



Gulf Coast Workforce Board
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MARCH EMPLOYMENT SURGES BY NEARLY 20,000 *Largest month-to-month increase reported across multiple industry sectors*

(HOUSTON, TX) **Attention Reporters, producers, and assignment editors: We have been notified that a person claiming to be with Workforce Solutions has been contacting customers in our area. More information on this alleged job scam can be found below.**

Houston-area employers added 19,900 new jobs last month, the largest March increase since the Coronavirus pandemic began excluding 2021's early rebound, according to data released this morning by Workforce Solutions. Nine out of the eleven industry sectors also saw month-over-month increases.

Trade, Transportation and Utilities reported the biggest jump in hiring, adding 6,000 jobs. Hiring in the retail stores outpaced other categories in the sector, adding more than half – or 3,100 jobs in March. "This is an extremely strong showing, particularly in the retail sector," said Parker Harvey, principal economist at Workforce Solutions. "Typically we see about 1,600 new jobs in March, so this is substantially above the average and the biggest one-month increase since 2007."

The Professional & Business Services sector, which was revised downward from February's report, added 4,100 jobs, mainly in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services subsector (+2,400) followed closely by Administrative and Support Services (+1,300). The majority of jobs in this sector are tied to the oil & gas industry, Harvey said, "When you take this and add it a strong month for Manufacturing, which added 2,200 jobs mainly in durable goods, maybe higher oil prices are finally having a positive effect on employment in those two sectors."

Construction hiring also jumped in March, adding 3,000 jobs, another record month of hiring which was spread nearly evenly between Civil Engineering Construction (+1,100) and Speciality Trade Contractors (+1,400). Harvey noted this sector was revised downward from February's already anemic hiring. "We could chalk this up to a simple delay in actual hiring or in reporting new hires but also keep in mind that Construction job growth was overstated throughout 2022," he said.

Unemployment in the Houston area stands at a not-seasonally-adjusted 4.4 percent, down nearly half a point from February, but still slightly higher than this time a year ago. Harvey attributes the increase to more people coming off the sidelines to look for work. Seasonally adjusted unemployment for February also rose slightly over the month to 4.3 percent.

Additional labor market information, including the detailed March report can be found online at www.wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release April employment data on May 19, 2023.



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More on the alleged job scam email

Multiple people have reported receiving an email for a “Representative/Escrow Agent” from a “Robert Dobson” claiming to be a Workforce Solutions Recruiter. Dobson is **not** employed by Workforce Solutions and the job is a likely a scam.

Tips to avoid common job scams:

- Never pay for training, enrollment, background checks, or "work from home" equipment
- Never give out your personal information (Social Security Number, Bank account) over the phone
- Never accept a check up front for work you haven't done
- Be wary of job offers through email unless you have an established relationship with the company
- Only use reputable job search websites like www.WorkinTexas.com

ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: [Workforce Solutions](http://www.WorkforceSolutions.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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