# Labour market conditions improve in November

December 3, 2021

In November 2021, seasonally adjusted labour market conditions in the Edmonton census metropolitan area (CMA) saw a marked improvement both month-over-month and compared to February 2020 pre-pandemic reference points. Regional employment gained month-over-month for the fifth consecutive period in November. The labour force also expanded, though its pace of growth was outpaced by employment growth, resulting in downward pressure on the region's unemployment rate to 7.6 per cent in November compared to eight per cent in October.

Edmonton CMA Employment and Unemployment Rate
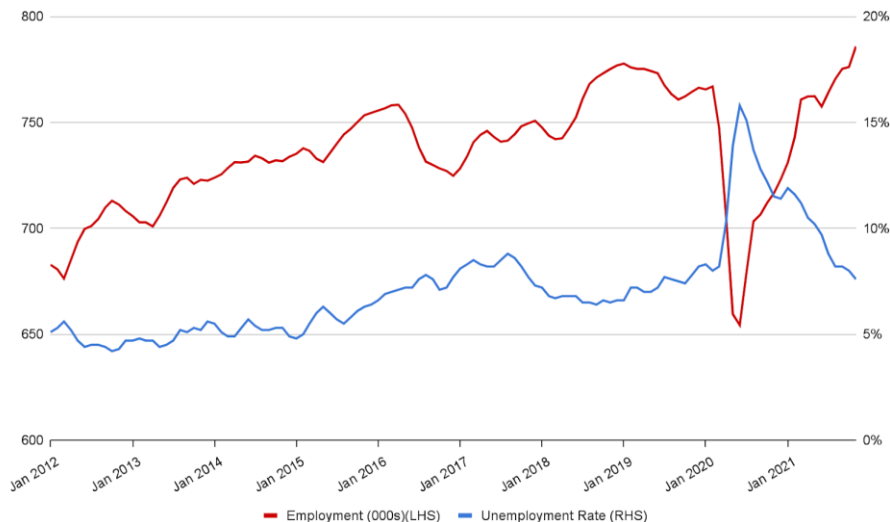
Source: Statistics Canada, seasonally adjusted data series ending November 2021
Notes: Employment data are charted on the left vertical axis (LHS), whereas unemployment rates are charted on the right vertical axis (RHS).

Unadjusted labour force survey data provided additional reassuring signs of improving regional labour market conditions. Full-time employment in November 2021 not only closed the gap from its corresponding 2019[1] level but surpassed it. Part-time employment continued to hold onto its relatively higher position compared to its corresponding monthly 2019 level.

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[1] Comparisons of monthly employment figures in 2021 against corresponding monthly figures in 2019 are useful to gauge progress of the region's employment recovery, as year-over-year comparisons alone may overstate the strength of any labour market improvements due to employment levels being significantly lower in most months of 2020.

Significance

Labour force survey data for the Edmonton CMA in November 2021 provided additional reassurances that the labour market is continuing to recover. Full-time employment in November is now above its corresponding monthly 2019 level, a first since the pandemic set in. As well, the region's employment and participation rates saw gains on a month-over-month basis in November, narrowing gaps from pre-pandemic levels to less than one percentage point. Even though the region's labour market recovery has been impressive so far, there remain areas in which the labour market recovery is incomplete. Across sectors, there remains weakness in goods-producing sector employment, particularly for manufacturing and construction. Pandemic-related factors including rising costs of inputs, difficulty acquiring inputs, as well as labour market uncertainties, are likely factors holding back employment in these sectors, though to varying extents. If these factors persist, this could lead to a more prolonged recovery in employment for the goods-producing sector.

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

	Nov 2020	Oct 2021	**Nov 2021**	Month-over-month	Year-over-year	Month-over-month	Year-over-year
	(000)	(000)	**(000)**	(000)	(000)	%	%
Labour force	810.1	844.1	**850.7**	6.6	40.6	0.8	5.0
Employment	716.7	776.2	**785.9**	9.7	69.2	1.2	9.7
Unemployment	93.4	67.9	**64.8**	-3.1	-28.6	-4.6	-30.6
Unemployment rate (%)	11.5	8.0	**7.6**	-0.4	-3.9	…	…
Participation rate (%)	68.1	70.0	**70.4**	0.4	2.3	…	…
Employment rate (%)	60.2	64.4	**65.0**	0.6	4.8		

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.

Contact

Felicia Mutheardy, Corporate Economist
780-496-6144
felicia.mutheardy@edmonton.ca

Contact for media inquiries

Lindsay Yarmon, Senior Communications Advisor
780-977-8293
lindsay.yarmon@edmonton.ca