Labour Market Bulletin

New Brunswick

November 2019

This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of New Brunswick, including the regions of Campbellton—Miramichi, Edmundston—Woodstock, Fredericton—Oromocto, Moncton—Richibucto and Saint John—St. Stephen.

OVERVIEW

After strengthening for the better part of the year, labour market conditions in New Brunswick have begun to deteriorate over the past few months. While employment fell only modestly in November, it still marked the third consecutive monthly decline. Despite the small reduction in employment, the unemployment rate edged down a tenth of a percentage point in November, as 1,300 people left the labour force during the same month. More generally, at 8.0% in November, the unemployment rate sits well below it historical norms which fluctuated in and around 9.5%.

**New Brunswick Monthly Labour Force Statistics**

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	Nov 2019	Oct 2019	Nov 2018	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	634.1	633.5	628.3	0.6	0.1	5.8	0.9
Labour Force ('000)	384.8	386.1	385.0	-1.3	-0.3	-0.2	-0.1
Employment ('000)	354.3	354.6	354.2	-0.3	-0.1	0.1	0.0
Full-Time ('000)	301.1	301.6	302.7	-0.5	-0.2	-1.6	-0.5
Part-Time ('000)	53.1	53.0	51.5	0.1	0.2	1.6	3.1
Unemployment ('000)	30.6	31.4	30.8	-0.8	-2.5	-0.2	-0.6
Unemployment Rate (%)	8.0	8.1	8.0	-0.1	-	0.0	-
Participation Rate (%)	60.7	60.9	61.3	-0.2	-	-0.6	-
Employment Rate (%)	55.9	56.0	56.4	-0.1	-	-0.5	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287

For the year as a whole, employment is up by 2,300 on average through the first 11 months, compared to the same period in 2018. The only drawback is that these job gains have been concentrated entirely among part-time work. The average unemployment rate through the first 11 months, meanwhile, still edged up by 0.2 of a

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percentage point to 8.1% compared to the same period last year, as the job gains occured against a backdrop of 3,200 additional participants in the labour force.
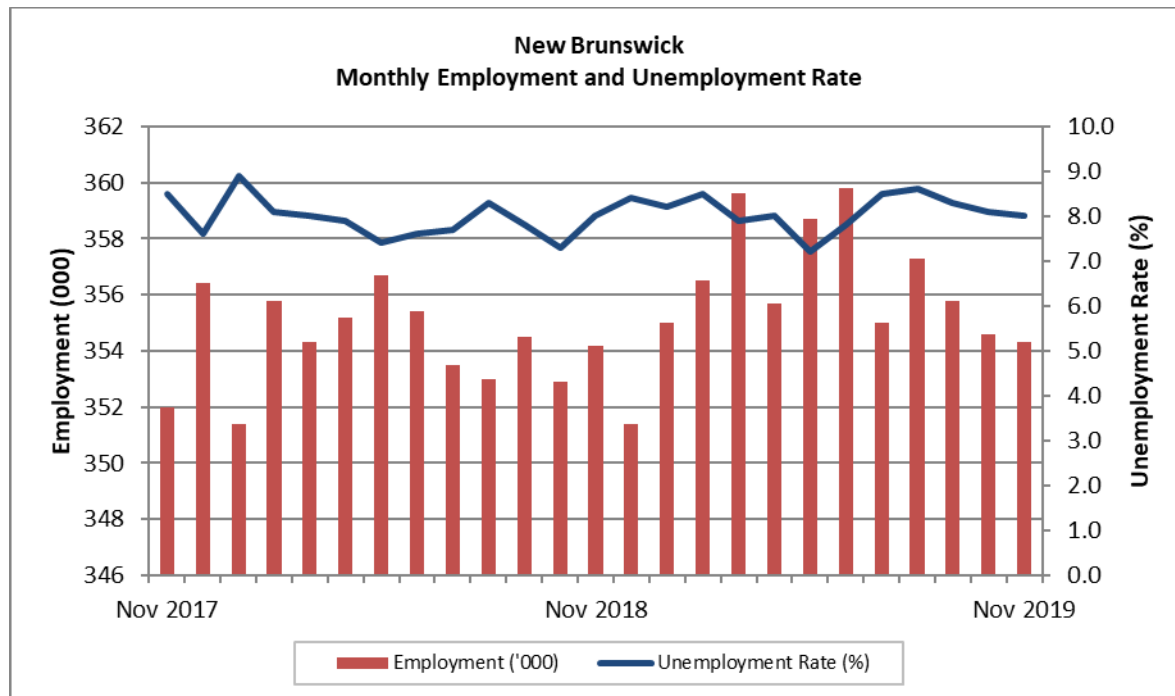
Job losses in November were the largest among prime age (25 to 54 years) workers, where the level of employment declined by a thousand. On a year-to-date basis, job gains were limited exclusively to the older cohort (aged 55 and over), where the average level of employment between January and November was 3,300 higher than the same period a year earlier. None of this is new, however, as job gains since the early 2000s have more often than not been strongest among older workers.

