



Labour Market Bulletin

Saskatchewan

July 2020



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Saskatchewan, including Regina-Moose Mountain, Swift Current-Moose Jaw, Saskatoon-Biggar, Yorkton-Melville and Prince Albert and Northern economic regions.

OVERVIEW

Saskatchewan continues to have one of the strongest employment recoveries in Canada. The province added 13,300 jobs in July, raising the number of people working in the province to within 95% of those working before the pandemic. Only New Brunswick (97%) has a higher employment recovery rate.¹

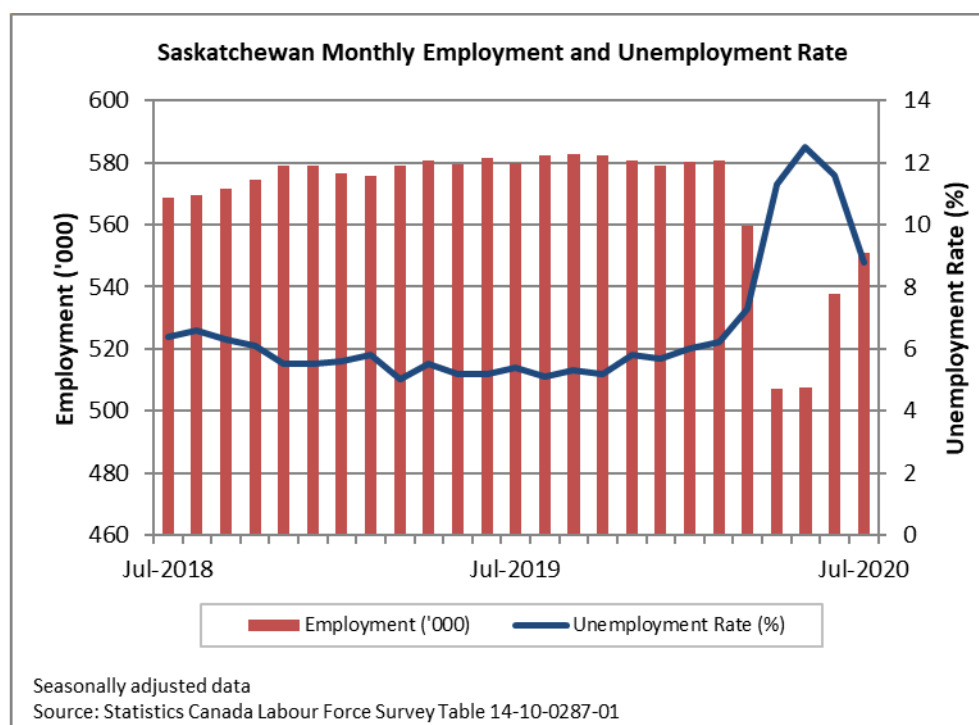
The Province moved to Phase 4 of its Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan in June, with most businesses and workplaces now permitted to resume operations under prescribed guidelines. Employment increased both in full-time (+10,500) and part-time (+2,700) positions in July. While public sector employment has recovered to pre-pandemic levels, both private sector (-6.4%) and self-employment (-7.7%) remain significantly below July 2019 levels.

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	July 2020	June 2020	July 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	893.6	893.8	889.6	-0.2	0.0	4.0	0.4
Labour Force ('000)	604.2	608.1	613.1	-3.9	-0.6	-8.9	-1.5
Employment ('000)	551.1	537.8	579.9	13.3	2.5	-28.8	-5.0
Full-Time ('000)	455.4	444.9	467.3	10.5	2.4	-11.9	-2.5
Part-Time ('000)	95.7	93.0	112.6	2.7	2.9	-16.9	-15.0
Unemployment ('000)	53.1	70.3	33.2	-17.2	-24.5	19.9	59.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	8.8	11.6	5.4	-2.8	-	3.4	-
Participation Rate (%)	67.6	68.0	68.9	-0.4	-	-1.3	-
Employment Rate (%)	61.7	60.2	65.2	1.5	-	-3.5	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287-01, formerly CANSIM 282-0087



Saskatchewan's unemployment rate (8.8%) improved for a second consecutive month, but remains above February's pre-COVID-19 level (6.2%). Saskatchewan now has the second lowest unemployment rate among provinces. A portion of unemployed workers are eligible for income support programs. In Saskatchewan, 228,160 people have applied for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) as of August 2, 2020.²

Unemployment by Major Demographic Group

Saskatchewan's youth (15 to 24 years) are more likely to be out of work than other age groups. Their unemployment rate (18.2%) is almost two and half times that of their older counterparts (7.2%). The rate for young women dropped dramatically in July (-11.0 percentage points), reflecting in part their return to work in re-opening industries such as retail and food services.

Saskatchewan Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	July 2020 (%)	June 2020 (%)	July 2019 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	8.8	11.6	5.4	-2.8	3.4
25 years and over	7.2	9.9	4.2	-2.7	3.0
Men - 25 years and over	7.9	10.7	4.3	-2.8	3.6
Women - 25 years and over	6.4	8.9	4.2	-2.5	2.2
15 to 24 years	18.2	22.0	12.6	-3.8	5.6
Men - 15 to 24 years	22.6	20.2	11.2	2.4	11.4
Women - 15 to 24 years	12.8	23.8	14.0	-11.0	-1.2

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Industries in Saskatchewan are recovering at different rates, influenced in part by government-imposed restrictions. Saskatchewan's services-producing sector added 11,000 positions in July, with gains in all but two industries. Despite this strong growth, employment both in the services- and goods-producing sectors is down from July 2019.

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	July 2020	June 2020	July 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	551.1	537.8	579.9	13.3	2.5	-28.8	-5.0
Goods-producing sector	134.0	131.8	146.4	2.2	1.7	-12.4	-8.5
Agriculture	36.6	37.7	39.7	-1.1	-2.9	-3.1	-7.8
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	19.8	18.3	23.1	1.5	8.2	-3.3	-14.3
Utilities	5.9	5.8	5.8	0.1	1.7	0.1	1.7
Construction	40.2	40.0	47.1	0.2	0.5	-6.9	-14.6
Manufacturing	31.5	30.0	30.7	1.5	5.0	0.8	2.6
Services-producing sector	417.1	406.0	433.5	11.1	2.7	-16.4	-3.8
Trade	83.4	82.9	87.4	0.5	0.6	-4.0	-4.6
Transportation and warehousing	24.8	26.8	26.3	-2.0	-7.5	-1.5	-5.7
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	30.4	29.1	29.2	1.3	4.5	1.2	4.1
Professional, scientific and technical services	25.9	27.5	28.4	-1.6	-5.8	-2.5	-8.8
Business, building and other support services	16.5	16.2	14.9	0.3	1.9	1.6	10.7
Educational services	45.9	41.7	41.8	4.2	10.1	4.1	9.8
Health care and social assistance	80.0	79.3	81.0	0.7	0.9	-1.0	-1.2
Information, culture and recreation	20.1	17.2	21.4	2.9	16.9	-1.3	-6.1
Accommodation and food services	25.9	23.5	42.3	2.4	10.2	-16.4	-38.8
Other services	29.6	29.1	28.5	0.5	1.7	1.1	3.9
Public administration	34.7	32.7	32.1	2.0	6.1	2.6	8.1

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0355, formerly CANSIM 282-0088

Within the goods-producing sector, the **agriculture** industry was alone in recording a month-over-month drop in employment (-1,100). However, with stakeholders adapting to post-COVID realities and most crops at their normal development stage, employment is expected to return to pre-COVID levels by the close of 2020.

Employment in the **construction** industry was flat in July after a sizable jump in June when several infrastructure projects resumed. Construction employment has been the slowest in the sector to return to pre-pandemic levels and is down almost 7,000 positions from July 2019. The industry is central to the economic stimulus plans announced by all levels of government to assist the province's recovery from the pandemic. The Government of Canada is providing Saskatchewan communities with \$62.5 million through the federal Gas Tax Fund to address their infrastructure needs.³ Additionally, the provincial government has approved 741 "shovel-ready" projects through the \$150 million Municipal Economic Enhancement Program 2020 to support local job creation.⁴ Work

is also beginning on a \$4 billion irrigation project at Lake Diefenbaker that will double the amount of irrigable land in Saskatchewan. The project is estimated to create 2,500 jobs a year, over the next ten years.⁵

The uneven economic impact of the pandemic is reflected in the how manufacturing businesses are faring, with some ceasing operations and others expanding into new areas. Overall, employment in the **manufacturing** industry is up year-over-year (+800 or +2.6%) but remains below February pre-pandemic levels. Among those shuttering facilities are Shawcor's Shaw Pipe in Regina, which consolidated operations in Alberta due to fewer oil and gas projects⁶, and Aurora Cannabis which closed five production facilities, including its Saskatoon location.⁷ In contrast, Benchmark PPE refocused its experience in making specialty fabrication products for mining and industrial clients and are now producing personal protection equipment (PPE) at its Saskatoon manufacturing facility.⁸

Employment in Saskatchewan's resource extraction industry (**forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas**) rose for the second consecutive month in July (+1,500). Confidence in the mining sector's ability to ensure worker safety was behind SSR Mining Inc.'s decision to ramp up its Seabee gold operations in August⁹ and Cameco's announcement to reopen its Cigar Lake uranium mine in September.¹⁰ Both operations were temporarily closed in March over COVID-19 concerns.

Saskatchewan's services-sector continues to recover as the Province gradually eases COVID-19 restrictions, although employment growth varies considerably between industries. For example, the number of people working in **finance, insurance, real estate and leasing** is up 1,300 year-over-year. The Saskatchewan Realtors Association points to pent-up demand for pushing year-over-year sales up more than 56% and new listings up 9% in July.¹¹ In contrast, businesses in **accommodation and food services** continue to struggle with the new measures required in their establishments. The sector gained 2,400 positions (+10.2%) in June but is still well below February's pre-pandemic levels (-13,300 or -33.9%).

Saskatchewan's **professional, scientific and technical services** industry has developed significantly over the past decade, capitalizing on tech-startups and the influx of health-related research funding. Saskatoon tech company Vendasta is recruiting 100 new professional sales and support positions to meet the increased demand to assist businesses to operate remotely and in eCommerce during the pandemic.¹² Meanwhile, the University of Saskatchewan received over \$77 million from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation to support research at the Canadian Light Source on COVID-19¹³ and \$23 million for the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization-International Vaccine Centre (VIDO-InterVac) to undertake clinical testing of a COVID-19 vaccine.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the number of people working in **educational services** in July (45,900) is up 9.8% year-over-year, although somewhat lower than its pre-COVID level in February (47,200). The industry continues to adjust as school divisions develop their plans for the safe return of students to the classroom in September.¹⁵ In similar fashion, the **public administration** industry grew 8.1% (+2,600) between July 2019 and July 2020, reflecting its essential role during the pandemic and the ability of many employees to work remotely. As part of its public safety initiatives, the provincial government is providing \$15.52M through the Municipal Police Grants program to support 129 municipal and RCMP positions and targeted policing initiatives in Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, North Battleford, Meadow Lake and Yorkton.¹⁶

Monthly employment in **healthcare and social assistance** rebounded to near pre-pandemic levels in July and is down 1.2% (-1,000) on the year. The Saskatchewan Health Authority moved to Phase 3 of its resumption of services plan in mid-July, increasing surgical capacity to between 75 and 85% of pre-COVID levels and expanding access to a range of services, including mental health and chronic disease management.¹⁷ In addition, the authority is hiring 45 full-time and 45 part-time employees for the 811 HealthLine to address delays in accessing COVID-19 testing.¹⁸

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Employment fell in every economic region in Saskatchewan over the past year. Job losses were greatest in the Regina and Saskatoon regions, driven largely by the shutdown of non-essential businesses and services concentrated in urban centres. In contrast, employment losses were less pronounced in areas with larger goods-producing sectors, such as **Swift Current-Moose Jaw** (-1,300), which were less impacted by pandemic restrictions.

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	July 2020 ('000)	July 2019 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	July 2020 (%)	July 2019 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Saskatchewan	539.0	587.5	-8.3	10.9	5.4	5.5
Economic Regions						
Regina - Moose Mountain	168.2	190.0	-11.5	10.5	5.2	5.3
Swift Current - Moose Jaw	50.0	51.3	-2.5	9.1	4.3	4.8
Saskatoon - Biggar	193.7	207.1	-6.5	12.6	5.6	7.0
Yorkton - Melville	34.2	39.4	-13.2	7.3	2.5	4.8
Prince Albert and Northern	92.9	99.6	-6.7	9.9	6.9	3.0

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0293, formerly CANSIM 282-0122

Employment in the **Regina-Moose Mountain** has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. However, the easing of restrictions on several industries allowed many employees to return to work, particularly in the retail, food, accommodation and leisure sectors. Additionally, the City of Regina has begun an extensive \$70.5 million construction agenda with projects ranging from road renewal and street infrastructure to water and drainage initiatives and an outdoor pool.¹⁹ At the same time, SaskPower is progressing on a \$20.5 million upgrade to the city's electrical grid and is scheduled to begin construction of a new \$100 million logistics warehouse complex at the Global Transportation Hub this fall.²⁰

Year-over-year employment in **Saskatoon-Biggar** fell 13,400 due to sizable losses in the services-producing sector. Fallout from COVID-19 has caused both the University of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan Polytechnic to restructure programs in light of reduced revenue and physical distancing requirements. Over 355 university academic and support staff²¹ and 93 Polytechnic employees²² have received temporary or permanent layoff notices. In contrast, Saskatoon Public Schools is drawing upon reserve funds to hire an additional 29 teachers and 40 educational assistants to meet enrolment and new safety expectations.²³

The **Prince Albert and Northern** economic region had 6,700 fewer people (-6.7%) employed in July compared to a year ago. Many northern communities are now welcoming the resumption of tourism and outfitter operations. Activity in these and other service industries only recently resumed after high COVID-19 infection counts extended travel restrictions to the region.

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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