



Labour Market Bulletin

New Brunswick

February 2021



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of New Brunswick, including the regions of Campbellton—Miramichi, Edmundston—Woodstock, Fredericton—Oromocto, Moncton—Richibucto and Saint John—St. Stephen.

OVERVIEW

Labour market conditions deteriorated in New Brunswick in February, as the level of employment fell by 2,600, easily erasing the 1,100 increase the month before. One encouraging development to note in the data release is that none of the job losses were in full-time positions, which is where the brunt of the job losses have occurred throughout the pandemic. Full-time work increased by 1,500 in February. The unemployment rate grew only slightly last month, as the decline in employment was accompanied by a 2,300 reduction in the labour force.

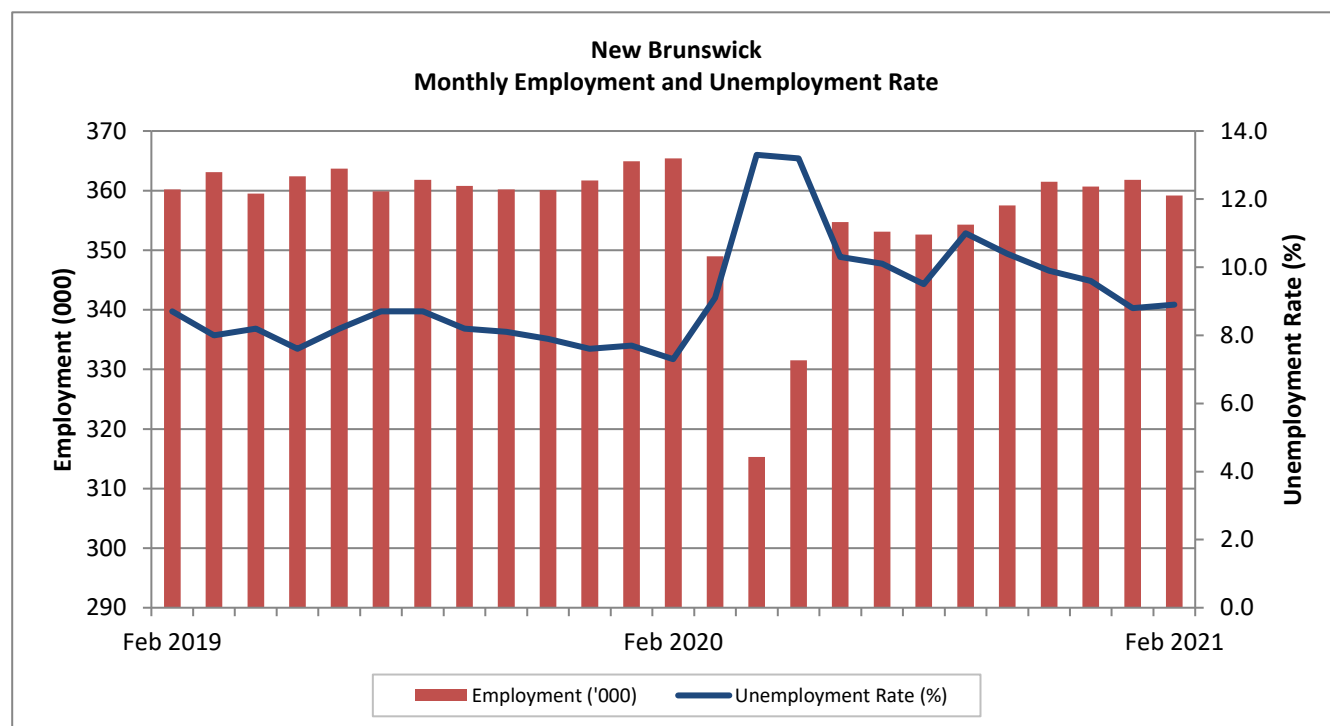
New Brunswick Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	Feb 2021	Jan 2021	Feb 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	648.4	648.4	645.9	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.4
Labour Force ('000)	394.2	396.5	394.0	-2.3	-0.6	0.2	0.1
Employment ('000)	359.2	361.8	365.4	-2.6	-0.7	-6.2	-1.7
Full-Time ('000)	302.2	300.7	314.1	1.5	0.5	-11.9	-3.8
Part-Time ('000)	57.0	61.1	51.3	-4.1	-6.7	5.7	11.1
Unemployment ('000)	35.0	34.7	28.6	0.3	0.9	6.4	22.4
Unemployment Rate (%)	8.9	8.8	7.3	0.1	-	1.6	-
Participation Rate (%)	60.8	61.2	61.0	-0.4	-	-0.2	-
Employment Rate (%)	55.4	55.8	56.6	-0.4	-	-1.2	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287

