



# TEXAS

## LABOR MARKET REVIEW

**JANUARY 2026**

The Texas Labor Market Review brings you the most current labor market highlights and happenings across the Lone Star State. The information that follows is produced and published on a monthly basis and includes data on nonagricultural job trends, the labor force, job postings, and other relevant indicators for both the state and sub-state areas. Additional data and historical information is available at [TexasLMI.com](https://TexasLMI.com).

### December 2025 Monthly Indicators

#### INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT



**19,700 jobs**

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#### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



**0.1 points**

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#### JOB ADS INDEX



**0.4%**

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#### INITIAL UI CLAIMS



**1,954 claims**

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# CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

## Statewide Industry Employment (Seasonally Adjusted)

Total Nonfarm employment continued the momentum of a revised November increase of 7,600 jobs with a gain of 19,700 positions in December. This brought the series to a record-high level of 14,341,000 jobs, while the annual growth rate edged down to 0.9 percent. Monthly growth was largely driven by gains in the private sector,

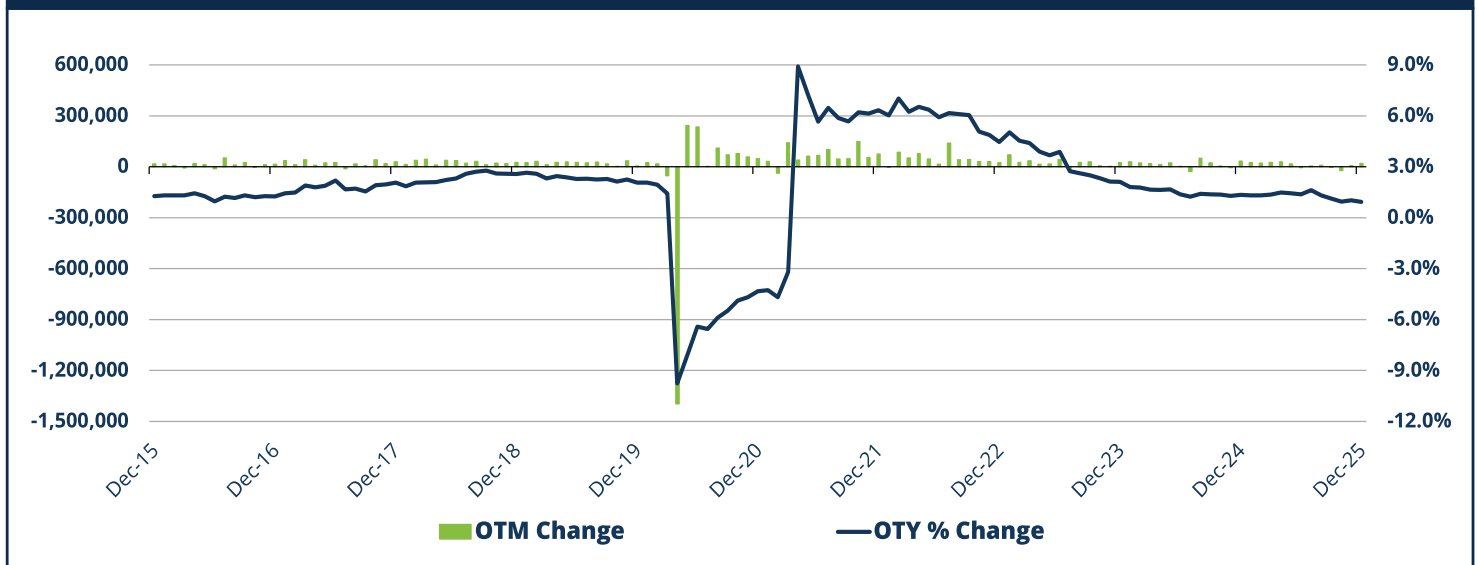
which posted an increase of 17,400 positions in December and also posted a new record-high job count. Nine of the 11 major industries added jobs over the month, and eight grew over the year. Four private industries achieved new series highs in December.

Industry	Dec 2025	Monthly Change	Annual Change	Annual % Change
Total Nonagricultural	14,341,000	19,700	132,500	0.9
Total Private	12,193,700	17,400	115,900	1.0
Goods Producing	2,067,300	-1,600	16,200	0.8
Mining and Logging	221,200	2,500	3,800	1.7
Construction	876,600	-4,500	15,700	1.8
Manufacturing	969,500	400	-3,300	-0.3
Service Providing	12,273,700	21,300	116,300	1.0
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	2,818,400	9,500	37,800	1.4
Information	224,200	-300	-4,600	-2.0
Financial Activities	939,300	1,300	1,900	0.2
Professional and Business Services	2,118,800	3,000	-14,800	-0.7
Private Education & Health Services	1,985,900	1,300	44,200	2.3
Leisure and Hospitality	1,541,700	3,700	26,500	1.7
Other Services	498,100	500	8,700	1.8
Government	2,147,300	2,300	16,600	0.8

### Highlights

- Leisure and Hospitality employment reached a new series-high mark in December with an over-the-month gain of 3,700 jobs on top of a revised increase of 100 in November.
- Trade, Transportation, and Utilities industry recovered from two months of job losses to achieve a new series high in December with 9,500 positions added.
- Mining and Logging employment rose for the first time in four months with the addition of 2,500 positions in December.

### Total Nonagricultural Jobs



# CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

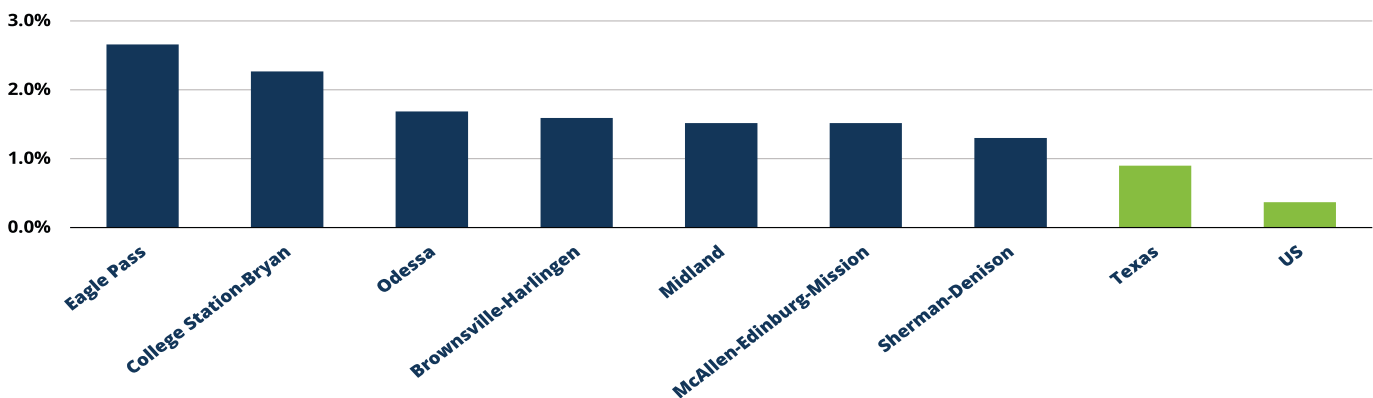
## Metro Areas (Seasonally Adjusted)