New Brunswick Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	Nov 2019	Oct 2019	Nov 2018	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
	%	%	%	(% points)	(% points)
Total	8.0	8.1	8.0	-0.1	0.0
25 years and over	7.1	7.0	7.4	0.1	-0.3
Men - 25 years and over	8.5	8.2	8.1	0.3	0.4
Women - 25 years and over	5.6	5.6	6.6	0.0	-1.0
15 to 24 years	13.4	15.6	11.9	-2.2	1.5
Men - 15 to 24 years	14.9	17.5	16.0	-2.6	-1.1
Women - 15 to 24 years	12.1	13.6	7.6	-1.5	4.5

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287

Youth employment has remained unchanged on a year-to-date basis through the first 11 months of the year compared to the same January-November period a year earlier. More generally, youth employment has been essentially flat since early 2012.

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EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

The 700 increase in **services-producing sector** employment in November was more than offset by a 1,200 decline in the **goods-producing sector**.

- Job losses within goods-producing industries were concentrated in **agriculture** and **manufacturing**.

- Looking at the **services-producing sector**, job gains were most notable in **educational services**, **retail and transportation and warehousing**, which for their part were able to contain some losses in **information, culture and recreation**; **health care and social assistance**; and **finance, insurance, real estate and leasing**.

On a year-to-date basis, job gains were split almost evenly between the goods-producing and services-producing sectors. Through the first 11 months of the year, employment is up in both the **goods-producing sector** (+1,200) and the **services-producing sector** (+1,100), relative to the same period in 2018.

- Within the **goods-producing sector**, job gains were driven primarily by a 1,100 increase in **construction** employment. Otherwise, small increases in **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** and **utilities** were erased by similar declines in **manufacturing** and **agriculture**.
- In much of the same way, services-producing employment gains were driven by increases in a small handful of industries. Job gains were most evident in **information, culture and recreation** (+1,600) and **public administration** (+1,200) whereas job losses were confined mostly to the **accommodation and food services** industry (-1,700).
- Employment in **health care and social assistance** has been broadly unchanged through the first 11 months of the year, which is considerably different from the sustained period of rapid job gains between 2015 and 2018, where employment in the industry grew by more than ten thousand. The slowdown in job gains in this industry is particular, especially in the sense that vacancies have been growing materially during this same period, suggesting skill shortages or mismatch among certain occupations. At 3.0% in the second quarter of 2019, the job vacancy rate in **health care and social assistance** is nearly three time higher than what it was when data collection began in the first quarter of 2015.

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New Brunswick Monthly Employed Labour Force, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	Nov 2019	Oct 2019	Nov 2018	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	354.3	354.6	354.2	-0.3	-0.1	0.1	0.0
Goods-producing sector	72.4	73.6	73.1	-1.2	-1.6	-0.7	-1.0
Agriculture	5.6	6.4	6.8	-0.8	-12.5	-1.2	-17.6
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	9.2	9.3	10.4	-0.1	-1.1	-1.2	-11.5
Utilities	3.5	3.5	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	2.9
Construction	23.7	23.4	22.5	0.3	1.3	1.2	5.3
Manufacturing	30.4	30.8	30.0	-0.4	-1.3	0.4	1.3
Services-producing sector	281.8	281.1	281.1	0.7	0.2	0.7	0.2
Trade	51.4	50.7	53.4	0.7	1.4	-2.0	-3.7
Transportation and warehousing	19.0	18.4	18.4	0.6	3.3	0.6	3.3
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	16.7	17.2	15.5	-0.5	-2.9	1.2	7.7
Professional, scientific and technical services	16.8	17.0	15.3	-0.2	-1.2	1.5	9.8
Business, building and other support services	16.8	16.4	16.2	0.4	2.4	0.6	3.7
Educational services	27.8	27.0	26.4	0.8	3.0	1.4	5.3
Health care and social assistance	59.8	60.5	60.7	-0.7	-1.2	-0.9	-1.5
Information, culture and recreation	11.8	12.6	12.6	-0.8	-6.3	-0.8	-6.3
Accommodation and food services	20.2	20.1	24.1	0.1	0.5	-3.9	-16.2
Other services	14.6	14.4	14.2	0.2	1.4	0.4	2.8
Public administration	26.9	26.7	24.1	0.2	0.7	2.8	11.6

