



# Labour Market Bulletin

British Columbia

November 2019



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

## OVERVIEW

Employment in British Columbia (B.C.) decreased to 2,550,300 (-18,200) in November, eliminating the gain made in October and returning to a downward trend that had begun in May. Month-over-month there was a reduction in full-time employment in the province (-20,500) that overshadowed gains in part-time employment (+2,300).<sup>1</sup> Employment decreased in the public sector (-1,900), and in the private sector (-25,800), while self-employment increased by around 9,400 to 461,900.<sup>2</sup>

The top issue in B.C. remains the struggles of the forestry sector, as Mosaic Forest Management shutdown harvesting operations on Vancouver Island and the Coast sooner than expected, ending seasonal employment for about 2,000 contracted workers.<sup>3</sup> Additional sawmill production curtailments are scheduled for December.<sup>4,5</sup> The forest product industry will continue to be weakened so long as it faces lower demand and prices, coupled with higher costs.

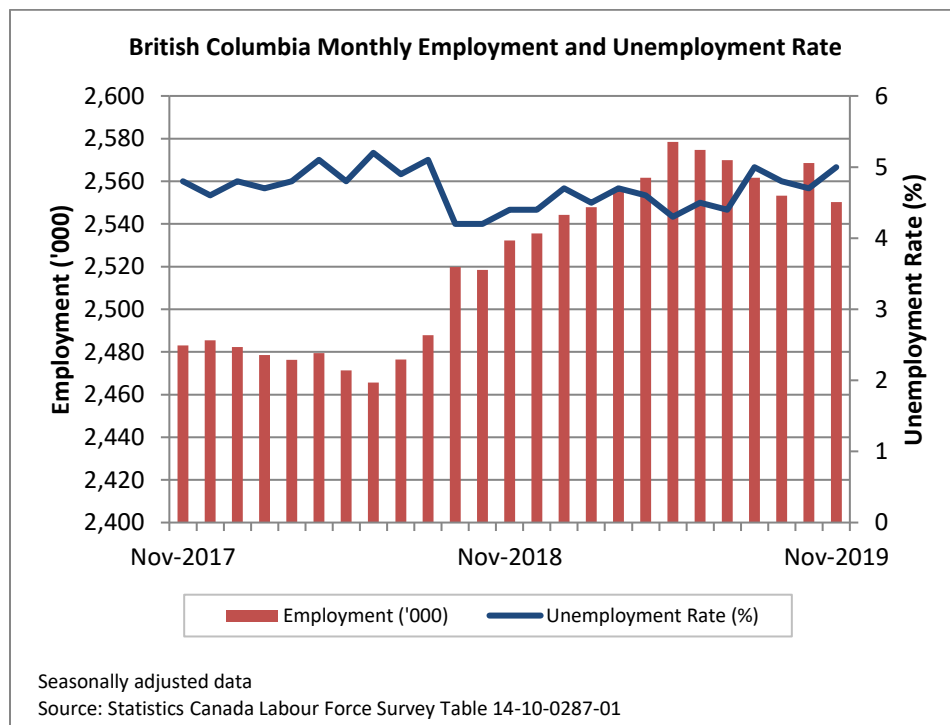
## British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	November 2019	October 2019	November 2018	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Population 15 + ('000)</b>	4,129.3	4,123.0	4,054.6	6.3	0.2	74.7	1.8
<b>Labour Force ('000)</b>	2,685.6	2,696.3	2,649.9	-10.7	-0.4	35.7	1.3
<b>Employment ('000)</b>	2,550.3	2,568.5	2,532.2	-18.2	-0.7	18.1	0.7
Full-Time ('000)	1,998.9	2,019.4	1,963.1	-20.5	-1.0	35.8	1.8
Part-Time ('000)	551.4	549.1	569.1	2.3	0.4	-17.7	-3.1
<b>Unemployment ('000)</b>	135.3	127.8	117.7	7.5	5.9	17.6	15.0
<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	5.0	4.7	4.4	0.3	-	0.6	-
<b>Participation Rate (%)</b>	65.0	65.4	65.4	-0.4	-	-0.4	-
<b>Employment Rate (%)</b>	61.8	62.3	62.5	-0.5	-	-0.7	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

B.C.'s unemployment rate increased 0.3 percentage points in November, reaching 5.0%. However, B.C. does maintain the lowest monthly unemployment rate among all the provinces.<sup>6</sup>



On a monthly basis, the unemployment rate for British Columbia youth (age 15-24 years) increased in November, up 0.4 percentage points to 9.5%. In comparison, the unemployment rate of those aged 25 years and older also increased to 4.3%. Year over year, B.C.'s youth unemployment rate grew 1.9 percentage points, whereas the unemployment rate for the 25+ age group edged up by 0.4 percentage points.