Metro Areas	Dec 2025	Monthly Change	Annual Change	Annual % Change
Abilene MSA	79,400	200	200	0.3
Amarillo MSA	131,600	300	1,300	1.0
Austin-Round Rock MSA	1,379,000	3,300	10,100	0.7
Beaumont-Port Arthur MSA	170,500	-100	700	0.4
Brownsville-Harlingen MSA	166,100	-200	2,600	1.6
College Station-Bryan MSA	148,800	500	3,300	2.3
Corpus Christi MSA	201,300	200	1,700	0.9
Dallas-FW-Arlington MSA	4,300,800	2,900	14,200	0.3
Dallas-Plano-Irving MD	3,083,500	1,400	2,700	0.1
FW-Arlington-Grapevine MD	1,215,200	1,200	12,300	1.0
Eagle Pass MSA	19,300	200	500	2.7
El Paso MSA	355,700	-200	300	0.1
Houston MSA	3,470,400	-500	13,500	0.4
Killeen-Temple MSA	155,300	0	400	0.3
Laredo MSA	115,200	100	1,100	1.0
Longview MSA	122,800	100	1,400	1.2
Lubbock MSA	175,200	400	900	0.5
McAllen MSA	307,500	400	4,600	1.5
Midland MSA	127,000	-100	1,900	1.5
Odessa MSA	84,500	100	1,400	1.7
San Angelo MSA	54,800	-100	400	0.7
San Antonio MSA	1,205,700	1,400	13,600	1.1
Sherman-Denison MSA	54,500	100	700	1.3
Texarkana MSA	61,200	-200	600	1.0
Tyler MSA	119,200	-300	900	0.8
Victoria MSA	40,500	0	400	1.0
Waco MSA	144,200	-100	-100	-0.1
Wichita Falls MSA	59,500	0	100	0.2

## Highlights

- Total nonfarm employment in 15 of 27 metro areas expanded in December for a combined monthly increase of 9,900 jobs. Three MSAs experienced no change over the month, and nine areas recorded monthly employment declines. As of December, 26 areas experienced positive year-over-year job gains, as the Waco MSA contracted by 100 jobs. Nine MSAs recorded annual growth rates above 1.0 percent.
- Employment in the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA built on a revised gain of 2,100 jobs in November with growth of 3,300 in December to lead all metro areas.
- The San Antonio-New Braunfels MSA continued to rebound from a recent string of monthly declines with the gain of 1,400 jobs in December.
- The Eagle Pass MSA showed employment growth for the second time in three months with the addition of 200 jobs in December.

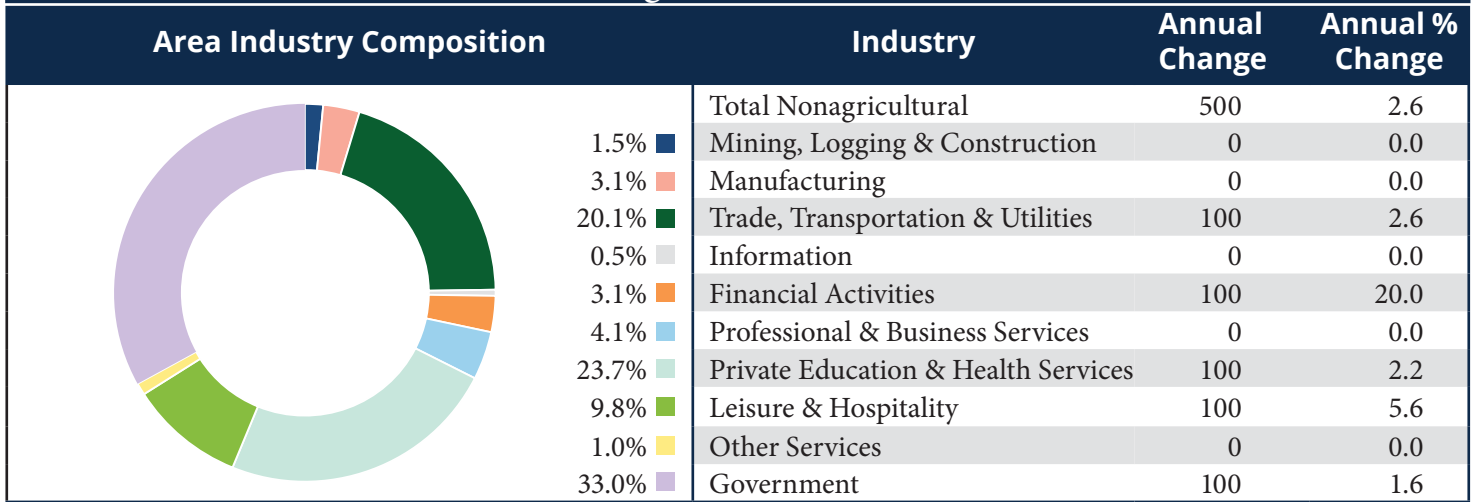
## Fastest Growing Metro Areas Over the Year



