

# Labour Market Bulletin

Ontario

April 2021



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Ontario, including the regions of Hamilton—Niagara Peninsula, Kingston—Pembroke, Kitchener—Waterloo—Barrie, London, Muskoka—Kawarthas, Northeast, Northwest, Ottawa, Stratford—Bruce Peninsula, Toronto and Windsor—Sarnia.

# **OVERVIEW**

## Labour Force Trends - Ontario employment declined in April 2021 amid province-wide stay-at-home order

- Employment decreased by 152,700 in Ontario in April 2021
- Most of the job losses were in full-time work (-134,000)
- The unemployment rate increased to 9.0%
- The unemployment rate for Ontario's youth aged 15 to 24 soared to 20.4%
- Employment losses were in both the goods-producing and services-producing sectors in April, although four industries showed improvements

In an effort to lower COVID-19 transmissions, effective April 8, the Government of Ontario issued a province-wide Stay-at-Home order requiring everyone to remain at home except for essential purposes, such as going to the grocery store, accessing health care services, outdoor exercise, or work that cannot be performed remotely. Under the shutdown, shopping centres were limited to curbside pick-up or delivery, although essential businesses (such as, grocery stores, discount and big box retailers, and pharmacies) remained open at reduced capacity, with sales of non-essential items prohibited. Restaurants were open for take-out only, while sports and recreational facilities, retail and gaming establishments were all closed. Personal care services, cinemas, and performing arts facilities were also shut to the public with some exceptions.<sup>1</sup>

According to Statistics Canada's Guide to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), people who are on temporary layoff due to business conditions, such as the mandatory shutdown from the COVID-19 pandemic, with an expectation of recall, and were available for work, are considered unemployed. This is different from people who had a job but were not at work due to illness or disability, personal or family responsibilities, vacation or labour dispute who are all considered employed.<sup>2</sup>

Employment in Ontario decreased by 152,700 (-2.1%) in April 2021. Smaller losses in part-time work (-18,700; -1.5%) were overshadowed by the drop in full-time work (-134,000; -2.2%). The unemployment rate grew by 1.5



percentage points to 9.0%. This marks the second month in 2021 that the province experienced employment losses, with the damages nearly reaching those in January, during the second province-wide lockdown (-153,500; -2.1%). The participation rate dropped slightly to 64.4% and the employment rate was marked down to 58.6% over the month.

Youth employment dropped in Ontario by 73,000 (-7.8%) in April with the losses in both full-time work (-50,700; -10.2%) and part-time work (-22,400; -5.1%). The unemployment rate soared by 5.3 percentage points to reach 20.4%. However, over the past year, estimates show employment conditions for youth have improved, with job gains of 174,500 (25.4%) and an increase in the participation rate from 48.5% in April 2020 to 58.1% in April 2021. Nationally, the youth unemployment rate stood at 16.1%.

Similarly, employment fell by 207,100 (-1.1%) in Canada in April 2021, with Ontario accounting for the majority of losses. Damages were reflected in both full-time work (-129,400; -0.8%) and part-time work (-77,800; -2.3%). All but three provinces experienced employment losses over the month, with gains in Saskatchewan (9,500; 1.7%), New Brunswick (4,100; 1.1%), and Manitoba (3,200; 0.5%). As the national unemployment rate increased to 8.1%, the employment rate decreased by 0.7 percentage points to 59.6% this month. Between April 2020 and April 2021, average hourly wages in the country also dipped from \$30.62 to \$30.07 (-1.8%).<sup>3</sup>

Total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 266,000 in the United States in April 2021 and the unemployment rate remained stable at 6.1%.<sup>4</sup> Notable job gains in leisure and hospitality, other services, and local government education were partially offset by employment declines in temporary help services and in couriers and messengers. The number of unemployed persons at 9.8M were little changed in April. These measures are down considerable from April 2020 figures, however they remain well above their levels prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in February 2020, where the number of unemployment persons stood at 5.7M.

