



# Labour Market Bulletin

## Nova Scotia

### April 2019



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Nova Scotia, including the regions of Annapolis Valley, Cape Breton, Southern, Halifax and North Shore.

## OVERVIEW

Employment in Nova Scotia declined in April 2019; the first decline in ten months. Most of the decline was for full-time jobs. As a result of the drop in employment, the unemployment rate increased from 6.2% observed in March to 6.9% in April. This was in contrast to the trend seen at the national level where a rise in employment led to another decline in the national unemployment rate for the month of April to 5.7%.

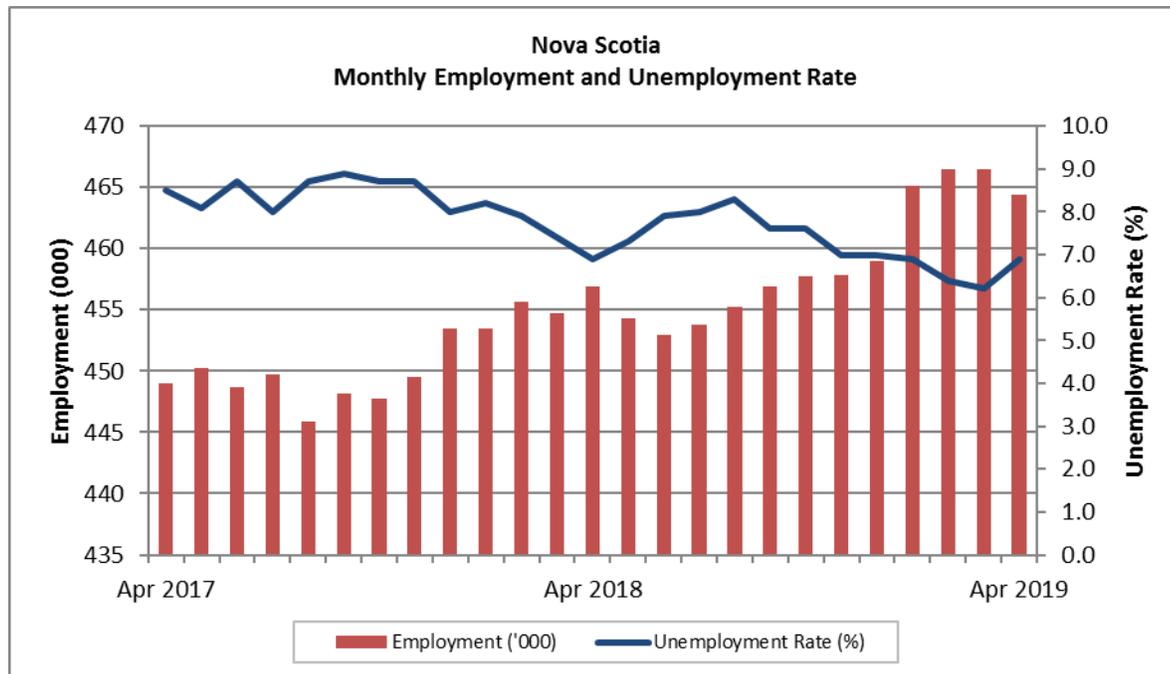
Nova Scotia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

| Seasonally Adjusted<br>Monthly Data | Apr 2019 | Mar 2019 | Apr 2018 | Monthly Variation |      | Yearly Variation |     |
|-------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|------|------------------|-----|
|                                     |          |          |          | Number            | %    | Number           | %   |
| <b>Population 15 + ('000)</b>       | 804.5    | 803.8    | 797.0    | 0.7               | 0.1  | 7.5              | 0.9 |
| <b>Labour Force ('000)</b>          | 498.8    | 497.2    | 490.6    | 1.6               | 0.3  | 8.2              | 1.7 |
| <b>Employment ('000)</b>            | 464.4    | 466.5    | 456.9    | -2.1              | -0.5 | 7.5              | 1.6 |
| Full-Time ('000)                    | 377.3    | 378.9    | 375.4    | -1.6              | -0.4 | 1.9              | 0.5 |
| Part-Time ('000)                    | 87.1     | 87.7     | 81.5     | -0.6              | -0.7 | 5.6              | 6.9 |
| <b>Unemployment ('000)</b>          | 34.4     | 30.7     | 33.7     | 3.7               | 12.1 | 0.7              | 2.1 |
| <b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>        | 6.9      | 6.2      | 6.9      | 0.7               | -    | 0.0              | -   |
| <b>Participation Rate (%)</b>       | 62.0     | 61.9     | 61.6     | 0.1               | -    | 0.4              | -   |
| <b>Employment Rate (%)</b>          | 57.7     | 58.0     | 57.3     | -0.3              | -    | 0.4              | -   |

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Compared with April of last year, 7,500 more individuals found work in Nova Scotia, mainly in part-time jobs. There was a corresponding increase in the number of people joining the labour force in search of work and as a consequence the unemployment rate remained unchanged from its level in April of last year.



Roughly two thirds of the employment gains since last April were for youth workers (aged 15 to 24 years old). With more younger people working, the youth unemployment rate declined notably from 16.3% last April to 13.9% this April.