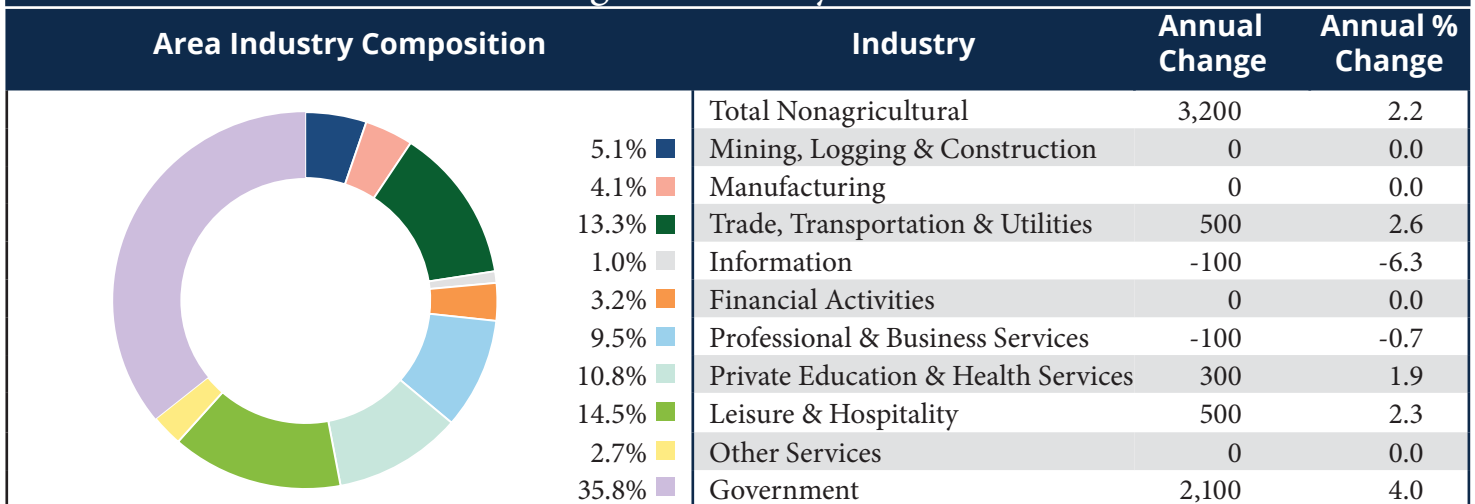
# CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Fastest Growing Metro Areas Over-the-Year (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

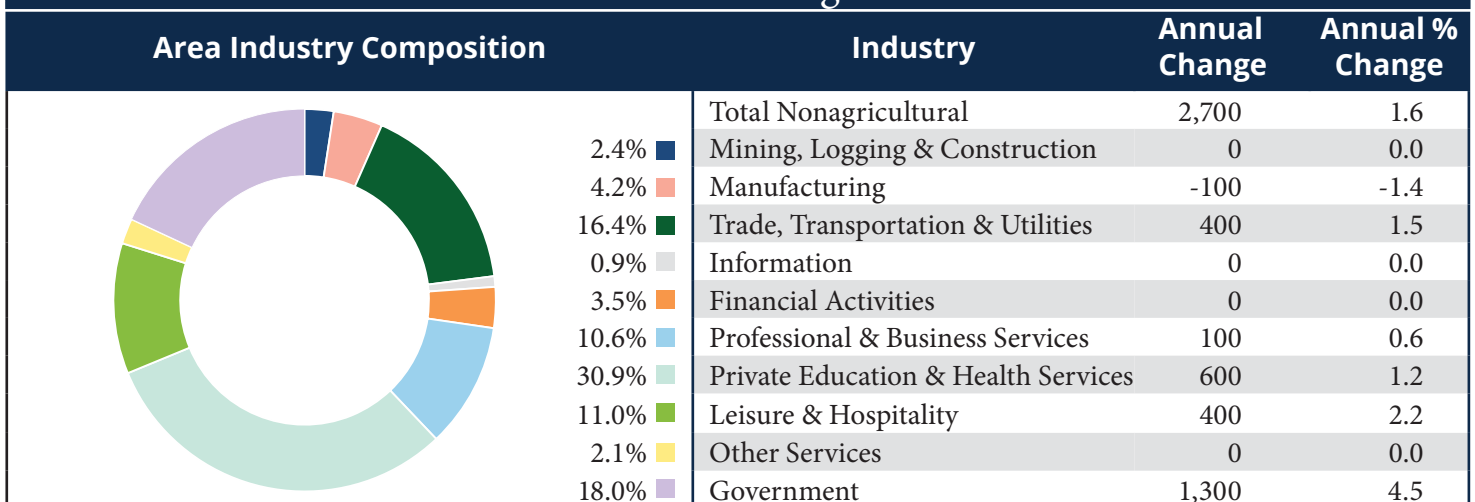
## Eagle Pass MSA



## College Station-Bryan MSA



## Brownsville-Harlingen MSA



[Download CES data \(including industry-level data\) in Excel](#)

# LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Texas & the U.S. (Seasonally Adjusted)

## Texas December 2025

### Employed

15,283,600

### Unemployed

680,400

4.3%

Date	CLF	Employment	Unemployment	Rate
December 2025	15,964,000	15,283,600	680,400	4.3
November 2025	15,939,000	15,264,900	674,100	4.2
December 2024	15,727,700	15,073,300	654,500	4.2

## U.S. December 2025

### Employed

163,992,000

### Unemployed

7,503,000

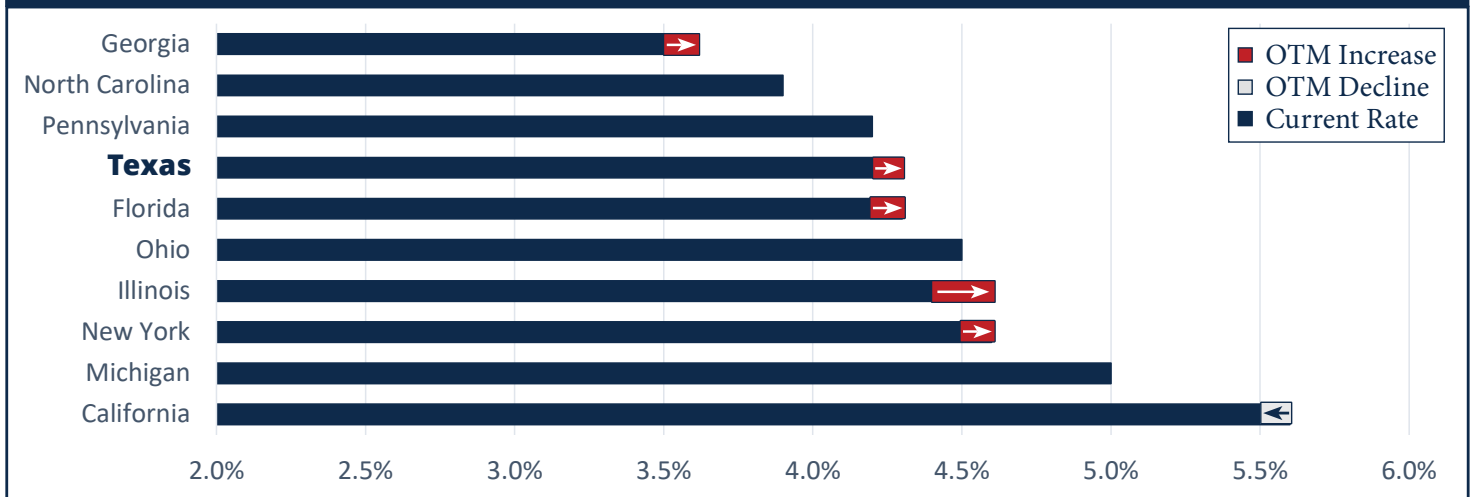
4.4%

Date	CLF	Employment	Unemployment	Rate
December 2025	171,495,000	163,992,000	7,503,000	4.4
November 2025	171,541,000	163,760,000	7,781,000	4.5
December 2024	168,547,000	161,661,000	6,886,000	4.1

