



Economic Indicators

Employment gains for fourth consecutive month in October

November 6, 2020

For the fourth consecutive month, seasonally adjusted employment in the **Edmonton** census metropolitan area (CMA) increased month-over-month, picking up 6,800 positions in October 2020. Growth in unadjusted employment figures suggests improvements were more concentrated in full-time work, though the October full-time employment estimate was still significantly lower year-over-year. Though employment levels remained lower year-over-year for most sectors, employment in some saw improvements, including construction and the transportation and warehousing sector. Unadjusted employment was 57,600 positions lower in October year-over-year.

Edmonton's labour force saw very modest growth month-over-month in October which helped to bring the unemployment rate down to 12 per cent from 12.6 per cent in September. The region's labour force estimate includes those who are employed, as well as those who are unemployed but are actively looking for work.

Labour Force Survey Results—Edmonton CMA¹
Three-month moving average—seasonally adjusted

	Oct 2019	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Month-over-month	Year-over-year	Month-over-month	Year-over-year
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1,192.4	1,213.1	1,214.6	1.5	22.2	0.1	1.9
Labour force	846.8	824.7	826.8	2.1	-20.0	0.3	-2.4
Employment	785.2	720.6	727.4	6.8	-57.8	0.9	-7.4
Unemployment	61.5	104.2	99.4	-4.8	37.9	-4.6	61.6
Unemployment rate (%)	7.3	12.6	12.0	-0.6	4.7
Participation rate (%)	71.0	68.0	68.1	0.1	-2.9
Employment rate (%)	65.9	59.4	59.9	0.5	-6.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0294-01

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in the **Calgary CMA** came down month-over-month to 11.3 per cent in October from 12.6 per cent, with a solid 17,000 month-over-month gain in employment.

Seasonally adjusted employment in **Alberta** increased by 23,400 positions in October from the previous month, though the province's labour force saw a marginal month-over-month decline. Alberta's unemployment rate in October was 10.7 per cent², a reduction from 11.7 per cent in September. The monthly employment gain in October was almost evenly split between full-time and part-time work. Employment continued to recover across most sectors on a month-over-month basis in October; the most notable relative monthly gain was in the transportation and warehousing sector where employment increased by 5.8 per cent month-over-month.

Employment growth in **Canada** appeared to have slowed down in October, though growth was positive with a net addition of 83,600 positions month-over-month and adjusted for seasonal factors. Employment growth was more concentrated in full-time work which saw its position count grow by 69,100 month-over-month. Employment growth in October was more concentrated in the services-producing sector which saw a monthly gain almost four times that of the goods-producing sector. The national unemployment rate in October saw a very modest downtick to 8.9 per cent from nine per cent September.

Significance

Seasonally adjusted employment in the Edmonton region is recovering from the sharp losses experienced earlier in the year with four consecutive months of monthly employment gains. Since June, employment has risen by 60,000 positions. Across sectors, the recovery has been uneven, though employment levels in some sectors, including professional, scientific and technical services, were estimated to be higher on a year-over-year basis in October. All in all,

¹ Statistics Canada revised the Labour Force Survey seasonally adjusted estimates for 2017 to 2019 using the latest seasonal factors.

² For direct comparability to the CMA unemployment rates, the three-month moving average for Alberta's unemployment rate was 11.4 per cent in October, down from 12.1 per cent in September.

recent developments in the region's labour market have been encouraging, though rising case counts in the Edmonton health zone pose a downside risk to the pace of employment recovery.

It is important to keep in mind that labour force data for the Edmonton region are three-month moving averages, so monthly data estimates carry an even greater lag when it comes to assessing rapidly changing labour market conditions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Provincial estimates can provide some early indication as to what to expect in monthly regional releases, which hold some promise given sustained positive employment growth for the province in October.

Limitations

Employment trends tend to lag developments in overall economic activity. Because of this, they are a better indicator of past, rather than current, conditions in the economy. However, employment trends are still useful predictors of future changes in incomes and consumer spending. Statistics Canada publishes a three-month moving average of all labour force estimates for the Edmonton region, which sometimes results in the number of reported jobs lagging behind developments in the Edmonton region's economy.

Contact

Felicia Mutheardy
Chief Economist (acting), Financial and Corporate Services
780-496-6144

Contact for media inquiries

Dale Shekooley
Senior Communications Advisor
780-554-1611