



Gulf Coast Workforce Board  
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **Job Growth Narrows as Labor Market Continues to Moderate**

**HOUSTON, TX** — The Houston region’s labor market continued to expand in February, but at a slower and more uneven pace, according to the latest *Houston Area Employment Situation* report from Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast.

Total nonfarm employment increased by 13,100 jobs over the month, bringing the region’s total to 3.47 million jobs. While February typically sees job gains following seasonal declines in January, this month’s increase fell below the historical average, signaling softer hiring activity across the region. February data should also be interpreted with caution, as seasonal patterns typically inflate job gains following January declines.

On a year over year basis, Houston added 7,700 jobs, a significant slowdown compared to the more than 53,000 jobs added during the same period last year. At the same time, seven of the eleven major industry sectors experienced job losses over the year, reflecting a narrowing base of growth across the regional economy.

Despite recent volatility in global energy markets and upward pressure on oil prices, employment in energy related sectors continues to decline. Mining and Logging employment fell by 5,600 jobs over the year, underscoring ongoing adjustments in the energy sector following lower drilling activity throughout much of 2025.

While higher oil prices have historically driven job growth in the region, recent trends suggest that relationship has weakened. Increased efficiency, automation, and capital discipline across the energy industry have limited the extent to which price increases translate into immediate hiring gains.

Job growth in February was led by Government, which added 7,100 jobs over the month, followed by Professional and Business Services (4,800) and Construction (3,000). Over the year, Construction remained the strongest contributor to job growth, adding 11,200 jobs, followed by Private Education and Health Services (6,500) and Professional and Business Services (5,500).

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The region's unemployment rate declined to 4.7 percent in February, though it remains slightly higher than a year ago. Additional indicators suggest a labor market that is stable but cautious. The Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions Index (WSI) remained below equilibrium, indicating slower hiring activity relative to the number of job seekers.

Looking ahead, Houston's labor market is expected to see moderate growth, supported by population gains, infrastructure investment, and continued demand in healthcare and construction. However, ongoing weakness in energy, manufacturing, and trade-related sectors is likely to continue constraining broader employment growth in the near term.

Additional labor market information, including the detailed February report, can be found online at [www.wrksolutions.com/regional-economic-data/houston-area-employment-situation](http://www.wrksolutions.com/regional-economic-data/houston-area-employment-situation).

The Texas Workforce Commission will release March employment data on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026.

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**ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS – GULF COAST:** [Workforce Solutions - Gulf Coast](http://www.WorkforceSolutions-GulfCoast.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](http://www.WorkInTexas.com).

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