The provincial labour market has recovered considerably over the past twelve months. Employment in Ontario increased by 805,500 (12.6%) between April 2020 and April 2021 with the gains realized in both full-time work (553,000; 10.2%) and in part-time work (252,500; 25.6%). The unemployment rate has dropped by 2.3 percentage points and the participation rate has increased from 59.2% to 64.4% over the year.

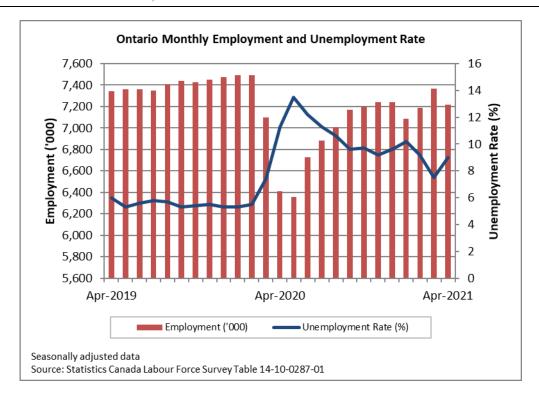
#### **Ontario Monthly Labour Force Statistics**

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|--------------------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|------|------------------|-------|--|--|
| Seasonally Adjusted                  | April 2021 | March 2021    | April 2020 | Monthly Variation |      | Yearly Variation |       |  |  |
| Monthly Data                         | April 2021 | IVIAICII 2021 | April 2020 | Number            | %    | Number           | %     |  |  |
| Population 15 + ('000)               | 12,311.3   | 12,301.8      | 12,191.5   | 9.5               | 0.1  | 119.8            | 1.0   |  |  |
| Labour Force ('000)                  | 7,932.2    | 7,964.5       | 7,222.6    | -32.3             | -0.4 | 709.6            | 9.8   |  |  |
| Employment ('000)                    | 7,215.4    | 7,368.1       | 6,409.9    | -152.7            | -2.1 | 805.5            | 12.6  |  |  |
| Full-Time ('000)                     | 5,976.2    | 6,110.2       | 5,423.2    | -134.0            | -2.2 | 553.0            | 10.2  |  |  |
| Part-Time ('000)                     | 1,239.2    | 1,257.9       | 986.7      | -18.7             | -1.5 | 252.5            | 25.6  |  |  |
| Unemployment ('000)                  | 716.8      | 596.4         | 812.8      | 120.4             | 20.2 | -96.0            | -11.8 |  |  |
| Unemployment Rate (%)                | 9.0        | 7.5           | 11.3       | 1.5               | -    | -2.3             | -     |  |  |
| Participation Rate (%)               | 64.4       | 64.7          | 59.2       | -0.3              | -    | 5.2              | -     |  |  |
| Employment Rate (%)                  | 58.6       | 59.9          | 52.6       | -1.3              | -    | 6.0              | -     |  |  |

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey - Table 14-10-0287, formerly CANSIM 282-0087





#### Ontario Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

| Seasonally Adjusted Data  | April 2021 | March 2021 | April 2020 | Monthly Varia-<br>tion | Yearly Varia-<br>tion |  |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--|
|                           | (%)        | (%)        | (%)        | (% points)             | (% points)            |  |
| Total                     | 9.0        | 7.5        | 11.3       | 1.5                    | -2.3                  |  |
| 25 years and over         | 7.2        | 6.3        | 9.4        | 0.9                    | -2.2                  |  |
| Men - 25 years and over   | 6.3        | 6.2        | 8.7        | 0.1                    | -2.4                  |  |
| Women - 25 years and over | 8.3        | 6.3        | 10.1       | 2.0                    | -1.8                  |  |
| 15 to 24 years            | 20.4       | 15.1       | 24.3       | 5.3                    | -3.9                  |  |
| Men - 15 to 24 years      | 21.0       | 13.6       | 24.3       | 7.4                    | -3.3                  |  |
| Women - 15 to 24 years    | 19.7       | 16.7       | 24.3       | 3.0                    | -4.6                  |  |

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

# **EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY**

## Goods-producing employment spiralled downwards with losses concentrated in manufacturing

Employment in Ontario's **goods-producing sector** decreased by 11,000 (-0.7%) in April. The largest losses were observed in manufacturing (-10,100; -1.3%), followed by construction (-3,400; -0.6%), utilities (-1,500; -2.9%) and forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas (-1,400; -4.0%). The only employment gains were observed in agriculture (+5,400; +8.6%).



