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#### **Our Mission:**

The mission of the South Plains workforce system is to meet the needs of the region's employers for a highly skilled workforce by educating and preparing workers.

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## **December Newsletter**

### **Lubbock MSA and Regional Unemployment**

Lubbock's MSA unemployment rate for December 2018 is 2.8%, up 0.1% from November's 2.7%. Midland MSA recorded the lowest unemployment rate at 2.1%, second lowest was Amarillo and Odessa MSA's at 2.6%. The Austin-Round Rock MSA recorded the third lowest rate of 2.7%.

\*Employment estimates released by TWC are produced in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. All estimates are subject to revision. To access this and more employment data, visit [tracer2.com](http://tracer2.com).

### **Upcoming Events in 2019:**

#### **- South Plains Job Fairs -**

- April 24, 2019 -  
-10am - 2pm-
- October 2019 -  
-10am - 2pm-

#### **- South Plains Career Expo -**

- ~ October 2019 ~  
- 8:00am - 12:00pm -

### **Hiring Red, White & You**

The TWC Lubbock MSA and South Plains WDA Economic Profiles provide a breakdown of employment by industry. Click on the images to the right to access the profiles.

Veterans Job Fair  
 - November 2019 -  
 -10:00am - 2:00pm-

(Image located on page 3)

### CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

Metro Areas (Seasonally Adjusted)

Metro Areas	Apr 2017	Monthly Change	Annual Change	Annual % Change
Abilene MSA	68,100	100	700	1.0
Amarillo MSA	121,300	-1,100	1,200	1.0
Austin-Round Rock MSA	1,021,900	-400	29,300	3.0
Beaumont-Port Arthur MSA	164,000	900	-800	-0.5
Brownsville-Harlingen MSA	143,000	100	2,700	1.9
College Station-Bryan MSA	115,900	-400	2,500	2.2
Corpus Christi MSA	192,400	-100	1,400	0.7
Dallas-FW-Arlington MSA	3,582,400	-18,000	99,600	2.9
Dallas-Plano-Irving MD	2,555,000	-15,600	76,600	3.1
Fort Worth-Arlington MD	1,027,800	-3,200	22,600	2.2
El Paso MSA	317,000	400	9,200	3.0
Houston MSA	3,044,300	13,700	44,000	1.5
Killeen-Temple MSA	146,600	500	3,600	2.5
Laredo MSA	104,000	100	2,300	2.3
Longview MSA	96,700	300	-600	-0.6
Lubbock MSA	146,300	-1,000	800	0.5
McAllen MSA	256,700	600	4,900	1.9
Midland MSA	87,800	-100	100	0.1
Odessa MSA	69,800	100	-200	-0.3
San Angelo MSA	48,600	400	-500	-1.0
San Antonio MSA	1,035,600	3,800	24,800	2.5
Sherman-Denison MSA	47,000	100	1,000	2.2
Texarkana MSA	60,200	-500	-800	-1.3
Tyler MSA	106,200	400	2,300	2.2
Victoria MSA	42,000	200	-300	-0.7
Waco MSA	120,400	600	2,200	1.9
Wichita Falls MSA	58,000	400	-100	-0.2

#### Highlights

(MSA industry data are not seasonally adjusted)

- Seventeen of 26 areas grew in April for a combined increase of 22,700 jobs. Nineteen areas grew over the year, while seven areas contracted.
- The Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land MSA accounted for more than half of all area employment gains over the month. The MSA increased its annual growth rate to 1.5 percent.
- The San Angelo MSA grew fastest in percentage terms with a 0.8 percent April expansion. Per not seasonally adjusted industry data, Retail Trade and Other Services each added 200 jobs over the month, while Government was down 200 positions.
- The Dallas-Plano-Irving MD led in actual and percentage job growth annually. Professional and Business Services led all major industries with 21,000 positions gained, followed by Leisure and Hospitality with 10,900 jobs added.
- The Beaumont-PA and the Texarkana MSAs lost the most jobs annually. The loss of 2,100 jobs in Retail was primarily responsible for the contraction in the Beaumont-PA MSA, while employment losses in Texarkana were spread across industries.

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## 14 Benefits of Coding for Kids and Students

When kids are introduced to coding, they gain appreciation of how digital technology work. Digital technology is a big part of many kids' lives, as they are surrounded by smart phones, video games, video entertainment, websites, and even robots. What drives this technology are software or computer programs that are created by coding. Like learning about biology and chemistry, it is important for kids to understand the building blocks of an integral part of their life. They need to realize that what happens when they use technology is not magic, and they themselves can create programs that can be useful.

But knowing what happens under the hood of modern technology is just one of the benefits of learning to code for kids and students. Many of the other benefits are related to making them learn how to think and develop skills that they will need in the future.

