



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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OIL PRICE CRASH, CORONAVIRUS HEALTH MEASURES CAUSE BIG JUMP IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ON RECORD

(HOUSTON) Houston-area employers shed 8,200 jobs in March due to a combination of emergency health measures related to Coronavirus and the impact of the second big oil price crash in five years begins to affect the economy, according to data released this morning by Workforce Solutions.

Job losses in the Construction and Manufacturing sectors contributed the majority of the month's job losses, said Parker Harvey, an economist with the regional workforce development agency, "In construction, projects already underway are continuing but those still in the planning stages or that were on the cusp of starting have been delayed. For Manufacturing, it's along the lines of a 60-40 split between the crash in oil prices and furloughs related to social distancing measures."

The local not-seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate jumped more than one point to 5.1 percent in March. "This report picks up the initial unemployment claims that came in just as the emergency health measures began," Harvey explained.

Additional labor market information including the detailed February report can be found at wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release employment data for April on May 22, 2020.

Despite the negative economic data, there are still employers looking for immediate hires. "We're seeing job orders come in from industries deemed essential," said Michelle Castrow, a senior planner with Workforce Solutions. Those looking for a "right now" job are encouraged to visit www.wrksolutions.com/jobsnow for a list of immediate job openings. "If you are hired for, or are already employed, in an essential job category, Workforce Solutions has additional childcare options available to help you out."



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"All you need to do is visit www.childcarenow.org and fill out an application and we will help you find a quality childcare provider and get approved for the stipend," Castrow said, adding that so far, the program has placed nearly 900 children with a quality childcare provider. "We don't want anyone working in an essential industry to worry about who's going to watch their children or how they are going to pay for it."

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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.