



Labour Market Bulletin

Saskatchewan

July 2021



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 COVID-19 pandemic remained stalled in July, as employment declined for a second consecutive month. Total employment was down 4,500 (-0.8%) compared to June, with job losses primarily occurring in part-time employment (-3,800).

Taking a longer view, overall employment in Saskatchewan was up 1.3% compared to June 2020, three months after the initial lockdown last year. However, given recent losses, overall employment is now 20,400 below February 2020's pre-pandemic level (-3.6%).

In July, private sector employment was down 10,000 positions compared to February 2020, while self-employment was down 10,900. In contrast, public sector employment increased 600.¹

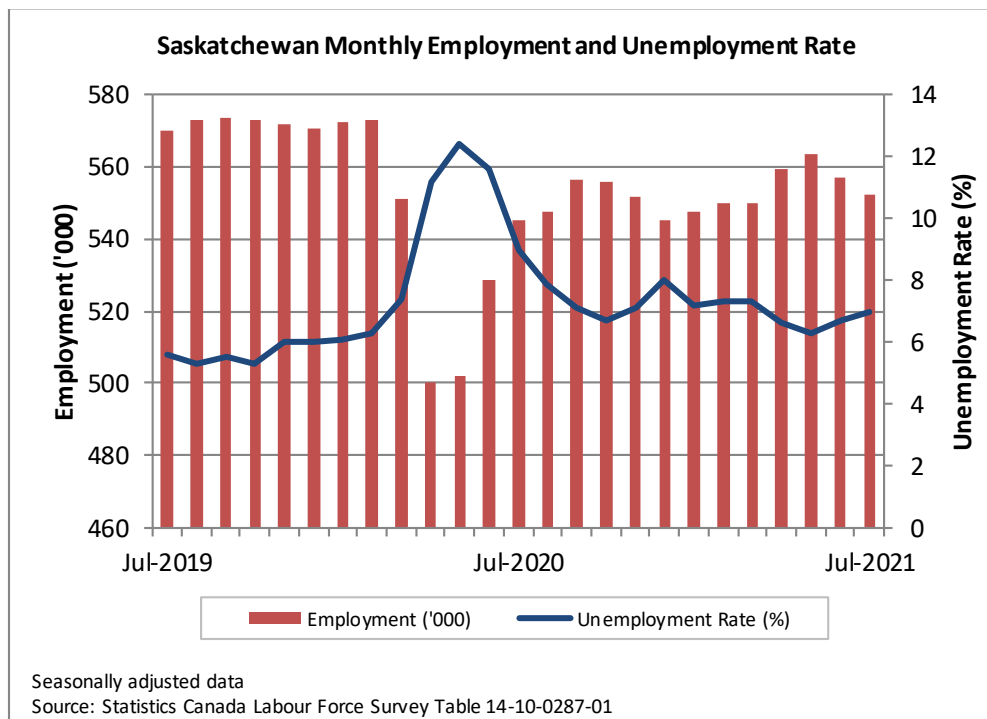
Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	July 2021	June 2021	July 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	889.4	889.1	887.7	0.3	0.0	1.7	0.2
Labour Force ('000)	594.1	597.2	598.9	-3.1	-0.5	-4.8	-0.8
Employment ('000)	552.3	556.8	545.0	-4.5	-0.8	7.3	1.3
Full-Time ('000)	447.1	447.6	451.1	-0.5	-0.1	-4.0	-0.9
Part-Time ('000)	105.2	109.3	93.8	-4.1	-3.8	11.4	12.2
Unemployment ('000)	41.8	40.3	53.9	1.5	3.7	-12.1	-22.4
Unemployment Rate (%)	7.0	6.7	9.0	0.3	-	-2.0	-
Participation Rate (%)	66.8	67.2	67.5	-0.4	-	-0.7	-
Employment Rate (%)	62.1	62.6	61.4	-0.5	-	0.7	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

While the Delta variant remains a concern, Saskatchewan's overall rising COVID-19 vaccination rates and declining infection counts allowed the province to remove all public health restrictions on July 11. As of August 8, 74% of those 12 and over in the province had received at least one vaccination dose.² However, outbreaks have continued in the thinly populated north, where vaccination rates lag and wildfires have led to community displacement.³



In July, Saskatchewan's unemployment rate edged up 0.3 percentage points to 7.0%, a relatively high rate for the province. At the peak of COVID-19's labour market disruption in May 2020, the provincial unemployment rate reached 12.4%, the highest rate since at least 1976.

