



Labour Market Bulletin

Nova Scotia

September 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 went up by 1.9% in Q3 2021 as the labour market rebounded from COVID-19 containment measures implemented during the previous quarter. The majority of the added employment was part-time in nature. The labour force also expanded, but at a slower rate than employment; as a result, the unemployment rate declined by 0.9 percentage points (pp) to 8.1%. Despite the growth of the labour force, the participation rate edged up by just 0.3pp to 61.4% as the working age population expanded at a solid clip.

Nova Scotia Quarterly Labour Force Statistics

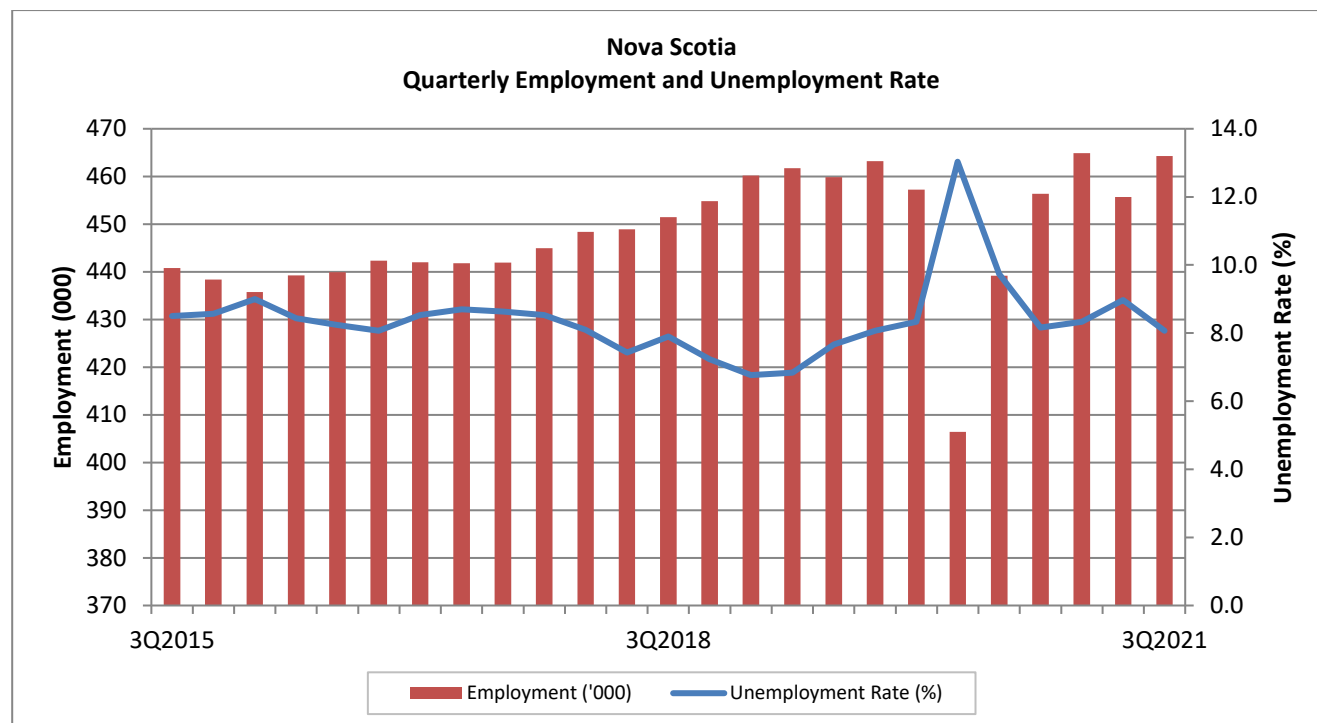
Seasonally Adjusted Quarterly Data	3rd Quarter 2021	2nd Quarter 2021	3rd Quarter 2020	Quarterly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	822.3	818.8	815.0	3.5	0.4	7.2	0.9
Labour Force ('000)	505.0	500.7	486.6	4.3	0.9	18.4	3.8
Employment ('000)	464.3	455.7	439.2	8.6	1.9	25.1	5.7
Full-Time ('000)	372.1	371.2	353.4	0.9	0.2	18.8	5.3
Part-Time ('000)	92.1	84.5	85.8	7.6	9.0	6.3	7.3
Unemployment ('000)	40.8	45.0	47.5	-4.2	-9.3	-6.7	-14.1
Unemployment Rate (%)	8.1	9.0	9.7	-0.9	-	-1.7	-
Participation Rate (%)	61.4	61.1	59.7	0.3	-	1.7	-
Employment Rate (%)	56.5	55.7	53.9	0.8	-	2.6	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

