



# Labour Market Bulletin

Nova Scotia

October 2021



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Nova Scotia, including the regions of Annapolis Valley, Cape Breton, Southern, Halifax and North Shore.

## OVERVIEW

Employment in Nova Scotia was little changed in October, edging up by just 200 compared to the previous month, though there was a notable shift from part- to full-time work. The current level of employment is just shy of the record high set in February 2020 before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The labour force expanded by 1,600 individuals this month, causing the participation rate to increase slightly. The unemployment rate also went up, by 0.3 percentage points (pp), to 8.3%.

Nova Scotia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

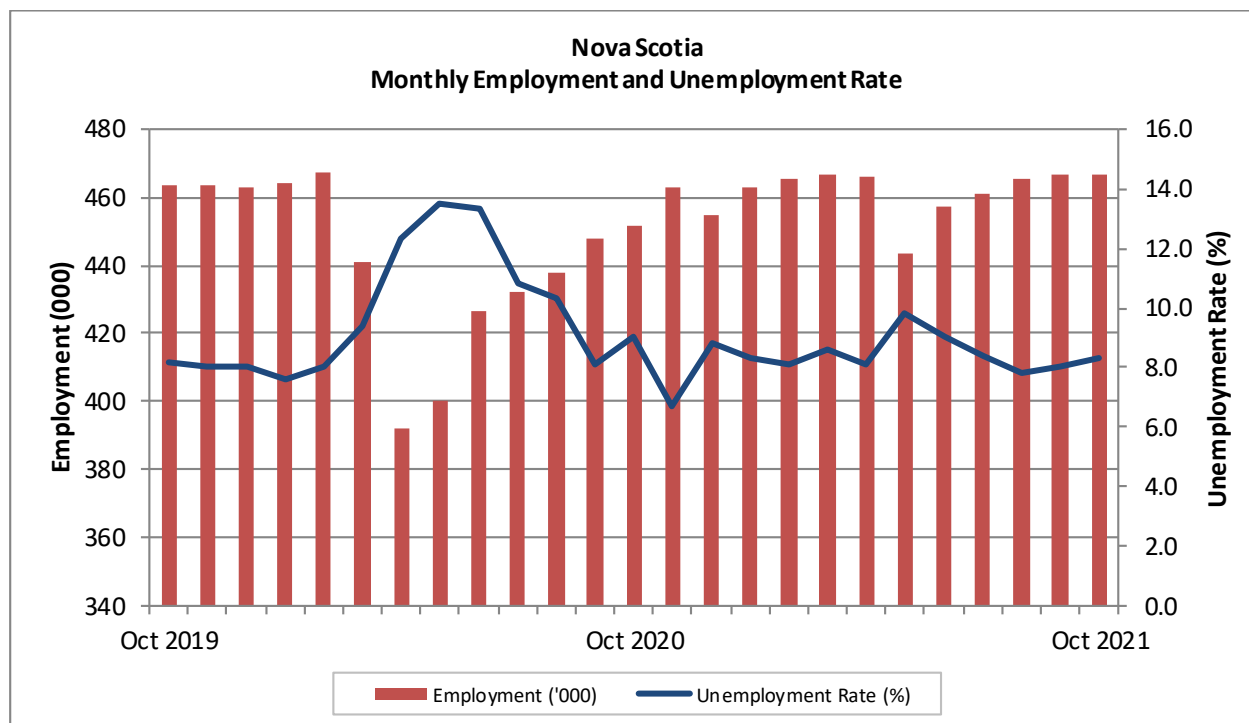
Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	Oct 2021	Sept 2021	Oct 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Population 15 + ('000)</b>	825.3	824.0	816.5	1.3	0.2	8.8	1.1
<b>Labour Force ('000)</b>	508.8	507.2	496.1	1.6	0.3	12.7	2.6
<b>Employment ('000)</b>	466.7	466.5	451.5	0.2	0.0	15.2	3.4
Full-Time ('000)	374.9	372.5	367.5	2.4	0.6	7.4	2.0
Part-Time ('000)	91.8	94.0	84.0	-2.2	-2.3	7.8	9.3
<b>Unemployment ('000)</b>	42.1	40.7	44.7	1.4	3.4	-2.6	-5.8
<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	8.3	8.0	9.0	0.3	-	-0.7	-
<b>Participation Rate (%)</b>	61.7	61.6	60.8	0.1	-	0.9	-
<b>Employment Rate (%)</b>	56.5	56.6	55.3	-0.1	-	1.2	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Year-over-year changes in the labour market were much more pronounced, as in October 2020 the economy was still recovering from the COVID-19 containment measures put in place during the first wave. Since then, employment increased by 15,200, divided evenly between full-time and part-time work, and the unemployment

rate declined from 9.0% to 8.3%. The working age population reached it's highest level ever this month. The province has been experiencing an influx of international and interprovincial migrants in recent years.