Unemployment by Major Demographic Group

Saskatchewan Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	July 2021 (%)	June 2021 (%)	July 2020 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	7.0	6.7	9.0	0.3	-2.0
25 years and over	6.4	6.2	7.4	0.2	-1.0
Men - 25 years and over	7.1	7.0	8.1	0.1	-1.0
Women - 25 years and over	5.6	5.3	6.6	0.3	-1.0
15 to 24 years	10.5	9.9	18.0	0.6	-7.5
Men - 15 to 24 years	12.1	10.4	22.5	1.7	-10.4
Women - 15 to 24 years	8.8	9.6	12.7	-0.8	-3.9

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Saskatchewan workers 25 years and over continue to fare better than their younger counterparts (15 to 24 years). Younger workers have historically experienced unemployment rates as much as double that of their older counterparts, a trend amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, young men appear particularly vulnerable to employment downturns. In July, the unemployment rate for young men aged 15 to 24 years increased 1.7 percentage points, while women of the same age cohort saw a decline. Notably, older men had an unemployment rate relatively close to that of older women (1.5 percentage points higher), while young men had an unemployment rate over 3 percentage points higher than that of young women.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

On the month, employment in Saskatchewan's goods-producing sector increased 2,000 (+1.6%), while employment in the services-producing sector fell 6,500 (-1.5%). Year-over-year, employment in the goods-producing sector was down 2.6%, while employment in the services-producing sector was 2.7% higher compared to July 2020.

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	July 2021	June 2021	July 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	552.3	556.8	545.0	-4.5	-0.8	7.3	1.3
Goods-producing sector	130.6	128.6	134.1	2.0	1.6	-3.5	-2.6
Agriculture	30.3	29.6	36.9	0.7	2.4	-6.6	-17.9
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	18.8	19.4	20.4	-0.6	-3.1	-1.6	-7.8
Utilities	6.5	6.3	5.8	0.2	3.2	0.7	12.1
Construction	42.9	42.2	39.4	0.7	1.7	3.5	8.9
Manufacturing	32.1	31.1	31.7	1.0	3.2	0.4	1.3
Services-producing sector	421.7	428.2	410.8	-6.5	-1.5	10.9	2.7
Trade	88.8	90.6	81.6	-1.8	-2.0	7.2	8.8
Transportation and warehousing	22.0	22.7	24.5	-0.7	-3.1	-2.5	-10.2
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	27.9	26.5	29.6	1.4	5.3	-1.7	-5.7
Professional, scientific and technical services	27.5	27.9	25.4	-0.4	-1.4	2.1	8.3
Business, building and other support services	15.8	15.3	16.0	0.5	3.3	-0.2	-1.3
Educational services	45.0	46.8	44.5	-1.8	-3.8	0.5	1.1
Health care and social assistance	84.7	86.1	80.1	-1.4	-1.6	4.6	5.7
Information, culture and recreation	20.0	19.1	19.2	0.9	4.7	0.8	4.2
Accommodation and food services	28.6	30.2	26.3	-1.6	-5.3	2.3	8.7
Other services	25.8	26.8	29.0	-1.0	-3.7	-3.2	-11.0
Public administration	35.6	36.1	34.5	-0.5	-1.4	1.1	3.2

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, year-over-year employment was down significantly in **agriculture** (-6,600), with job losses seen both in animal and crop production. Saskatchewan farmers enjoyed a good year in 2020 as the province led the country in total net farm income at \$2.9 billion.⁴ However, this year's growing conditions have taken a turn for the worse, as a continued lack of moisture, combined with record-breaking heat has

affected crop quality and yields. Ranchers are also struggling as water sources have dried up and the cost of hay has doubled.⁵

Employment in the **construction** industry increased on the month (+700), as the Government of Saskatchewan continues to focus on construction as an avenue for economic recovery. Many large provincially funded projects were announced in the province's 2021-2022 budget. The federal and provincial governments are providing more than \$81.2M in funding for 23 infrastructure projects across Saskatchewan. Projects include upgrades to wastewater treatment facilities, recreation projects, and the decommissioning of landfills.⁶ The federal and provincial governments, along with the City of Saskatoon, are spending \$19.5M to build a new waste diversion facility to divert more than half of the garbage heading to the landfill. The new facility is set to open in 2023.⁷