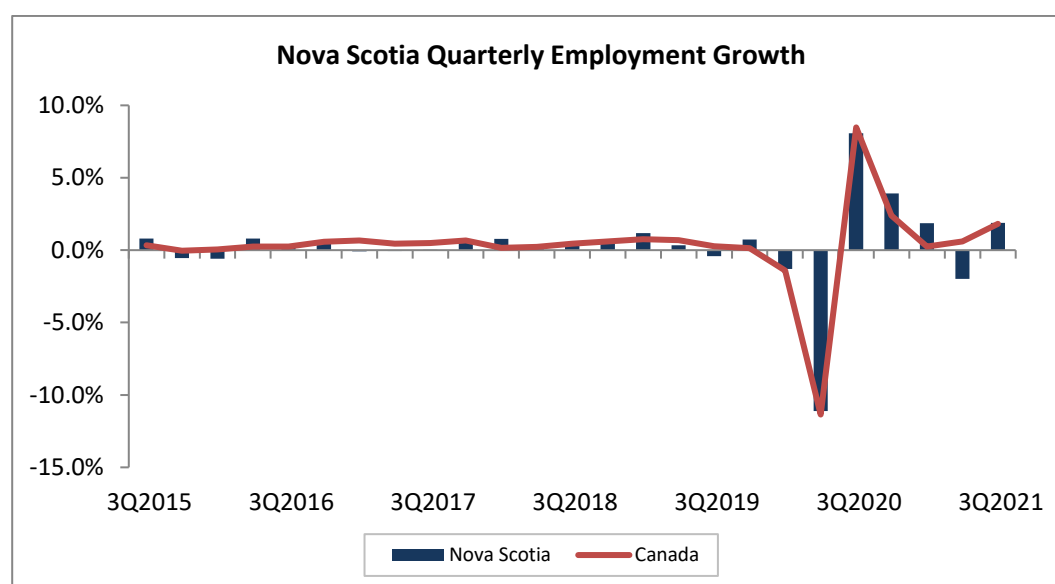
Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287

Employment went up by 5.7% compared to Q3 of 2020, which was divided between full- and part-time work. One year ago, during Q3 2020, the economy was still in the midst of the first rebound from wide-ranging containment

measures in effect during Q2 2020 so a portion of the job growth represents the recovery of previous job loss. The labour force also experienced strong growth during the past year as individuals who had paused their search for work during the first wave of COVID-19 cases resumed job hunting activities. The net effect of these developments was a 1.7pp decrease in the unemployment rate.



Over 80% of job growth in the past year occurred in the private sector. Despite this increase, however, private sector employment has not yet returned to the pre-pandemic level measured in Q4 2019. In comparison, the number of workers in the public sector rose by several thousand throughout 2020 and remains about 7.4% above pre-pandemic levels.



Among broad age groups, youth (15 to 24 years of age) experienced the greatest year-over-year employment increase, at 13.4%. Throughout the pandemic, this cohort experienced the most severe job losses during periods of strict containment measures, and the rebound has been pronounced. Labour market outcomes for this age group were also strong from a historical perspective: 60% of youth were employed in Q3 2021 and the youth unemployment rate fell to 12.1%, the third- and second-best figures on record, respectively.

Labour market indicators among the prime working age group (25 to 54 years of age) improved to a moderate extent over the past year. Employment went up by 5,200, nearly all of which was full-time, while the unemployment rate fell to 6.8%.

Older workers (age 55 years and older) continue to make up a growing share of the labour force. Despite comprising about one-quarter of employment overall, this age group accounted for nearly half of the year-over-year employment growth and nearly two-thirds of the expansion of the labour force. Both of these measures for older workers reached record high values in Q3 2021.

Nova Scotia Quarterly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	3rd Quarter 2021 %	2nd Quarter 2021 %	3rd Quarter 2020 %	Quarterly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	8.1	9.0	9.7	-0.9	-1.7
25 years and over	7.4	8.0	8.6	-0.6	-1.2
Men - 25 years and over	7.9	9.0	9.0	-1.1	-1.1
Women - 25 years and over	6.9	6.8	8.2	0.1	-1.3
15 to 24 years	12.1	15.2	16.7	-3.1	-4.6
Men - 15 to 24 years	15.3	17.2	21.2	-2.0	-5.9
Women - 15 to 24 years	9.0	13.1	11.5	-4.2	-2.5

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

Job growth over the past year was divided nearly evenly between males and females, though part-time positions made up a disproportionate share of the increase among females. In the youth and prime working age groups, females account for more than half of employment and also have a lower unemployment rate than their male counterparts. Among older workers, however, the reverse is true.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

The goods- and services-producing sectors posted fairly similar rates of job growth during the past year: 4.9% and 5.9%, respectively. Employment went up the most in the **goods-producing** sector, led by the **construction** industry which added 2,200 employees year-over-year. Population growth and a surge of capital spending by the provincial government on highway and healthcare infrastructure is driving a high level of construction activity, leading to worker shortages in certain construction trades. In the **agriculture** industry, employment also went up amid reports of a more productive growing season and favourable weather conditions. **Manufacturing** employment edged up by 1.5%, while the number of workers in **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** declined by 3.6%.

