



Labour Market Bulletin

British Columbia

February 2018



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

BC's population has been growing steadily each month for the last several years, gaining over 48,000 people between February 2017 and February 2018 alone. During this period, employment in the province increased by 40,200 and the unemployment rate remained well below six percent. BC's unemployment rate in February 2018 was 4.7% — over one percentage point below the national average (5.8%).

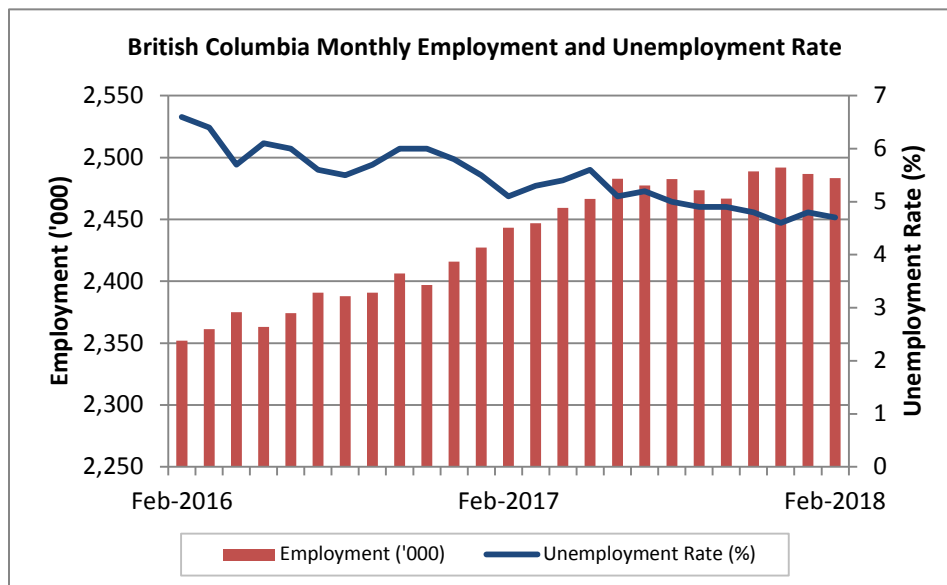
On a monthly basis, employment in BC fell by 3,400 in February as losses in full-time employment (-28,500) outpaced increases in part-time employment (+25,200). Private sector employment edged up about 3,500 in February while the number of public sector employees and self-employed people each decreased by approximately 3,400.¹ The province's labour force also decreased in February for the third consecutive month (-6,200).

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	February 2018	January 2018	February 2017	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	4,007.6	4,003.7	3,959.4	3.9	0.1	48.2	1.2
Labour Force ('000)	2,604.7	2,610.9	2,574.7	-6.2	-0.2	30.0	1.2
Employment ('000)	2,483.4	2,486.8	2,443.2	-3.4	-0.1	40.2	1.6
Full-Time ('000)	1,922.3	1,950.8	1,927.5	-28.5	-1.5	-5.2	-0.3
Part-Time ('000)	561.1	535.9	515.7	25.2	4.7	45.4	8.8
Unemployment ('000)	121.2	124.1	131.4	-2.9	-2.3	-10.2	-7.8
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.7	4.8	5.1	-0.1	-	-0.4	-
Participation Rate (%)	65.0	65.2	65.0	-0.2	-	0.0	-
Employment Rate (%)	62.0	62.1	61.7	-0.1	-	0.3	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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



Month over month, young women had the largest decrease in their unemployment rate in BC (-1.1 percentage points). The unemployment rate for young women in BC has remained at least three percentage points below the national average for young women in Canada since September 2017.²

Between January and February 2018, BC’s unemployment rate for young men (aged 15 to 24 years) increased 2.6 percentage points reaching 10.8%. This rate is two full percentage points below the national average for young men but remains far higher than other demographic groups within the province.

BC’s unemployment rate for men (aged 25 years and over) (4.2%) was similar to women (aged 25 years and over) (4.1%) in February and each has also remained well below the national average for their demographic groups for the past twelve months.

