



December 2019 Labor Market Report - Workforce Solutions Lower Rio

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) released the December 2019 Labor Market and Employment reports. The seasonally adjusted national unemployment held steady at 3.5%. Texas seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased by 0.1% to 3.5%.

Statewide Overview for December: Texas had a net gain of 29,800 nonagricultural jobs in December, and has added 342,800 in the past year (seasonally adjusted). This represents a 2.7% annual employment growth rate.

Goods-Producing employment decreased by -700 jobs in December and a total of 64,300 jobs were added in the past twelve months. The Construction sector led for this month with a gain of 3,800 jobs. The Goods-Producing sector has seen a 3.4% growth rate over the past twelve months.

The Service-Providing sector in total gained 30,500 jobs in December and a total of 278,500 jobs in the past year. This sector is growing at a 2.6% annual rate. The Trade, Transportation & Utilities sector led in December with an estimated 11,600 employees added and an annual growth rate of 2.0%. The Professional & Business Services sector follows with a gain of 10,500 jobs and a 3.3% annual growth rate.

Regional Unemployment Recap: The December unemployment rates show slight increases at the county and city levels. Hidalgo and Starr counties reflect the most significant increases of 0.9% and 1.6% respectively.

Counties:

- Hidalgo County increased by 0.9% to 7.0%
- Cameron County increased 0.4% to 5.8%
- Starr County increased by 1.6%, to 12.5%
- Willacy County increased 0.2% at 7.4%
- Webb County increased by 0.1% to 3.6%

Cities:

- McAllen had the lowest unemployment rate in the RGV with an increase of 0.2% and a rate of 4.4%
- Harlingen was second with a decrease of 0.1% and a rate of 4.6%
- Edinburg was third with an increase of 0.3% and a rate of 4.8%
- Laredo again had the lowest rate in our border region with an increase of 0.1% and a rate of 3.6%

Hidalgo, Cameron, and Webb County MSA Regional Employment Change Estimates for December 2019:

Employment Sectors	McAllen MSA	Brownsville MSA	Laredo MSA	Total Region
Healthcare & Private Education	-400	-300	-100	-800
Leisure & Hospitality	300	100		400
Government (Public Ed, Law Enforcement)	400	-100	-100	200
Professional & Business Services	300		-300	
Mining & Construction	-100		-100	-200
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	500	100	-100	500
Manufacturing	100			100
Information	100			100
Financial Activities	100		100	200
Other Services				
Total All Non-Agriculture Sectors:	1,300	-200	-600	500

The primary contributor to the December employment gains in our region was the Trade, Transportation & Utilities sector, with an estimated 500 more jobs and continuing the seasonal trend from the previous month. The Healthcare & Private Education sector had the most job losses of -800 jobs in the border region. However, local healthcare partners continue to report hires and the need for middle skilled healthcare professionals, the expansion of hospitals, and healthcare facilities. This suggests that the December employment data reflects what seem to be “end of the year” adjustments at the local and state level. The December total non-agricultural job growth for our border region is an estimated 500 new jobs.

Manufacturing: Space X continues to hire for a variety of occupations in construction and skilled trade for the Launch site in Brownsville. The immediate need however is for Welders and Integration Technicians. Welders will be in charge of structural welds of the launch vehicle and Integration Technicians will be tasked with the arming of internal components of launch vehicle using basic hand tools.

Construction and Transportation: There has been an increase in the need of workers due to the preliminary phase of the border wall construction. Two companies have been working with Workforce Solutions to hire 220 workers initially and approximately 400 jobs to follow.

Information Technology: Workforce Solutions continues to partner with The RGV Cybersecurity Regional Pathway Network (CRPN) to provide support for the students and industry partners involved in the Cybersecurity pathway. Promotion and recruitment for the next cohort will begin with the Cybersecurity Awareness Event planned for early March. The event is to raise student awareness about the Cybersecurity Pathways and develop interest in enrolling in the program in fall of 2020. The event will target 60 students (10th graders) from the partner districts.

As always, thanks again for your support and participation!

Texas Labor Market Review from TWC: <https://texaslmi.com/api/GetHomeLinks/TLMR>

Local Labor Market Reports: <https://www.wfsolutions.org/workforce-intelligence.html>