The **agriculture** industry registered gains for the second consecutive month. The industry benefitted from the announced Government of Canada funding of \$691M over 10 years to support on-farm investments and market development for chicken, turkey and egg farmers. However, the industry continued to struggle as the pandemic ravaged its workforce. In an effort to curb these impacts, a new vaccine pilot program was launched at Toronto Pearson International Airport to vaccinate migrant farm workers upon arrival. In addition, the Government of Canada announced that it would spend \$17.8M to operate the isolation and recovery centre in Windsor for migrant farm workers infected or exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

The **construction** industry returned to shedding employment after registering a dramatic increase in March. Despite dismal numbers, the industry saw a significant increase in housing starts. Compared to February 2021, housing starts increased by 45.0% in March 2021, and almost doubled the number registered in March 2020. However, this trend may have faced some friction in the later weeks of April as the provincial government announced the shutdown of non-essential construction projects like shopping mall, hotels, and office towers starting April 17.9

Announcements of new construction projects in the industry included \$656.5M in federal and provincial government funding to provide critical infrastructure upgrades to protect students and staff from COVID-19 in the province's schools. There was also a \$1.6M investment by the City of Thunder Bay to rebuild existing recreational trail systems and develop the waterfront trail this summer. 11

April also saw investments in construction related to education and training. The federal and provincial governments announced up to \$560K to provide skills training to 60 women and youth in the Niagara Region for careers in construction and manufacturing,<sup>12</sup> while the Government of Ontario is investing \$592K to support 150 people in Hamilton prepare for jobs in construction.<sup>13</sup>

Employment in **manufacturing** continued its decline this month, following a poor showing in March. The IHS Markit Canada Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell to 57.2 in April from 58.5 in March, still recording a monthly expansion for the tenth consecutive month. Firms are still seeing a rise in new orders despite a moderated rate of growth since March owing to a surge in COVID-19 cases, tightening restrictions, and port congestions. This has prompted additions to the workforce and increased demand for input stocks, suggesting increased production in the coming months.<sup>14</sup>

The motor vehicle manufacturing industry faced significant challenges in April as global shortages in semiconductor chips led to the temporary idling of multiple plants. Plants extending their shutdown into May and/or June include the Ford Motor Company's Essex engine plant affecting 850 workers;<sup>15</sup> the Stellantis Windsor assembly plant;<sup>16</sup> and General Motors of Canada CAMI assembly plant in Ingersoll.<sup>17</sup> In addition, Toyota Canada was forced to stop production across multiple facilities as Toyotetsu Canada Inc., a producer of parts for Toyota manufacturers, temporarily paused their operations due to eight COVID-19 cases at their Simcoe facility.<sup>18</sup> In positive news, the Government of Ontario announced that it would invest \$10M in automotive parts companies through the Ontario Automotive Modernization Program. With more than 100 projects underway or in the pipeline, the program will boost competitiveness and is expected to create about 570 jobs.<sup>19</sup>

The meat and poultry processing industry continued to face COVID-19 challenges in April with the temporary shutdown of Cargill's poultry processing plant in London due to a COVID-19 outbreak.<sup>20</sup> However, the industry did receive some positive news with the Government of Canada announcing a \$12.2M investment in 42 meat-processing companies in Ontario to adopt health and safety measures, upgrade facilities and procure new equipment to boost production capacity.<sup>21</sup> April brought some stability to the beverage production industry as Molson's Toronto Brewery workers headed back to work on April 6, after nearly two months of negotiations with the company.<sup>22</sup>



