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WHITE COLLAR AND SERVICE INDUSTRY JOBS LEAD HIRING IN APRIL *Gains offset by steep drop in Construction sector jobs*

(HOUSTON, TX) Houston-area employers added a mere 300 jobs in April, despite strong hiring in the Professional & Business Services and Leisure & Hospitality sectors, according to data released Friday by Workforce Solutions. Combined, the two sectors were responsible for nearly 3 out of every 4 jobs added last month. Excluding seasonal jobs, the region saw employment fall by 13,500 in April ending a streak of 25 months of consecutive gains.

Leisure & Hospitality, staffing up ahead of summer, added 5,300 workers – the third largest increase on record for the month and well above the long-term average. Workforce Solutions principal economist Parker Harvey noted that, “after bearing the brunt of the pandemic’s disruption back in 2020, this sector has settled back into its normal pattern of strong seasonal growth over the past two springs.” Professional & Business Services was the second largest contributor to employment growth last month, up 2,200 jobs. Combined with an upward revision to March, the sector has added 7,500 workers since February.

Construction, however, weighed heavily on April hiring, posting an unusually large decline of 8,100 jobs. Specialty Trade Constructors, the subsector focused on the finish work of new home construction, as well as home remodeling, drove much of the sector’s decline. March hiring in Construction was also revised downward by 200 jobs. Harvey believes it could be a harbinger of things to come, but notes that the industry is highly sensitive to changes in borrowing costs, “We’ve had 10 interest rate increases over the last 13 months, so it’s not terribly surprising that the cracks are starting to show.”

Unemployment in the Houston area declined nearly half a point to 4.0 percent in April, on a not seasonally adjusted basis while the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for March rose slightly to 4.3 percent.

Additional labor market information, including the detailed March report can be found online at www.wrksolutions.com/localstats. The Texas Workforce Commission will release May employment data on June 16, 2023.

ABOUT WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS: [Workforce Solutions](http://www.WorkInTexas.com) is dedicated to keeping the Texas Gulf Coast region a great place to do business, work and live. Our employer-driven, people-focused approach elevates the economic and human potential of the region to attract and retain the best employers, afford everyone the dignity of a job, and remain indispensable to the global economy. As the public workforce system for 13 counties in the Houston-Galveston region, we work in tandem with the Texas Workforce Commission and the statewide Workforce Solutions network to maintain the state’s largest job-match database – www.WorkInTexas.com.

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