## Highlights

- Over the month the Texas seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose to 4.3 percent, one-tenth of a percentage point lower than the U.S. rate of 4.4 percent.
- The state's seasonally adjusted labor force participation rate was 64.7 percent in December.
- Texas' seasonally adjusted LAUS employment was up 18,700 from last month.
- Summarizing the not seasonally adjusted estimates, the Texas unemployment rate decreased to 3.9 percent in December. This was 0.2 percentage points higher than the unemployment rate in December 2024.

## 10 Largest States' Unemployment Rates



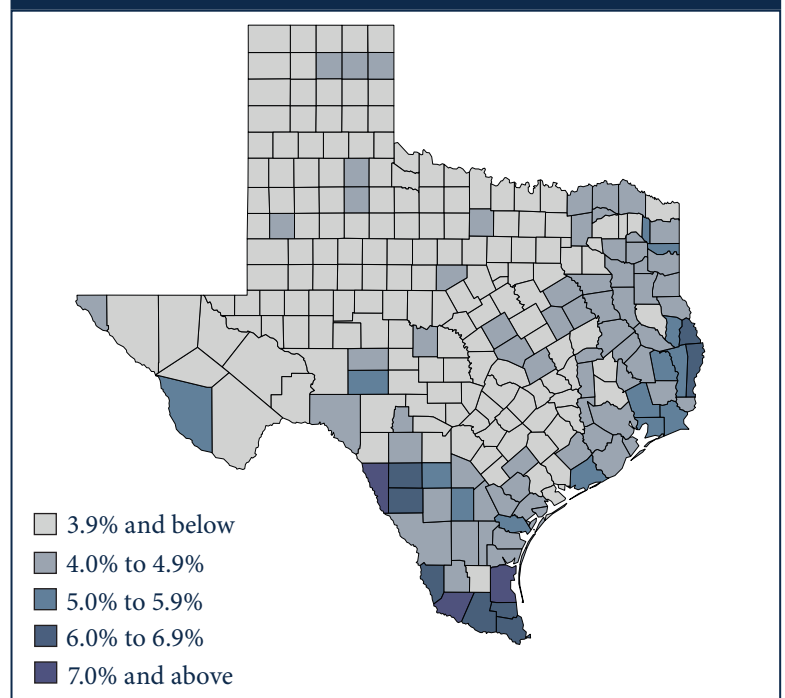
# LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

## Substate Areas (Not Seasonally Adjusted)

### County Highlights

- Unemployment rates varied considerably across counties, ranging from a low of 0.5 percent in Loving County to a high of 9.8 percent in Starr County.
- Fifty-five counties had an unemployment rate of 3.0 percent or less.
- Frio County experienced the largest unemployment rate decrease of 2.5 percentage points over the year.
- In December 2025, nine counties experienced an increase in their unemployment rates over the month, while 239 counties experienced a decrease and six experienced no change.
- Over the year, the civilian labor force increased in 235 counties, while 19 counties in the state experienced a decline.

### County Unemployment Rates



### Texas Metro Areas Ranked by Unemployment Rate

Rank	Area	Rate	Rank	Area	Rate
1	Amarillo	2.8	14	Victoria	3.9
2	Midland	2.9		United States	4.1
2	San Angelo	2.9	15	El Paso	4.1
4	Abilene	3.1	15	Laredo	4.1
4	College Station-Bryan	3.1	17	Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands	4.2
4	Lubbock	3.1	17	Longview	4.2
7	Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos	3.2	17	Texarkana	4.2
8	Odessa	3.5	20	Corpus Christi	4.3
8	Wichita Falls	3.5	20	Tyler	4.3
10	Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington	3.6	22	Killeen-Temple	4.4
10	Sherman-Denison	3.6	23	Beaumont-Port Arthur	5.2
10	Waco	3.6	24	Brownsville-Harlingen	6.4
13	San Antonio-New Braunfels	3.7	24	McAllen-Edinburg-Mission	6.4
	Texas	3.9	26	Eagle Pass	8.7

### Metro Area Highlights

- Over the month, 23 metropolitan areas experienced a decrease in their unemployment rates while three experienced an increase.
- Over the year, one Texas metropolitan area, Longview MSA, saw a decrease in their unemployment rate, while 23 metro areas experienced an increase and two experienced no change.

[Download LAUS data in Excel](#)

# AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Population and Age by Educational Attainment, U.S. Census Bureau

## Age by Educational Attainment

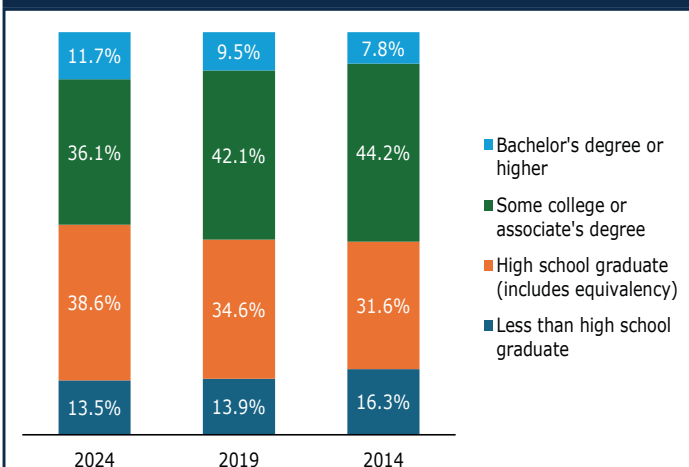
Population 18 to 24 Years	2024	2019	2014
18 to 24 years	3,056,382	2,826,700	2,753,234
Bachelor's degree or higher	11.7%	9.5%	7.8%
Some college or associate's degree	36.1%	42.1%	44.2%
High school grad (or equivalent)	38.6%	34.6%	31.6%
Less than high school graduate	13.5%	13.9%	16.3%