The manufacturing industry saw some positive job creation news this month, particularly in the metal and machinery and equipment manufacturing industry. Major announcements in the industry included NRB Modular solutions opening a manufacturing facility in Cambridge, expecting to hire up to 100 workers;<sup>23</sup> Kingston Aluminum Technology Inc., an aluminum bottles manufacturer, scaling up production and creating 29 skilled jobs;<sup>24</sup> and Alps Welding Limited expanding operations in Woodbridge creating additional employment opportunities.<sup>25</sup> Other positive news included the relocation of custom millwork company, Mirmil Products, to a larger facility in Campbellford, adding 30 new employees;<sup>26</sup> St. Thomas-based rail car manufacturer, Arva industries, announcing plans to add 50 workers;<sup>27</sup> and the provincial government investing \$850K in Dimachem Inc. to produce 12 million bottles of Pine-Sol Disinfectant per year in Windsor, creating about 14 jobs.<sup>28</sup>

When compared year-over-year, employment in Ontario's goods-producing sector increased by 230,400 (+18.6%). In a reversal of the month-over-month trend, agriculture (-4,300; -5.9%) is the only industry that registered losses year-over-year. Manufacturing (+149,200; +23.7%) led employment gains, followed by construction (+83,100; +18.1%), utilities (+1,400; +2.9%), and forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas (+1,000; +3.1%).

#### Employment in the services-producing sector plunges following province-wide shutdown

Employment in Ontario's **services-producing sector** dropped by 141,700 (-2.4%) in April. Eight out of eleven industries registered declines in the sector, with wholesale and retail trade (-56,700; -5.2%), educational services (-44,100; -7.8%), accommodation and food services (-23,600; -7.1%) and information, culture and recreation (-21,300; -6.7%) leading the charge. Gains were observed in three industries, namely, public administration (+8,800; +2.3%), finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (+7,300; +1.2%), and transportation and warehousing (+4,200; +1.2%).

**Retail trade** faced significant challenges in April as retail stores were temporarily restricted to operating at 25%-50% capacity or less as part of the provincial pandemic restrictions. The industry was left reeling from Disney's announced closure of all of its 18 locations in Canada this year,<sup>29</sup> in addition to the closure of multiple fashion retailers<sup>30,31</sup> and food retailers.<sup>32,33</sup>

However, the opening of major retailers offset some of these layoffs. These included the reopening of a Costco Business Centre in St. Catharines, creating about 140 new jobs;<sup>34</sup> Food Basics opening a new grocery store in Courtice, creating 110 new jobs;<sup>35</sup> and athleisure brand Athleta announcing the opening of two physical stores in Canada, one of which will be located in Toronto.<sup>36</sup> The industry also benefitted from the opening of several new cannabis stores across the province including Sparkle Cannabis Company in Hamilton,<sup>37</sup> Trease in Bobcaygeon,<sup>38</sup> Spiritleaf in Kemptville,<sup>39</sup> Sparq Retail in Peterborough,<sup>40</sup> and High Tide Inc. in Ottawa.<sup>41</sup>

The **educational services** industry was hit hard this month with Laurentian University's restructuring plans resulting in the layoff of 195 employees, including faculty and staff.<sup>42</sup> The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board also eliminated nearly 104 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions at elementary schools because of low enrollment rates in kindergarten and grades 1 through 3, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>43</sup>

The **accommodation and food services** industry struggled as the provincial government prohibited indoor and outdoor dining and limited services to take-out, drive-through, and delivery only, as part of its stay-at-home order. The widespread closure of restaurants, cancellation of concerts and other events, and restrictions on travel and tourism continued during April, further impacting the beleaguered industry. In positive news, ONroute announced that it would hire hundreds of seasonal workers across all of its 23 locations throughout Ontario, to work at brands such as Tim Hortons, Starbucks, Burger King, and Subway.<sup>44</sup>



The **information**, **culture and recreation** industry faced significant challenges in April as the stay-at-home order called for the shutdown of indoor and outdoor art and recreation facilities. Despite its dismal employment numbers this month, the industry saw some job creation from Ottawa-based production company, Ross Video Limited, announcing the hiring of 200 people;<sup>45</sup> London-based high-tech company, ZTR Control Systems LLC, hiring about 40 staff;<sup>46</sup> and Burlington-based healthcare technology company, AceAge Inc., adding 50 skilled jobs.<sup>47</sup> The news that Netflix chose Toronto for its new Canadian corporate headquarters, creating 10-15 jobs,<sup>48</sup> also provided a boost. Jobs in the industry were further bolstered by several provincial and federal government investments in the expansion of broadband infrastructure in Grey County, Bruce County,<sup>49</sup> Huron County,<sup>50</sup> Killarney, East Ferris, Red-bridge, Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation,<sup>51</sup> Millgrove, Pleasant View Survey, Dundas, Copetown, Ancaster,<sup>52</sup> Pickering,<sup>53</sup> Lemonville, and Locust Hill.<sup>54</sup>