The job losses in February reversed much of the progress in bringing employment back in-line with its pre-pandemic level. With the most recent decline, the level of employment now remains 6,200 below where it stood in February of last year, just before the onset of the pandemic. Full-time employment is down by 11,900 whereas part-time work is up by 5,700 positions. The increase in part-time work partly reflects a rebound in retail trade across the province. Otherwise, the labour force is almost exactly in-line with its pre-pandemic level from February of last year.



The youth (aged 15 to 24 years) unemployment rate fell by 2.3 percentage points (p.p.) between January and February. The decline was much more concentrated among women, where it fell by 4.7 p.p. to 10.8% in February. Among males between the ages of 15 and 24, the unemployment rate diminished by a modest 0.2 p.p. to 13.5%.

New Brunswick Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	Feb 2021	Jan 2021	Feb 2020	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
	%	%	%	(% points)	(% points)
Total	8.9	8.8	7.3	0.1	1.6
25 years and over	8.3	7.8	6.8	0.5	1.5
Men - 25 years and over	10.5	8.7	8.1	1.8	2.4
Women - 25 years and over	6.1	6.8	5.4	-0.7	0.7
15 to 24 years	12.2	14.5	10.2	-2.3	2.0
Men - 15 to 24 years	13.5	13.7	9.8	-0.2	3.7

Women - 15 to 24 years	10.8	15.5	10.7	-4.7	0.1
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Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287

On an annual basis, the youth unemployment rate increased by 2.0 p.p. to 12.2% between February of 2020 and February of this year. The youth rate of unemployment was essentially unchanged among women during the same period, however. Among males, the youth unemployment rate grew by 3.7 p.p. since February of last year, settling at 13.5% in February.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

At the aggregate level, the overall month-over-month decline in employment across the province was driven by a significant reduction in the **goods-producing sector** (-2,800). The level of employment edged up by 300 in the **services-producing sector**, which accounts for well over two-thirds of all employment in the province. Compared to February of last year, employment rose by 2,700 jobs in the services-producing sector in February. In the goods-producing sector, however, the level of employment in February was down by 8,900 relative to a year earlier.

The overall weakness in labour market conditions has been relatively broad based among goods-producing industries during the past year. Nonetheless, the weakness has been more pronounced in **construction**, where almost 4,000 fewer jobs were reported in February compared to a year earlier. Aside from an increase in residential construction over the course of the year as households re-allocated their funds towards home renovations, activity has been weak across the construction industry, with non-residential construction investment down significantly from before the pandemic. Employment was also down by 2,000 in **manufacturing**, 1,500 in **agriculture** and 1,300 in **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas**.

The overall labour market situation is not as downbeat among services-producing industries, as job losses over the past year have been confined to only a small subset of industries that have been most affected by the pandemic and the resulting social distancing requirements. These include **accommodation and food services** (-2,100) and **information, culture and recreation** (-2,000). The level of employment has surpassed pre-pandemic levels in a number of services-producing industries, including **educational services** and **business, building and other support services**.

New Brunswick Monthly Employed Labour Force, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	Feb 2021	Jan 2021	Feb 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	359.2	361.8	365.4	-2.6	-0.7	-6.2	-1.7
Goods-producing sector	68.6	71.4	77.5	-2.8	-3.9	-8.9	-11.5
Agriculture	4.6	5.1	6.1	-0.5	-9.8	-1.5	-24.6
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	9.1	8.7	10.4	0.4	4.6	-1.3	-12.5
Utilities	3.5	3.7	3.7	-0.2	-5.4	-0.2	-5.4

