infants and toddlers is the greatest need

No matter how quickly our economy rebounds, childcare continues to have its impact on families who can't afford it; on children who benefit most by learning social concepts; and by employers that continually hire, replace and train their workforce.

To help the Service industries recover, Workforce Solutions is offering 12-month childcare scholarships to service industry workers who apply by **March 4, 2022**. Named "Service Industry Recovery," the initiative covers employees who work at restaurants and entertainment venues to retail workers and other service providers. To view eligibility requirements and to apply, visit: www.wrksolutions.com/SIR

Additional labor market information including the full, detailed November report can be found at www.wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release employment data for December on Friday, January 21, 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 - WorkInTexas.com.