

2022 Topeka Employment Forecast

The Topeka metropolitan area's¹ employment decreased by more than 4,300 employees in 2020, a contraction of 3.9 percent. In the second quarter of 2020, the area's employment declined by 8,900 workers, the area's single largest employment loss on record. Over the next four quarters, 5,600 jobs were regained as the region began to recover. Unemployment peaked at 12.6 percent of the labor force in April 2020, and it consistently declined over the next ten months to reach a new low of 3 percent in February 2021.

A modest recovery is expected to continue for the Topeka area in 2022, adding almost 1,300 jobs for 1.2 percent growth. The first quarter is expected to have the fastest growth, but the recovery pace is projected to be relatively even throughout the year. The recovery is subject to higher uncertainty than other recent periods of growth, with recurring novel coronavirus outbreaks, tight labor markets, and brittle supply chains as potential downside risks.

- The production sectors are forecast to increase by almost 150 jobs, expanding 1.1 percent. Both of the production sectors, the construction sector and the manufacturing sector, are expected to grow robustly, at 1 and 1.2 percent, respectively. The construction sector is projected to remain slightly below its pre-pandemic peak, while the manufacturing industry is expected to exceed its pre-pandemic peak.
- Employment in the trade, transportation, and utilities is projected to grow by 0.8 percent, adding more than 100 jobs. The retail trade sector is forecast to lead the expansion, adding almost 100 jobs with a 0.9 growth rate. The transportation and utilities sector is projected to increase by 0.8 percent, while wholesale trade is forecast to expand by 0.4 percent.
- The service sectors are expected to account for 74.6 percent of total job growth in the Topeka area, expanding 1.8 percent and adding almost 1,000 new workers. Leisure and hospitality is projected to be the fastest-growing sector at 4.2 percent after suffering the sharpest decline during the novel coronavirus outbreak. The professional and business services sector and the education and health services sector are projected to be the other job growth engines in the service sector, expanding 1.4 and 1.5 percent, respectively.
- Government sector employment is forecast to grow 0.2 percent in 2022 after declines in 2020 and 2021. The growth is expected to be concentrated in the local government sector, while state and federal employment are both projected to decline modestly.

¹ The Topeka metropolitan area consists of Jackson, Jefferson, Osage, Shawnee, and Wabaunsee counties in Kansas.

| Topeka Employment by Industry Summary* | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | 2020 (a) | 2021 (e) | 2022 (f) | 2021-2022 Level Change | 2021-2022 Percent Change |
| Total Nonfarm | 107,138 | 108,309 | 109,598 | 1,289 | 1.2% |
| Production Sectors | 13,302 | 13,557 | 13,704 | 147 | 1.1% |
| Nat. Resources, Mining & Cons. | 5,352 | 5,287 | 5,337 | 51 | 1.0% |
| Manufacturing | 7,949 | 8,270 | 8,366 | 96 | 1.2% |
| Trade, Transportation & Utilities | 16,723 | 17,571 | 17,710 | 140 | 0.8% |
| Wholesale Trade | 2,733 | 2,827 | 2,838 | 11 | 0.4% |
| Retail Trade | 9,725 | 10,191 | 10,282 | 91 | 0.9% |
| Transportation & Utilities | 4,265 | 4,553 | 4,590 | 37 | 0.8% |
| Service Sectors | 51,136 | 52,067 | 53,029 | 962 | 1.8% |
| Information | 1,183 | 1,108 | 1,127 | 18 | 1.7% |
| Financial Activities | 6,992 | 6,867 | 6,966 | 99 | 1.4% |
| Professional & Business Services | 12,251 | 12,678 | 12,868 | 190 | 1.5% |
| Education & Health Services | 18,732 | 19,064 | 19,332 | 268 | 1.4% |
| Leisure & Hospitality | 7,396 | 7,699 | 8,023 | 324 | 4.2% |
| Other Services | 4,582 | 4,651 | 4,713 | 62 | 1.3% |
| Government | 25,978 | 25,115 | 25,155 | 40 | 0.2% |

*Annual values are derived from average quarterly observations and projections.
(a) actual (e) estimated (f) forecasted
Source: CEDBR, BLS - CES