The **professional, scientific and technical services** industry (-800; -0.1%) benefitted from multiple federal government investments. These included an investment of \$6M in the Southern Ontario Pharmaceutical and Health Innovation Ecosystem, which will create 50 new jobs and maintain 100 jobs, <sup>55</sup> and an investment of \$5M in the City of Guelph's Circular Opportunity Innovation Launchpad (COIL), which is expected to create 400 jobs and support 70 businesses. <sup>56</sup> This will offset the layoff of 61 employees by Spartan Bioscience Inc., an Ottawa-based biotechnology company. <sup>57</sup>

Notwithstanding employment drops in these industries, job creation news was also noted in **other services** (-3,700; -1.3%) with Kinetrics employing 40 workers at its new laundry facility in Teeswater. Factor and **social assistance** (-6,900; -0.8%) industry was bolstered by a provincial government investment of \$12.5M, which will result in the hiring of 20 mental health support staff to strengthen mental health services available to Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and their families. Provincial Police (OPP) and their families.

The **transportation and warehousing** industry registered employment gains this month and saw some positive news with Walmart Logistics advertising 150 jobs at its distribution hub in Cornwall.<sup>60</sup> Government investments were particularly important for the industry this month. Airlines saw a ray of hope with the federal government providing a \$5.9B aid package to Air Canada<sup>61</sup> and a \$700M aid package to Transat AT Inc.<sup>62</sup> Public transit also benefitted from a combined \$174.7M investment by the governments of Canada, Ontario and the City of Brampton, to build a new public transit maintenance and storage facility for the city's bus fleet.<sup>63</sup> However, the industry faced significant COVID-19 related challenges as multiple Canada Post<sup>64,65</sup> and Amazon distribution centres<sup>66</sup> declared outbreaks and partial shutdowns over the month.

On a year-over-year basis, employment in the services-producing sector increased by 575,100 (+11.1%), with gains observed in all industries except business, building and other support services (-21,000; -7.0%). The largest gains occurred in wholesale and retail trade (+153,600; +17.6%); accommodation and food services (+82,000; +36.2%); health care and social assistance (+78,100; +9.4%); professional, scientific and technical services (+61,800; +9.5%); and information, culture and recreation (+57,200; +23.9%).



