

Labour Market Notes

Labour market starts 2021 on a positive note

Alberta

- **Employment grows.** Employment increased 20,800 month-over-month (m/m) in January, posting its first monthly gain since October 2020, despite public health measures remaining in place.
- **Part-time employment leads the recovery.** Strong gains in part-time jobs (+21,100 m/m) offset marginal losses in full-time positions (-300 m/m). Part-time jobs turned around after retreating from their November 2020 peak.
- **Small gains in services sector.** Service sector employment grew (+3,400) following two months of consecutive declines. Accommodation and food services (-17,900 m/m) and information and recreation (-3,700) bore the brunt of the ongoing public health measures. These, however, were more than offset by gains in other services industries, particularly educational services, and business, building & other support services.
- **Goods sector resumes growth.** Goods sector employment experienced broad-based gains (+17,200 m/m), driven by construction (+15,300) and supported by natural resources industries (+2,400). Manufacturing (-3,100) was the only goods sector that experienced jobs losses.
- **Unemployment rate falls.** With the strong monthly job gain, the unemployment rate declined 0.4 percentage points to 10.7%. This was even as labour force participation rate inched up 0.4 percentage points to 69.3%.
- **Employment remains below pre-COVID levels.** Employment stood nearly 88,000 below the February 2020 level. Alberta has now recovered almost 74% (249,200) of the 337,000 jobs lost between February and April.
- **Labour underutilization remains high.** In January, the labour underutilization rate stood at 20%, slightly lower m/m but up from 15% a year ago. There were 165,600 who were employed, but worked zero hours or missed more than half of their usual hours during the reference week. This was up 32,400 (+24% y/y) from a year ago. The number of Albertans who wanted a job but did not look for one was largely unchanged in January and was 14,300 (+23% y/y) above last year.
- **Wages inch up.** The average hourly wage in Alberta edged up to \$33.18 (+1.4% m/m). With the monthly increase, average hourly wage was up 4.2% from February and 4.7% compared to a year ago.

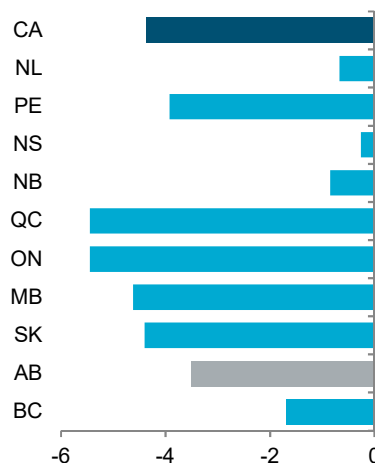
Canada

- **National employment declines.** A total of 212,800 jobs were lost in January, the second consecutive monthly decline. The monthly decline was concentrated in retail trade sectors in Ontario and Quebec, as public health measures tightened. Employment improved in all provinces except Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador.
- **Unemployment rate rises.** The national unemployment rate inched up by 0.6 percentage points to 9.4% in January.
- **Wages move up.** The national average hourly wage increased to \$30.23 (+1.8% m/m). The average wage remained 5.7% above February and 6.2% higher than last year.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY PROVINCE

January 2021 vs. January 2020

(year-over-year
% change)



Source: Statistics Canada, Haver Analytics

ALBERTA LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Indicator	Latest*
Employment	2,181,400
month-over-month change	+20,800
year-over-year % change	-3.5%
Alberta Unemployment Rate (UR)	10.7%
Edmonton UR**	11.9%
Calgary UR**	10.6%
Participation Rate	69.3%
Average Weekly Earnings (AWE)	\$1,197.26
year-over-year % change	+2.2%
Average Hourly Wage	\$33.18
year-over-year % change	4.7%

Source: Statistics Canada, Haver Analytics

* All data is from the January 2021 Labour Force Survey, except AWE which is from the November 2020 Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours.