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding
Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0355

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Labour market developments have been somewhat mixed at a regional level over the past year. Aside from the **Campbellton-Miramichi Economic Region** (ER), no other economic region registered any meaningful job losses over the past year. The decline in employment in **Saint John-St. Stephen** (ER) was relatively modest. Labour market conditions continue to show the most improvement in the central and south-east portions of the province, which include two of the three largest cities in the province.

In the northeast of the province, labour market conditions have deteriorated noticeably during the past year. Compared to a year earlier, employment in the relatively small **Campbellton-Miramichi** (ER) declined by 9,800, which is close to 10% in percentage terms. The unemployment rate, meanwhile, rose by 0.5 of a percentage point during the same period, which is not overly significant considering the magnitude of the drop in employment. The decline in the jobless rate was contained by a a significant outflow of workers from the labour force. The upcoming closure of the smelter in Belledune, unfortunately, suggests the labour market conditions are unlikely to show any meaningful signs of improvement soon.

In the **Moncton-Richibucto** (ER), where economic conditions are among the most encouraging in the province, job gains have been fairly steady, reaching 2,200 during the past year. That these job gains were matched almost equally by the number of entrants into the labour force suggests that workers are having no real difficulty integrating into the labour market and finding work. At 5.4%, the unemployment rate is down a tenth of a percentage point from a year earlier and is within close distance of the lowest rate in the province.

The unemployment rate grew from 6.1% in November of 2018 to 7.6% in November of this year in the **Saint John-St. Stephen** (ER), as employment diminished by 1,300. Despite the drop in employment, there were a few hundred more workers counted in the labour force, as the working age population grew by more than a thousand. The participation rate fell from 65.5% to 61.3% during the past year.

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Labour market conditions have strengthened considerably in the **Fredericton-Oromocto** (ER), especially during the second half of the year. The year-over-year employment gain has gone from 5,600 in October to 11,800 in November. The 7,300 increase in employment during the past year was likely a key contributor to the influx of 6,700 workers into the labour force that took place at the same time. While nonetheless an encouraging sign, the increase in the number of people looking for work helped contain the downward movement in the unemployment rate to a still-respectable 1.6 percentage points, to level out at 5.2% in November, which is tied for lowest in the province.

There is relatively little to speak of with regards to changes in the labour market in the **Edmundston-Woodstock** (ER) during the past year. Both the level of employment and size of the labour force are down only slightly from a year earlier, lifting the unemployment rate by half a percentage point to 5.2% in November.

New Brunswick Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	Nov 2019 ('000)	Nov 2018 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	Nov 2019 (%)	Nov 2018 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
New Brunswick	359.5	357.2	0.6	6.8	6.8	0.0
Economic Regions						
Campbellton-Miramichi	57.2	63.4	-9.8	11.3	10.8	0.5
Moncton-Richibucto	109.8	107.4	2.2	5.4	5.5	-0.1
Saint John-St. Stephen	86.5	87.6	-1.3	7.6	6.1	1.5
Fredericton-Oromocto	69.4	62.1	11.8	5.2	6.8	-1.6
Edmundston-Woodstock	36.6	36.9	-0.8	5.2	4.7	0.5

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0293

> **Note:** *In preparing this document, the authors have taken care to provide clients with labour market information that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since this document was published. Users are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect official policies of Employment and Social Development Canada.*

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For information on the Labour Force Survey, *please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at: www.statcan.gc.ca*

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