



# Labour Market Bulletin

## British Columbia

April 2017



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of British Columbia (BC), including the regions of Northern BC, Vancouver Island and Coast, Lower Mainland, Thompson–Okanagan and the Kootenays.

### OVERVIEW

In April 2017, approximately 2.5 million people were working in British Columbia (BC) as employment advanced over 11,000 on a monthly basis (+0.5%). On a yearly basis, employment is up 3.4% in the province, almost 2.0 full percentage points higher than the national rate.

Compared to March, there was very little change in full-time employment (+0.1%) with the majority of growth coming in part-time employment (+1.9%). On an annual basis, both full- and part-time employment are up 3.4%.

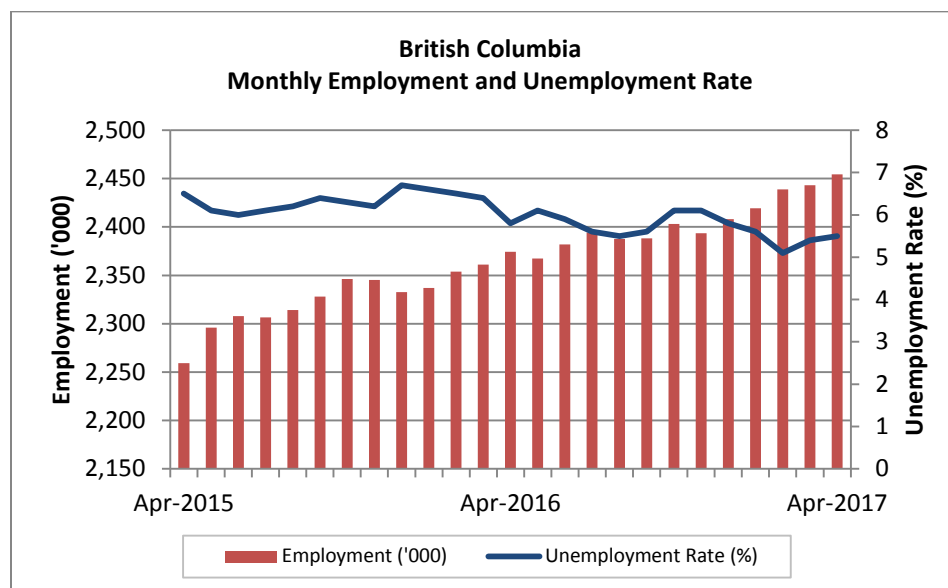
The number of unemployed people in BC edged up 2,600 compared to last month, but is down 2,800 (-1.9%) compared to April 2016. BC's unemployment rate for April is 5.5%, down 0.3 percentage points year over year. This represents the second lowest rate among provinces, and is well below the national rate of 6.5%.

## British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	April 2017	March 2017	April 2016	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Population 15 + ('000)</b>	3,968.3	3,963.7	3,917.9	4.6	0.1	50.4	1.3
<b>Labour Force ('000)</b>	2,596.7	2,582.8	2,519.6	13.9	0.5	77.1	3.1
<b>Employment ('000)</b>	2,454.3	2,443.0	2,374.4	11.3	0.5	79.9	3.4
Full-Time ('000)	1,925.2	1,924.0	1,862.7	1.2	0.1	62.5	3.4
Part-Time ('000)	529.1	519.0	511.7	10.1	1.9	17.4	3.4
<b>Unemployment ('000)</b>	142.4	139.8	145.2	2.6	1.9	-2.8	-1.9
<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	5.5	5.4	5.8	0.1	-	-0.3	-
<b>Participation Rate (%)</b>	65.4	65.2	64.3	0.2	-	1.1	-
<b>Employment Rate (%)</b>	61.8	61.6	60.6	0.2	-	1.2	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – CANSIM Table 282-0087



The majority of employment growth in April was in the public sector (+1.3%), with private sector employment relatively unchanged (+0.3%). Meanwhile, the number of self-employed people in BC increased by 2.2% on a monthly basis.

Looking at labour force results by major demographic groups, young men (15 to 24 years) continue to have the highest unemployment rate at 12.0%, relatively unchanged from this time last year and more than twice the overall provincial rate for April. The unemployment rate for young women is much lower than it is for young men, decreasing 1.4 percentage points to 7.4% between April 2017 and April 2016. Meanwhile, women 25 years and over (4.3%) continue to have the lowest unemployment rate (4.3%) among major demographic groups in BC.

