



Labour Market Bulletin

Manitoba

February 2021



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Manitoba, including the regions of Winnipeg, Northern Manitoba and Southern Manitoba.

OVERVIEW

The Government of Manitoba continued to lift restrictions in February after enforcing about three months of regulations meant to prevent the spread of COVID-19. While there were fewer than 600 cases of COVID-19 detected in Manitoba between March 11 and August 11, 2020, the second wave resulted in an exponential increase with over 30,000 cases in the following seven months.¹ To contain the spread of the virus, the Government of Manitoba imposed several restrictions in November 2020, impacting the majority of businesses throughout the province.

The Province began easing these regulations on January 23 when some services were allowed to resume such as barbershops and hair salons while non-essential retail stores could also re-open at reduced capacity.² On February 12, more businesses were allowed to resume operations at reduced capacity including dine-in restaurants, fitness centres and personal services, while the film industry became fully operational.³

Employment increased for the second consecutive month in February, up 2.6% to 647,200. The majority of monthly employment gains were in part-time positions (+12,200) while full-time employment edged up 3,800. Despite these gains, employment in Manitoba is still down 17,100 compared to February 2020. Most of these annual job losses are in the private sector (-10,400), while public sector employment is down 4,500 and self-employment declined 2,200.⁴

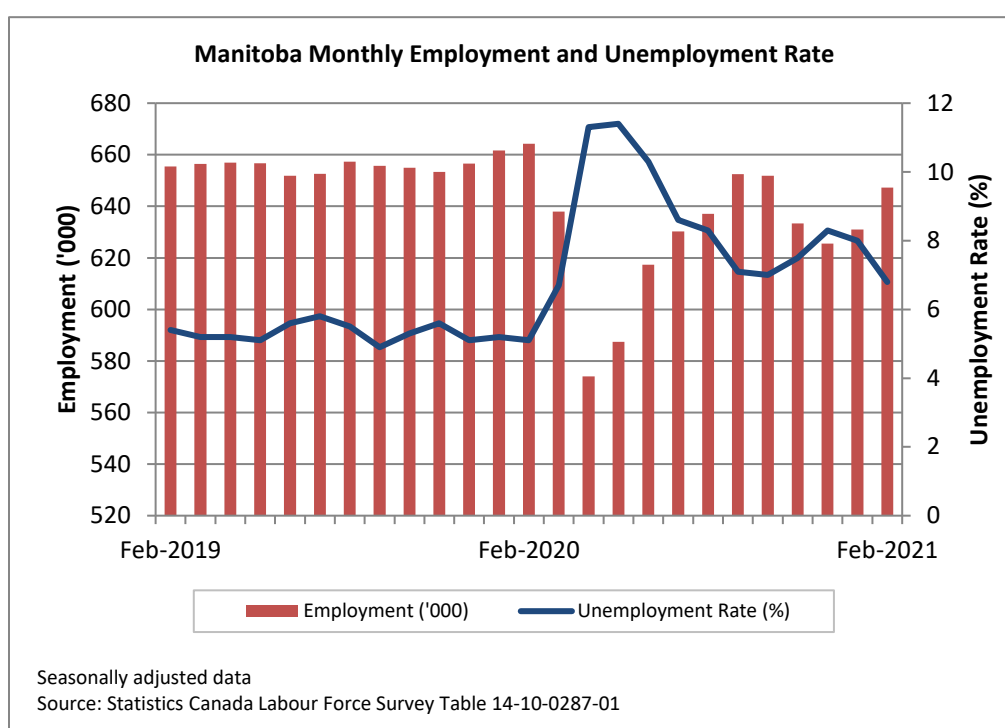
According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), small businesses in Manitoba started their slow recovery process in February. In fact, 59% of Manitoba businesses surveyed in early February were fully open compared to only 45% in January.⁵ Staffing also improved with 47% of businesses surveyed reporting a full complement of staff in February compared to just 40% in January.⁶

Manitoba Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	February 2021	January 2021	February 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	1,050.4	1,049.4	1,046.5	1.0	0.1	3.9	0.4
Labour Force ('000)	694.2	685.9	700.2	8.3	1.2	-6.0	-0.9
Employment ('000)	647.2	631.0	664.3	16.2	2.6	-17.1	-2.6
Full-Time ('000)	529.6	525.8	525.3	3.8	0.7	4.3	0.8
Part-Time ('000)	117.5	105.3	139.0	12.2	11.6	-21.5	-15.5
Unemployment ('000)	47.0	54.8	35.9	-7.8	-14.2	11.1	30.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.8	8.0	5.1	-1.2	-	1.7	-
Participation Rate (%)	66.1	65.4	66.9	0.7	-	-0.8	-
Employment Rate (%)	61.6	60.1	63.5	1.5	-	-1.9	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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



Manitoba's unemployment rate declined 1.2 percentage points to 6.8% in February and remains well below the national average (8.2%). However, the province's unemployment rate is still significantly higher than it was in February 2020 (5.1%).

