



# Labour Market Bulletin

## Nova Scotia

## July 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 increased by 3,700 in Nova Scotia in July as the provincial labour market continued to rebound from the May lockdown, albeit at a slower pace than in June. The job growth was all full-time in nature, and outpaced the expansion of the labour force. This reduced the number of unemployed jobseekers and drove the unemployment rate down from 9.0% to 8.4%.

Nova Scotia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

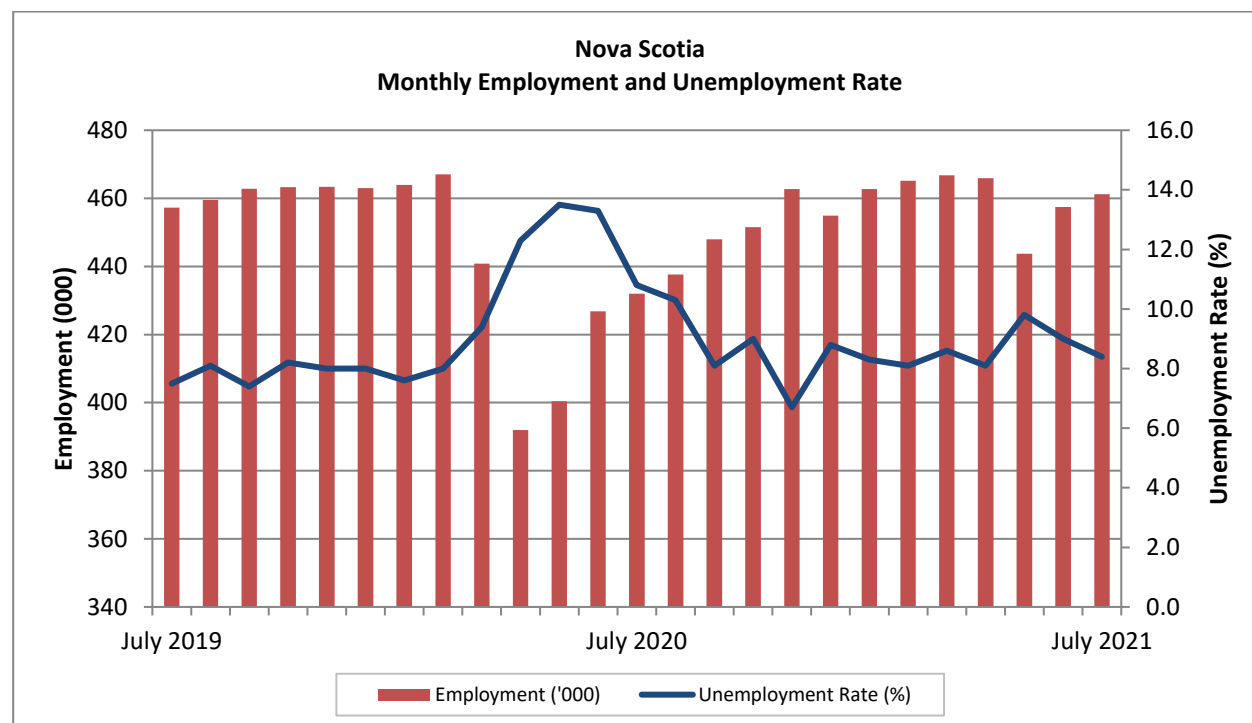
Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	July 2021	June 2021	July 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Population 15 + ('000)</b>	820.5	819.7	814.2	0.8	0.1	6.3	0.8
<b>Labour Force ('000)</b>	503.3	502.8	484.5	0.5	0.1	18.8	3.9
<b>Employment ('000)</b>	461.2	457.5	432.0	3.7	0.8	29.2	6.8
Full-Time ('000)	372.7	367.0	353.5	5.7	1.6	19.2	5.4
Part-Time ('000)	88.5	90.6	78.5	-2.1	-2.3	10.0	12.7
<b>Unemployment ('000)</b>	42.1	45.3	52.5	-3.2	-7.1	-10.4	-19.8
<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	8.4	9.0	10.8	-0.6	-	-2.4	-
<b>Participation Rate (%)</b>	61.3	61.3	59.5	0.0	-	1.8	-
<b>Employment Rate (%)</b>	56.2	55.8	53.1	0.4	-	3.1	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

One year ago, the provincial labour market was in the midst of a recovery from the record plunge in employment caused by the first round of COVID-19 containment measures. As a result, year-over-year changes appear very favourable— there was a 6.8% increase in employment and a 2.4 percentage point (pp) decrease in the unemployment rate. The present level of employment, however, remains somewhat lower than values posted both before the pandemic and during the first four months of 2021.