Though total employment has essentially returned to pre-pandemic levels, there has been a shift toward more public-sector employment. Private-sector employment is still 4.9% lower than it was in February 2020, while the number of public-sector workers has increased by 11.1%.

**Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age**

Seasonally Adjusted Data	Oct 2021 %	Sept 2021 %	Oct 2020 %	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>Total</b>	8.3	8.0	9.0	0.3	-0.7
<b>25 years and over</b>	8.1	7.6	8.2	0.5	-0.1
Men - 25 years and over	9.2	8.1	9.1	1.1	0.1
Women - 25 years and over	6.8	7.2	7.3	-0.4	-0.5
<b>15 to 24 years</b>	9.6	10.3	13.9	-0.7	-4.3
Men - 15 to 24 years	9.5	13.0	18.1	-3.5	-8.6
Women - 15 to 24 years	9.7	7.8	9.0	1.9	0.7

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

By broad age group, youth (15 to 24 years of age) and older workers (55 years and older) have been the main beneficiaries of job growth during the past 12 months. The number of employed youth went up by 8.2% year-over-year, but is still about 3,600 short of the level posted in February 2020. The unemployment rate for this age group sank to 9.6%, which is the lowest value on record since comparable LFS data began in 1976. However, a contributing factor to this improvement is flagging labour force participation. The youth participation rate this

month was 67%, the lowest value since the May 2021 lockdown and 6 pp below the pre-pandemic level observed in February 2020.

The number of older workers went up by 7.8% year-over-year, with part-time jobs accounting for two-thirds of the additional employment. On a monthly basis, employment in this cohort reached an all-time high in August 2021 before subsiding somewhat. Employment in this group has been trending steadily upwards over the years as the population ages.

By sex, some labour market indicators have diverged somewhat during the past 12 months. The level of employment among males went up by 9,000, all of which was full-time in nature, while the net 6,200-worker increase among females was comprised entirely of part-time work. Improvements in the participation and unemployment rates were also more pronounced among males, though the female unemployment rate remains the lower of the two, by more than 2 pp.

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Employment in the **goods-producing** and **services-producing sectors** expanded at very similar rates over the past year: 3.2% and 3.4%, respectively. In the goods-producing sector, job gains were led by the **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas** industry, which added 2,400 workers as it rebounded from a dip in employment in October 2020. Year-to-date exports in the fishing industry have improved substantially compared to 2020, as global markets for seafood products have been recovering. The number of workers in the **utilities** and **manufacturing** industries also went up. Despite the increase, **manufacturing** employment has not quite returned to pre-pandemic levels yet.

The **construction** industry shed 700 workers year-over-year. There is currently a high level of construction activity associated with provincial capital projects, such as highway twinning and healthcare facility redevelopment, as well as a large number of dwellings under construction or renovation amid rapid population growth. In some areas of the province, the need for workers in certain construction occupations exceeds the available labour supply. Employment in the **agriculture** industry also declined on an annual basis, but remains within the range of usual variation.

Among services-producing industries, the **transportation and warehousing** industry posted the largest annual employment increase. While a long-term shortage of transport truck drivers and a slow recovery in the air transportation industry may weigh on job growth, the opening of an Amazon Delivery Centre in Dartmouth and generally strong demand for parcel delivery services have been recent bright spots. Employment in the **retail and wholesale trade** industry was up by 6,000 compared to one year earlier. The recovery of jobs in this industry began to gather steam in August 2021, after having stalled during the previous nine months despite solid retail sales figures. Strong job growth also occurred in the **health care and social assistance** industry, as well as the **professional, scientific, and technical services** industry, which includes the province's IT sector.

Notable job loss occurred in the **information, culture, and recreation** and **accommodation and food services** industries. Both of these industries remain well below pre-pandemic employment levels, having been hit hard by containment measures that reduced venues' capacities and tourism visitations to the province. These challenges may gradually improve as physical distancing and travel restrictions have been recently loosened in response to the high rate of vaccination.