In the private sector, Red Leaf Pulp Ltd. is building a new \$350M mill that will turn wheat straw into pulp for paper products. Located near Regina, the plant will create 250 jobs when construction begins in 2022 and 110 full-time permanent jobs once operational.⁸ The agriculture-related development comes as four firms have announced major canola crushing projects, with all four slated for completion in 2024. Richardson International is expanding its Yorkton-based canola crush facility, with construction beginning this spring.⁹ Additionally, Cargill, Viterra, and Ceres Global Ag Corp are planning new crush plants in the Regina area. Of the four, Viterra's new facility will be the largest, supporting 1,000 workers during construction and 100 permanent staff once operational.¹⁰

The **manufacturing** industry added 1,000 jobs in July, led by transportation equipment manufacturing, and fabricated metal product manufacturing. However, Saskatoon ambulance manufacturer Crestline Coach, like many other companies, is caught in a global supply chain crunch. Suppliers are now giving estimated wait times of closer to a year, instead of a few months.¹¹ Meanwhile, Väderstad Industries, a manufacturer of tillage, drilling and planting farm equipment, is looking to hire 55 people at its facility in Langbank, near the Manitoba border. Some of the positions include welders, assembly technicians, paint prep technicians, and material handlers.¹²

Saskatchewan's resource extraction industry (**forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas**) lost 1,600 jobs year-over-year, primarily in mining. According to the Government of Saskatchewan, sales in the province's forestry sector were up 30% in 2020. Increased production is expected to continue and reach record levels in 2022.¹³ Meanwhile, Saskatchewan is currently in the second phase of the abandoned oil well clean-up program. The Accelerated Site Closure Program runs until March 2022 and provides support to the oil and gas industry by creating and maintaining jobs.¹⁴

Turning to the services-producing sector, employment in Saskatchewan's **retail and wholesale trade** industry fell 1,800 on the month, but remains up 7,200 year-over-year. The annual gains come as COVID-19 case loads shrink, vaccination rates rise and outlets that had voluntarily turned to delivery or curbside pickup resume in-store operations. The Shoppe, a gourmet candy and ice cream retailer recently opened outlets in Regina and Saskatoon.¹⁵ The number of retail cannabis stores in Saskatchewan continues to increase. In July, two new cannabis outlets opened in Estevan, Moonlit Cannabis and Peace of Mind Cannabis, providing about a dozen new jobs.¹⁶

Employment in the **health care and social assistance** industry pulled back on the month (-1,400) while showing growth on a year-over-year basis (+4,600) as the demands of COVID-19 began to ease. Pop-up vaccination clinics

are now in operation as the province encourages the vaccine-hesitant to overcome their reluctance. In funding news, the Government of Saskatchewan is allocating over \$23M to support Saskatchewan families and children through community programs. The programs support child development, parenting and mental health and addiction treatment services.¹⁷ The Government of Saskatchewan is also providing \$4M in 2021-22 towards the Community Initiatives Fund (CIF). CIF provides support and funding to communities that focus on the wellbeing of youth and families.¹⁸

The **accommodation and food services** industry continues to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with employment down 1,600 from June. Despite adding 2,300 jobs since July 2020, employment in the industry remains 9,700 below its pre-pandemic level in February 2020 (-25.3%). As of June 20, restaurants in Saskatchewan were allowed to operate at full capacity. Despite the province fully opening up, some restaurant owners continue to have staffing challenges, as former workers may have new jobs or no longer want to work in the restaurant industry.¹⁹

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

On a year-over-year basis, employment is up in four of five economic regions compared to July 2020. As of July 11, the Government of Saskatchewan lifted all COVID-19 public health orders and encouraged employers to recall employees laid off due to the pandemic.²⁰ Nevertheless, the longer-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to take its toll. Yorkton-Melville saw job losses (-4.7%) on the year, while Regina – Moose Mountain led the province in employment growth (+10.5%).