There was a wide range of outcomes among **services-producing** industries. The greatest employment growth occurred in the **transportation and warehousing** industry, which added 6,000 employees year-over-year. There have been several positive developments in this industry over the past year, such as the partial recovery of travel to and within the region, an increase in the popularity of parcel delivery, greater cargo throughput in the Port of Halifax, and the construction of an Amazon delivery centre. The **professional, scientific and technical services** industry added 5,900 workers, and has grown steadily throughout the pandemic. This industry includes the province's information technology sector, which has seen a large number of business openings and expansions during the past year. Employment in the **wholesale and retail trade** industry expanded by 5,700 year-over-year, a larger increase than during the previous three quarters. Despite this improvement, this industry still employs several thousand fewer workers than it did before the pandemic struck. The **health care and social assistance** industry also posted strong growth. Strong demand for workers in this industry is expected to continue to increase as the population ages and consumes more health care services.

Nova Scotia Quarterly Employed Labour Force, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	3rd Quarter 2021	2nd Quarter 2021	3rd Quarter 2020	Quarterly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	464.3	455.7	439.2	8.6	1.9	25.1	5.7
Goods-producing sector	87.8	91.6	83.7	-3.8	-4.2	4.1	4.9
Agriculture	6.0	6.9	5.0	-0.9	-13.0	1.0	20.0
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	10.9	11.3	11.3	-0.4	-3.8	-0.4	-3.6
Utilities	4.4	4.3	3.7	0.1	2.3	0.7	20.0
Construction	35.0	36.2	32.8	-1.2	-3.4	2.2	6.7
Manufacturing	31.5	32.9	31.0	-1.4	-4.3	0.5	1.5
Services-producing sector	376.5	364.2	355.5	12.3	3.4	21.0	5.9
Trade	74.2	69.5	68.5	4.7	6.8	5.7	8.4
Transportation and warehousing	24.5	23.3	18.6	1.2	5.1	6.0	32.1
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	22.8	23.2	22.0	-0.4	-1.6	0.8	3.5
Professional, scientific and technical services	35.7	33.9	29.8	1.8	5.3	5.9	19.9
Business, building and other support services	18.3	18.0	16.8	0.3	1.9	1.5	8.7
Educational services	36.7	36.3	38.2	0.4	1.1	-1.4	-3.8
Health care and social assistance	76.2	72.8	71.5	3.4	4.7	4.7	6.6
Information, culture and recreation	13.4	14.0	15.7	-0.5	-3.8	-2.3	-14.6
Accommodation and food services	27.7	26.6	27.6	1.2	4.4	0.2	0.6
Other services	15.5	15.6	16.8	-0.2	-1.1	-1.4	-8.1
Public administration	31.4	31.0	30.0	0.4	1.3	1.4	4.6

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Job growth in the **accommodation and food services** industry was nearly flat, adding just 200 workers, while the largest employment loss occurred in the **information, culture, and recreation** industry. Both of these industries

have been hard-hit by measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 which have limited certain activities and patron capacities, and employment levels in both remain well below pre-pandemic levels.

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Employment in the **Cape Breton** economic region went up by 1,600 year-over-year, all of which was part-time in nature. This was the smallest increase among the economic regions but the overall level of employment has nearly returned to pre-pandemic values. The unemployment rate decreased to 11.5%, which is historically low for this region. The labour force participation rate also improved, climbing to 54.5%, but remains the lowest in the province. The largest employment increases occurred in the **construction** and **accommodation and food services** industries, while the number of workers in the **manufacturing, accommodation and food services**, and the **professional, scientific, and technical services** industries went down.

The number of workers in the **North Shore** economic region rose by 10.9% on an annual basis, the largest relative increase the province. The labour force expanded by a comparable rate, driving the labour force participation rate up to 59%. An increase in the number of people looking for work limited the change in the unemployment rate, however, which decreased by just 0.7pp to 7.7%. Employment gains were led by the **transportation and warehousing, agriculture, and finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing** industries, while the largest decline occurred in the **accommodation and food services** industry.