Ontario Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

| Seasonally Adjusted                   | A! 2024    | March 2024 | A          | Monthly Variation |      | Yearly Variation |      |
|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|------|------------------|------|
| Data ('000)                           | April 2021 | March 2021 | April 2020 | Number            | %    | Number           | %    |
| Total employed, all industries        | 7,215.4    | 7,368.1    | 6,409.9    | -152.7            | -2.1 | 805.5            | 12.6 |
| Goods-producing sector                | 1,470.9    | 1,481.9    | 1,240.5    | -11.0             | -0.7 | 230.4            | 18.6 |
| Agriculture                           | 68.4       | 63.0       | 72.7       | 5.4               | 8.6  | -4.3             | -5.9 |
| Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, |            |            |            |                   |      |                  |      |
| oil and gas                           | 33.5       | 34.9       | 32.5       | -1.4              | -4.0 | 1.0              | 3.1  |
| Utilities                             | 50.1       | 51.6       | 48.7       | -1.5              | -2.9 | 1.4              | 2.9  |
| Construction                          | 541.4      | 544.8      | 458.3      | -3.4              | -0.6 | 83.1             | 18.1 |
| Manufacturing                         | 777.5      | 787.6      | 628.3      | -10.1             | -1.3 | 149.2            | 23.7 |
| Services-producing sector             | 5,744.5    | 5,886.2    | 5,169.4    | -141.7            | -2.4 | 575.1            | 11.1 |
| Trade                                 | 1,027.5    | 1,084.2    | 873.9      | -56.7             | -5.2 | 153.6            | 17.6 |
| Transportation and warehousing        | 369.4      | 365.2      | 347.3      | 4.2               | 1.2  | 22.1             | 6.4  |
| Finance, insurance, real estate       |            |            |            |                   |      |                  |      |
| and leasing                           | 638.1      | 630.8      | 599.2      | 7.3               | 1.2  | 38.9             | 6.5  |
| Professional, scientific              |            |            |            |                   |      |                  |      |
| and technical services                | 711.9      | 712.7      | 650.1      | -0.8              | -0.1 | 61.8             | 9.5  |
| Business, building                    |            |            |            |                   |      |                  |      |
| and other support services            | 278.5      | 283.2      | 299.5      | -4.7              | -1.7 | -21.0            | -7.0 |
| Educational services                  | 521.4      | 565.5      | 484.8      | -44.1             | -7.8 | 36.6             | 7.5  |
| Health care and social assistance     | 907.7      | 914.6      | 829.6      | -6.9              | -0.8 | 78.1             | 9.4  |
| Information, culture and recreation   | 296.3      | 317.6      | 239.1      | -21.3             | -6.7 | 57.2             | 23.9 |
| Accommodation and food services       | 307.9      | 331.5      | 225.9      | -23.6             | -7.1 | 82.0             | 36.3 |
| Other services                        | 288.3      | 292.0      | 244.8      | -3.7              | -1.3 | 43.5             | 17.8 |
| Public administration                 | 397.6      | 388.8      | 375.3      | 8.8               | 2.3  | 22.3             | 5.9  |

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey - Table 14-10-0355, formerly CANSIM 282-0088

# **REGIONAL ANALYSIS**

### All regions showed gains over the year, except the Northeast

Due to the size of its labour force compared to other regions, the **Toronto** economic region (ER) posted the largest employment increase among all economic regions in Ontario. The Toronto ER observed yearly employment gains of 72,500 (2.2%) in April measured on a year-over-year, seasonally unadjusted basis. However, the regional unemployment rate increased by 1.4 percentage points to 9.4% over the year.

Despite the shutdown, employment in the **Toronto** economic region did receive positive news. HCL Technologies Limited, an IT services and consulting company, will create 350 jobs with a new global delivery centre in Mississauga, <sup>67</sup> and Sanofi Pasteur is expanding its Toronto biopharmaceutical and vaccine facility to meet the demand for flu vaccines, which created 300 jobs. Furthermore, Netflix's announcement that it is opening a new Canadian corporate headquarters in Toronto<sup>68</sup> added to the press. Several restaurant expansions were announced with Momo House, <sup>69</sup> Gus Tacos<sup>70</sup> and Salad King<sup>71</sup> adding new locations. In retail, Athleta, a Gap-owned sustainable athleisure brand, announced that it will be expanding into Canada in 2021 with two physical stores, one of which will be in Toronto, and Ellie Mae is opening its first flagship store in the region. <sup>72</sup> Food Basics also opened a new location in Courtice, <sup>73</sup> creating 110 jobs.

The Super 8 by Wyndham, a hotel in Toronto, permanently closed<sup>74</sup> and widespread restaurant closures in the Toronto region continued to create significant layoffs in the accommodation and food services sector. Dozens of



restaurants in the region, including Hot-Star,<sup>75</sup> Hikari Sushi Bar,<sup>76</sup> Benihana,<sup>77</sup> and County General,<sup>78</sup> all permanently shuttered their doors.