Manitobans aged 15 to 24 continue to be disproportionately affected by job losses induced by pandemic-related business restrictions. Indeed, youth employment is down 10,700 year-over-year and the youth unemployment rate is up 6.2 percentage points to 15.7% over the same period. In addition to job losses, 3.5% of Manitoba's youth left the labour force altogether over the last year.

Approximately half of all youth working in Manitoba have part-time jobs. These positions are typically more precarious than full-time employment and offer less job security in times of economic uncertainty. Indeed, while

full-time employment for youth was up 12.7% on an annual basis in February, part-time employment for this age group was down significantly (-33.6%).

Manitoba Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	February 2021 (%)	January 2021 (%)	February 2020 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	6.8	8.0	5.1	-1.2	1.7
25 years and over	5.1	6.0	4.3	-0.9	0.8
Men - 25 years and over	4.5	4.8	4.6	-0.3	-0.1
Women - 25 years and over	5.7	7.4	3.9	-1.7	1.8
15 to 24 years	15.7	18.9	9.5	-3.2	6.2
Men - 15 to 24 years	16.7	18.0	10.5	-1.3	6.2
Women - 15 to 24 years	14.7	19.6	8.3	-4.9	6.4

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Employment increased in Manitoba's **goods-producing sector** (+3,800) due to gains in **construction** (+2,400) and **manufacturing** (+1,700). Meanwhile, monthly employment growth in the province's **services-producing sector** (+12,400) was led by significant gains in **wholesale and retail trade** (+5,300), **educational services** (+2,600), and **accommodation and food services** (+2,500).

Employment in Manitoba's **agriculture** industry edged down in February (-200). However, despite the global pandemic, annual employment in this industry was relatively unchanged in 2020 compared to 2019. While technology is pivotal to advancement and sustainability in the agriculture industry, experts indicate agriculture producers are struggling to find qualified employees to work with highly technical machinery and equipment, and provide specialized animal care.⁷ Assiniboine Community College (ACC) in Brandon plans to address this skills gap by increasing the number of agriculture, environment, and ag technology students attending its college from 260 to 800 students a year. Expanded enrollment is expected to begin in 2024, once construction of the Prairie Innovation Centre is complete.⁸ This new space will allow ACC to offer courses such as Robotics and Industrial Automation, Food Science Technology and Advanced Agriculture.⁹

Agriculture and **manufacturing** go hand in hand in Manitoba. In fact, Manitoba's agri-food sector is the province's largest export sector, accounting for approximately a third of all provincial exports. While most of these exports are agriculture products, export volumes for these types of products can be volatile due to weather, global supply, and international trade barriers.¹⁰ On the other hand, Manitoba's manufactured foods represent a smaller share of agri-food exports but have been more stable and have shown steady growth.¹¹

One of the province's recent food manufacturing developments is the construction of Roquette's \$600 million pea processing facility located in Portage la Prairie. The plant currently employs approximately 110 local staff with an additional 60 out-of-country employees temporarily present to help with the initial stages of the

operation.¹² Merit Functional Foods also recently started producing pea and canola protein at their new facility in Winnipeg.¹³ Merit expects to create over 175 jobs in Manitoba over the next three years based on these new developments.¹⁴

Due to increased global demand for plant and animal protein, the Government of Manitoba launched the Manitoba Protein Advantage in 2019. Through this strategy, the Province aims to expand the plant and animal protein industry in Manitoba by attracting \$1.5 billion in new investments and 1,550 new jobs by 2025.¹⁵ In support of these objectives, Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development held the Virtual Protein Summit in February. Over 650 participants from around the world attended the virtual event.¹⁶ Since the launch of the Manitoba Protein Advantage, there has been \$680 million in new investment and almost 600 new jobs created in Manitoba's protein industry.¹⁷