British Columbia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	February 2018 (%)	January 2018 (%)	February 2017 (%)	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
				(% points)	(% points)
Total	4.7	4.8	5.1	-0.1	-0.4
25 years and over	4.1	4.4	4.5	-0.3	-0.4
Men - 25 years and over	4.2	4.5	4.6	-0.3	-0.4
Women - 25 years and over	4.1	4.2	4.3	-0.1	-0.2
15 to 24 years	7.9	7.0	8.7	0.9	-0.8
Men - 15 to 24 years	10.8	8.2	10.5	2.6	0.3
Women - 15 to 24 years	4.8	5.9	6.8	-1.1	-2.0

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Between January and February 2018, employment in BC's services-producing sector increased 1,900. Meanwhile, employment in the province's goods-producing sector declined 5,300 over the same period.

Within the goods-producing sector, agriculture is one of the industries in BC that shed employment during February 2018. Despite this drop, annual figures indicate an upward trend with employment numbers growing from 22,000 in 2015 to 26,200 in 2017.³ Effective July 2018, the federal Cannabis Act (2018) proposes to legalize the controlled use of recreational marijuana in Canada — opening up new opportunities for employment in the agriculture industry.⁴

The proposed legalization of marijuana has led several cannabis growers to seek industrial space to grow and store their product. For instance, cannabis producer Santé Veritas Therapeutics Inc. moved into a 30,000 square foot space in Powell River and expects to create up to 50 positions.⁵ Medical marijuana producer, True Leaf, plans to refit 16,000 square feet of industrial space and build a new one million square-foot facility in Lumby.⁶ Sunniva Inc. has proposed a medical cannabis production facility near the town of Oliver which would cost approximately \$100 million to build and create up to 200 positions.⁷ Finally, Canopy Growth recently received a marijuana cultivating licence from the federal government for a 1.3 million square foot facility in Aldergrove.⁸

Construction is another industry in BC's goods-producing sector that saw a decline in employment in February 2018 (-4,400) despite an annual upward trend. Overall, construction industry employment has been trending upward in BC growing from 224,600 in February 2017 to 240,600 in February 2018. According to a report by BuildForce Canada, a shift in emphasis from residential to non-residential employment requirements in BC's construction industry is anticipated to add approximately 11,500 construction jobs in the province by 2021.⁹ In addition, the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association released a survey in February indicating a growing shortage of skilled labour in BC. Survey results also indicate a 4.5% average wage increase is expected for skilled trades in 2018.¹⁰

Turning to services-producing industries, employment in other services increased 7,200 in the month of February; leading all industries in employment gains for this month.¹¹ On an annual basis, the greatest increase in employment was in health care and social assistance. Indeed, employment in this industry increased 28,500 between February 2017 and February 2018. Continued employment growth in this industry is supported by new provincial funding introduced in BC's Budget 2018. In this budget, the Province allocated \$548 million over three years to improve care for seniors and \$150 million to help connect those who do not have a family doctor with team-based primary care.¹²

Within health care and social assistance, increased employment in child day-care services will be supported by the Canada-British Columbia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. In February 2018, the federal and provincial government entered into a bilateral agreement which will provide BC with \$153 million over three years. The funding will go towards the creation of new child care spaces, reduce fees for many parents as well as support education and upgrading for up to 4000 current and future early childhood educators.¹³

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	February 2018	January 2018	February 2017	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	2,483.4	2,486.8	2,443.2	-3.4	-0.1	40.2	1.6
Goods-producing sector	507.4	512.7	484.2	-5.3	-1.0	23.2	4.8
Agriculture	27.1	27.4	28.7	-0.3	-1.1	-1.6	-5.6
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	50.2	47.8	48.4	2.4	5.0	1.8	3.7
Utilities	13.0	14.1	13.1	-1.1	-7.8	-0.1	-0.8
Construction	240.6	245.0	224.6	-4.4	-1.8	16.0	7.1
Manufacturing	176.6	178.3	169.5	-1.7	-1.0	7.1	4.2
Services-producing sector	1,976.0	1,974.1	1,959.0	1.9	0.1	17.0	0.9
Trade	379.5	389.0	365.8	-9.5	-2.4	13.7	3.7
Transportation and warehousing	129.8	131.5	145.8	-1.7	-1.3	-16.0	-11.0
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	152.4	153.5	148.7	-1.1	-0.7	3.7	2.5
Professional, scientific and technical services	201.3	198.9	192.6	2.4	1.2	8.7	4.5
Business, building and other support services	100.5	97.4	109.4	3.1	3.2	-8.9	-8.1
Educational services	161.9	163.3	166.7	-1.4	-0.9	-4.8	-2.9
Health care and social assistance	322.2	318.9	293.7	3.3	1.0	28.5	9.7
Information, culture and recreation	130.0	130.0	131.2	0.0	0.0	-1.2	-0.9
Accommodation and food services	175.2	176.3	183.3	-1.1	-0.6	-8.1	-4.4
Other services	122.1	114.9	115.3	7.2	6.3	6.8	5.9
Public administration	101.3	100.4	106.6	0.9	0.9	-5.3	-5.0