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

Seasonally Adjusted Data	November 2019 (%)	October 2019 (%)	November 2018 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>Total</b>	5.0	4.7	4.4	0.3	0.6
<b>25 years and over</b>	4.3	4.0	3.9	0.3	0.4
Men - 25 years and over	4.4	3.9	3.4	0.5	1.0
Women - 25 years and over	4.2	4.1	4.5	0.1	-0.3
<b>15 to 24 years</b>	9.5	9.1	7.6	0.4	1.9
Men - 15 to 24 years	8.4	12.1	8.0	-3.7	0.4
Women - 15 to 24 years	10.6	5.9	7.2	4.7	3.4

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

Employment in B.C.'s **goods-producing sector** decreased 4,800 between the months of October and November, falling to 473,100. Year-over-year the sector is significantly down by 31,400 positions. Employment losses were predominantly in the **construction** (-11,900), **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** (-8,900), and **manufacturing** (-8,800). The only goods-producing sector that had increased employment was the **agriculture industry** (+1,200).

This year, sawmill production curtailments and closures across the province continue to affect thousands of British Columbians in the **forest** industry. The sector is grappling with weaker export demand, lower lumber prices, ongoing U.S. softwood lumber tariffs, and timber supply constraints. As a result, there will be added pressure on the rural communities that rely on this industry and lack the economic diversification to provide alternative employment opportunities. The Government of B.C. is currently providing supports and resources to help affected workers within the interior.<sup>7,8</sup>

The decline in the province's **construction** industry was due, in part, to a slowdown in housing starts in October.<sup>9</sup> However, the provincial government continues to pursue its \$7 billion goal of 114,000 new affordable homes over the coming decade. The Province of B.C. is partnering with Centre for Seniors Information Kamloops and Stoni Flats Developments to build 112 affordable rental homes in downtown Kamloops.<sup>10</sup> Construction is underway on Emmaus Place, an affordable rental housing development for seniors in Langley. The 82-unit complex is expected to be complete in spring 2021.<sup>11</sup> Looking forward, the sector is likely to see a surge of activity in 2020, as work is expected to begin on the Coast Mountain Gas and the LNG pipelines.

Year-over-year, employment in B.C.'s **services sector** increased to 2,077,200 (+49,500). Notable employment growth was seen in trade (+22,300), public administration (+18,100), and educational services (+17,800). Meanwhile, employment declined sharply in health care and social assistance (-21,500) and information, culture and recreation (-8,100).<sup>12</sup>

## British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	November 2019	October 2019	November 2018	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Total employed, all industries</b>	2,550.3	2,568.5	2,532.2	-18.2	-0.7	18.1	0.7
<b>Goods-producing sector</b>	473.1	477.9	504.5	-4.8	-1.0	-31.4	-6.2
Agriculture	27.7	27.8	26.5	-0.1	-0.4	1.2	4.5
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	41.3	41.3	50.2	0.0	0.0	-8.9	-17.7
Utilities	11.8	11.0	14.8	0.8	7.3	-3.0	-20.3
Construction	231.1	234.1	243.0	-3.0	-1.3	-11.9	-4.9
Manufacturing	161.2	163.7	170.0	-2.5	-1.5	-8.8	-5.2
<b>Services-producing sector</b>	2,077.2	2,090.6	2,027.7	-13.4	-0.6	49.5	2.4
Trade	394.1	398.7	371.8	-4.6	-1.2	22.3	6.0
Transportation and warehousing	138.2	141.3	141.3	-3.1	-2.2	-3.1	-2.2
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	169.8	163.6	153.5	6.2	3.8	16.3	10.6
Professional, scientific and technical services	223.7	223.7	213.4	0.0	0.0	10.3	4.8
Business, building and other support services	107.2	105.2	106.6	2.0	1.9	0.6	0.6
Educational services	185.7	186.8	167.9	-1.1	-0.6	17.8	10.6
Health care and social assistance	305.2	308.6	326.7	-3.4	-1.1	-21.5	-6.6
Information, culture and recreation	121.5	123.7	129.6	-2.2	-1.8	-8.1	-6.3
Accommodation and food services	194.5	200.3	192.6	-5.8	-2.9	1.9	1.0
Other services	114.7	114.6	119.6	0.1	0.1	-4.9	-4.1
Public administration	122.7	124.0	104.6	-1.3	-1.0	18.1	17.3

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Employment growth has varied across B.C. over the last year, ranging from a modest increase in the Lower Mainland-Southwest (+27,300) to job losses on Vancouver Island and Coast (-12,100). Over the same period, the unemployment rates grew in all the regions, with the exception of the Thompson-Okanagan.