Employment for older workers (aged 55 years and older) increased compared with last year but a larger influx of older workers joining the labour force resulted in a higher rate of unemployment for older workers. This rate rose from 5.5% last year's April to 6.5% in April of this year. Over the same period, labour market conditions for prime-age workers (aged 25-54 years old) was little changed.

**Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age**

| Seasonally Adjusted Data  | Apr 2019 | Mar 2019 | Apr 2018 | Monthly Variation | Yearly Variation |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|------------------|
|                           | %        | %        | %        | (% points)        | (% points)       |
| <b>Total</b>              | 6.9      | 6.2      | 6.9      | 0.7               | 0.0              |
| <b>25 years and over</b>  | 5.7      | 5.1      | 5.3      | 0.6               | 0.4              |
| Men - 25 years and over   | 6.8      | 6.2      | 7.1      | 0.6               | -0.3             |
| Women - 25 years and over | 4.5      | 3.9      | 3.3      | 0.6               | 1.2              |
| <b>15 to 24 years</b>     | 13.9     | 12.7     | 16.3     | 1.2               | -2.4             |
| Men - 15 to 24 years      | 15.3     | 15.1     | 20.1     | 0.2               | -4.8             |
| Women - 15 to 24 years    | 12.5     | 10.1     | 12.4     | 2.4               | 0.1              |

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

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Compared with April 2018, employment levels were higher in both the **services** and **goods-producing** sectors in Nova Scotia. Employment in the **goods-producing** sector, the smaller of the two, grew at a faster pace, adding 3,000 positions from April of last year.

Among **goods-producing** industries, the **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** industry group had the largest employment gain over the past year, rising by 1,500. Employment in this industry was on an upward trend in the second half of 2018 owing partly to higher exports of forest and fish and seafood products through 2018. Production ended at two of Nova Scotia's only offshore natural gas developments in 2018 which may drag on employment in this industry, though some new jobs may arise from decommissioning. Other positive changes for this industry group include the decision this past summer to end tariffs on Port Hawkesbury paper mill products. The Touquoy gold mine in Moose River is in its second year of operation and the Donkin coal mine, which opened last year, is now operating with a full complement of staff.

The **agriculture** industry has added 900 jobs since last April. Employment gains occurred in this industry despite the negative impacts of late spring frosts on a number of crops, including fruits and Christmas trees although these impacts could carry forward to future seasons. The legalization of recreational cannabis has had a positive impact on employment in this industry. Four new Nova Scotia producers have obtained cannabis cultivation licenses since October, in addition to three already established prior to legalization.

Employment in the **manufacturing** and **construction** industries also increased from their levels in April of last year. Work continues on the Irving Shipbuilding Project with plans to grow its workers to 2,800 by late 2020. In February, the federal government awarded a \$185 million contract to Lockheed Martin Canada to design the 15 Canadian warships for Irving Shipbuilding. Michelin, a local tire manufacturer, has also announced it will be expanding the Granton plant in Pictou county. A number of construction projects are underway owing to higher provincial capital spending related to hospital, school, highway, road and bridge construction. This includes the recently announced Burnside Expressway in the Halifax region which will begin this year.

Nova Scotia Monthly Employed Labour Force, by Industry

| Seasonally Adjusted<br>Data ('000)                | Apr 2019 | Mar 2019 | Apr 2018 | Monthly Variation |      | Yearly Variation |       |
|---|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|------|------------------|-------|
|   |          |          |          | Number            | %    | Number           | %     |
| <b>Total employed, all industries</b>             | 464.4    | 466.5    | 456.9    | -2.1              | -0.5 | 7.5              | 1.6   |
| <b>Goods-producing sector</b>                     | 87.3     | 88.4     | 84.3     | -1.1              | -1.2 | 3.0              | 3.6   |
| Agriculture                                       | 6.4      | 5.5      | 5.5      | 0.9               | 16.4 | 0.9              | 16.4  |
| Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas | 11.1     | 11.1     | 9.6      | 0.0               | 0.0  | 1.5              | 15.6  |
| Utilities   | 3.8      | 3.7      | 4.3      | 0.1               | 2.7  | -0.5             | -11.6 |
| Construction                                      | 34.2     | 33.1     | 33.6     | 1.1               | 3.3  | 0.6              | 1.8   |
| Manufacturing                                     | 31.7     | 35.0     | 31.3     | -3.3              | -9.4 | 0.4              | 1.3   |
| <b>Services-producing sector</b>                  | 377.1    | 378.2    | 372.6    | -1.1              | -0.3 | 4.5              | 1.2   |
| Trade   | 82.4     | 82.0     | 78.9     | 0.4               | 0.5  | 3.5              | 4.4   |
| Transportation and warehousing                    | 19.7     | 20.6     | 20.5     | -0.9              | -4.4 | -0.8             | -3.9  |
| Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing       | 21.1     | 20.9     | 21.6     | 0.2               | 1.0  | -0.5             | -2.3  |
| Professional, scientific and technical services   | 28.3     | 27.7     | 26.2     | 0.6               | 2.2  | 2.1              | 8.0   |
| Business, building and other support services     | 16.3     | 16.8     | 18.0     | -0.5              | -3.0 | -1.7             | -9.4  |
| Educational services                              | 38.9     | 39.5     | 37.9     | -0.6              | -1.5 | 1.0              | 2.6   |
| Health care and social assistance                 | 72.3     | 71.0     | 68.3     | 1.3               | 1.8  | 4.0              | 5.9   |
| Information, culture and recreation               | 18.4     | 18.8     | 17.3     | -0.4              | -2.1 | 1.1              | 6.4   |
| Accommodation and food services                   | 32.9     | 34.6     | 35.3     | -1.7              | -4.9 | -2.4             | -6.8  |
| Other services                                    | 17.5     | 17.0     | 19.1     | 0.5               | 2.9  | -1.6             | -8.4  |
| Public administration                             | 29.3     | 29.3     | 29.6     | 0.0               | 0.0  | -0.3             | -1.0  |

