

Slower rate of employment losses in June

July 10, 2020

Employment in the **Edmonton** census metropolitan area (CMA) continued to drop in June 2020, though the level of employment losses was significantly lower than in April and May. In June, seasonally adjusted employment in the Edmonton CMA shed 8,000 net positions compared to May and 127,000 compared to June 2019. Excluding the finance, insurance, real estate and leasing (FIRE) and public administration sectors, non-seasonally adjusted employment in all other sectors was lower year-over-year in June 2020. Employment losses by that same comparison were more concentrated in full-time positions.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Edmonton continued to rise in June 2020, reaching 15.7 per cent from 13.6 per cent in May, as labour force growth applied additional upward pressure. The region's labour force estimate includes those who are employed, as well as those who are unemployed but are actively looking for work.

Labour Force Survey Results—Edmonton CMA¹
Three-month moving average—seasonally adjusted

	June 2019	May 2020	June 2020	May 2020 to June 2020	June 2019 to June 2020	May 2020 to June 2020	June 2019 to June 2020
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1,181.8	1,206.8	1,208.4	1.6	26.6	0.1	2.3
Labour force	854.9	781.5	791.7	10.2	-63.2	1.3	-7.4
Employment	794.4	675.4	667.4	-8.0	-127.0	-1.2	-16.0
Unemployment	60.5	106.1	124.3	18.2	63.8	17.2	105.5
Unemployment rate (%)	7.1	13.6	15.7	2.1	8.6
Participation rate (%)	72.3	64.8	65.5	0.7	-6.8
Employment rate (%)	67.2	56.0	55.2	-0.8	-12.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0294-01

¹ Statistics Canada revised the Labour Force Survey seasonally-adjusted estimates for 2017 to 2019 using the latest seasonal factors.

Like what was observed in Edmonton, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in the **Calgary CMA** increased as the labour force saw modest growth in June 2020 compared to May, while employment continued to shed positions. The region's unemployment rate was 15.6 per cent in June 2020, an increase from 13.4 per cent in May.

Employment growth in **Alberta** gained momentum, picking up 91,600 positions in June 2020 compared to May on a seasonally adjusted basis. Both full- and part-time employment rose month-over-month in June. Employment continued to recover across sectors. Except for the FIRE and business, building and other support services sectors, employment levels for all other sectors remained lower in June than in February. Alberta's unemployment rate held steady at 15.5 per cent in June² as the province's employment gains were met by growth in the labour force.

Employment in **Canada** gained 952,900 positions month-over-month on a seasonally adjusted basis in June 2020 from May. Excluding the agriculture and forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas sectors, all other sectors gained positions on a month-over-month basis in June. The national unemployment rate came down to 12.3 per cent in June from 13.7 per cent in May as employment growth outpaced growth in the national labour force.

Significance

June 2020 employment estimates suggest an improvement in Edmonton's labour market with growth in the region's labour force and employment losses at a fraction of what was estimated in previous months. It is important to note that labour force data for the Edmonton region are three-month moving averages due to small sample sizes for the labour force survey. This presents a challenge when trying to estimate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Edmonton's labour market as it unfolded at a rapid pace and over a short period of time. Nonetheless, the rate of employment losses slowing in June, coupled with stronger signals of an employment rebound at the provincial level, suggest improvements are likely to emerge in future monthly data releases.

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 developments in the Edmonton region's economy.

Contact

Felicia Mutheardy
A/Chief Economist, Financial and Corporate Services
780-496-6144

Contact for media inquiries

Matt Pretty
Communications Advisor
780-442-0970

² For direct comparability to the CMA unemployment rates, the three-month moving average for Alberta's unemployment rate was 14.8 per cent in June 2020, up from 12.5 per cent in May.