Below are the main benefits of kids' learning how to code, and why coding is important for kids and students to learn:

- **Kids learn computational thinking** – When kids learn to read and write code, they develop cognitive skills and learn a methodical, problem-solving process that resembles a computer. The process involves using abstractions and pattern recognition to represent the problem in new and different ways, logically organizing and analyzing data, breaking the problem down into smaller parts, identifying and creating the steps needed to solve the problem, running the procedures, analyzing the results, and determining if the

results yielded an acceptable answer. Computational thinking can be applied to other situations aside from coding, as it is a way of thinking that solves practical problems.

- **Kids learn to use logic** – Logical thinking is required for coding. It consists of formulating step by step procedures to produce a desired outcome. It involves using expressions, selection, iteration, conditional and other logical statements and sentences.
- **Kids learn problem solving** – Coding teaches kids to break down complex problems into components. This problem-solving technique is transferable to a lot of other fields. For example, scientists solve problems by forming hypotheses and systematically testing these hypotheses one by one. Car mechanics diagnose car problems by replacing one part at a time to isolate the problem part. In coding, a programmer figures out bugs by generating intelligent hypotheses and tweaking parts of his code one component at a time to test which one solves the problem.
- **Kids learn how things work, and create things that work** – Coding teaches kids how to build, using cause and effect to make things work, and adapt them for his specific purpose.
- **Kids learn to anticipate and avoid problems** – In programming, kids learn how to “handle errors”, that is, anticipate problems that will probably emerge, and writing the correct codes that will prevent the entire program to crash when the error happens.
- **Kids learn structural thinking** – Kids learn how to build small pieces to add up to the solution.
- **Kids learn algorithmic thinking** – Algorithmic thinking is the ability to define clear steps to solve a problem or solving a task. It involves computational concepts like repetition, sequencing, and conditional logic. Kids use algorithm all the time, without even knowing it, especially with math (like solving long division problems) and science. Algorithmic thinking enables kids to break down problems and think of solutions as step-by-step procedure.

**Read:**                    How                    to                    make                    math                    fun

- **Kids learn perseverance** – Kids learn to persist if what they are creating is not working. They are compelled to analyze what is not working, why it is not working, and figure out how to correct it until it works.
- **Kids exercises creativity, and in a fun way, learn to create stuff that works** – Kids love technology, and “magically” creating things related to what they love provide them natural motivation. Learning to code encourages kids to exercise their imaginations and improvise when their resources are limited. Also, when they are able to create something that works, coding gives kids a sense of achievement and bolsters their self-confidence.
- **Coding prepares kids for skills that are necessary in the future** – The continuing pervasiveness and importance of technology in our lives would require a lot of workers with coding skills. It is expected that writing programs will continue to pay well into the future. Even many non-programming jobs that require the use of computers would require a bit of coding knowledge. In addition, when learning to code, kids also learn other important future skills like critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity.
- **Coding shows math in action** – Coding shows kids the practical application of math, and why it is so important. Coding statements usually contain math expressions that need to be resolved for the program to move forward.
- **Coding can make your child discover his lifelong passion, and can be helpful for him to decide his future career** – Computer programming can be one the fastest growing and the most exciting profession in the next few decades, with the development

of artificial intelligence, machine learning, data mining, and robotics. Kids exposed to coding can develop the love or even the passion for it, and discover that it is what he wants to do in life.

- **For exceptionally creative and entrepreneurial coders, coding can make a lot of money** – There are several stories of teenage coders who used their imaginations to create software, apps, games, and websites that enable them to become rich at a very young age. Stories abound about [young app developers who become millionaires](#). A young Vietnamese game developer who created [Flappy Bird](#) was earning \$50,000 a day before he quit. A lot of teens who offer their coding and web-building skills online are able to save enough for college.
- **Coding encourages kids to think outside of the box** – Coding sends a message to kids that they can create anything from nothing if they want to work on it. By coding, they can stretch what is possible. This fosters the progress of humanity, and the overall improvement of the quality of life.

As Bill Gates states: “Learning to write programs stretches your mind, and helps you think better, creates a way of thinking about things that I think is helpful in all domains.”

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## Texas has added 391,800 jobs over the year

*State unemployment rate is 3.7 percent in December*

AUSTIN – Texas has added 38,000 seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs in December. The State has experienced 30 consecutive months of employment growth.

Read the full [press release](#).

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### Sources:

[Texas Labor Market Review](#)

[http://www.tracer2.com/admin/uploadedPublications/2138\\_TLMR-Current\\_Edition.pdf](http://www.tracer2.com/admin/uploadedPublications/2138_TLMR-Current_Edition.pdf)

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