

2022 Wichita Employment Forecast

Average annual employment in the Wichita metropolitan area¹ decreased by more than 18,000 workers in 2020, a contraction of 6 percent. With the onset of the novel coronavirus pandemic in the second quarter of 2020, employment declined by 37,600 workers before recovering by 15,000 workers in the third quarter. From the fourth quarter of 2020 to the second quarter of 2021, the area added an additional 2,800 jobs as the recovery continued at a slower rate. As a result, the unemployment rate rose to 19.2 percent in April 2020 and then declined throughout the rest of the year and into 2021, reaching a low of 5.1 percent in June 2021.

The recovery is expected to continue at a modest pace in 2022 as employment is forecast to increase by more than 3,100 workers, an expansion of 1.1 percent. Growth is projected to be relatively consistent throughout the year, adding 300 or more jobs every quarter. The recovery remains somewhat fragile due to supply chain disruptions, tight labor markets, and potential resurgences of the novel coronavirus. Given the weakness in the aerospace manufacturing market in 2020, Wichita will likely continue to have outsized downside risk for the local economy compared to the statewide or national economy.

- The production sectors are forecast to increase in employment by 1.1 percent with the addition of more than 700 workers. The natural resources and construction sector is projected to lead growth, adding more than 400 workers as housing demand remains robust. The manufacturing sector is expected to resume growth in 2022 after declining in 2020 and projections to contract modestly in 2021. The durable goods sector is forecast to add more than 250 workers, while the nondurable industry is projected to add fewer than 50 jobs.
- Employment in the trade, transportation, and utilities sector is expected to increase by more than 400 workers, growing 0.9 percent. The transportation and utilities sector is projected to grow 1.8 percent, adding more than 170 workers, almost matching its pre-pandemic peak. The retail trade sector is forecast to expand 0.7 percent and add more than 200 jobs, but the industry is expected to remain below its pre-recession peak for a number of years beyond 2022. The wholesale trade sector is projected to have the slowest growth in the industry at 0.3 percent.
- The service sectors are forecast to grow 1.3 percent and are projected to represent 58.6 percent of all area employment growth. The leisure and hospitality sector is expected to add more than 1,200 of the 1,800 service sector jobs created in Wichita in 2022 following the loss of more than 4,300 workers in the sector in 2020. The professional and business service sector is forecast to have the second-fastest growth among service sectors, at 1.1 percent, as the industry reaches beyond its pre-pandemic peak.
- The governmental sector is projected to add fewer than 200 jobs for a growth of 0.4 percent. Both the local and state government sectors are forecast to add approximately 100 jobs, while federal government employment is expected to remain flat.

¹ The Wichita metropolitan consists of Sedgwick, Butler, Harvey, Kingman, and Sumner counties.

Wichita Employment by Industry Summary*					
	2020 (a)	2021 (e)	2022 (f)	2021-2022 Level Change	2021-2022 Percent Change
Total Nonfarm	287,546	288,219	291,353	3,134	1.1%
Production Sectors	63,325	61,416	62,120	703	1.1%
Nat. Resources, Mining & Cons.	16,887	17,118	17,526	408	2.4%
Manufacturing	46,438	44,298	44,594	295	0.7%
Durable Goods	38,797	36,725	36,994	269	0.7%
Non-Durable Goods	7,642	7,573	7,600	27	0.4%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	48,346	48,407	48,820	412	0.9%
Wholesale Trade	8,318	8,189	8,209	20	0.3%
Retail Trade	30,496	30,434	30,650	216	0.7%
Transportation & Utilities	9,532	9,784	9,960	176	1.8%
Service Sectors	135,182	137,742	139,581	1,839	1.3%
Information	3,625	3,718	3,813	95	2.6%
Financial Activities	11,792	11,711	11,672	-39	-0.3%
Professional & Business Services	33,996	34,236	34,597	361	1.1%
Education & Health Services	46,878	47,013	47,117	104	0.2%

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