The second largest job gains in the province occurred in the **Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula** economic region, where employment increased by 41,600 (6.0%) from April 2020 to April 2021. Gains in employment was felt in both full-time (31,000; 5.5%) and part-time (10,600; 7.8%) work, while the unemployment rate dropped 0.1 percentage points to 8.7%. Good news from the region came from the federal government's investment in Hamilton's Innovation Factory to produce healthcare products, creating 50 new jobs and supporting 100 existing jobs,<sup>79</sup> and AceAge Inc. and Gerrie Electric, creating 60 new jobs in Burlington.<sup>80</sup> As well, the Costco Business Centre in Niagara re-opened, creating up to 140 new jobs.<sup>81</sup>

The **Ottawa** economic region also saw significant gains in employment of 39,500 (5.7%) over the year, with a stronger impact seen in full-time employment (33,800; 5.9%) than part-time (5,700; 4.6%). However, the unemployment rate rose slightly to 6.6%. Positive news in the region came from Ottawa as Ross Video Limited, a production company, announced they would hire over 200 people, <sup>82</sup> and in Cornwall, TD Bank Group opened a new branch, <sup>83</sup> Spiritleaf and High Tide Inc, <sup>85</sup> cannabis retailers opened, and Sagar Indian Cuisine, a restaurant, announced its expansion. <sup>86</sup> Losses in employment were felt as Spartan Bioscience Inc., a biotechnology company, announced that it would lay off 61 employees. <sup>87</sup>

The **Windsor-Sarnia** economic region also experienced substantial expansions in employment from April 2020 to April 2021, as it rose by 30,100 (11.3%), the second highest percentage gain in the province. The regional unemployment rate dropped 2.8 percentage points to 9.0% over the same period. Positive employment news from the region came with the Government of Ontario's investment in Dimachem Inc. creating 14 jobs. <sup>88</sup> Employment opportunities also arose from several openings in the region, such as, a new Princess Auto location, <sup>89</sup> Amherstberg Farmers Market <sup>90</sup> and Brady's Drug Store. <sup>91</sup>

The **Northeast** economic region was the only region to post employment declines, as job figures decreased by 2,600 (-1.1%) from April 2020 to April 2021. The region also had a slight jump in the unemployment rate over the year, increasing by 0.5 percentage points to 8.1%. The biggest losses were felt as Laurentian University in Sudbury announced that it will terminate 195 positions as it continues its insolvency negotiations.<sup>92</sup>



#### Ontario Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

|   |               | Employment    |                     | Unemployment Rate |               |                     |  |  |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|--|--|
| 3-Month Moving Averages<br>Seasonally Unadjusted Data | April<br>2021 | April<br>2020 | Yearly<br>Variation | April<br>2021     | April<br>2020 | Yearly<br>Variation |  |  |
|   | ('000)        | ('000')       | (%)                 | (%)               | (%)           | (% points)          |  |  |
| Ontario   | 7,163.1       | 6,905.7       | 3.7                 | 8.7               | 8.2           | 0.5                 |  |  |
| Economic Regions                                      |               |               |                     |                   |               |                     |  |  |
| Ottawa  | 736.8         | 697.3         | 5.7                 | 6.6               | 6.4           | 0.2                 |  |  |
| Kingston - Pembroke                                   | 205.6         | 199.5         | 3.1                 | 10.1              | 9.9           | 0.2                 |  |  |
| Muskoka - Kawarthas                                   | 187.8         | 159.4         | 17.8                | 7.0               | 10.3          | -3.3                |  |  |
| Toronto   | 3,398.7       | 3,326.2       | 2.2                 | 9.4               | 8.0           | 1.4                 |  |  |
| Kitchener - Waterloo - Barrie                         | 742.7         | 735.9         | 0.9                 | 8.7               | 7.8           | 0.9                 |  |  |
| Hamilton - Niagara Peninsula                          | 738.0         | 696.4         | 6.0                 | 8.7               | 8.8           | -0.1                |  |  |
| London  | 362.3         | 332.3         | 9.0                 | 8.6               | 8.4           | 0.2                 |  |  |
| Windsor - Sarnia                                      | 295.6         | 265.5         | 11.3                | 9.0               | 11.8          | -2.8                |  |  |
| Stratford - Bruce Peninsula                           | 157.0         | 156.5         | 0.3                 | 6.1               | 8.0           | -1.9                |  |  |
| Northeast   | 242.3         | 244.9         | -1.1                | 8.1               | 7.6           | 0.5                 |  |  |
| Northwest   | 96.4          | 91.9          | 4.9                 | 7.7               | 8.7           | -1.0                |  |  |

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey - Table 14-10-0287-01

**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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