

Key Takeaways

Employment

- From March 2025 to March 2026, non-farm employment in El Paso and Las Cruces increased by 6,200 jobs (1.7%) and 2,300 jobs (2.8%), respectively.
- In March 2026, Ciudad Juárez experienced its 30th consecutive month of declining employment, with a loss of 9,830 jobs (-2.0%).
- Manufacturing employment growth in the region remained mixed from March 2025 to March 2026: El Paso gained 700 jobs (3.1%), Las Cruces remained stagnant (0.0%), and Ciudad Juárez lost 13,290 jobs (-4.3%).

Residential Building Permits

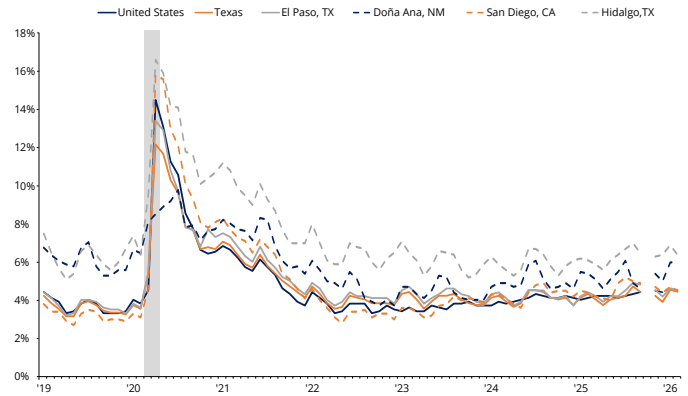
- From January to March 2026, the number of new, privately owned, single-unit building permits per 100,000 inhabitants decreased from 2025 levels in all selected MSAs. The El Paso MSA experienced a decrease of 7 permits (-12.8%) during this period.¹
- Several of the selected MSAs experienced an increase in the average value of new, privately owned, single-unit building permits issued during the first three months of 2026 compared to the same period in 2025, apart from Austin, Las Cruces, Laredo, and San Antonio.
- El Paso had the largest YoY increase in average permit value, with approximately \$9,000 (3.7%) during the first three months of 2026.

Bankruptcies

- San Antonio had the highest number of bankruptcy filings among the four selected cities, with 1,174 filings between January and April 2026, an increase of 224 filings (23.6%) compared to the equivalent period in 2025.²
- Bankruptcy filings in El Paso illustrated the lowest percentage increase among the selected cities when comparing January to April 2026 to the same period in 2025, with an increase of 111 filings (20.9%), totaling 641 bankruptcy cases between January and April of 2026.

Quick-Glance Indicators

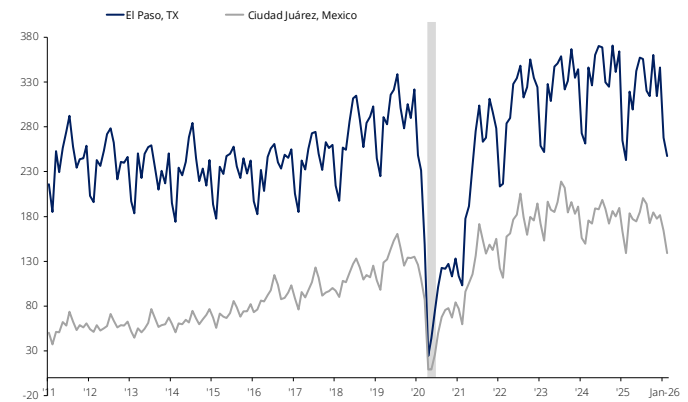
Unemployment Rates for U.S., State, and Selected MSA Economies



Note: Data as of February 2026. The data for October 2025 is unavailable due to the 2025 lapse in appropriations. The shaded area indicates recession as defined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (2020 recession began in February and ended in April).

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

El Paso and Ciudad Juárez Air Passengers, Thousands



Note: Data as of February 2026. The shaded area indicates recession as defined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (2020 recession began in February and ended in April).

Source: Hunt Institute using El Paso International Airport and Grupo OMA data.

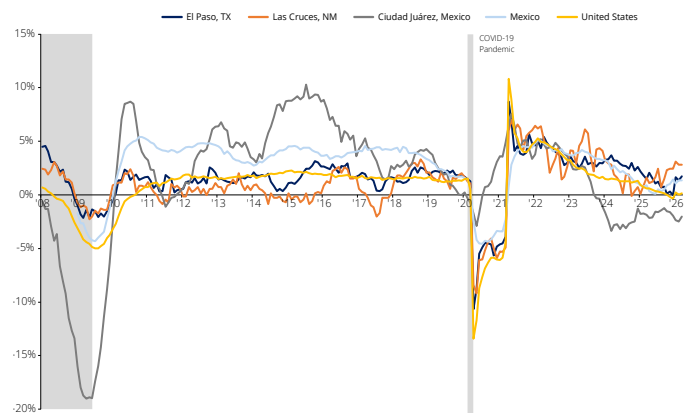
Employment

Continued Growth in the Paso del Norte Non-farm Employment

El Paso and Las Cruces experienced a YoY increase in total non-farm employment between March 2025 and March 2026, while Ciudad Juárez continued to experience losses.