**British Columbia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age**

Seasonally Adjusted Data	April 2017 (%)	March 2017 (%)	April 2016 (%)	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
				(% points)	(% points)
<b>Total</b>	5.5	5.4	5.8	0.1	-0.3
<b>25 years and over</b>	4.7	4.7	5.0	0.0	-0.3
Men - 25 years and over	5.1	4.9	5.7	0.2	-0.6
Women - 25 years and over	4.3	4.3	4.2	0.0	0.1
<b>15 to 24 years</b>	9.7	9.7	10.4	0.0	-0.7
Men - 15 to 24 years	12.0	11.2	11.9	0.8	0.1
Women - 15 to 24 years	7.4	8.2	8.8	-0.8	-1.4

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – CANSIM Table 282-0087

**EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**

BC's goods-producing sector gained 1,900 positions between March and April, while the province's services-producing sector employed almost 4,000 more people this month. A similar trend is observed year over year with employment advancing in both sectors.

BC's resource extraction industry (forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, gas and oil) shed 2,100 positions last month. In the near term, the Conference Board of Canada is forecasting weak growth in the mining industry due to soft commodity prices and difficulties in attaining government approval for some projects.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, BC's forestry industry continues to suffer from the effects of the mountain pine beetle infestation, as well as from a dispute with the United States (U.S.) concerning exports of softwood lumber.<sup>2</sup> The U.S. recently imposed new preliminary countervailing duties ranging from 3 to 24% on Canadian imported lumber.<sup>3</sup> Many Canadian forestry firms must pay tariffs backdated 90 days for wood exports previously sent south of the border from January 28 to April 27, 2017.<sup>4</sup>

Activity continues to be brisk in BC's construction industry. Since last April, overall employment in the construction industry is up 3.4%. The provincial government's plan to spend \$10 billion on infrastructure projects throughout the province will undoubtedly support sustained growth in the construction industry. Projects include new schools, hospitals, highways, roads and other projects including the Surrey LRT and Broadway subways and the George Massey Tunnel replacement project.<sup>5</sup>

Turning to services-sector industries, there were monthly employment gains in education services (+4.1%) and health care and social assistance (+3.3%). Employment in accommodation and food services increased 2.4% on a monthly basis and is up 4.5% compared to the same time last year.

Employment in the finance, insurance, real estate and leasing industry continued to gain momentum in April. All told, employment in the industry is up an impressive 20.7% on a year over year basis. Indeed, the real estate industry has been the engine behind BC's robust economic growth the past few years. Looking forward though, recent measures implemented by the provincial and federal governments could slow down activity in BC's housing market. The provincial government imposed a 15% foreign buyers tax in August 2016. And in October

2016, the federal government announced new restrictions on when the government will provide insurance for low-ratio mortgages, and new reporting rules for primary residence capital gains exemptions.<sup>6</sup>

### British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	April 2017	March 2017	April 2016	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Total employed, all industries</b>	2,454.3	2,443.0	2,374.4	11.3	0.5	79.9	3.4
<b>Goods-producing sector</b>	483.3	481.4	476.0	1.9	0.4	7.3	1.5
Agriculture	27.3	26.1	22.5	1.2	4.6	4.8	21.3
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	49.8	51.9	49.3	-2.1	-4.0	0.5	1.0
Utilities	13.1	12.4	13.9	0.7	5.6	-0.8	-5.8
Construction	224.6	221.9	217.3	2.7	1.2	7.3	3.4
Manufacturing	168.7	169.1	172.9	-0.4	-0.2	-4.2	-2.4
<b>Services-producing sector</b>	1,971.0	1,961.6	1,898.4	9.4	0.5	72.6	3.8
Trade	366.3	374.2	378.1	-7.9	-2.1	-11.8	-3.1
Transportation and warehousing	142.4	143.1	137.2	-0.7	-0.5	5.2	3.8
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	155.9	150.4	129.2	5.5	3.7	26.7	20.7
Professional, scientific and technical services	190.6	193.5	193.3	-2.9	-1.5	-2.7	-1.4
Business, building and other support services	103.0	110.1	102.4	-7.1	-6.4	0.6	0.6
Educational services	166.9	160.4	167.8	6.5	4.1	-0.9	-0.5
Health care and social assistance	301.5	292.0	292.9	9.5	3.3	8.6	2.9
Information, culture and recreation	139.3	141.3	124.8	-2.0	-1.4	14.5	11.6
Accommodation and food services	179.6	175.4	171.9	4.2	2.4	7.7	4.5
Other services	119.0	118.0	99.4	1.0	0.8	19.6	19.7
Public administration	106.5	103.1	101.5	3.4	3.3	5.0	4.9

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – CANSIM Table 282-0088

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Compared to the same period last year, employment is up in all regions of BC with the exception of North Coast and Nechako (-1.0%). The greatest yearly variation was seen in the Kootenay region where employment is up almost 10% compared to levels a year ago.

