



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOUSTON JOB GROWTH IMPROVES IN MAY, BUT EXPANSION REMAINS UNEVEN

(HOUSTON, Texas, June 25, 2026) Houston-area employers added 16,800 jobs in May, a stronger-than-average gain for the month and a sign that the region's labor market regained some momentum following a slower start to the year, according to numbers released Friday by Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast.

The gain exceeded Houston's long-term May average of 12,600 jobs and was substantially stronger than May 2025, when employers added 4,100 positions. Leisure and Hospitality led monthly growth with 5,400 jobs, followed by Construction with 4,000 and Other Services with 1,900. Trade, Transportation and Utilities, Professional and Business Services, and Manufacturing also posted gains during the month.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, Houston added 5,000 jobs in May, slightly above the historical average for the month. "Houston's labor market showed encouraging signs of stabilization in May," said Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast Economist Mohammad Ahmadizadeh. "Monthly job growth exceeded typical seasonal expectations, and employment gains were fairly well-distributed across industries. Challenges remain in several sectors, but the region continues to benefit from strength in construction, healthcare, and professional services."

Several of May's strongest gains came from sectors benefiting from seasonal activity and major events. Leisure and Hospitality hiring exceeded historical norms as employers added staff in advance of summer travel and Houston's role as a host city for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. At the same time, Construction continued to outperform historical averages, supported by ongoing industrial development, infrastructure investment, and large-scale construction activity across the region.

Over the year, Houston added 21,300 jobs, an increase of 0.6 percent. While that marks an improvement from recent months, annual growth remains well below the pace recorded a year ago, when the region added more than 44,000 jobs. Seven of Houston's eleven major industry sectors now show year-over-year growth, reaffirming that hiring has broadened somewhat compared to earlier in 2026.

Construction remained the region's strongest source of annual job growth, adding 12,100 jobs over the year. Professional and Business Services added 7,000 jobs, while Private Education and Health Services added 6,500. Financial Activities, Mining and Logging, Manufacturing, and Information remained below year-ago levels.

Houston's unemployment rate rose to 4.6 percent in May from 4.3 percent in April and remained above both the Texas rate of 4.3 percent and the national rate of 4.1 percent. Workforce Solutions noted that Houston's unemployment rate typically increases in May and has done so over the past three decades.

Other indicators also show early signs of improving labor market conditions. The Houston Area Workforce Solutions Index increased from 3.33 in April to 3.46 in May, marking four consecutive monthly improvements. While the index remains below the equilibrium level of 4.0, indicating that jobseekers still outnumber available opportunities, the recent upward trend points to strengthening hiring demand. **-more-**

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Additional labor market information, including the detailed May report, can be found online at www.wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release June employment data on June 20, 2026.

ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: [Workforce Solutions](http://www.WorkInTexas.com) is dedicated to keeping the Texas 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.

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