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November 23, 2020

EMPLOYMENT

Metro Houston added 38,700 jobs in October, according to the Texas Workforce Commission. This brings the number of total jobs recovered since April to 176,600, amounting to 50.4 percent of the jobs that were lost. Houston remains 173,600 jobs short of its pre-pandemic employment level.

Four sectors have recouped all jobs shed in March and April and their employment now exceeds pre-pandemic levels. Those sectors are transportation and warehousing; utilities; finance and insurance; and professional, scientific and technical services.

Four sectors continue to lose jobs—energy, manufacturing, wholesale trade, and information.

Three sectors are well on their way to recovery, having recouped 85 percent or more of the jobs lost. Those sectors are retail trade, administrative and support services, and educational services. Retail is benefitting from hiring associated with the holiday season and will likely relinquish its gains after the first of the year.

October is always a good month for job growth in the region. Only three times in the last 20 years has the region logged net losses for the month. This October, gains were especially robust. The average gain over the past 20 years has been 13,700 jobs; over the past 20 years, 22,000 jobs. The additions were widespread, with several sectors adding 4,000 or more jobs:

- Restaurants and bars (5,600 jobs)
- Professional, scientific, and technical services (5,000)
- Local educational (*i.e.* school districts, community colleges) (4,700)
- Construction (4,400)
- Transportation, warehousing, and utilities (4,400)
- Employment services (*i.e.*, contract workers) (4,200)
- Other Services (*i.e.*, personal care, appliance and equipment repair) (4,000)

These gains were offset by significant losses elsewhere:

- Other services (-5,400 jobs),
- Health care and social assistance (-3,400),
- Financial activities (-2,400),
- Wholesale trade (-2,200) and
- Arts, entertainment, and recreation (-1,700).

As expected, federal payrolls shrank by 4,000 as work on the 2020 Census wound down and temporary hires brought on to assist with canvassing were laid off.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON METRO HOUSTON PAYROLL EMPLOYMENT
NOT SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

Employment Sector	March - April Job Losses	May - October Job Gains	Gap from Pre-COVID Level	% Recovered
				Fully Recovered
				Still losing
Total Nonfarm	-350,200	176,600	-173,600	50.4%
Mining and Logging	-8,500	-2,600	-11,100	
Construction	-31,300	7,300	-24,000	23.3%
Manufacturing	-13,300	-4,200	-17,500	
Durable Goods	-7,600	-9,600	-17,200	
Nondurable Goods	-5,700	5,400	-300	94.7%
Wholesale Trade	-17,000	-1,800	-18,800	
Retail Trade	-27,700	24,600	-3,100	88.8%
Transportation, Warehousing	-3,800	5,600	1,800	
Utilities	100	0	100	
Information	-3,100	-300	-3,400	
Finance and Insurance	-400	1,400	1,000	
Real Estate, Rental, Leasing	-5,000	900	-4,100	18.0%
Professional, Scientific, Technical Services	-8,800	13,200	4,400	
Administrative and Support Services	-13,700	11,900	-1,800	86.9%
Educational Services	-5,800	5,200	-600	89.7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	-41,000	23,900	-17,100	58.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	-18,000	5,700	-12,300	31.7%
Hotels	-9,100	3,200	-5,900	35.2%
Restaurants, Bars	-101,800	70,100	-31,700	68.9%
Other Services	-27,400	11,000	-16,400	40.1%
Government	-10,100	-1,600	-11,700	

Source: Partnership calculations based on Texas Workforce Commission

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