In the **Annapolis Valley** economic region, employment increased by 4,600 year-over-year, more than half of which was in full-time work. The labour force also increased by 4,600 individuals, causing the participation rate to go up, while the unemployment rate slipped from 9.3% to 8.5%. The Annapolis Valley was the only region outside of Halifax to experience positive growth in the working age population during the past year. The **wholesale and retail trade** industry accounted for much of the job growth, though there was also a large increase in the **health care and social assistance** industry. The largest employment decline in this region occurred in the **manufacturing** industry.

Nova Scotia Quarterly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

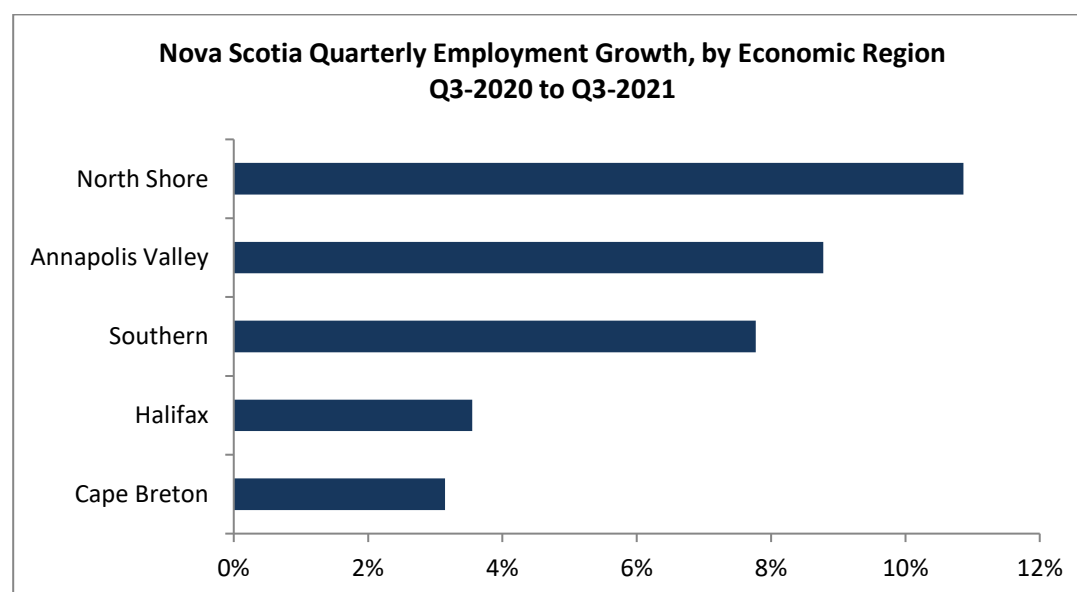
3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	3rd Quarter 2021 ('000)	3rd Quarter 2020 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	3rd Quarter 2021 (%)	3rd Quarter 2020 (%)	Yearly Variation (%)
Nova Scotia	472.3	447.3	5.6	7.8	9.6	-1.8
Economic Regions						
Cape Breton	52.5	50.9	3.1	11.5	13.7	-2.2
North Shore	69.4	62.6	10.9	7.7	8.4	-0.7
Annapolis Valley	57.0	52.4	8.8	8.5	9.3	-0.8
Southern	51.3	47.6	7.8	7.7	11.4	-3.7
Halifax	242.1	233.8	3.6	6.8	8.6	-1.8

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Employment went up by 3,700 in the **Southern** economic region during the past year. Three-in-four of the added workers were in full-time positions. This region experienced the largest reduction of the unemployment rate in the province: from 11.4% to 7.7%. The **manufacturing** industry led employment growth, followed by the **professional, scientific and technical services** and **accommodation and food services** industries, while the **wholesale and retail trade** industry shed 2,100 workers.

Employment in the **Halifax** economic region surpassed pre-pandemic levels as the region added 8,300 workers year-over-year, nearly all in full-time work. The employment growth reduced the number of unemployed jobseekers and lowered the unemployment rate by 1.8pp to 6.8%. Halifax was the only economic region in which the participation rate declined as the working age population expanded by 2.0%, accounting for most of the province's population growth during the past year. The top industries for job growth in this region during the past year were **transportation and warehousing, professional, scientific, and technical services**, and **wholesale and retail trade**. The **information, culture, and recreation** industry experienced the greatest job loss.



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.

Prepared by: Labour Market Analysis Directorate, Service Canada, Atlantic Region

For further information, please contact the LMI team at:

http://www.esdc.gc.ca/cgi-bin/contact/edsc-esdc/eng/contact_us.aspx?section=lmi

For information on the Labour Force Survey, please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at: www.statcan.gc.ca

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada as represented by Employment and Social Development Canada, 2021, all rights reserved