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0355

Among the Services-producing industries, the **health care and social assistance** industry added the largest number of jobs (4,000) since last April. Employment in the sector has continued to trend higher since September 2018. A shortage of some health care professionals and the aging demographics have been weighing on employment in this industry.

Employment in the **wholesale and retail trade** industry has also been trending higher with 3,500 workers added from last year. Retail sales remained at high levels through 2018 following strong gains in 2017.

The **accommodation and food services** and **business, building and other support services** industries experienced the largest employment declines since last April. Employment levels decreased in the accommodation and food services industry in spite of higher tourism revenues in 2018. So far in 2019, visitors to the province and licensed room nights sold continue to track higher. Within the business, building and other support services industry there has been less positive news. In February, Web.com, a provider of internet support services announced it would be laying off 130 workers in its New Glasgow call centre as it streamlines operations.

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

From a regional perspective, labour markets have strengthened across all five of Nova Scotia's economic regions since last April.

The **Cape Breton** economic region experienced the largest employment growth over this period, rising by 2,600 from last April, all full-time jobs. A similar number of people joined the labour force in search of work over this period resulting in only a small decline in the unemployment rate to 15.3%. Employment levels have been on an upward trend since the start of the year. Among industries, employment increased the most in **education, public administration**, and **professional, scientific and technical services**. Despite the job gains, the Cape Breton region continues to experience the highest rate of unemployment among regions in the province. There are some upcoming construction projects in the region including the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) Health Care Redevelopment Plan which involves expansion, renovations and construction of health facilities in the CBRM.

Employment in the **North Shore** economic region increased by 1,400 compared with last April, owing to an increase in part-time jobs. There was a pronounced drop in the region's unemployment rate to 7.8% from a level of 10.1% last April. The **wholesale and retail trade** industry registered the most notable employment rise while the **construction** industry experienced the most notable employment decline.

Nova Scotia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

| 3-Month Moving Averages<br>Seasonally Unadjusted Data | Employment         |                    |                            | Unemployment Rate |                 |                                   |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|
|   | Apr 2019<br>('000) | Apr 2018<br>('000) | Yearly<br>Variation<br>(%) | Apr 2019<br>(%)   | Apr 2018<br>(%) | Yearly<br>Variation<br>(% points) |
| <b>Nova Scotia</b>                                    | 454.9              | 444.1              | 2.4                        | 7.4               | 8.4             | -1.0                              |
| <b>Economic Regions</b>                               |                    |                    |                            |                   |                 |                                   |
| Cape Breton   | 47.1               | 44.5               | 5.8                        | 15.3              | 15.6            | -0.3                              |
| North Shore   | 66.5               | 65.1               | 2.2                        | 7.8               | 10.1            | -2.3                              |
| Annapolis Valley                                      | 57.3               | 55.8               | 2.7                        | 7.3               | 9.3             | -2.0                              |
| Southern  | 50.6               | 47.6               | 6.3                        | 7.8               | 8.3             | -0.5                              |
| Halifax   | 233.4              | 231.0              | 1.0                        | 5.5               | 6.3             | -0.8                              |

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

The **Annapolis Valley** economic region experienced gains of 1,500 jobs, mostly in full-time positions. The region's unemployment rate experienced a notable decline from 9.3% last April to 7.3% in April 2019. Employment rose the most in the **accommodation and food services** industry but declined by nearly the same number of jobs in the **wholesale and retail trade** industry.

Employment in the **Southern** economic region was higher by 3,000 compared with last April and all of these gains were in full-time work. Over the same period, more people joined the labour force, which helped moderate the

drop in the region's unemployment rate, which fell from 8.3% last April to 7.8% in April 2019. Employment rose the most in the **manufacturing** and **health care and social assistance** industries.

The **Halifax** economic region experienced gains of 2,400 jobs since last April. Most of the job gains occurred among part-time workers. This region was the only region to experience notable gains in the working-age population (+7,400). Though, despite these population gains, there was not a corresponding increase in the region's labour force. The higher employment levels resulted in a noticeable drop in the unemployment rate from 6.3% last April to 5.5% in April 2019. Job gains were strongest in the **wholesale and retail trade** and **professional, scientific and technical** industries.

***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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