

If you have any suggestions or content you would like to see, shoot us an email. Thanks!

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.

Upcoming Events

- November 26, 2020 -
Thanksgiving Day



November Newsletter **Lubbock MSA and Regional Unemployment**

Lubbock's MSA unadjusted unemployment rate for October 2020 is 5.1%, down 0.9% from September adjusted rate of 6.0%. Amarillo MSA recorded the lowest, not seasonally adjusted, unemployment rate at 4.4%, followed by College Station-Bryan MSA of 4.6%. Abilene MSA recorded the third lowest at 4.9%. All data impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.





- January 21, 2021 -
Workforce Solutions South Plains
Virtual Job Fair


*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 TexasLMI.com.

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.

(Image located on page 3)

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CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

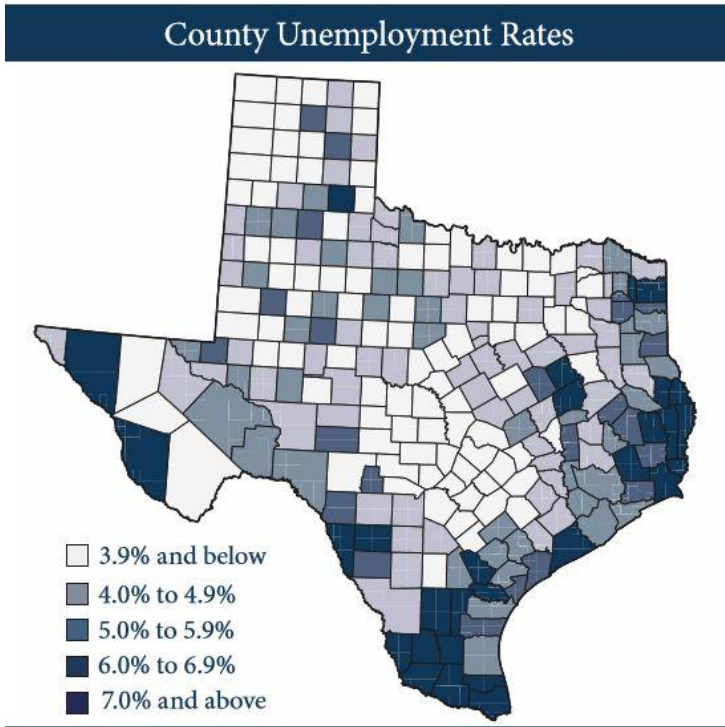
Metro Areas (Seasonally Adjusted)

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.



[\(Image located on page 6\)](#)



**Click image to
 view full report:**
 Lubbock Metropolitan
 Statistical Area (MSA)

**Click image to
 view full report:**
 South Plains Regional
 Workforce Development Area

**Click image to
view full report:**
Lubbock LAUS
County-by-County
Unemployment Rates

A FMLA Story for Employers Everywhere

December 12, 2017

by Eddie Shleyner



This article was originally published on *The WorkForce Blog*.

Naydeen and her daughter, Ashley, were in the dining room, clearing the table.

Thanksgiving dinner was over. The house was quiet again.

“I got it from here,” said Naydeen. “Go see if your dad needs a hand out there.”

“Alright,” said Ashley, smiling. Her dad *always* needed a hand.

She put on some boots and a coat. It was cold outside, icy. She walked through the kitchen and out the backdoor onto the deck, where her dad was hanging Christmas lights from the gutters. It was an after-dinner tradition.

He was on a ladder.

The screen door slammed.

He jerked his head, shifting his weight ...

“MOM!”

Ashley opened the door and yelled again,

“Mom, come here!”

Naydeen ran into the kitchen, “What?” she said, wide-eyed, startled.

“Dad fell off the ladder.”

Naydeen pushed past her, through the door and onto the deck.

She found Roger sat up, clutching his leg.

“I think it’s broken, Nay,” he said.

FMLA: A Brief

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides employees with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year for most FMLA reasons. It also requires that their group health benefits be maintained during the leave. That's good news for Roger, a warehouse manager.

The law exists to protect people in Roger's situation: workers who can't perform because of a serious health condition. It also applies to employees who need time off to birth a baby, adopt a child, care for a badly ill family member, or for a qualifying military exigency.

And there are several types of FMLA leave:

1. **Continuous:** if Roger needed to be out for an entire month.
2. **Intermittent:** if Roger needed to be out every Friday for a month.
3. **Reduced Schedule:** if Roger worked only 4-hour days for a month.

Employees are eligible for FMLA leave after 12 months with their employer, among other stipulations. In fact, there are dozens of variables to juggle, which can make accurate *manual* management of this exacting law almost impossible, especially for larger organizations.

FMLA: The Manual Way

Administering FMLA by hand—without the benefit of digitalization—is **a burden** and **a risk** for any HR department. It's especially dangerous for those supporting big employee populations.

The bigger the organization, the wider the margin of error.

1. It's a burden.

FMLA regulations are many and nuanced, vulnerable to carelessness. That is, even if you're an experienced payroll manager – an organized, diligent pro – you're still capable of missteps. Who isn't? Every case also takes a while ...

a. The manual way takes longer.

"Everything takes longer by hand," explains Paul Kramer, WorkForce's Director of Compliance. "Filling out paperwork takes longer. *Filing* paperwork takes longer. And that's just the surface strain ..."
Because before the paperwork drag even begins, payroll managers must ensure the leave qualifies – and that requires legal research.

"That can take a lot of time," says Kramer. "You also have to do it correctly."

b. The manual way is prone to errors.

Every mistake can create costly consequences.

According to Kramer and other legal experts, "the law is full of traps."

For example, employers have the right to verify the documentation they receive to ensure the employee does, in fact, have a serious health condition. That said, it's against the law to dig too deep, to ask for too much. Where's the line? It's not always clear.

2. It's a risk.

FMLA regulations are strict. They don't offer much leeway to navigate violations that wrong the employee. This is fair, of course. Everyone deserves what they're entitled to. But since the onus falls on employers to be compliant, organizations assume tremendous liability by default.

a. The manual way puts you at risk for fines.

If an employee believes their leave was improperly managed, they can file a formal complaint with the Department of Labor. The DOL will then investigate. If the case has merit—and can't be resolved administratively—the DOL may file suit to recover any damages (e.g. back wages) or the employee may file suit.

The process may start with an on-site visit, during which agents investigate **all** employment practices (not only those limited to the initial complaint): past and present employment records get reviewed; interviews get conducted.

If there was wrongdoing, fines and damages could range from hundreds of dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars, and possibly more.

In 2014, the DOL paid out \$240 million in back wages to 270,000 workers.

b. The manual way puts your public image at risk.

A lawsuit is public record.

The bigger the organization, the broader the coverage.

FMLA: The Modern Way

Software helps large and growing organizations reduce their FMLA burden and risk.

“For one, software helps HR departments manage FMLA eligibility,” says Kramer. “It also streamlines workflow management.”

1. “Managing eligibility.”

Digitizing with an absence management solution helps payroll managers ask the right questions, streamlining the qualification process while guaranteeing against the costly mistakes manual HR departments so often make.

No research (or lawyers) necessary.

2. “Workflow management.”

Depending on the circumstances, there could be dozens of documents and notices involved with a FMLA leave. Of course the employer is responsible for ensuring that an employee’s FMLA rights are protected, so be careful.

Software helps payroll managers bring order to the chaos – and, of course, peace of mind to their people.

Roger woke up to his phone alarm, or so he thought ...

The post-surgery sedatives were working.

“Go back to sleep,” said Naydeen. “Rest.”

“It’s work,” he mumbled.

“I’ll get it then,” she said, picking up the phone. “Hello?”

“Hello,” said the voice, “This is Kathy Higgins. May I speak to Roger Horowitz?”

“This is his wife,” said Naydeen. “My husband’s indisposed.”

“I understand, Mrs. Horowitz,” said Kathy. “I’m sorry about what happened. I’m his payroll manager.”

“Thank you,” said Naydeen. “Has everything gone through?”

“Yes,” said Kathy. “Your husband’s continuous FMLA is good to go.”

Naydeen smiled at Roger.

He closed his eyes and fell back asleep.

Texas Economy added 118,100 non-farm positions over the Month.

State unemployment rate is 6.9 percent for August

AUSTIN – In October, Texas' unemployment rate of 6.9% is in line with the National unemployment rate 6.9 percent.

Read the full [press release](#).

Sources:

Texas Labor Market Review

<https://texaslmi.com/api/GetHomeLinks/TLMR>

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