Labour Force
Statistics Highlights

Reference date: August 2020    Issue: #20-08    Released: September 4, 2020

The unemployment rate decreased 0.4 percentage points to 10.7%.
The participation rate increased 0.1 percentage points to 64.0%.
The employment rate increased 0.3 percentage points to 57.2%.

B.C. Highlights

The unemployment rate in British Columbia was 10.7% in August, down 0.4 percentage points from July and up 5.7 percentage points from 12 months ago. In August, the labour force continued to grow (+4,800) after substantial declines in March and April, with the number of jobs increasing as well (+15,300). Both saw declines compared to 12 months ago, with employment down by 169,600 and 18,900 fewer individuals in the labour force mainly due to the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In August, there were 13,300 more full-time jobs and an additional 2,000 part-time jobs. By age group, full-time employment gains among those aged 25 to 54 (+16,100) and 15 to 24 (+3,000) offset the decrease in jobs for those aged 55 and over (-5,800). There were part-time job gains for those aged 25 to 54 (+9,900), and fewer positions for those aged 55 and over (-7,500) and 15 to 24 (-500).

There were employment gains in both the private sector (+22,300) and the public sector (+3,500) in August. The number of self-employed individuals decreased (-10,600) compared to July.

Provincial Comparisons

At 10.7%, British Columbia’s unemployment rate was tied with Ontario for the sixth lowest in Canada during the month of August. The lowest unemployment rates were in Saskatchewan (7.9%), Manitoba (8.1%), and Quebec (8.7%). Alberta (11.8%) had the ninth lowest rate.

National Highlights

In Canada, employment increased with 245,800 more positions in August. The unemployment rate was 10.2%, down from 10.9% in July and up from 5.7% twelve months ago.

Gender

In August, employment in British Columbia for men (aged 25 years and over) increased by 2,300, while

Note: All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated
2,900 men joined the labour force. The unemployment rate for men was 8.9%, unchanged from July.

For women (aged 25 years and over), there were 10,600 more jobs in August, while the labour force added 6,700 individuals. As a result, the unemployment rate for women was 8.3%, a decrease from 8.7% in July.

Compared to August 2019, the unemployment rate for men was up 4.9 percentage points to 8.9%, while the rate for women increased 3.8 percentage points to 8.3%. Jobs for men decreased by 57,200 (-4.9%) from twelve months ago, while employment for women decreased by 56,700 (-5.4%).

**Youth Aged 15 to 24 Years**

The unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 years was 22.6% in August, down from 24.1% the previous month. Total employment increased by 2,500, while 4,800 individuals left the labour force. There was an increase in full-time (+3,000) positions, but fewer part-time positions (-500).

Compared to August 2019, the unemployment rate for youth was up 13.2 percentage points to 22.6%.

**Summer Employment for Students**

From May to August, the Labour Force Survey collects labour market outcomes about youths aged 15 to 24 who were attending school full-time in March and who intend to return to school full-time in September. The data are unadjusted, making comparisons from one year to another appropriate.

The unemployment rate (unadjusted) for B.C. students aged 20 to 24 returning to school in the fall was 27.8%, up from 5.9% in August 2019. The participation rate (unadjusted) among older students was 72.4%, up from 72.0% in August 2019. While the participation rate was up, the rate of employment (unadjusted) was down by 15.7 percentage points to 52.1%.

**Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)**

There was an increase in positions in Victoria (+5,200 or +2.8%) in August and employment also rose in the areas outside the CMAs (+16,000 or +2.4%). Employment decreased in Vancouver (-2,100 or -0.2%), Kelowna (-2,200 or -2.2%), and Abbotsford-Mission (-1,400 or -1.5%).

**Industry**

Employment in the goods-producing sector was up (+20,700 or +4.6%) in August, led by job gains in agriculture (+6,600 or +26.9%) and manufacturing (+6,000 or +3.9%). The construction (+3,900 or +1.8%), utilities (+2,700 or +14.4%), and forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas (+1,500 or +3.9%) industries also added positions. In the twelve months to August, employment in the goods-producing sector declined by 12,300 (-2.6%).

In August, overall employment for the services-producing sector decreased (-5,400 or -0.3%) from the previous month. Other services, except public administration (+10,400 or +11.1%) posted the largest increase, followed by accommodation and food services (+6,400 or +3.7%), health care and social assistance (+4,100 or +1.4%), and business, building and other support services (+3,500 or +4.1%). There were fewer jobs in professional, scientific and technical services (-10,800 or -4.6%), wholesale and retail trade (-10,400 or -2.7%), and information, culture and recreation (-6,000 or -6.1%). On a year over year basis, the services-producing sector has 157,300 (-7.6%) fewer positions.

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

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey