



Labour Market Bulletin

Saskatchewan

August 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's economic recovery from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continued in August, with the province having 95.7% of the employment level that it held in February.^{1,2} While the province added 4,700 (+0.9%) positions in August, job growth slowed considerably from the gains recorded in June (+30,000 or 6.0%) and July (+13,000 or 2.5%).

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics

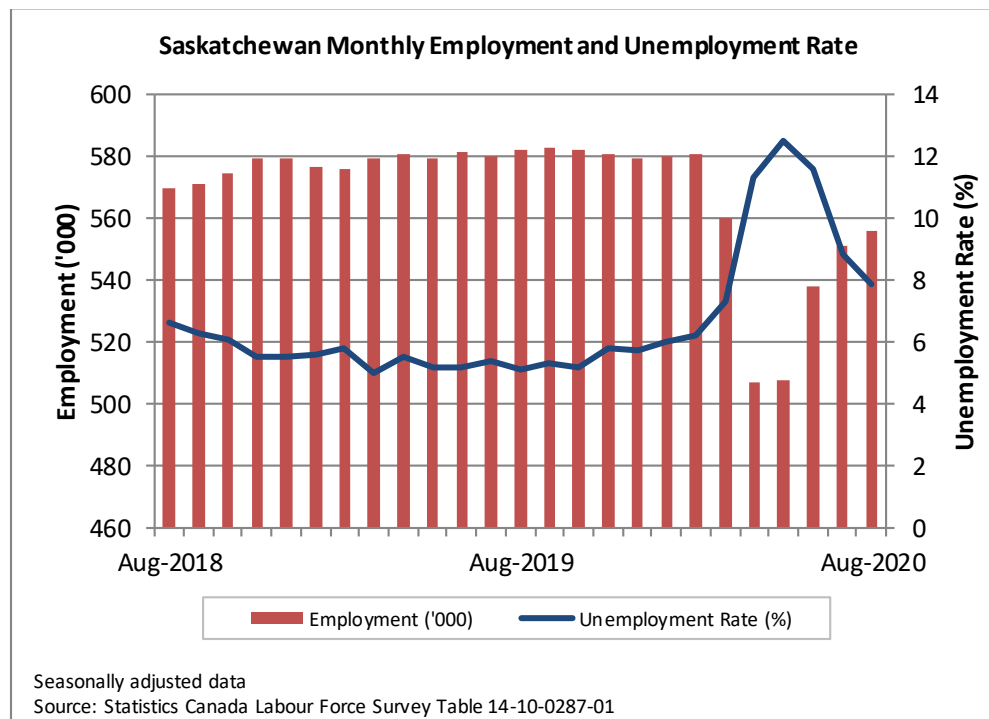
Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	August 2020	July 2020	August 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	893.9	893.6	890.2	0.3	0.0	3.7	0.4
Labour Force ('000)	603.4	604.2	613.3	-0.8	-0.1	-9.9	-1.6
Employment ('000)	555.8	551.1	582.3	4.7	0.9	-26.5	-4.6
Full-Time ('000)	456.6	455.4	472.3	1.2	0.3	-15.7	-3.3
Part-Time ('000)	99.2	95.7	110.0	3.5	3.7	-10.8	-9.8
Unemployment ('000)	47.7	53.1	31.0	-5.4	-10.2	16.7	53.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	7.9	8.8	5.1	-0.9	-	2.8	-
Participation Rate (%)	67.5	67.6	68.9	-0.1	-	-1.4	-
Employment Rate (%)	62.2	61.7	65.4	0.5	-	-3.2	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

The Province continued Phase 4 of its Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan in August, with most businesses and workplaces permitted to resume operations under prescribed guidelines. The majority of employment gains were found in part-time positions (+3,500) with full-time employment increasing by 1,200.

Employment in the private sector increased for the fourth consecutive month, adding 3,600 positions in August. However, the sector needs to recover a further 19,800 or 5.9% positions to reach employment levels in February 2020 before the pandemic was declared. In comparison, self-employment is also down 5,300 or 5.3% over the same period February to August period while public sector employment remained relatively stable (-1,400 or -1.0%).³



Saskatchewan's unemployment rate (7.9%) improved for a third consecutive month, but remains almost 3 percentage points above the rate in August 2019 (5.1%). Saskatchewan now has the lowest unemployment rate among provinces.

Saskatchewan Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	August 2020 (%)	July 2020 (%)	August 2019 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	7.9	8.8	5.1	-0.9	2.8
25 years and over	6.7	7.2	3.9	-0.5	2.8
Men - 25 years and over	6.9	7.9	3.5	-1.0	3.4
Women - 25 years and over	6.4	6.4	4.4	0.0	2.0
15 to 24 years	15.3	18.2	12.0	-2.9	3.3
Men - 15 to 24 years	19.3	22.6	10.5	-3.3	8.8
Women - 15 to 24 years	11.1	12.8	13.6	-1.7	-2.5

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Saskatchewan's youth (15 to 24 years) are more likely to be out of work than other age groups. Their unemployment rate (15.3%) is more than double that of their older counterparts (6.7%). After a dramatic drop

in July (-11.0 percentage points), the rate for young women improved again in August, reflecting in part their return to work in re-opening industries such as retail and food services.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Employment growth in Saskatchewan's services-producing sector (+3,500) continues to outpace gains in the goods-producing sector (+1,200). However, the pace of the recovery slowed in August as industries hardest hit by the pandemic such as **accommodation and food services** (+500) and **information, culture and recreation** (-1,800), continue to struggle with physical distancing requirements and overcoming customer apprehensions.

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	August 2020	July 2020	August 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	555.8	551.1	582.3	4.7	0.9	-26.5	-4.6
Goods-producing sector	135.2	134.0	146.3	1.2	0.9	-11.1	-7.6
Agriculture	35.4	36.6	38.5	-1.2	-3.3	-3.1	-8.1
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	19.9	19.8	23.4	0.1	0.5	-3.5	-15.0
Utilities	6.1	5.9	5.7	0.2	3.4	0.4	7.0
Construction	41.8	40.2	48.1	1.6	4.0	-6.3	-13.1
Manufacturing	32.1	31.5	30.6	0.6	1.9	1.5	4.9
Services-producing sector	420.6	417.1	436.0	3.5	0.8	-15.4	-3.5
Trade	84.2	83.4	86.1	0.8	1.0	-1.9	-2.2
Transportation and warehousing	25.8	24.8	26.2	1.0	4.0	-0.4	-1.5
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	30.0	30.4	29.7	-0.4	-1.3	0.3	1.0
Professional, scientific and technical services	27.1	25.9	28.7	1.2	4.6	-1.6	-5.6
Business, building and other support services	16.7	16.5	14.8	0.2	1.2	1.9	12.8
Educational services	46.8	45.9	44.1	0.9	2.0	2.7	6.1
Health care and social assistance	80.6	80.0	80.5	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.1
Information, culture and recreation	18.3	20.1	22.0	-1.8	-9.0	-3.7	-16.8
Accommodation and food services	26.4	25.9	41.7	0.5	1.9	-15.3	-36.7
Other services	30.3	29.6	29.3	0.7	2.4	1.0	3.4
Public administration	34.5	34.7	32.8	-0.2	-0.6	1.7	5.2

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 (-1,200). The industry has adapted to post-COVID realities, enabling the harvest to proceed quicker than normal for this time of the year.⁴

Employment in the **construction** industry picked up again in August (+1,600) after a sizable increase 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 6,300 positions from August 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 provided Saskatchewan communities with \$62.5 million through the federal Gas Tax Fund to address their infrastructure needs.⁵ Additionally, the provincial government has approved 1,359 “shovel-ready” projects through the \$150 million Municipal Economic Enhancement Program 2020 to support local job creation.⁶ 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.⁷

Employment in Saskatchewan’s resource extraction industry (**forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas**) was flat in August and remains down by 3,500 on a year-over-year basis as mining and oilfield activities slowly resume. Growing 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 August⁸ and Cameco’s announcement to reopen its Cigar Lake uranium mine in September.⁹ In the oil sector, the province approved 22 well abandonment and site reclamation projects in the Lloydminster, Kindersley, Swift Current, and Estevan areas as part of the \$400 million Accelerated Site Closure Program. The initiative will prioritize Saskatchewan-based and Indigenous service companies.¹⁰

Employment in Saskatchewan’s services-sector continued to recover in August (+3,500 or 0.8%), although at a slower pace than in July (+11,100 or +2.7%). Public-facing industries such as **accommodation and food services** and **information, culture and recreation**, remain significantly below pre-pandemic levels.

The challenges confronting the province’s hospitality and tourism sector have been only partially addressed by the relaxation of government restrictions. One estimate projects that the sector may experience a decline of \$730 million in visitor spending in 2020-21, down from the \$2.2 billion spent by visitors in 2019.¹¹ With the aim of assisting the sector weather the downturn, the provincial government announced the \$30 million Tourism Sector Support Program that will provide one-time, non-repayable emergency payments to operators and a further \$5 million to support the marketing of local tourism experiences.¹²

Meanwhile, the number of people working in **educational services** in August (46,800) is up 6.1% year-over-year, although somewhat lower than its pre-COVID level in February (47,200). The industry continues to adjust as school divisions implement their plans for the safe return of students to the classroom in September, aided in part by the hiring of 443 janitors, teachers and staff under additional provincial funding.¹³

Meanwhile, the **public administration** industry grew 5.2% (+1,700) between August 2019 and August 2020, as public servants continued to provide essential services. 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.¹⁴

Monthly employment in **healthcare and social assistance** rebounded to pre-pandemic levels in August and is up 0.7% (+600) on the year. The Saskatchewan Health Authority continues to adjust its labour market needs, hiring 90 full- and part-time employees for the 811 HealthLine to address delays in accessing COVID-19 testing¹⁵ while doubling training seats in the Combined Laboratory and X-ray Technologists program at Saskatchewan Polytechnic to address an anticipated shortage in rural facilities.¹⁶

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

The widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted employment 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** (-600), 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		
	August 2020 ('000)	August 2019 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	August 2020 (%)	August 2019 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Saskatchewan	555.3	588.0	-5.6	9.6	5.6	4.0
Economic Regions						
Regina - Moose Mountain	173.7	188.8	-8.0	9.2	5.2	4.0
Swift Current - Moose Jaw	51.1	51.7	-1.2	7.4	5.0	2.4
Saskatoon - Biggar	201.2	208.8	-3.6	11.1	5.7	5.4
Yorkton - Melville	34.3	39.5	-13.2	6.0	3.0	3.0
Prince Albert and Northern	95.0	99.1	-4.1	9.2	7.5	1.7

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** (-15,100 or -8.0%) continues to lag all other regions in recovering from the significant job losses earlier in the year. The easing of restrictions on several industries allowed many retail and food services employees to return to work, although several small businesses closed permanently. In response to the economic downturn, the City of Regina began an extensive \$70.5 million construction agenda to stimulate spending and employment.¹⁷

Year-over-year employment in **Saskatoon-Biggar** fell 7,600 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 staff¹⁸ and 93 Polytechnic employees¹⁹ received temporary or permanent layoff notices.

The **Prince Albert and Northern** economic region had 4,100 fewer people (-4.1%) employed in August compared to a year ago. Many northern communities welcomed the resumption of tourism and outfitter operations. Activity in these and other service industries only resumed mid-summer 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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¹ Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0287-01 Labour force characteristics, monthly, seasonally adjusted and trend-cycle, last 5 months. Accessed September 4, 2020. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1410028701>

² Government of Saskatchewan, Strong Recovery Continues: 4,700 more Jobs and Lowest Unemployment Rate in Canada. September 4, 2020 <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2020/september/04/labour-stats>

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⁴ Government of Saskatchewan, Crop Report For The Period August 25 To August 31, 2020; September 3, 2020. <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2020/september/03/crop-report>

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¹¹ Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, Saskatchewan announces \$35-million boost to ailing tourism sector; August 10, 2020. <https://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/saskatchewan-announces-35-million-boost-to-ailing-tourism-sector/wcm/986a7afd-d5e7-47e3-aec0-4c7352ced460/>

¹² Hotelier Magazine, Saskatchewan announces \$35-million to support tourism sector; August 18, 2020. <https://www.hoteliermagazine.com/saskatchewan-announces-35-million-to-support-tourism-sector/>

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¹⁴ Government of Saskatchewan, \$5.88 Million For Saskatoon Policing Initiatives; July 13, 2020.

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<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/90-staff-healthline-811-delays-saskatchewan-covid-19-1.5670483>

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