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	Oct 2021	Sept 2021	Oct 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Total employed, all industries</b>	466.7	466.5	451.5	0.2	0.0	15.2	3.4
<b>Goods-producing sector</b>	87.4	85.9	84.7	1.5	1.7	2.7	3.2
Agriculture	6.3	5.9	7.9	0.4	6.8	-1.6	-20.3
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	10.1	9.2	7.7	0.9	9.8	2.4	31.2
Utilities	5.3	5.5	4.2	-0.2	-3.6	1.1	26.2
Construction	33.3	33.6	34.0	-0.3	-0.9	-0.7	-2.1
Manufacturing	32.5	31.7	30.9	0.8	2.5	1.6	5.2
<b>Services-producing sector</b>	379.3	380.6	366.8	-1.3	-0.3	12.5	3.4
Trade	76.1	77.4	70.1	-1.3	-1.7	6.0	8.6
Transportation and warehousing	26.7	25.8	19.0	0.9	3.5	7.7	40.5
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	22.5	22.5	23.1	0.0	0.0	-0.6	-2.6
Professional, scientific and technical services	35.1	35.4	31.9	-0.3	-0.8	3.2	10.0
Business, building and other support services	18.8	18.4	16.9	0.4	2.2	1.9	11.2
Educational services	37.2	37.1	41.0	0.1	0.3	-3.8	-9.3
Health care and social assistance	73.8	75.0	70.4	-1.2	-1.6	3.4	4.8
Information, culture and recreation	13.2	13.5	15.1	-0.3	-2.2	-1.9	-12.6
Accommodation and food services	30.2	27.9	31.9	2.3	8.2	-1.7	-5.3
Other services	16.0	15.7	17.0	0.3	1.9	-1.0	-5.9
Public administration	29.7	32.0	30.4	-2.3	-7.2	-0.7	-2.3

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Employment in the **Cape Breton** economic region increased by 1,600 year-over-year, though all of the growth was in part-time work. The unemployment rate declined by 1 pp over the same period, but remains the highest in the province at 11.9%. The labour force also expanded, pushing the labour force participation rate up to 55%. The **accommodation and food services** industry accounted for much of the added employment, while the number of workers in the **manufacturing** and **wholesale and retail trade** declined.

The number of workers in the **North Shore** economic region increased by 4,500 on an annual basis, more than half of whom were in full-time positions. Despite the job growth, the unemployment rate also went up to 8.3% (+0.9pp) as a large number of jobseekers entered the labour force. All of the job growth in this region occurred in the services-producing sector, driven by the **public administration** and **finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing** industries. The largest employment declines occurred in the **health care and social assistance** and **accommodation and food services** industries.

In the **Annapolis Valley** economic region, employment climbed by 3,800 over the past year, three-quarters of which was in part-time work, while the unemployment rate edged downward to 7.9%. The participation rate rose to 58.5%, the highest in the province outside of the Halifax region, as 4,000 individuals joined the labour force. The **wholesale and retail trade** industry added more than 3,000 workers, while large job gains also accord in the **health care and social assistance** and **construction** industries. Meanwhile, the **public administration** sector shed the largest number of workers in this region: 1,200.

Robust job growth also occurred in the **Southern** economic region, which has added 3,400 workers since October 2020. Nearly all of the change was in full-time work. The unemployment rate declined from 10.7% to 8.7%, which was the largest improvement among the five economic regions in the province. The **goods-producing sector** accounted for slightly more than half of the additional employment, with major increases occurring in the **manufacturing** and **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** industries. In the **services-producing sector**, growth was led by the **professional, scientific, and technical services** industry, while the largest decline occurred in the **wholesale and retail trade** industry.

Developments in the **Halifax** economic region's labour market over the past year were quite positive. Employment increased by 7,700, all of which was full-time in nature, and the unemployment rate sank to a two-year low of 6.3%. The participation rate slipped by 0.5pp to 67.8%, but remains the highest in the province by a wide margin. Many recent newcomers to Nova Scotia have chosen to settle in Halifax, resulting in a 2.1% increase in the working age population. Strong employment growth occurred in the **wholesale and retail trade, transportation and warehousing, and professional, scientific, and technical services** industries, while the **information, culture, and recreation, accommodation and food services, and other services** industries shed 2,900 workers each.

**Nova Scotia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region**

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	Oct 2021 ('000)	Oct 2020 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	Oct 2021 (%)	Oct 2020 (%)	Yearly Variation (%)
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	471.5	451.2	4.5	7.7	8.8	-1.1
<b>Economic Regions</b>						
Cape Breton	52.8	50.9	3.7	11.9	12.9	-1.0
North Shore	68.1	64.5	5.6	8.3	7.4	0.9
Annapolis Valley	57.5	53.7	7.1	7.9	8.0	-0.1
Southern	50.2	46.8	7.3	8.7	10.7	-2.0
Halifax	243.0	235.3	3.3	6.3	8.0	-1.7

*Note: Totals may not add due to rounding*

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

**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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