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Year over year, employment grew 2.4% in BC with employment up in four out of seven economic regions. The Lower Mainland-Southwest is the most populated economic region in the province and is responsible for the majority of all employment gains for BC. There were over 70,000 more people employed in this economic region in February 2018 compared to February 2017. The Lower Mainland-Southwest also boasted the lowest unemployment rate in the province in February 2018 (4.0%).

Within the Lower Mainland-Southwest, the Port of Vancouver sustains employment for the region and beyond. According to an economic impact study, the Port of Vancouver supports an estimated 44,800 full-time equivalent positions in BC.¹⁴ The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority recently released 2017 year-end statistics for cargo indicating a five percent increase from 2016 — reaching an all-time high of 142.1 million metric tonnes (MMT).¹⁵ Currently, G3 is building a new crop terminal at the Port of Vancouver which is estimated to increase grain capacity by eight million tonnes. Looking forward, the Vancouver Port Authority has submitted nine applications to the National Trade Corridors Fund, a federal program that will provide \$2 billion over 11 years for projects that will make trade corridors more efficient and reliable.¹⁶

On a yearly basis, the unemployment rate in most of BC's economic regions is little changed. The two exceptions are Cariboo (-2.4 percentage points) and Northeast (-4.2 percentage points). Indeed, BC's Northeast economic region has been trending down; decreasing from 8.7% in February 2017 to 4.5% in February 2018. Developments in the region bode well for continued employment in this part of the province. Recent projects in this region include; Encana's three new liquids processing plants, the re-opening of three metallurgical coal mines, and the construction of the \$10.7 billion Site C hydroelectric dam.¹⁷ According to BC Hydro, 1,743 workers were employed on the Site C project near Fort St. John in January 2018, an increase of 218 compared to December 2017.¹⁸

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	February 2018 ('000)	February 2017 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	February 2018 (%)	February 2017 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
British Columbia	2,456.2	2,399.1	2.4	4.9	5.7	-0.8
Economic Regions						
Vancouver Island and Coast	380.6	379.0	0.4	5.8	5.7	0.1
Lower Mainland-Southwest	1,604.1	1,534.0	4.6	4.0	4.8	-0.8
Thompson-Okanagan	244.6	250.6	-2.4	7.5	8.6	-1.1
Kootenay	65.4	75.1	-12.9	6.7	6.7	0.0
Cariboo	79.7	79.5	0.3	7.3	9.7	-2.4
North Coast and Nechako	43.9	40.2	9.2	6.2	7.4	-1.2
Northeast	38.0	40.7	-6.6	4.5	8.7	-4.2

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.

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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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¹ Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 282-0089 Labour Force Survey estimates (LFS), employment by class of worker and sex, seasonally adjusted and unadjusted monthly (persons x 1,000). Accessed on March 9, 2018. Retrieved from: <http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a26?lang=eng&retrLang=eng&id=2820089&pattern=&csid=>

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¹¹ According to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), other services is an industry that comprises establishments, not classified to any other sector, primarily engaged in repairing, or performing general or routine maintenance, on motor vehicles, machinery, equipment and other products to ensure that they work efficiently; providing personal care services, funeral services, laundry services and other services to individuals, such as pet care services and photo finishing services; organizing and promoting religious activities; supporting various causes through grant-making, advocating (promoting) various social and political causes, and promoting and defending the interests of their members. Private households are also included. Retrieved from:

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