Population 25 Years and Over	2024	2019	2014
25 to 34 years	4,514,557	4,242,661	3,904,730
Bachelor's degree or higher	37.2%	32.8%	28.8%
High school graduate or higher	91.7%	89.6%	85.7%
35 to 44 years	4,491,641	3,959,419	3,660,268
Bachelor's degree or higher	39.2%	33.5%	30.0%
High school graduate or higher	88.4%	85.0%	82.4%
45 to 64 years	7,205,292	6,831,743	6,426,877
Bachelor's degree or higher	33.9%	29.8%	27.6%
High school graduate or higher	84.3%	83.6%	82.5%
65 years and over	4,365,469	3,738,727	3,096,013
Bachelor's degree or higher	31.0%	27.4%	24.3%
High school graduate or higher	83.7%	80.5%	76.8%

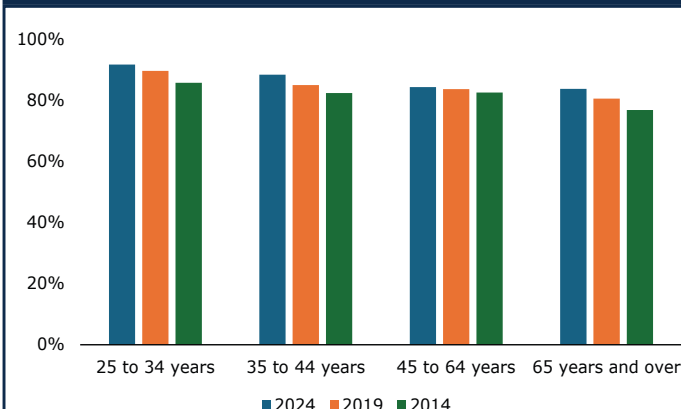
## Highlights

- From 2014 to 2024, the percentage of Texans age 18-24 obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher grew from 7.8 percent to 11.7 percent, a 3.9 percentage point increase.
- During the same time, the percentage of Texans age 18-24 with less than a high school degree decreased from 16.3 percent to 13.5 percent, a 2.8 percentage point decrease.
- From 2014 to 2024, the percentage of Texans attaining a high school level of education or higher increased across all age groups.
- In 2024, 91.7 percent of the population group between the ages of 25 to 34 had a high school level education or higher, more than any other group.

## Educational Attainment by Year, 18 to 24 Years



## High School Graduate or Higher by Year, Age



12-month moving average unemployment rates will return November 2026



# HELP WANTED ONLINE

## Statewide Online Job Ads Data (Seasonally Adjusted)

### Texas Labor Supply vs. Labor Demand



### Highlights

- The Conference Board–Lightcast Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) Index increased over the month to 111.1 in December, an increase of 0.5 points.
- The December Supply/Demand rate was 1.1 unemployed for each advertised vacancy, with a total of 73,593 more unemployed workers than advertised vacancies.

### Top Employers by Postings

Employer	Dec 2025
HCA Healthcare	6,192
CHRISTUS Health	4,204
Domino's Pizza	3,953
Walmart	3,457
Baylor Scott & White Health	3,401
CVS Health	2,590
Allied Universal	2,329
Pizza Hut	2,230
Starbucks	2,099
JPMorgan Chase	1,959

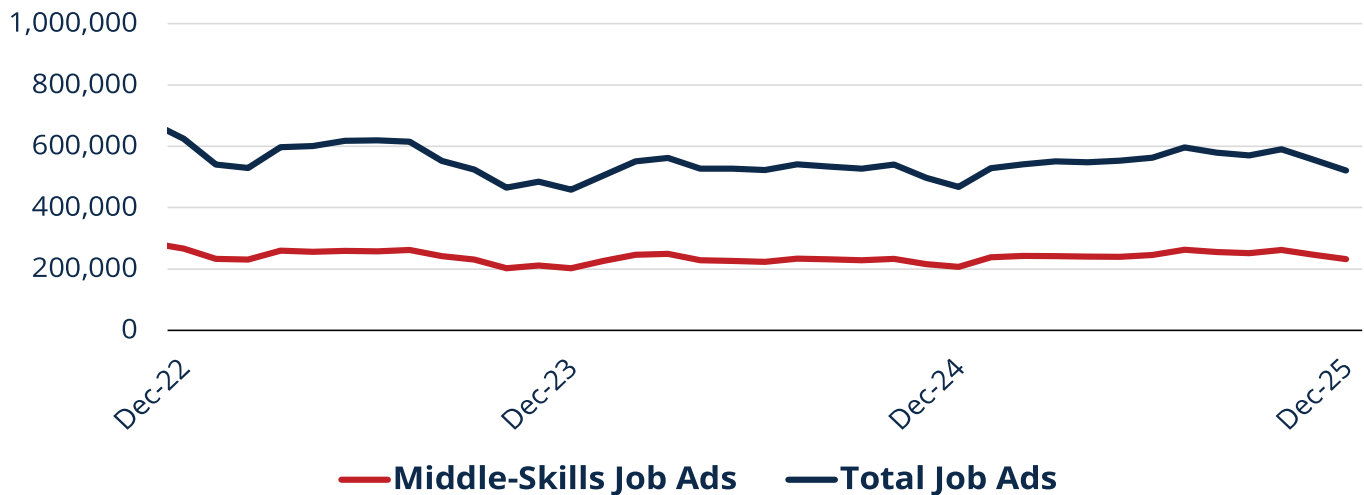
### Top Occupations by Postings

Occupation	Dec 2025
Registered Nurses	29,621
Retail Salespersons	17,965
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	13,197
Customer Service Representatives	10,399
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	10,177
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	8,638
Software Developers	8,425
Sales Reps, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	8,134
Food Service Managers	8,094
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	8,016



# DEMAND FOR MIDDLE-SKILLS JOBS

**Total Middle-Skills Job Ads in Texas**



**Source:** Lightcast® and TWC Long Term Projections 2022-2032

## Highlights

- Middle-Skill occupations require more education than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree.
- December Help Wanted OnLine® Middle-Skills Job Ads increased 12.2 percent over the year to 231,983.
- Job ads for Middle-Skill occupations represented 44.6 percent of all live postings in December.

