Labour Force
Statistics Highlights

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B.C. Highlights

The unemployment rate in British Columbia was 11.5% in April, up 4.3 percentage points from March and up 6.9 percentage points from 12 months ago. Overall in April, the labour force continued to contract (-172,400), while the number of jobs decreased (-264,100). Both areas saw decreases over the previous 12 months, with employment down by 420,900 and 266,200 individuals no longer in the labour force.

Additional labour-related COVID-19 data is available at the end of this report.

In April, there were 194,900 fewer full-time jobs and 69,200 fewer part-time jobs. By age group, the majority of full-time employment losses were among those aged 25 to 54 (-131,900), with fewer jobs for those aged 55 and over (-32,900) and 15 to 24 (-30,200), as well. All the part-time job losses were for those aged 15 to 24 (-43,100) and 25 to 54 (-26,300), with little change among those aged 55 and over (+200).

Both the private (-254,100) and public (-12,800) sectors saw decreased employment in April. The number of self-employed individuals increased (+2,800) compared to March.

Provincial Comparisons

At 11.5%, British Columbia’s unemployment rate was the fifth lowest in Canada for the month of April. The lowest unemployment rates were in Prince Edward Island (10.8%), Saskatchewan (11.3%), and Ontario (11.3%). Alberta (13.4%) had the eighth lowest rate.

National Highlights

In Canada, employment decreased with 1,993,800 fewer positions in April. The unemployment rate was 13.0% in April, up from 7.8% in March and 5.7% twelve months ago.

Gender

In April, employment in British Columbia for men (aged 25 years and over) decreased by 106,300, while the size of the labour force shrank (-57,700).
Accordingly, the unemployment rate for men was up from 5.1% in March to 9.7%.

For women (aged 25 years and over), there were 84,600 fewer jobs in April, while the labour force contracted by 55,100 individuals. As a result, the unemployment rate for women was 9.9%, an increase from 6.6% in March.

Compared to April 2019, the unemployment rate for men was up 6.0 percentage points to 9.7%, while the rate for women increased 5.9 percentage points to 9.9%. Jobs for men decreased by 131,200 (-11.4%) from twelve months ago, while employment for women decreased by 147,500 (-14.0%).

**Youth Aged 15 to 24 Years**

The unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 years was 24.2% in April, up from 16.1% the previous month. Total employment decreased by 73,200, while 59,600 individuals left the labour force. There were decreases in part-time (-43,100) and full-time positions (-30,200).

Compared to April 2019, the unemployment rate for youth was up 15.0 percentage points to 24.2%.

**Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)**

In April, there were decreases in employment across all the CMAs. Vancouver (-139,100 or -10.3%) saw the largest decline, followed by the areas outside the CMAs (-82,300 or -12.4%), Victoria (-21,500 or -11.2%), Abbotsford-Mission (-11,600 or -11.9%), and Kelowna (-9,600 or -9.8%).

**Industry**

Employment in the goods-producing sector was down (-46,900 or -9.8%) in April. The majority of the job losses were in construction (-34,100 or -14.6%), with manufacturing (-8,900 or -5.5%) and agriculture (-6,100 or -19.9%) also having fewer positions. Conversely, there were more jobs in utilities (+2,400 or +15.5%), while employment in forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas (-200 or -0.5%) was relatively stable. In the twelve months to April, employment in the goods-producing sector declined by 61,600 (-12.4%).

In April, overall employment for the services-producing sector decreased (-217,200 or -11.3%) from the previous month. Among the service industries, accommodation and food services (-75,700 or -47.7%) posted the largest decrease, followed by wholesale and retail trade (-35,500 or -9.8%), other services, except public administration (-29,100 or -25.6%), health care and social assistance (-20.4% or -6.6%), and information, culture and recreation (-17,400 or -17.2%). Professional, scientific and technical services (+1,900 or +0.9%) was the only sector to add positions in April. On a year over year basis, the services-producing sector has 359,400 (-17.4%) fewer positions.

Visit the Labour Market Statistics page for detailed data tables and other resources.

**Additional COVID-19 Data**

To better understand the shock to the Canadian labour market resulting from the COVID-19 economic shutdown, Statistics Canada produced supplementary indicators at the provincial level to measure hours lost due to the pandemic.

During the week of April 12, 258,800 people in B.C. were employed but absent for the full week. This was an increase of 209,500 compared with February, with the increase being attributable to the COVID-19 economic shutdown. The number of people who worked some hours, but less than half of their usual hours, increased by 37,200, bringing the total increase...
in absences since February attributable to COVID-19 to 246,700.

As of the week of April 12, the cumulative effect of the COVID-19 economic shutdown—the number of British Columbians who were either not employed or working substantially reduced hours—was 629,300, or about one-quarter of February’s employment level.
British Columbia Unemployment Rates
April 2020 - Unadjusted, 3 Month Moving Average

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey