

Labour Force Statistics Highlights



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- ↑ The unemployment rate increased 0.3 percentage points to 5.5%.
- ↑ The participation rate increased 0.3 percentage points to 65.3%.
- ▬ The employment rate remained the same at 61.7%.

B.C. Highlights

The unemployment rate in British Columbia was 5.5% in March 2024, up 0.3 percentage points from February and up 0.9 percentage points from 12 months before. The labour force increased by 18,800 in March while employment increased 6,600 on a month-over-month basis. Over the past 12 months they grew by 108,600 and 75,000 respectively.

B.C. gained 20,100 full-time jobs in March and 75,000 over the previous 12 months. Part-time employment has fallen by comparison: down by 13,700 in March and -1,100 over 12 months.

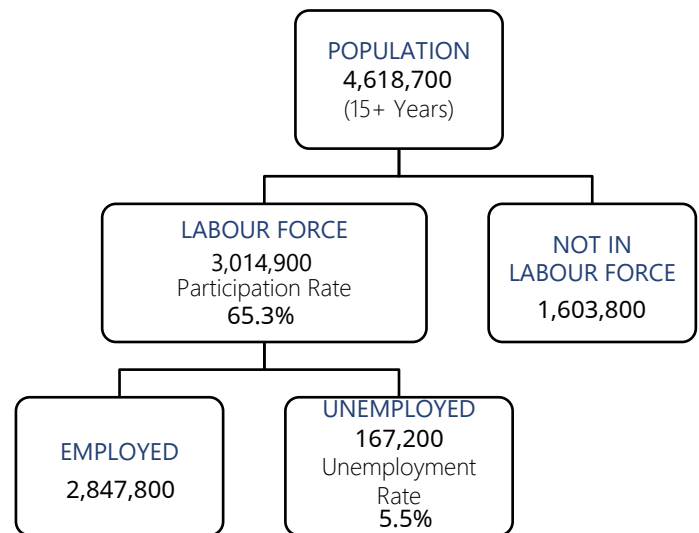
Employment increased in the public sector (+2,700) while decreasing in the private sector (-18,100). Meanwhile, there was an increase in the number of self-employed individuals (+21,900).

Provincial Comparisons

At 5.5%, British Columbia had the fourth-lowest unemployment rate in Canada during the month of March. Quebec and Manitoba tied for the lowest unemployment rate (5.0%) followed by Saskatchewan (5.4%). Nova Scotia was in 5th place with 6.2%, followed by Alberta (6.3%) and Ontario (+6.7%).

National Highlights

In Canada, employment decreased with 2,200 fewer jobs in March than in February. The unemployment rate (6.1%)



increased 0.3 percentage points from February and was up 1.0 percentage points when compared to 12 months ago.

Gender

Estimates on employment by gender are for people aged 25 years and over only.

Compared to February, employment in British Columbia for men increased by 1,200 while the labour force increased by 4,000. As a result, the unemployment rate for men increased by 0.2 percentage points to 4.6%. For women, there were 6,900 more jobs in March and an estimated 7,900 women entered the labour force. Month over month, the unemployment rate for women remained the same at 5.0%.

Compared to 12 months prior, the unemployment rate for men increased by 0.4 percentage points from 4.2% while

the rate for women increased by 1.1 percentage points from 3.9%. Employment for men increased by 49,000 (+3.9%) from 12 months ago, while employment for women increased by 15,200 (+1.3%).

Youth Aged 15 to 24

The youth unemployment rate increased from 8.3% to 10.2% in March as the number of jobs (-1,500) decreased and the labour force (+7,000) increased. Part-time jobs were lost (-10,400) and full-time jobs were gained (+8,900).

Compared to March 2023 (12 months prior), the unemployment rate for youth was up 2.2 percentage points from 8.0%.

Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs)

In March, employment decreased in Kelowna (-5,900 or -5.1%) while increasing in Victoria (+4,400 or +1.9%), Abbotsford-Mission (+1,700 or +1.5%), and Vancouver (+300 or less than +0.5%). For the rest of B.C. or areas outside these CMAs, employment increased by 6,100 (+0.8%).

Note that labour force estimates for CMAs are presented as seasonally adjusted on a three-month moving average, with larger standard errors due to small sample sizes.

Industry

Employment in the goods-producing sector was up in March (+8,000) when compared to February.

Manufacturing jobs (+3,500 or +2.0%) had the largest increase followed by utilities (+2,500 or +17.0%), forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas (+1,100 or +2.1%), and construction (+800 or +0.3%). The number of agricultural jobs remained the same at 17,600 positions.

In the 12 months to March, employment in the goods-producing sector was down by 16,700 (-3.3%). The largest employment decrease by far was in the construction subsector at -18,300 (-7.3%).

In March overall employment for the services-producing sector decreased by 1,500 (-0.1%) from the previous month. The subsectors that added jobs were health care and social

assistance (+10,300 or +2.6%), finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (+5,800 or +3.2%), wholesale and retail trade (+4,700 or +1.1%), public administration (+800 or +0.5%), and other services (except public administration) (+200 or +0.2%). Service subsectors that lost jobs in March were information, culture and recreation (-5,800 or -3.9%), accommodation and food services (-5,200 or -2.9%), professional, scientific and technical services (-3,800 or -1.3%), transportation and warehousing (-3,700 or -2.4%), educational services (-3,300 or -1.5%), and business, building and other support services (-1,500 or -1.6%).

On a year-over-year basis, the services-producing sector added 91,600 (+4.0%) more positions. Health care and social assistance added the most jobs (+48,800) during this time.

[Visit the Labour Market Statistics page](#) for detailed data tables and other resources.

British Columbia Unemployment Rates

March 2024 - Unadjusted, 3 Month Moving Average