## Top Middle-Skills Employers by Postings

Employer	Dec 2025
HCA Healthcare	4,506
Domino's Pizza	3,224
CHRISTUS Health	2,924
Baylor Scott & White Health	2,135
Allied Universal	2,051
Walmart	1,371
Pizza Hut	1,308
Medical City Healthcare	1,038
Houston Methodist	990
Walgreens Boots Alliance	983

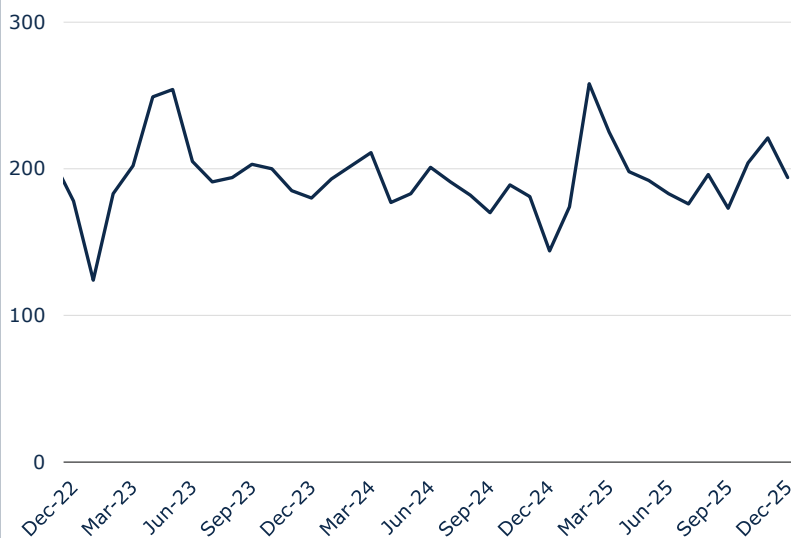
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Sales Reps, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	8,134
Food Service Managers	8,094
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	8,016
Sales Reps of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	5,946
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	5,409
Driver/Sales Workers	4,570

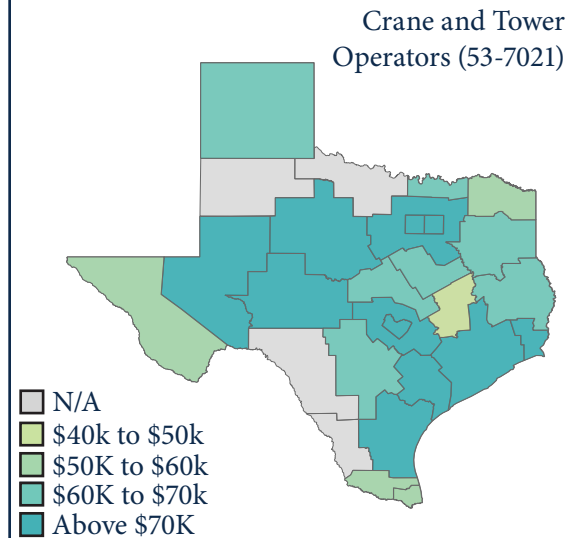
# OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE

Standard Occupational Classification: Crane and Tower Operators (53-7021)

## Monthly Job Ads for SOC 53-7021



## Annual Median Wages by WDA



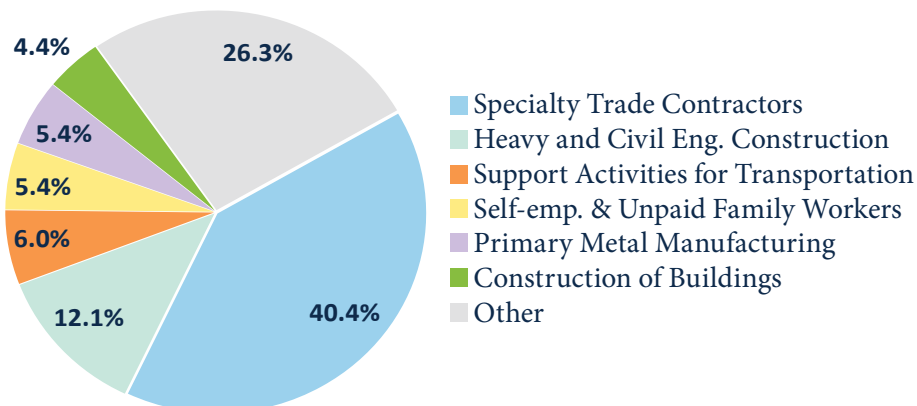
## Job Description

- Operate and control heavy lifting equipment (cranes, etc.) to move materials.
- Inspect, maintain, and repair lifting equipment to ensure safe operation.
- Calculate load weights and ensure adherence to safety regulations and capacity limits.
- Direct and coordinate support personnel for safe and efficient lifting operations.
- Manage loading/unloading processes, including securing loads and verifying documentation.

## Education, Experience & Training for SOC 53-7021

Typical education needed for entry:	High school diploma or equivalent
Work experience in a related occupation:	1 to 5 years
Typical training needed:	Moderate-term on-the-job training

## Top Industries for Employment for SOC 53-7021



## Occupational Outlook

- The 2024 median annual wage for this occupation in Texas is \$72,868, ranging from \$44,591 to \$77,624 among WDAs.
- In 2024, Gulf Coast WDA had the highest employment for this occupation at 2,430 and Permian Basin WDA had the highest median wage of \$77,624.
- 2022-2032 Occupational Projections estimate this occupation will grow 11.7 percent in Texas, with high growth expected in East Texas WDA at 38.4 percent.
- Learn more: [TexasLMI.com](https://texaslmi.com).

# UNDERSTANDING THE ECONOMY

## Data in Context

### Texas Population Increase Helped Fuel Economic Growth

by Will Lutz

While they may not be coming here quite as quickly as they did at the beginning of this decade, people are still moving to Texas at a rapid clip. Labor economists watch population growth carefully as it impacts civilian labor force and other key economic indicators and expanding population can often be a sign of increased economic activity.

The U.S. Census Bureau released the July 1, 2025 estimates last month. Texas ranked first in the nation in population growth both between July 1, 2024 to July 1, 2025 and since the April 1, 2020 Census. The Census Bureau estimated the Texas population at 31,709,821, with 391,243 people moving here since July 2024 and over 2.56 million new Texans arriving since April 2020.

Compared to the nation's population that grew 0.5 percent, the Texas population grew 1.2 percent 2024-2025. Since the 2020 Census, the Texas population grew 8.8 percent compared with an analogous national number of 3.1 percent.