Construction	22.1	22.4	26.0	-0.3	-1.3	-3.9	-15.0
Manufacturing	29.4	31.5	31.4	-2.1	-6.7	-2.0	-6.4
Services-producing sector	290.6	290.3	287.9	0.3	0.1	2.7	0.9
Trade	56.9	55.6	54.2	1.3	2.3	2.7	5.0
Transportation and warehousing	19.1	19.2	18.8	-0.1	-0.5	0.3	1.6
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	17.5	17.3	16.5	0.2	1.2	1.0	6.1
Professional, scientific and technical services	18.0	18.4	16.8	-0.4	-2.2	1.2	7.1
Business, building and other support services	15.8	15.9	17.7	-0.1	-0.6	-1.9	-10.7
Educational services	28.5	28.5	27.1	0.0	0.0	1.4	5.2
Health care and social assistance	60.4	60.1	60.1	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.5
Information, culture and recreation	10.2	10.3	12.2	-0.1	-1.0	-2.0	-16.4
Accommodation and food services	20.5	21.9	22.6	-1.4	-6.4	-2.1	-9.3
Other services	15.3	14.5	14.4	0.8	5.5	0.9	6.3
Public administration	28.5	28.5	27.4	0.0	0.0	1.1	4.0

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0355

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

At the Economic Region (ER) level, the economic recovery continues to remain uneven. As of February, employment levels had surpassed pre-pandemic levels in two of the five economic regions in the province. An outbreak of COVID-19 in Zone Four in the province, which essentially covers much of the Edmundston-Woodstock ER, resulted in much of the ER being placed into lockdown. This implies that many of the job losses in February in this part of the province were likely temporary and will probably be reversed when the next LFS release becomes available sometime in early April.

New Brunswick Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	Feb 2021 ('000)	Feb 2020 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	Feb 2021 (%)	Feb 2020 (%)	Yearly Variation (%)
New Brunswick	349.1	353.2	-1.2	10.1	8.2	1.9
Economic Regions						
Campbellton-Miramichi	60.4	57.7	4.7	13.5	13.4	0.1
Moncton-Richibucto	105.9	109.7	-3.5	10.0	6.8	3.2
Saint John-St. Stephen	80.7	84.1	-4.0	11.4	7.9	3.5
Fredericton-Oromocto	69.5	65.6	5.9	7.0	7.5	-0.5
Edmundston-Woodstock	32.6	36.1	-9.7	7.1	6.2	0.9

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0387

The 2,700 increase in employment in the **Campbellton-Miramichi ER** since February of last year is encouraging, especially considering the economic challenges in the ER leading up to the pandemic. A comparable increase in the size of the labour force during the same period kept the unemployment rate broadly unchanged at 13.5% in February, highest in the province.

The level of employment diminished by 3,800 in the **Moncton-Richibucto ER** since February of 2020. The unemployment rate grew by a significant 3.2 p.p. to 10.0%. Stricter health restrictions in an effort to curb the spread of the virus likely weighed on the labour market in the southeastern part of the province in February.

There were 3,400 fewer employed persons in the **Saint John-St. Stephen ER** in February relative to a year earlier. As a result, the unemployment rate grew by nearly four p.p., reaching 11.4% in February. The recent announcement from the Federal Government that cruise ship activity will remain cancelled until February of 2022 is a blow to the local economy and will likely weigh on employment for much of the year. Cruise ship activity is not only an important direct employer but also drives tourism activity, which coincidentally has been one of the most greatly impacted sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After having recovered in recent months, labour market conditions took a significant step forward in the **Fredericton-Oromocto ER** in February. In January, employment levels in January were up by 2,600 from a year earlier. As of February, the annual change in employment improved to 3,900 in the Fredericton-Oromocto ER. The unemployment rate diminished by around half a percentage point, to 7.0% in February.

Of all the economic regions in the province, labour market conditions deteriorated the most in the **Edmundston-Woodstock ER** during the past year, where the level of employment diminished by 3,500 between February of 2020 and February of this year. The unemployment rate increased by close to a percentage point, reaching 7.1% in February. Zone Four of the province, which includes the Edmundston and Grand Falls region, was placed on full lockdown for much of February. As such, while this is likely responsible for some of the jobs that were lost in February, it is also likely that many of these losses are temporary and will likely be reversed in March, with the lockdown having been lifted that month.

***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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