

2022 Wichita Employment Forecast

In 2021, unemployment in Wichita fell dramatically, from 9.0% down to an estimated 5.5%. Indicative of continuing labor market adaptation and recovery from the ongoing novel Coronavirus pandemic, these trends are expected to continue throughout 2022 and 2023, more than halving the number of Wichitans left unemployed in 2020. There remains a degree of uncertainty as mutations of the virus such as the Delta and Omicron variants continue to place strain on the population, workforce, and economy through surges in infection rates. Still, this strain is dampened by continually increasing access to and availability of vaccines and treatments, and the outlook appears increasingly optimistic.

Wichita				
Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
2020(a)	321,038	294,496	26,543	9.0%
2021(e)	318,456	301,807	16,649	5.5%
2022(f)	317,268	304,045	13,223	4.3%
2023(f)	318,409	307,030	11,379	3.7%

(a) actual (e) estimated (f) forecasted
Source: CEDBR, BLS - LAUS

Personal income grew 2.2% in 2021, and growth is forecasted to continue throughout 2022, 2023, and 2024. This same trend is observed in personal income per-capita, which saw 1.1% growth in 2021 with higher rates forecast for coming years, expected to exceed \$56,000 per-capita in 2022.

Wichita, KS (Metropolitan Statistical Area)				
Year	Personal Income (\$billions)	Personal Income Growth	Per-Capita Personal Income (\$)	Per-Capita Income Growth
2021	36.19	2.2%	\$55,608	1.1%
2022	37.12	2.6%	\$56,640	1.9%
2023	38.06	2.5%	\$57,657	1.8%
2024	38.99	2.5%	\$58,660	1.7%

Source: CEDBR, BLS - LAUS

Employment growth is expected to be distributed unevenly across different sectors. Wichita's trade occupations grew by 0.2% in 2021 but are expected to decline in 2022 and 2023 by 0.9% then 0.1%. The service sector, the largest component of Wichita's labor market, grew by 2% in 2021, adding 2,600 jobs, and is expected to continue growing up through 2023, netting 5,800 jobs since 2020.

The most significant component of job growth in the service sector comes from leisure and hospitality occupations, which rebounded dramatically in 2021 (8.4% growth from 2020) alongside increasing vaccine availability and an ever-adapting labor force and job market. Concurrent with this expansion, retail sales similarly bounced back in 2021, growing 8.0% relative to 2020, and are forecasted to continue growth, even after adjusting for inflation. As a result, retail sales in 2022 and 2023 are expected to each total over \$900 million.

Inflation-Adjusted Taxable Retail Sales Growth				
Kansas			Wichita MSA	
Year	Sales(\$Billions)*	Growth Rate	Sales(\$Billions)*	Growth Rate
2019(a)	3.578		0.838	
2020(a)	3.529	-1.4%	0.827	-1.4%
2021(e)	3.898	8.0%	0.893	8.0%
2022(f)	4.158	3.7%	0.926	3.7%
2023(f)	4.261	0.9%	0.934	0.9%

*Annual values, in billions are derived from monthly observations and projections.
(a) actual (e) estimated (f) forecasted
Source: CEDBR, KSDOR

Production sector employment fell throughout 2021, a loss of 1,400 jobs, but growth rates are forecasted to be positive in 2022 and 2023, adding 1,300 jobs followed by another 900. Similarly, the government sector lost 50 jobs in 2021 but is expected to grow in 2022 by 0.9%. In 2023, government is estimated to grow by 0.6%, leaving a net increase of 360 jobs since 2020.

Wichita Employment by Industry*							
	2020 (a)	2021 (e)	2022 (f)	2023 (f)	2021	2022	2023
Production	63,333	61,926	63,229	64,105	-2.2%	2.1%	1.4%
Nat. Resources, Mining & Cons.	16,883	16,742	16,754	16,984	-0.8%	0.1%	1.4%
Durables	38,808	37,631	38,950	39,418	-3.0%	3.5%	1.2%
Non-Durables	7,642	7,554	7,526	7,703	-1.2%	-0.4%	2.4%
Trade	48,342	48,458	48,031	47,969	0.2%	-0.9%	-0.1%
Services	135,150	137,800	139,488	140,987	2.0%	1.2%	1.1%
Information	3,625	3,623	3,590	3,587	0.0%	-0.9%	-0.1%
Financial Activities	11,792	11,724	11,980	12,103	-0.6%	2.2%	1.0%
Professional & Business Services	33,992	33,882	34,330	34,699	-0.3%	1.3%	1.1%
Education & Health Services	46,875	47,119	47,198	47,530	0.5%	0.2%	0.7%
Leisure & Hospitality	28,700	31,116	31,951	32,581	8.4%	2.7%	2.0%
Other	10,167	10,337	10,439	10,486	1.7%	1.0%	0.4%
Government	40,717	40,666	41,031	41,285	-0.1%	0.9%	0.6%
Total	287,542	288,850	291,780	294,345	0.5%	1.0%	0.9%

*Annual values are derived from average quarterly observations and projections.

(a) actual (e) estimated (f) forecasted

Source: CEDBR, BLS - CES