Area	2025	Number Change 2024-25	Percent Change 2024-25	Percent Change 2020-25
United States	341,784,857	1,781,060	0.5%	1.0%
Florida	23,462,518	98,540	0.8%	8.9%
Texas	31,709,821	391,243	1.2%	8.8%
Pennsylvania	13,059,432	13,584	0.1	0.4%
California	39,198,693	-9,465	-	-0.5%
New York	20,002,427	1,008	-	-1.0%

*Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of Resident Population. 2025 Vintage.*

*Dash denotes less than 0.1 percent change in either direction.*

Of the Texas population growth, 157,711 came from natural increase (births minus deaths) and 234,774 came from net migration (both internationally and from other parts of the United States).

Of course, people move from one part of the country to another for a lot of different reasons. It could be to take a job or because their jobs moved here. Some people retire here or move here to be closer to family. Still others move here for a lower cost of living or because they would like to participate in our economy.

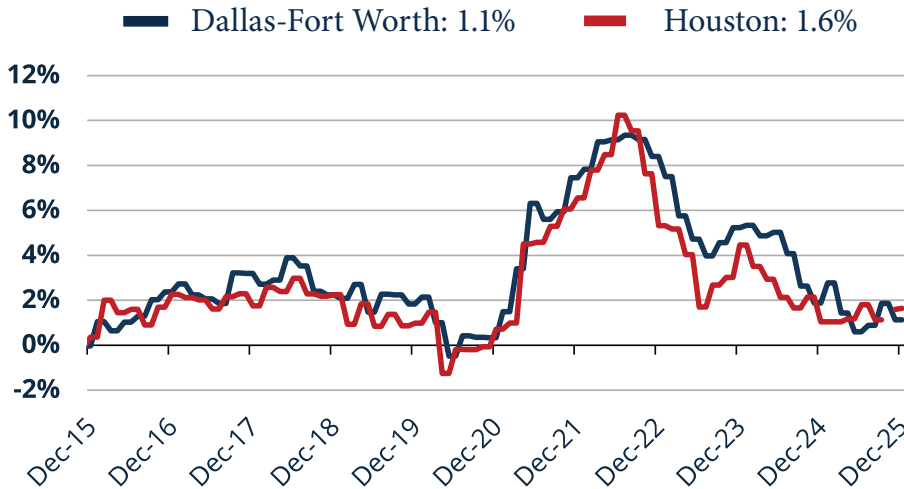
Someone who moves here to take a job or whose job moved here would be part of our labor force, as would someone who comes here to seek a job. But someone who moves here to retire would not be part of our labor force, and those moving for family reasons wouldn't be unless they seek or accept employment. However, even those new Texans who do not join the labor force still contribute to the economy through purchasing goods and services.

Texas seasonally adjusted Civilian Labor Force grew 1.3 percent July 2024 to July 2025, roughly in line with the population increase. Employment grew 1.4 percent. It appears a lot of the new Texans want to participate in our labor market, and so do people who have lived here the entire time.

The Census Bureau has not yet released the county and metropolitan area numbers, which will help us understand where in Texas this increase has happened. In general, roughly 70 percent of the state's civilian labor force resides in the four largest metropolitan areas in the state: Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands, San Antonio-New Braunfels, and Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos.

# KEY INDICATORS

## Consumer Price Index Annual Growth (Not Seasonally Adjusted)



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is an index of the variation in prices paid by typical consumers for retail goods and other items.

### Highlights

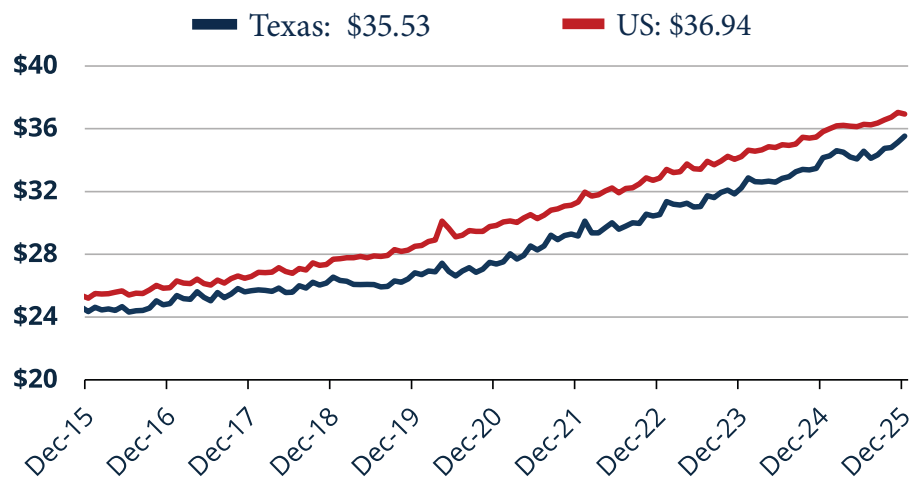
- Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land CPI annual growth rate increased by 0.5 percentage points from the August reading to 1.6 percent in December, 1.1 percentage points lower than the U.S city average of 2.7 percent.
- Since December 2024, Food increased by 3.6 percent while Motor fuel decreased by 4.3 percent.

### Highlights

- AHE for Texas employees on private nonfarm payrolls increased by \$1.38 over the year to \$35.53, an increase of 4.0 percent.
- Over the year, Texas AHE increased by 2.9 percent in the Goods Producing Sector and increased by 4.4 percent in the Private Service Providing sector.
- U.S. AHE increased by \$1.12 over the year to \$36.94, an increase of 3.1 percent.

Average hours and earnings data are derived from reports of hours and payrolls for all employees.