** This indicator is calculated as a three month moving average and is seasonally adjusted.

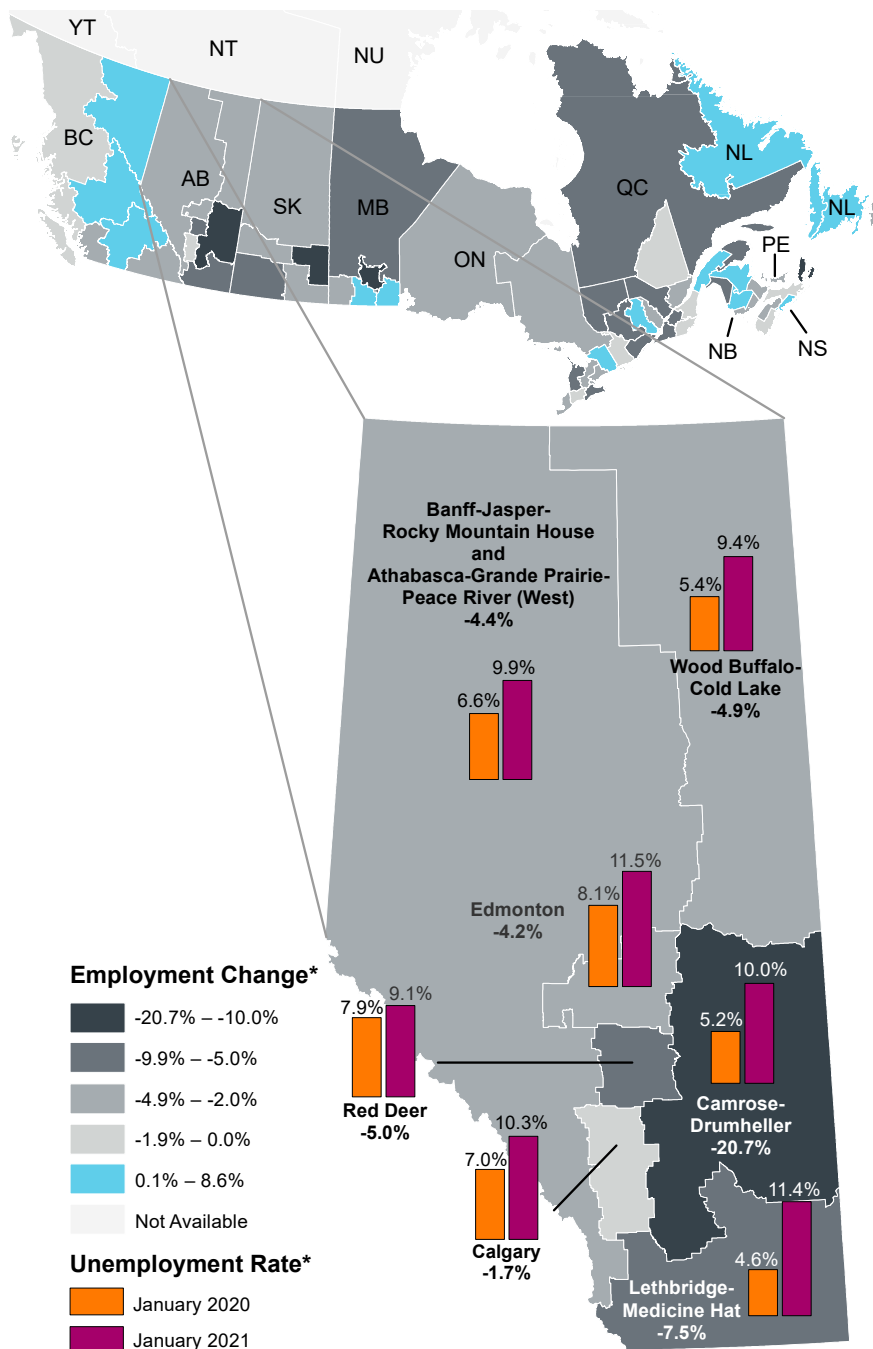
Regional labour market indicators

	2019	2020	2021 YTD
Alberta			
Population	1.6	1.5	1.2
Labour Force	1.0	-1.9	-0.5
Employment	0.7	-6.6	-4.3
Unemployment Rate	7.0	11.4	10.6
Calgary			
Population	2.0	1.8	1.5
Labour Force	2.4	-0.5	1.9
Employment	2.8	-5.3	-1.7
Unemployment Rate	7.2	11.7	10.3
Edmonton			
Population	2.0	1.9	1.6
Labour Force	1.7	-2.9	-0.6
Employment	0.7	-7.7	-4.2
Unemployment Rate	7.4	12.0	11.5
West			
Population	0.6	0.4	0.2
Labour Force	-0.1	-3.4	-1.0
Employment	0.1	-9.2	-4.4
Unemployment Rate	5.5	11.1	9.9
Lethbridge - Medicine Hat			
Population	1.1	0.9	0.6
Labour Force	0.5	-2.8	-0.3
Employment	-0.3	-5.4	-7.5
Unemployment Rate	6.1	8.6	11.4
Red Deer			
Population	1.2	1.2	0.9
Labour Force	-4.6	-1.9	-3.8
Employment	-6.1	-6.7	-5.0
Unemployment Rate	7.0	11.6	9.1
Camrose - Drumheller			
Population	0.2	0.1	-0.1
Labour Force	-6.5	0.5	-16.6
Employment	-7.8	-4.0	-20.7
Unemployment Rate	6.6	10.7	10.0
Wood Buffalo - Cold Lake			
Population	0.4	0.0	-0.2
Labour Force	2.0	-3.7	-0.6
Employment	2.3	-7.6	-4.9
Unemployment Rate	5.7	9.5	9.4

Source: Statistics Canada, Haver Analytics
All numbers are percent growth, except unemployment rates.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY ECONOMIC REGION

Per cent change in year-over-year employment



*Based on three-month moving averages.

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Have a question? Send us an [email](#)