Nationally, the U.S. added 235,000 non-farm jobs (0.1%) in March 2026 on a YoY basis. During the same period, El Paso and Las Cruces experienced YoY gains of 6,200 jobs (1.7%) and 2,300 jobs (2.8%), respectively. Meanwhile, Ciudad Juárez reported a loss of 9,830 jobs (-2.0%), marking the 30th consecutive month of YoY non-farm job losses.

Paso del Norte Total Non-Farm Employment (Year-over-Year, %)



Note: Preliminary data for March 2026. The shaded area indicates recession as defined by the National Bureau of Economic Research (The Great Recession began in December 2007 and lasted until June 2009. The 2020 recession began in February and ended in April).

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social.

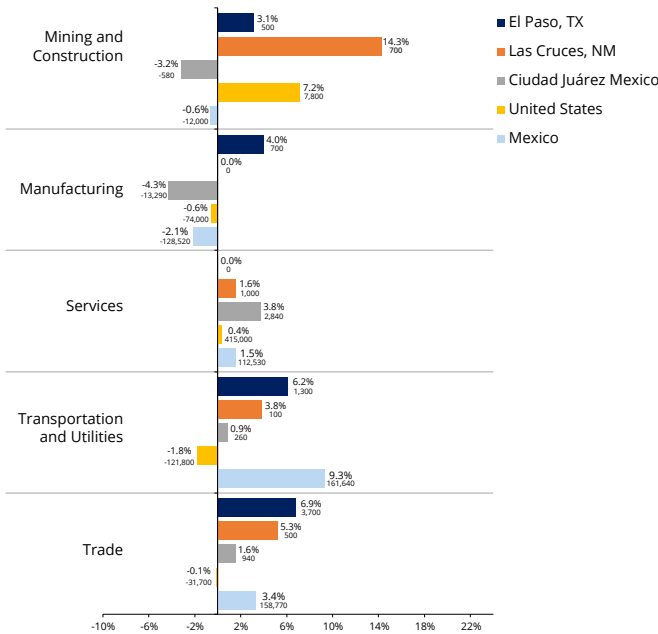
¹ The selected MSAs include Austin–Round Rock–Georgetown, TX; Dallas–Fort Worth–Arlington, TX; El Paso, TX; Houston–The Woodlands–Sugar Land, TX; Laredo, TX; Las Cruces, NM; and San Antonio–New Braunfels, TX.

² Selected Texas cities include Austin, TX; El Paso, TX; Midland, TX; and San Antonio, TX.

These losses are primarily driven by a decline in the city's manufacturing sector, which lost approximately 13,290 jobs (-4.3%) during this period.

The Hunt Institute tracks five non-farm employment sectors in the Paso del Norte region. In El Paso, the following sectors experienced employment growth on a YoY basis comparing March 2025 to March 2026: trade grew by 3,700 jobs (6.9%); transportation and utilities by 1,300 jobs (6.2%); mining and construction by 500 jobs (3.1%); and manufacturing by 700 jobs (4.0%). Meanwhile, employment in the services sector remained stagnant (0.0%). Las Cruces registered growth in four out of the five sectors: services by 1,000 jobs (1.6%); mining and construction by 700 jobs (14.3%); trade by 500 jobs (5.3%); and transportation and utilities by 100 jobs (0.9%). Meanwhile, the manufacturing sector's employment remained unchanged (0.0%).

Paso del Norte Total Non-Farm Employment by Sector, (Year-over-Year), March 2026



Note: Preliminary data for March 2026. Services exclude Transportation and Utilities, and Trade. Beginning July 1, 2025, IMSS began incorporating digital platform workers under the new pilot rules, leading to a sharp increase in the transportation and utilities sector.

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social.

Residential Building Permits

Residential Building Permit Activity Weakened Across Selected MSAs in Early 2026

From January to March 2026, all selected MSAs recorded declines in private residential building permits issued, while several experienced increases in the average value per permit compared to the same period in 2025.

New, privately owned, single-unit building permits are used to assess residential building development in El Paso, Texas, and Las Cruces, New Mexico, as well as other selected Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) in Texas.³ The number of building permits per 100,000 inhabitants is used to account for population differences across MSAs. Among the selected MSAs, Dallas had the largest decrease from January to March 2026 and the same period in 2025, with a decline of 18 permits (-13.5%), followed by Houston with 17 permits (-10.7%) and by Las Cruces, which recorded a decline of 11 permits (-11.5%).