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

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	November 2019 ('000)	November 2018 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	November 2019 (%)	November 2018 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>British Columbia</b>	2,558.2	2,527.6	1.2	4.8	4.0	0.8
<b>Economic Regions</b>						
Vancouver Island and Coast	384.1	396.2	-3.1	4.3	3.7	0.6
Lower Mainland - Southwest	1,666.3	1,639.0	1.7	4.8	3.9	0.9
Thompson - Okanagan	276.9	258.8	7.0	4.7	4.9	-0.2
Kootenay	69.7	75.3	-7.4	4.8	4.1	0.7
Cariboo	79.7	75.9	5.0	6.8	4.9	1.9
North Coast and Nechako	42.3	42.7	-0.9	4.1	4.0	0.1
Northeast	39.0	39.9	-2.3	6.0	4.3	1.7

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Within the past 12 months, employment in **Lower Mainland - Southwest** increased to 1,666,300 (27,300), and is expected to continue to grow due to its diversified economy.<sup>13</sup> Particularly, the region's construction sector is performing well with a variety of ongoing projects, including construction of new affordable rental homes for seniors in Langley and North Vancouver.<sup>14,15</sup> Looking forward, the City of Vancouver approved the rezoning of the new St. Paul's Hospital, with construction expected to begin in late 2020.<sup>16</sup>

In the **Northeast**, employment remained relatively unchanged at 39,000 over the year. Even with the slight job losses, the regional unemployment rate increased by 1.7 percentage points, as labour force growth remained stagnant.<sup>17</sup> At this time, work continues on BC Hydro's Cite C hydroelectric project and further development on the Coastal Gaslink pipeline project is expected to ramp up in the coming months as the 700-person Sukunka Lodge work camp is now open.<sup>18,19</sup>

Year-over-year, employment in **Cariboo** increased to 79,700 (+3,800) and the unemployment rate grew by 1.9 percentage points to 6.8%.<sup>20</sup> Despite a slight increase in overall employment, the outlook for communities reliant upon regional forest product manufacturers remains poor. Especially since Tolko and Canfor announced they would be temporarily curtailing operations later this year.<sup>21,22</sup>

Compared to the same time last year, employment decreased to 384,100 (-12,100) in **Vancouver Island and Coast**, while the unemployment rate increased to 4.3%.<sup>23</sup> This November, an early winter shutdown of harvesting operations by Mosaic Forest Management brought seasonal employment to an end sooner than expected for about 2,000 contracted workers.<sup>24</sup>

In the past year, employment in **Thompson-Okanagan** increased to 276,900 (+18,100), as the unemployment rate decreased slightly to 4.7%.<sup>25</sup> Despite the downturn for regional forest product manufacturers, the region's economy remains robust. Rogers Communications is spending \$16.5M over the coming months in order to enhance its wireless network in Kelowna, West Kelowna, and Westbank First Nation. The investment includes the construction of new towers and upgrades to existing cell sites by early 2020.<sup>26</sup> Looking forward, construction of the new District Wine Village in Oliver is set to begin in spring 2020. The venue will allow 16 small-batch wine, beer, cider, and spirit producers to have their own production facility and tasting room.<sup>27</sup>

Employment in **North Coast and Nechako** economic region was relatively stable over the last year, while the unemployment rate remained relatively unchanged at 4.1%. The region is currently undergoing a lot of activity with the construction of the \$40 billion LNG Canada liquefied natural gas project in Kitimat, including the first of two worker camps.<sup>28,29</sup> While this project has increased employment opportunities in the region, there is the potential for further growth should the proposed Kitimat LNG Expansion Project and Cedar LNG Project receive approval.<sup>30,31</sup>

**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](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0287-01 Labour force characteristics, monthly, seasonally adjusted and trend-cycle, last 5 months, last modified December 6, 2019, accessed December 6, 2019 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410028701>

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0288-02 Employment by class of worker, monthly, seasonally adjusted (x 1,000), last modified December 6, 2019, accessed December 6, 2019 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1410028802>

<sup>3</sup> Mosaic Forest Management announces forestry shutdown, Campbell River Mirror, last modified November 22, 2019, accessed December 6, 2019 <https://www.campbellrivermirror.com/news/mosaic-forest-management-announces-forestry-shutdown/>

<sup>4</sup> TOLKO'S BC OPERATIONS TO TAKE HOLIDAY DOWNTIME, Tolko News, Tolko online, last modified November 14 2019, accessed December 6, 2019 [https://tolko.com/tolkocpt\\_news/tolkos-bc-operations-to-take-holiday-downtime/](https://tolko.com/tolkocpt_news/tolkos-bc-operations-to-take-holiday-downtime/)

<sup>5</sup> CANFOR CURTAILING BC PRODUCTION CAPACITY IN DECEMBER, News and Press Releases, Canfor online, last modified November 25, 2019, accessed December 6, 2019 <https://www.canfor.com/investor-relations/investor-news-press-releases/news-detail/2019/11/25/canfor-curtailling-bc-production-capacity-in-december>

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0287-01 Labour force characteristics, monthly, seasonally adjusted and trend-cycle, last 5 months, last modified November 8, 2019, accessed November 8, 2019 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410028701>

<sup>7</sup> Short Term Forest Employment Program, Supports for Interior Forestry Workers, Government of British Columbia online, accessed November 8, 2019 <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/supports-for-forestry-workers/short-term-forest-employment-program>

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<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 34-10-0152-01 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing starts, by type of dwelling unit and market type in all centres of 50,000 and over for Canada and provinces <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3410015201>

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- <sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0355-01 Employment by industry, monthly, seasonally adjusted and unadjusted, and trend-cycle, last 5 months (x 1,000) last modified December 9, 2019, accessed December 9, 2019 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410035501>
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