All other labour market indicators have also improved markedly since July 2020. The working age population has continued to increase, though this growth has been heavily concentrated in the older worker (55 years and older) age group. The labour force expanded by 3.9% year-over-year, employment gains accrued to both full- and part-time positions, and the participation rate increased by 1.8 pp.



By broad age group, youth (15 to 24 years of age) experienced the greatest improvement in labour market outcomes on both an annual and monthly basis. This reflects the disproportionate effect that containment measures have had on this age bracket throughout the pandemic, as they tend to be overrepresented in harder-hit industries such as retail trade and accommodation and food services. The number of employed youth increased by 11.9% year-over-year, but remains well below the pre-pandemic levels observed in late 2019 and early 2020. The youth unemployment rate also dropped substantially over the past year, from 20.3% to 14.0%.

The prime working-age group experienced a relatively lower drop in employment during lockdown periods and correspondingly had less of a rebound: 4.3% since last July. Meanwhile, the number of older workers reached the highest level on record this month, far surpassing pre-pandemic levels. This increase has been driven in large part by the growing size of this age group, which is the result of large numbers of residents reaching the age of 55 as well as interprovincial migration trends. However, the labour force participation rate of this age group has also edged up, contributing to an overall annual employment increase of 10.7%.

Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	July 2021 %	June 2021 %	July 2020 %	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>Total</b>	8.4	9.0	10.8	-0.6	-2.4
<b>25 years and over</b>	7.4	7.7	9.2	-0.3	-1.8
Men - 25 years and over	8.1	8.6	9.1	-0.5	-1.0
Women - 25 years and over	6.7	6.7	9.3	0.0	-2.6
<b>15 to 24 years</b>	14.0	16.6	20.3	-2.6	-6.3
Men - 15 to 24 years	18.2	19.6	24.2	-1.4	-6.0
Women - 15 to 24 years	9.9	13.9	15.7	-4.0	-5.8

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

Female job gains have accounted for a bit more than half of all employment growth observed over the past year among youth and prime working-aged individuals. This has helped to narrow the gap between male and female employment that has emerged during periods of stricter containment measures through the pandemic.

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

In both the **goods-producing** and **services-producing sectors**, employment has recovered at a comparable pace over the past year, expanding by 7.2% and 6.7% respectively. In the **goods-producing sector**, the strongest growth was in the **construction** industry, which added 4,900 workers (+15.8%) year-over-year. Activity in this industry has been strong, with shortages of some labour and trade occupations reported amid a surge of capital spending on highways and health care facilities, as well as elevated demand for new residential dwellings. The second-largest industry in this sector, **manufacturing**, saw more modest growth over the past year and remains below pre-pandemic levels. Employment declined by 800 year-over-year in the **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** industry. Despite this change, the level of employment in this industry remains comparable to pre-pandemic levels.

Of the **services-producing** industries, **transportation and warehousing** expanded at the quickest pace over the past year. Activity in some subsets of this industry, such as couriers and messengers, increased as a result of pandemic containment measures that discouraged in-person dining and shopping. Other sub-industries are in a state of recovery. Travel to and within the province has also begun to slowly improve. The **professional, scientific, and technical services** industry has expanded steadily throughout the pandemic, posting the second-highest rate of year-over-year growth and offsetting some of the sustained job losses that have occurred in other industries.

Changes over the past year have been mixed in the industries that were harder hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of workers employed in the **accommodation and food services** industry rose by 14.4% since last July, but remains approximately one-quarter below the pre-pandemic employment level. Restrictions for restaurants and bars have been reduced significantly, but the recovery of this industry may continue to be dampened by international and interprovincial travel restrictions. Employment in the **wholesale and retail trade** industry was 3.9% higher than in July 2020, but has not fully recovered. In February 2021, jobs in this industry peaked at 92% of their pre-COVID-19 level before declining again. The **information, culture, and recreation** industry experienced the most severe job loss on an annual basis, wiping out some of the employment recovery that had previously

occurred. All other industries experienced various degrees of positive employment growth over the past 12 months, with the exception of the **educational services** industry.