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	July 2021 ('000)	July 2020 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	July 2021 (%)	July 2020 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Saskatchewan	565.0	533.0	6.0	6.6	10.9	-4.3
Economic Regions						
Regina - Moose Mountain	182.3	165.0	10.5	6.7	10.7	-4.0
Swift Current - Moose Jaw	53.0	52.0	1.9	6.9	8.9	-2.0
Saskatoon - Biggar	197.7	186.3	6.1	7.6	12.6	-5.0
Yorkton - Melville	34.7	36.4	-4.7	4.1	7.6	-3.5
Prince Albert and Northern	97.2	93.2	4.3	5.2	10.0	-4.8

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0387, formerly CANSIM 282-0122

Year-over-year employment in **Saskatoon-Biggar** rose 11,400 (+6.1%), returning the region to February 2020's pre-pandemic employment level. One of the key contributors is the increase of 11,500 jobs (+8.0%) in the services-producing sector over the past year.

Looking at agricultural-related jobs in the region, Maple Leaf Foods is purchasing four pig farms in central Saskatchewan from Polar Pork. The number of pigs produced in Saskatchewan is expected to increase significantly after the acquisition.²¹ A new \$65M grain-cleaning terminal recently opened in the Town of Delisle. The new terminal can receive grain and pulses from producers and rapidly clean their entire shipment, enhancing the quality of exports to international markets.²²

Meanwhile, the Government of Canada is spending \$7.6M to build around 36 new, affordable homes in Saskatoon. The funding is part of the federal government's Rapid Housing Initiative and will be used to build new facilities or upgrade existing homeless shelters.²³ Northern Nutrients is building a new \$25M fertilizer manufacturing plant near Saskatoon. Construction is set to begin in July 2021 and be completed by early 2022. The company plans to hire around 30 new employees.²⁴

The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) and Moosomin First Nation plan to develop a horse racing track and equine sporting facility in the Rural Municipality of Corman Park. Currently, there are no timeframes for the facility.²⁵

Employment in **Regina-Moose Mountain** is up 17,300 (+10.5%) compared to July 2020. Employment in the region continues to surpass February 2020's pre-pandemic level but remains 3,400 below July 2019. Similar to the Saskatoon region, Regina's services-producing sector has seen strong growth in employment (+18,800) year-over-year, with the removal of the COVID-19 restrictions. Prairie Sky Co-op recently opened in Weyburn. The new Home Centre has a dedicated Contractor Centre, a drive-thru lumberyard and indoor lumber storage.²⁶

In construction-related news, the Government of Canada is spending \$7.8M, through the Rapid Housing Initiative, to create 29 affordable homes in Regina. The city is looking to renovate the recently vacated YMCA as an option.²⁷ The Government of Saskatchewan plans to create 600 long-term care beds in Regina. The Saskatchewan Health Authority will own and operate the new facility and the timelines for construction will be announced later this year.²⁸

Moving to travel and transportation news, according to the Regina Airport Authority, the number of passengers flying in and out of Regina has tripled when compared to several months earlier. The increase is due to the loosening of restrictions and the recent addition of flights.²⁹

Compared to July 2020, 4,000 (+4.3%) more people were employed in the **Prince Albert and Northern** region. That leaves the region 1,300 shy of its pre-pandemic employment level in February 2020 (-1.3%). The Community Heritage Centre in Prince Albert recently reopened after being closed for 16 months due to the pandemic. Senior citizens use the centre to visit, play card games and dance to live music.³⁰ Meanwhile, the North American Chuckwagon Championship recently took place in Lloydminster. The event was the first of its kind in Saskatchewan since the pandemic started.³¹

The Government of Saskatchewan's 2021-22 budget includes \$425,000 for Family Literacy Hubs. The first Northern Family Literacy Hub was set to open in July in La Ronge, serving families in the communities of La Ronge, Air Ronge and Lac La Ronge Indian Band.³²

In construction-related news, the Prince Albert Water Utility recently purchased land for the construction of a new \$52.5M water treatment plant and pipeline with service to Shellbrook. If approved, construction of the project would begin in the fourth quarter of 2022.³³

Wildfires have plagued the province this summer, causing disruptions to different industries. Cameco recalled employees back to the Cigar Lake uranium mine in northern Saskatchewan after 230 workers were forced to leave on July 1 as a wildfire burned close to the operation.³⁴

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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