Manitoba Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	February 2021	January 2021	February 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	647.2	631.0	664.3	16.2	2.6	-17.1	-2.6
Goods-producing sector	148.8	145.0	150.9	3.8	2.6	-2.1	-1.4
Agriculture	25.4	25.6	26.8	-0.2	-0.8	-1.4	-5.2
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	3.8	3.8	5.2	0.0	0.0	-1.4	-26.9
Utilities	4.7	4.7	6.7	0.0	0.0	-2.0	-29.9
Construction	50.7	48.3	49.7	2.4	5.0	1.0	2.0
Manufacturing	64.3	62.6	62.6	1.7	2.7	1.7	2.7
Services-producing sector	498.4	486.0	513.4	12.4	2.6	-15.0	-2.9
Trade	95.7	90.4	93.7	5.3	5.9	2.0	2.1
Transportation and warehousing	41.1	40.2	40.3	0.9	2.2	0.8	2.0
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	34.2	35.6	33.4	-1.4	-3.9	0.8	2.4
Professional, scientific and technical services	31.7	31.3	31.4	0.4	1.3	0.3	1.0
Business, building and other support services	21.4	20.6	23.4	0.8	3.9	-2.0	-8.5
Educational services	57.9	55.3	53.8	2.6	4.7	4.1	7.6
Health care and social assistance	101.4	100.2	108.7	1.2	1.2	-7.3	-6.7
Information, culture and recreation	19.1	20.1	22.3	-1.0	-5.0	-3.2	-14.3
Accommodation and food services	29.6	27.1	42.8	2.5	9.2	-13.2	-30.8
Other services	29.2	28.1	28.1	1.1	3.9	1.1	3.9
Public administration	37.0	36.9	35.3	0.1	0.3	1.7	4.8

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

In the services-producing sector, employment in the **accommodation and food services** industry is up for the second consecutive month (+2,500 or 9.2%). Despite this monthly uptick in employment, there are still over 13,000 fewer people working in this industry compared to February 2020. Provincial measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 significantly reduced employment opportunities for those working in the food services industry as all dine-in restaurant services were shuttered between November 2020 and mid-February 2021. According to the Conference Board of Canada, business in Manitoba's accommodation and food services industry declined an estimated 31.3% in 2020 but is expected to recover by 22.6% in 2021.¹⁸

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

On an annual basis, employment decreased in four of Manitoba's six economic regions. In the **Interlake** region employment is down 12% year-over-year (-5,400), while in **South Central and North Central** employment is up 5.6% year-over-year (+3,100). The **Winnipeg** and **Parklands and North** regions had the highest unemployment rates in February, at 8.4% and 8.2% respectively.

In late January, the **Winnipeg** region's retail industry welcomed relaxed COVID-19 public health measures that allowed stores selling non-essential items to open for the first time since November 2020.¹⁹ However, not all businesses were able to survive the prolonged closure.²⁰ For example, the city's West End neighborhood saw a net decrease of 30 businesses since the pandemic began.²¹ Although some businesses still saw opportunity as evidenced by two cannabis stores, an apparel store, a furniture store, and a Japanese lifestyle store all expanding or opening in the region in February.^{22,23,24,25}

Manitoba Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	February 2021 ('000)	February 2020 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	February 2021 (%)	February 2020 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Manitoba	627.7	653.7	-4.0	7.5	5.1	2.4
Economic Regions						
Southeast	59.6	60.0	-0.7	6.4	6.4	0.0
South Central and North Central	58.5	55.4	5.6	4.2	4.2	0.0
Southwest	56.0	55.9	0.2	5.4	4.9	0.5
Winnipeg	383.6	403.7	-5.0	8.4	5.0	3.4
Interlake	39.6	45.0	-12.0	7.3	5.3	2.0
Parklands and Northern	30.3	33.7	-10.1	8.2	4.8	3.4

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Unemployment in the **Southwest** region edged up 0.5 percentage points on an annual basis, reaching 5.4% in February — the second-lowest unemployment rate in the province. Increased employment in the educational services industry was supported by developments including a new elementary school and early learning and child-care centre that opened in Brandon this year.²⁶ In addition, Assiniboine Community College in Brandon launched several new programs over the last few months including an Early Childhood Education program.²⁷

The **Parklands and North** region maintains one of the highest unemployment rates in the province. However, gold mining is gaining interest in the region as Hudbay expands their operations at Lalor mine in Snow Lake, and Sartori begins drilling at the Tartan Lake gold mine project in Flin Flon.^{28,29} Alamos Gold also continues to invest in their project near Lynn Lake, including a partnership with Marcel Colomb First Nation.

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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