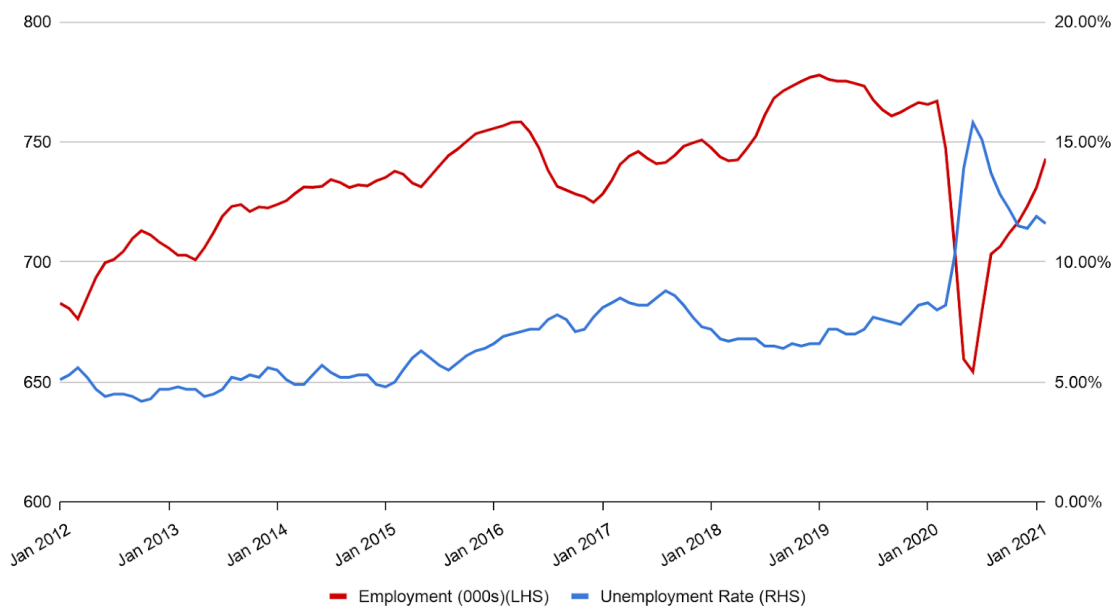


Edmonton employment sees impressive gain in February

March 15, 2021

Employment in the Edmonton census metropolitan area (CMA) increased by 12,000 individuals in February 2021 from January on a seasonally adjusted basis. The region's labour force expanded for the third consecutive month in February, though this was outpaced by employment growth, resulting in some downward pressure on the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate in the Edmonton CMA moved lower from 11.9 per cent in January to 11.6 per cent in February. Unadjusted employment numbers in February indicate a narrowing gap in year-over-year employment losses, with improvements concentrated in full-time positions.

Edmonton CMA Employment and Unemployment Rate



Source: Statistics Canada, seasonally adjusted data series ending February 2021

Note: Historical data were revised by [Statistics Canada](#) due to the rebasing of populations to reflect counts from the 2016 Census. Revised data are available going back to 2006 for the Edmonton CMA.

Seasonally adjusted employment in **Alberta** continued to increase in February 2021, adding 16,800 persons compared to January. The gain was largely due to improvements in full-time employment. The province's unemployment rate moved lower for the second consecutive

month to 9.9¹ per cent in February, the lowest rate since March 2020. Employment in the accommodation and food services sector saw an impressive gain in February, adding 19,200 persons on a month-over-month basis. This sector was among the hardest hit by the pandemic and public health measures and remains the sector with the largest year-over-year employment gap.

Seasonally adjusted employment in **Canada** gained an impressive 259,200 persons in February from January, with gains in both full- and part-time work. Employment gains were noted in retail trade and accommodation and food services, largely due to easing restrictions in many jurisdictions. These sectors were most affected by public health measures introduced in late 2020, resulting in notable reported losses in January. The national unemployment rate was 8.2 per cent in February, down from 9.4 per cent in January.

Significance

Employment in the Edmonton region continued to recover in February. The unadjusted employment gap in February (on a year-over-year basis) narrowed to 26,100 individuals which represents a significant improvement over peak employment loss of 120,100 persons in June 2020. Part-time employment was 9,000 individuals fewer in February on a year-over-year basis, with losses concentrated in the accommodation and food services, and information, culture and recreation sectors². The recovery in full-time employment in appears to be gaining traction with a year-over-year employment loss that was almost half of January's differential.

Looking ahead, continued recovery in the region's seasonally adjusted employment levels has been encouraging, particularly with gains in the region's labour force (suggesting renewed confidence in prospects for individuals who were discouraged) and downward pressure on the unemployment rate. Progress related to vaccine distribution is expected to continue adding support to the region's labour market recovery.

¹ For direct comparability to the CMA unemployment rates, the three-month moving average for Alberta's unemployment rate was 10.6 per cent in February 2021, down from 11 per cent in January.

² It is important to note that employment estimates for the Edmonton CMA are three-month moving averages and sectoral estimates are not seasonally adjusted, which can help to explain the divergence from the performance of the provincial accommodation and food services sector in February.

Labour Force Survey Results–Edmonton CMA
Three-month moving average–seasonally adjusted

	Feb 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Month -over- month	Year- over- year	Month -over- month	Year- over- year
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1,174.8	1,193.1	1,194.7	1.6	19.9	0.1	1.7
Labour force	834.0	829.6	840.1	10.5	6.1	1.3	0.7
Employment	767.0	731.0	743.0	12.0	-24.0	1.6	-3.3
Unemployment	66.9	98.5	97.1	-1.4	30.2	-1.4	45.1
Unemployment rate (%)	8.0	11.9	11.6	-0.3	3.6
Participation rate (%)	71.0	69.5	70.3	0.8	-0.7
Employment rate (%)	65.3	61.3	62.2	0.9	-3.1

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0380-01

Limitations

Employment trends tend to lag developments in overall economic activity. Because of this, they are a better indicator of past, rather than current, conditions in the economy. However, employment trends are still useful predictors of future changes in incomes and consumer spending. Statistics Canada publishes a three-month moving average of all labour force estimates for the Edmonton region, which sometimes results in the number of reported jobs lagging behind developments in the Edmonton region's economy.

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