Nova Scotia Monthly Employed Labour Force, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	July 2021	June 2021	July 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Total employed, all industries</b>	461.2	457.5	432.0	3.7	0.8	29.2	6.8
<b>Goods-producing sector</b>	89.5	88.5	83.5	1.0	1.1	6.0	7.2
Agriculture	6.2	6.1	5.4	0.1	1.6	0.8	14.8
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	12.0	11.6	12.8	0.4	3.4	-0.8	-6.3
Utilities	3.4	4.2	3.1	-0.8	-19.0	0.3	9.7
Construction	36.0	35.3	31.1	0.7	2.0	4.9	15.8
Manufacturing	31.9	31.3	31.1	0.6	1.9	0.8	2.6
<b>Services-producing sector</b>	371.7	369.1	348.4	2.6	0.7	23.3	6.7
Trade	71.7	72.4	69.0	-0.7	-1.0	2.7	3.9
Transportation and warehousing	24.3	25.2	18.2	-0.9	-3.6	6.1	33.5
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	23.0	23.1	21.1	-0.1	-0.4	1.9	9.0
Professional, scientific and technical services	34.2	34.2	28.6	0.0	0.0	5.6	19.6
Business, building and other support services	18.4	18.8	17.8	-0.4	-2.1	0.6	3.4
Educational services	35.1	35.3	36.2	-0.2	-0.6	-1.1	-3.0
Health care and social assistance	77.5	72.7	71.6	4.8	6.6	5.9	8.2
Information, culture and recreation	13.2	13.9	15.5	-0.7	-5.0	-2.3	-14.8
Accommodation and food services	28.6	27.1	25.0	1.5	5.5	3.6	14.4
Other services	14.8	15.2	14.7	-0.4	-2.6	0.1	0.7
Public administration	30.8	31.2	30.7	-0.4	-1.3	0.1	0.3

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 3.1% over the past year, the majority of which was part-time in nature. During the same period, the labour force shrank by 1,000 individuals. The net effect of these two changes was a sizeable drop of the number of unemployed jobseekers (-2,500) and of the unemployment rate, which fell from 16.7% to 12.6%. The region's participation rate was the lowest in the province by several percentage points this month. Job growth was led by gains in the **public administration** industry, followed by **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** and **accommodation and food services**.

The number of workers in the **North Shore** economic region jumped by 17.6% year-over-year, the largest relative increase in the province. Nearly three-quarters of the additional employment was in full-time work. The effect of this job growth on the unemployment rate was limited somewhat by a significant expansion of the labour force, which grew by 7,300 individuals. Nonetheless, the unemployment rate declined from 13.3% to 7.4%. All but four industries experienced job growth over the past year, with the largest gains occurring in the **wholesale and retail trade** industry. The number of workers in the **accommodations and food services** industry declined, however.

Similar to the North Shore, the **Annapolis Valley** region experienced a large expansion of the labour force (+5,500), which was outpaced by even faster job growth (+6,200). More than five-in-six of the added jobs were full-time. As a result, the unemployment rate slipped from 10.6% to 8.4%. The greatest employment increase occurred in the **wholesale and retail trade** industry, followed by **educational services**, while the number of workers in the **public administration** industry went down.

Employment in the **Southern** economic region went up by 6.1% in the past year, all of which was part-time in nature. The labour force grew at a much slower pace, 0.4%, resulting in little change to the participation rate. The unemployment rate declined by 5.1 pp to 7.1%. Job gains occurred in the majority of industries, led by the **health care and social assistance** and **professional, scientific, and technical services** industries. The number of workers in the **wholesale and retail trade** industry declined.

The **Halifax** economic region experienced solid employment growth over the past 12 months, adding 12,800 workers (+5.8%), approximately three-quarters of added positions were full-time. The participation rate for the Halifax region, consistently the highest in the province, rose to 67.7% as the labour force expanded at a faster pace than the working age population. The unemployment rate went down from 10.8% to 8.6%. The **professional, scientific, and technical services** industry added the most jobs over the past year, followed closely by **transportation and warehousing**. The **construction** industry also added 3,400 workers, as population growth and an exceptionally tight housing market supported residential investment. On the other hand, employment in the **information, culture, and recreation** industry went down by 1,100.

Nova Scotia 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 (%)
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	464.9	430.6	8.0	8.7	11.9	-3.2
<b>Economic Regions</b>						
Cape Breton	49.5	48.0	3.1	12.6	16.7	-4.1
North Shore	70.8	60.2	17.6	7.4	13.3	-5.9
Annapolis Valley	57.6	51.4	12.1	8.4	10.6	-2.2
Southern	52.0	49.0	6.1	7.1	12.2	-5.1
Halifax	234.9	222.1	5.8	8.6	10.8	-2.2

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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