## Average Hourly Earnings (Total Private, Not Seasonally Adjusted)

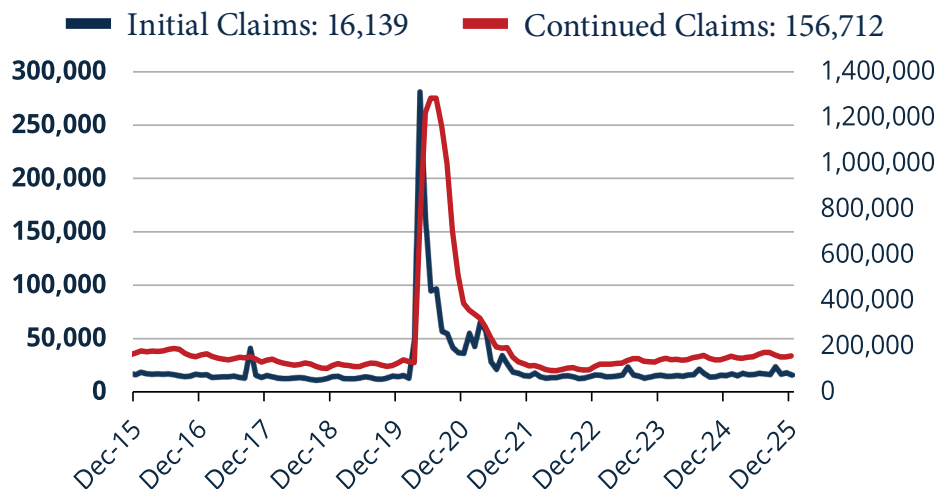


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

[Download Key Indicators data in Excel](#)

# KEY INDICATORS

## Initial and Continued Claims (Four-Week Moving Average)



Source: Texas Workforce Commission

Initial Claims refers to the number of requests for unemployment benefits; a person can file multiple claims. Continued Claims is the number of claimants receiving benefits.

## Highlights

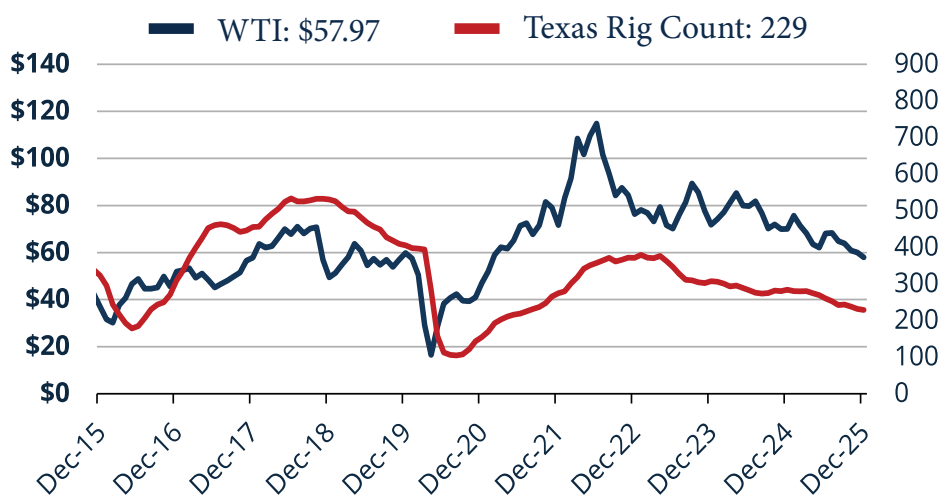
- Over the month, the four-week moving average decreased by 1,954 claims to 16,139 for initial claims and increased by 4,094 claims to 156,712 for continued claims.
- Over the year, the four-week moving average increased by 2.8 percent for initial claims and increased by 5.7 percent for continued claims.

## Highlights

- The West Texas Intermediate Spot Price averaged \$57.97 in December, a \$2.09 decrease over the month, and a \$12.15 decrease over the year.
- Rig count in Texas decreased by 3 rigs over the month and decreased by 56 rigs over the year, averaging 229 rigs in December.

West Texas Intermediate is a crude oil stream produced in Texas and southern Oklahoma that serves as reference for pricing a number of other streams. Rig Count refers to a weekly census of drilling rigs that are actively exploring for or developing oil or natural gas in the United States and Canada.

## West Texas Intermediate Crude Oil vs. Texas Rig Count



Source: US Energy Information Administration (EIA) & Baker Hughes

[Download Key Indicators data in Excel](#)

# GLOSSARY

## CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS (CES)

- **Nonagricultural Jobs:** The total number of persons on establishment payrolls employed full or part time. Persons on the payroll of more than one establishment are counted in each. Data exclude proprietors, self-employed, unpaid family or volunteer workers, farm workers, and domestic workers. Government employment only covers civilian employees.
- **Actual or Not Seasonally Adjusted:** Describes data series not subject to the seasonal adjustment process. In other words, the effects of regular, or seasonal, patterns have not been removed from these series.
- **Seasonally Adjusted:** Effects of regular, or seasonal, patterns of hiring or layoffs (holidays, weather, etc.) have been removed from these series. These adjustments make it easier to observe the cyclical and other non-seasonal movements in a data series.

## HELP WANTED ONLINE (HWOL)

- **Supply-Demand Rate:** Ratio measuring the number of unemployed persons per HWOL job openings.
- **Middle-Skills Jobs:** Jobs requiring more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree.

## LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

- **Employed:** All persons 16 years and over who, during the reference week, (a) did any work (at least one hour) as paid employees, worked on their own business, profession, or on their own farm, or worked 15 hours or more as unpaid family workers, or (b) were not working but who had jobs from which they were temporarily absent. Each employed person is counted only once, even if the person holds more than one job.
- **Unemployed:** All persons aged 16 years and over who had no employment, but were available for work and had made specific efforts to find employment. Includes persons who were waiting to be recalled to jobs from which they had been laid off.
- **Civilian Labor Force (CLF):** All persons classified as employed or unemployed.
- **Unemployment Rate:** The unemployed number divided by the civilian labor force number.

## OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT & WAGE STATISTICS (OEWS)

- **Mean Wage:** The average wage, calculated by summing the wages of all the employees in an occupation and dividing the sum by the number of employees.
- **Percentile Wage:** The wage below which a certain percentage of employees in an occupation earn. E.g., 25th Percentile Wage: 25 percent of employees in an occupation earn at or below this wage.
- **Median Wage:** A percentile wage boundary demarcating the 50th percentile; half of employees in an occupation earn more than the median wage, and half earn less than the median wage.
- **Standard Occupational Classification:** A hierarchical taxonomy that assigns a numeric code to an occupation according to tasks performed. This allows narrowly defined occupations to be grouped together at higher levels of aggregation reflecting common functions among similar occupations.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- **Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA):** Geographic area containing 1+ urban center with a population of 50,000+, plus adjacent territory with high social/economic integration with the urban center. In Texas, an MSA consists of 1+ counties.
- **Metropolitan Division (MD):** Smaller areas within a large MSA. The MSA must have a population of 2.5 million+ to be subdivided into Metropolitan Divisions (MDs).
- **Metro Area (MA):** Refers to either an MSA or MD. Texas has 26 MSAs, including the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington MSA, which is subdivided into two MDs.
- **Workforce Development Area (WDA):** The State of Texas is divided into 28 local workforce development areas.

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