Cariboo region's unemployment rate increased 3.3 percentage points to 8.9% from this time last year – now the highest unemployment rate among economic regions in BC. However, the region's economic fortunes are looking up following a recent land use agreement signed by the Province. The Government of BC signed a 60-year land-use agreement that allows construction and development of the Valemount Glacier Destinations ski and sightseeing resort. Overall, 800 jobs will be created through the construction and operation of the resort.<sup>7</sup>

Lower Mainland-Southwest region has the lowest unemployment rate in the province at 4.8%. Year over year, employment in the region is up nearly 50,000, buoyed by strong gains in the services-producing sector. The most significant growth was in finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing as the industry added over 19,000 new positions since April 2016.

Employment in the region's construction industry increased 5.7% year over year and should remain strong in the near term with several large projects slated to get underway. For instance, construction on the \$200 million redevelopment of the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts is anticipated to begin in 2018, and construction of a \$500 million grain terminal in North Vancouver is expected to begin this summer.<sup>8</sup> In addition, preliminary construction has already begun on the \$3.5 billion George Massey Tunnel Replacement Project that is scheduled for completion in 2022.<sup>9</sup>

### British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	April 2017 ('000)	April 2016 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	April 2017 (%)	April 2016 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>British Columbia</b>	2,425.4	2,336.9	3.8	5.4	6.5	-1.1
<b>Economic Regions</b>						
Vancouver Island and Coast	381.6	356.1	7.2	5.3	6.6	-1.3
Lower Mainland-Southwest	1,554.6	1,513.7	2.7	4.8	6.0	-1.2
Thompson-Okanagan	255.4	242.3	5.4	7.3	8.6	-1.3
Kootenay	73.5	66.9	9.9	7.4	7.6	-0.2
Cariboo	79.9	77.6	3.0	8.9	5.6	3.3
North Coast and Nechako	40.7	41.1	-1.0	6.2	7.8	-1.6
Northeast	39.6	39.3	0.8	5.5	9.4	-3.9

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – CANSIM Table 282-0122

**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.

**Prepared by:** Labour Market Information (LMI) Directorate, Service Canada, British Columbia

**For further information,** please contact the LMI team at: [NC-LMI-IMT-GD@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:NC-LMI-IMT-GD@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)

**For information on the Labour Force Survey,** please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at: [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada as represented by Employment and Social Development Canada, 2017, all rights reserved

<sup>1</sup> Conference Board of Canada (May 5, 2017). Canadian Outlook Executive Summary: Spring 2017. Retrieved from: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=8780>

<sup>2</sup> Conference Board of Canada (April 27, 2017). Provincial Outlook Long-Term Economic Forecast: British Columbia — 2017. Retrieved from: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=8728>

<sup>3</sup> CBC News (April 25, 2017). U.S. imposes preliminary duties up to 24% on 'subsidized' Canadian softwood lumber. Retrieved from: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/wilbur-ross-softwood-tariff-1.4083968>

---

<sup>4</sup> Globe and Mail (May 1, 2017). Lumber producers hit with retroactive U.S. tariff. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.pressreader.com/canada/the-globe-and-mail-bc-edition/20170501/281509341084902>

<sup>5</sup> Journal of Commerce (February 14, 2017). B.C. throne speech promises billions in infrastructure spending. Retrieved from:  
<http://journalofcommerce.com/Government/News/2017/2/BC-throne-speech-promises-billions-in-infrastructure-spending-1021832W/>)

<sup>6</sup> Conference Board of Canada (March 3, 2017). Metropolitan Outlook 1: Vancouver — Winter 2017. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=8590>

<sup>7</sup> Prince George Citizen (March 28, 2017). Valemount Glacier Destinations wins provincial approval Retrieved from:  
(<http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/valemount-glacier-destinations-wins-province-s-approval-1.13248812>)

<sup>8</sup> Conference Board of Canada (March 3, 2017). Metropolitan Outlook 1: Vancouver — Winter 2017. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=8590>

<sup>9</sup> Delta Optimist (April 14, 2017). Work finally underway on \$3.5B bridge. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.delta-optimist.com/news/work-finally-underway-on-3-5b-bridge-1.15377051>