Building Permits for New, Privately Owned, Single-Unit Housing in Selected MSAs per 100,000 Inhabitants

MSA	A 2025 Jan-Mar	B 2026 Jan-Mar	B-A	B-A (Δ%)
Austin, TX	155	152	-3	-2.3%
Houston, TX	164	147	-17	-10.7%
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	130	112	-18	-13.5%
Laredo, TX	101	91	-10	-9.8%
Las Cruces, NM	95	84	-11	-11.5%
San Antonio, TX	88	84	-4	-5.1%
El Paso, TX	57	50	-7	-12.8%

Note: Authorized unadjusted units by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Austin includes Round Rock Georgetown, Dallas-Fort Worth includes Arlington, Houston includes The Woodlands-Sugar Land and San Antonio includes New Braunfels. The number of building permits issued per 100,000 inhabitants is rounded to the nearest whole number. The percentage change may differ slightly as a result.

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

From January to March 2026, some selected MSAs recorded increases in the average value of building permits for new privately owned single unit housing, compared with the same period in the previous year. From January to March 2026, Dallas led these MSAs in average single-unit building value at approximately \$305,000, up around \$6,000 (1.9%) from the same period in 2025. Meanwhile, El Paso recorded the largest YoY increase in average permit value during this period, rising by approximately \$9,000 (3.7%). On the opposite side, Las Cruces had the largest YoY decrease in average permit value during the period mentioned above, with a decline of \$33,000 (-11.2%).

³ The selected MSAs are Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, TX; Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX; El Paso, TX; Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX; Laredo, TX; Las Cruces, NM and San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX.

Average Price of Buildings for New, Privately Owned, Single-Unit Housing in Selected MSAs (USD Thousand)

MSA	A 2025 Jan-Mar	B 2026 Jan-Mar	B-A	B-A (Δ%)
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	\$299	\$305	\$6	1.9%
Houston, TX	\$293	\$299	\$6	1.9%
Austin, TX	\$315	\$293	-\$22	-7.0%
San Antonio, TX	\$280	\$277	-\$3	-0.9%
Laredo, TX	\$286	\$279	-\$7	-2.8%
El Paso, TX	\$233	\$242	\$9	3.7%
Las Cruces, NM	\$292	\$259	-\$33	-11.2%

Note: Authorized unadjusted units by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Austin includes Round Rock Georgetown, Dallas-Fort Worth includes Arlington, Houston includes The Woodlands-Sugar Land and San Antonio includes New Braunfels.

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Bankruptcies

El Paso Bankruptcy Growth Rate Trails Other Texas Cities

El Paso reported the smallest percentage increase in bankruptcy filings among the selected cities between January and April 2026, rising by 111 filings (20.9%) compared to the same period in 2025.⁴

Between January and April 2026, the El Paso Office of the Western District of Texas Bankruptcy Court recorded 641 individual and business-related filings, including Chapter 7, Chapter 11, and Chapter 13 cases, representing the smallest percentage increase among the four selected cities, with a growth of 111 filings (20.9%) when compared to the same period in 2025.

San Antonio reported the highest overall volume of bankruptcy filings among the selected cities in the Western District of Texas, United States Bankruptcy Court, with 1,174 filings between January and April 2026, reflecting an increase of 224 filings (23.6%) relative to the corresponding period in 2025. Austin, positioned in the middle of the four selected cities, reported 791 bankruptcy filings between January and April of 2026, up 158 filings (25.0%) from the same period in 2025.

Conversely, despite reporting the lowest number of bankruptcies at 101 filings between January and April of 2026, Midland experienced the greatest percentage growth within the selected cities in the Western District of Texas at an increase of 37 filings (57.8%), in comparison to the equivalent period in 2025.

⁴ Selected Texas cities include Austin, TX; El Paso, TX; Midland, TX; and San Antonio, TX.

Total Bankruptcy Filings in Austin, El Paso, Midland, and San Antonio

City	A 2025 Jan-Apr	B 2026 Jan-Apr	B-A	B-A (Δ%)
Austin, TX	633	791	158	25.0%
El Paso, TX	530	641	111	20.9%
Midland, TX	64	101	37	57.8%
San Antonio, TX	950	1,174	224	23.6%

Note: Numbers include Chapter 7, Chapter 11, and Chapter 13 cases for the El Paso Office of the Western District of Texas U.S. Bankruptcy Court.

Source: Hunt Institute using data from the Western District of Texas U.S. Bankruptcy Court.

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About Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness

Since 2014, the Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness at The University of Texas at El Paso has provided economic analysis of the Paso del Norte Region that includes the binational communities of El Paso, Texas; Las Cruces, N.M.; and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. The mission of the Hunt Institute is to produce high-quality market analysis tools that strengthen regional and binational cross-border social and economic development.

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