Labour Force Statistics Highlights

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The unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage points to 7.2%.

The participation rate increased 0.1 percentage points to 64.3%.

The employment rate remained the same at 59.7%.

B.C. Highlights

The unemployment rate in British Columbia was 7.2% in December, up 0.1 percentage points from November and up 2.4 percentage points from 12 months ago. In December, the labour force increased slightly (+5,100), while the number of jobs continued to rise (+3,800), though not at the same pace as the labour force. Compared to 12 months ago, employment is down by 36,700, mainly due to the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the labour force grew by 29,000.

In December, there were 24,000 more full-time jobs and 20,300 fewer part-time jobs. For older and younger workers there was an increase in full-time and a decrease in part-time employment. By age group, full-time employment increased for those aged 15 to 24 (+19,200) and 55 and over (+12,200), with fewer full-time positions for those aged 25 to 54 (-7,400). There were fewer part-time jobs for those aged 15 to 24 (-22,700) and 55 and over (-7,200), alongside an increase in positions for those aged 25 to 54 (+9,700).

In December there were employment gains in the public sector (+8,300) but fewer private sector positions (-19,200). The number of self-employed individuals increased (+14,600) compared to November.

Provincial Comparisons

At 7.2%, British Columbia’s unemployment rate was the second lowest in Canada during the month of December. The lowest unemployment rate was in Quebec (6.7%), followed by British Columbia (7.2%), Saskatchewan (7.8%), and Manitoba (8.2%). Alberta (11.0%) had the ninth lowest rate.

National Highlights

In Canada, employment decreased with 62,600 fewer jobs in December. The unemployment rate was 8.6%, up from 8.5% in November and up from 5.6% twelve months ago.

Note: All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated.
Gender

In December, employment in British Columbia for men (aged 25 years and over) increased by 3,700, while 3,600 left the labour force. The unemployment rate for men was 5.9%, down from 6.5% in November.

For women (aged 25 years and over), there were 3,600 more jobs in December, while the labour force added 13,300 individuals. As a result, the unemployment rate for women was 6.4%, an increase from 5.6% in November.

Compared to December 2019, the unemployment rate for men was up 1.8 percentage points to 5.9%, while the rate for women increased 2.2 percentage points to 6.4%. Jobs for men decreased by 9,100 (-0.8%) from twelve months ago, while employment for women increased by 2,900 (+0.3%).

Youth Aged 15 to 24 Years

The unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 years was 14.0% in December, down from 14.1% the previous month. Total employment decreased by 3,500, while 4,600 individuals left the labour force. There was an increase in full-time (+19,200) positions, but fewer part-time positions (-22,700).

Compared to December 2019, the unemployment rate for youth was up 5.3 percentage points to 14.0%.

Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)

In December, the areas outside of CMAs (+10,500 or +1.6%) posted the largest employment increase, followed by Victoria (+700 or +0.4%). Vancouver (-4,100 or -0.3%), Kelowna (-1,700 or -1.6%), and Abbotsford-Mission (-1,600 or -1.6%) reported decreases in employment from November.

Industry

Employment in the goods-producing sector was up (+8,100 or +1.7%) in December, led by the construction (+6,600 or +3.2%) and manufacturing (+3,300 or +2.0%) industries. Employment decreased in the forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas (-900 or -1.9%), agriculture (-500 or -1.6%), and utilities (-500 or -2.7%) industries. In the twelve months to December, employment in the goods-producing sector grew by 1,200 (+0.3%).

In December, overall employment for the services-producing sector decreased (-4,300 or -0.2%) from the previous month. Professional, scientific and technical services (+2,800 or +1.2%) posted the largest increase, followed by public administration (+2,600 or +2.2%), health care and social assistance (+2,400 or +0.8%), and business, building and other support services (+1,700 or +1.6%). There were fewer jobs in accommodation and food services (-7,400 or -3.9%), finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (-5,700 or -3.5%), and information, culture and recreation (-1,500 or -1.3%). On a year over year basis, the services-producing sector had 37,900 (-1.8%) fewer positions.

Visit the Labour Market Statistics page for detailed data tables and other resources.
British Columbia Unemployment Rates
December 2020 - Unadjusted, 3 Month Moving Average

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey