Labour Force Statistics Highlights

Reference date: December 2019  Issue: #19-12  Released: January 10, 2020

B.C. Highlights

The unemployment rate in British Columbia was 4.8% in December, down 0.2 percentage points from November and up 0.4 percentage points from 12 months ago. Overall in December, the labour force contracted (-14,700) and there were fewer jobs (-7,700). However, both areas saw growth over the previous 12 months, with employment up by 7,100 and an additional 18,300 individuals joining the labour force.

In December, there were 1,200 fewer full-time jobs and 6,500 fewer part-time jobs. By age group, there were full-time employment losses for those aged 55 and over (-6,500), which offset job gains for those aged 25 to 54 (+4,100), and 15 to 24 (+1,300). There were decreases in part-time jobs for those aged 15 to 24 (-3,600), 55 and over (-2,700), and 25 to 54 (-100).

A majority of the employment losses were in the public sector (-6,800), while the private sector (-3,100) decreased as well in December. The number of self-employed individuals grew (+2,200) compared to November.

Provincial Comparisons

At 4.8%, British Columbia’s unemployment rate was the lowest in Canada for the month of December. The next lowest unemployment rates were in Manitoba (5.0%), Ontario (5.3%), and Quebec (5.3%). Alberta (7.0%) had the sixth lowest rate.

National Highlights

In Canada, employment increased with 35,200 more positions in December. The unemployment rate was down from 5.9% in November to 5.6% in December, unchanged from twelve months ago.

Gender

In December, employment in British Columbia for men (aged 25 years and over) decreased by 1,000, while the size of the labour force contracted (-4,800). Accordingly, the unemployment rate for men was down from 4.4% in November to 4.1%.

Note: All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated.
For women (aged 25 years and over), there were 4,300 fewer jobs in December, while the labour force contracted by 3,900 individuals. As a result, the unemployment rate for women remained at 4.2%, unchanged from November.

Compared to December 2018, the unemployment rate for men was up 1.1 percentage points to 4.1%, while the rate for women was stable at 4.2%. Jobs for men increased by 13,600 (+1.2%) compared to a year ago, while employment for women decreased by 5,800 (-0.6%).

**Youth Aged 15 to 24 Years**

The unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 years was 8.7% in December, down from 9.5% the previous month. Total employment decreased by 2,400, while 6,000 individuals left the labour force. There was an increase in full-time positions (+1,300) and fewer part-time positions (-3,600).

Compared to December 2018, the unemployment rate for youth was down 0.7 percentage points to 8.7%.

**Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)**

In December, Kelowna (+3,100 or +3.1%), Victoria (+3,000 or +1.5%), and Abbotsford-Mission (+1,600 or +1.6%) saw employment increases from November. Vancouver (-11,200 or -0.8%) and the areas outside the CMAs (-4,200 or -0.6%) saw decreases in employment from the previous month.

**Industry**

Employment in the goods-producing sector was up (+5,800 or +1.2%) in December. All the job gains were in construction (+9,200 or +4.0%), while there were fewer positions in manufacturing (-1,900 or -1.2%), agriculture (-1,200 or -4.3%), and forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas (-300 or -0.7%). The utilities industry saw no change. In the twelve months to December, employment in the goods-producing sector declined by 29,100 (-5.7%).

In December, overall employment for the services-producing sector (-13,500 or -0.6%) decreased from the previous month. Among the service industries, finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (-6,800 or -4.0%) posted the largest decrease, followed by wholesale and retail trade (-4,400 or -1.1%), public administration (-3,600 or -2.9%), and educational services (-3,300 or -1.8%). On the other hand, employment increased for health care and social assistance (+5,200 or +1.7%), accommodation and food services (+2,800 or +1.4%), and business, building and other support services (+400 or +0.4%) in December. On a year over year basis, the services-producing sector has added 36,200 (+1.8%) positions.

Visit the Labour Market Statistics page for detailed data tables and other resources.
British Columbia Unemployment Rates

December 2019 - Unadjusted, 3 Month Moving Average

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey