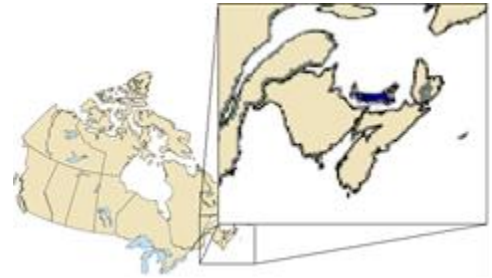




Labour Market Bulletin

Prince Edward Island



November 2020

This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Prince Edward Island.

OVERVIEW

In November, the Island's labour market continued on its road to recovery following the impact of COVID-19. The labour force was on par with what it was a year ago, and employment continued to approach pre-pandemic levels. November's employment gains were largely attributed to part-time work as there was little change in full-time employment from the previous month. With monthly labour force gains having outpaced employment growth, the level of unemployment in the province went up. The unemployment rate rose marginally in November to 10.2%, and remains about 2 percentage points higher compared to the same month a year ago.

Prince Edward Island Monthly Labour Force Statistics

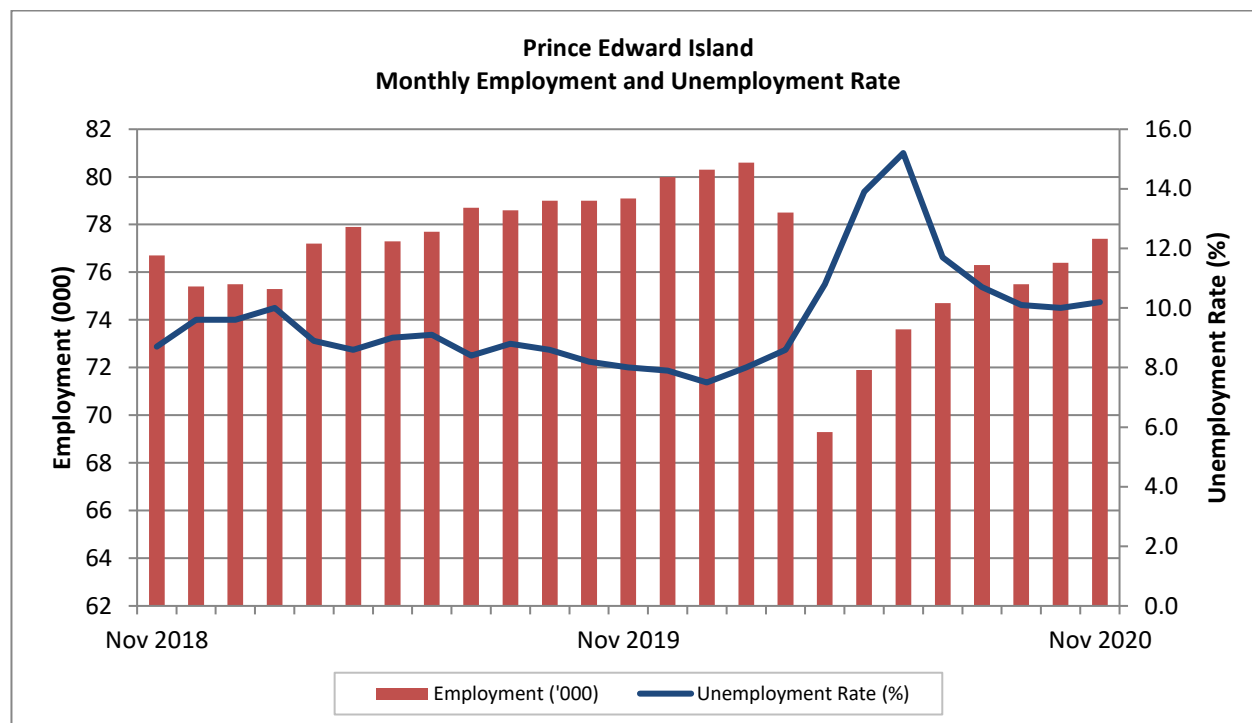
Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	Nov 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	132.2	132.0	129.9	0.2	0.2	2.3	1.8
Labour Force ('000)	86.3	84.9	86.0	1.4	1.6	0.3	0.3
Employment ('000)	77.4	76.4	79.1	1.0	1.3	-1.7	-2.1
Full-Time ('000)	64.7	64.6	67.0	0.1	0.2	-2.3	-3.4
Part-Time ('000)	12.7	11.8	12.1	0.9	7.6	0.6	5.0
Unemployment ('000)	8.8	8.5	6.9	0.3	3.5	1.9	27.5
Unemployment Rate (%)	10.2	10.0	8.0	0.2	-	2.2	-
Participation Rate (%)	65.3	64.3	66.2	1.0	-	-0.9	-
Employment Rate (%)	58.5	57.9	60.9	0.6	-	-2.4	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Due to the notable gains in November, the Island's labour force is up from what it was a year ago, meaning that it has almost fully recovered its pandemic-induced losses experienced in March and April of this year. Labour force growth was largely attributed to the core working-age cohort (aged 25-54 years), particularly women. There were

more youths participating in the labour force as well, comprised entirely of women. These gains were partially offset by a small decline in the number of older workers (persons 55 years and over) in the labour force. It is also interesting to note that for each of the three major age categories, the number of males in November 2020 are at least on par with what they were a year ago prior to the pandemic, while for women, only those in the core working-age group exceeded last year's levels. By contrast, there were 8,800 older worker women in November which is the lowest level since April 2017. The number of youth women in the labour force is nearly at par with what it was in November 2019.



There were 77,400 employed in November 2020 which is 2.1% lower year-over-year. Although employment has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels, the gap is shrinking. The full effect of COVID-19 on the labour market was felt in April when employment on P.E.I. plunged to 86% of its pre-pandemic level in February. Since then, the Island's employment base has recovered and is now nearing its pre-pandemic level.

Employment levels for men across the major age categories were for the most part, higher than they were a year ago. However, for women, the number of employed youth and older workers remained considerably lower year-over-year. The number of employed women in the core working-age group in the most recent month is at par with what it was in November 2019.

The number of workers employed full-time in November was 3.4% lower year-over-year, attributed largely to a reduced number of older workers working full-time. While there were more older worker males employed full-time compared to a year ago, there were fewer older worker females in full-time positions over the same period. This gender disparity is reversed with respect to the youth cohort. There were fewer youth employed full-time compared to a year ago, with nearly all of this decline attributed to youth males. Part-time employment levels were up 5% year-over-year, with the majority of the increase attributed to workers of the core working-age group, particularly males. There were fewer youths in part-time positions compared to November 2019, attributed mainly to fewer women employed.

At 8,800 persons, the Island’s unemployed pool in November remains considerably deeper (+27%) than it was a year ago, attributed mostly to higher unemployed women across the major age categories – especially those in the core working-age group. At 10.2%, the Island’s unemployment rate is 2.2 percentage points higher compared to what it was a year ago. Among the major age categories, the largest year-over-year variation occurred for youths, with the unemployment rate for this cohort 5.8 percentage points higher. Youth females accounted for the largest variation by gender (+7.4%) compared to males (4.2%).

Prince Edward Island Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	Nov 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2019	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
	%	%	%	(% points)	(% points)
Total	10.2	10.0	8.0	0.2	2.2
25 years and over	9.1	8.6	7.6	0.5	1.5
Men - 25 years and over	8.8	8.0	9.5	0.8	-0.7
Women - 25 years and over	9.8	9.5	5.2	0.3	4.6
15 to 24 years	16.4	18.5	10.6	-2.1	5.8
Men - 15 to 24 years	17.1	22.5	12.9	-5.4	4.2
Women - 15 to 24 years	15.5	13.5	8.1	2.0	7.4

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

With more people in the labour force, the Island’s participation rate increased by one percentage point to 65.3% in the most recent month, but down 0.9 of a percentage point year-over-year. P.E.I. had the third highest participation rate in the country, behind Alberta and Saskatchewan.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

The majority of the Island’s monthly employment gains in November 2020 were concentrated in the **services-producing sector**, particularly in **health care and social assistance, wholesale and retail trade, and business, building and other support services**. **Goods-sector** employment increased slightly, with the majority of the gains attributed to **construction**.

Employment gains in **health care and social assistance** in the most recent month may in part reflect the province’s recent hiring plans in preparation for a second wave of COVID-19. This included the hiring of licensed practical nurses, registered nurses and resident care workers. In addition, the government also sought to fill additional positions for caregivers, resident care workers, personal support workers, at its three private long-term care facilities. More recently, Health PEI announced that it is accepting expressions of interest from anyone who has worked in the health-care field.

Employment in **wholesale and retail trade** is up by 7.4% compared to October but remains 10% lower compared to a year ago. As of September 2020, the value of retail spending in the province is down by 1.3% on a year-to-date basis. Categories of retail trade that have fared relatively well throughout the pandemic include electronics and appliances, building supplies, health and personal care, and grocery stores. By contrast, clothing retailers, gas

stations, and motor vehicle sales and parts dealers have struggled. With respect to this later category, the volume of sales of new motor vehicles is down by 40% in the province on a year-to-date basis.

The **business, building and other support services** industry includes establishments that provide support services for the day-to-day operations of businesses. Building services group includes occupations related to janitorial as well as services associated with waste and remediation services (i.e. garbage collection and recycling).¹ Growth in this industry may be reflective of enhanced safety measures across all industries due to COVID-19, particularly increased sanitization requirements.

Employment in **construction** increased by 3.3% in November and is almost at par with levels a year ago. The industry has fared relatively well throughout the pandemic and continues to be driven by strong residential and non-residential construction activity. Although the number of new housing starts in the province is down by 14% in the first nine months of the year, it is worth noting that total volume of new builds reached a record level in 2019. In fact, the number of new starts in the province has increased by 40% on an average annual basis between 2017 and 2019. Construction of multiple-units has been driving residential activity in the province. Non-residential building permits is up 21.3% so far in 2020 (January to October) driven by institutional and commercial projects.

Employment in the Island's **manufacturing** industry was unchanged in November 2020, but remains higher on a year-over-year basis. The industry's reliance on food processing, as well as pharmaceutical manufacturing, has been key for the provincial economy throughout the crisis, evidenced by strong year-to-date growth in export values across these particular categories.

¹ WorkBC (<https://www.workbc.ca/Labour-Market-Information/Industry-Information/Industry-Profiles/Business-Building-and-Other-Support-Services>)

Prince Edward Island Monthly Employed Labour Force, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	Nov 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	77.4	76.4	79.1	1.0	1.3	-1.7	-2.1
Goods-producing sector	19.4	19.1	18.6	0.3	1.6	0.8	4.3
Agriculture	3.6	3.7	4.3	-0.1	-2.7	-0.7	-16.3
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	2.4	2.3	1.6	0.1	4.3	0.8	50.0
Utilities	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	-0.1	-33.3
Construction	6.3	6.1	6.6	0.2	3.3	-0.3	-4.5
Manufacturing	6.8	6.8	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.9	15.3
Services-producing sector	58.1	57.3	60.4	0.8	1.4	-2.3	-3.8
Trade	10.2	9.5	11.3	0.7	7.4	-1.1	-9.7
Transportation and warehousing	2.7	2.9	2.8	-0.2	-6.9	-0.1	-3.6
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	3.1	3.1	3.2	0.0	0.0	-0.1	-3.1
Professional, scientific and technical services	4.3	4.5	4.0	-0.2	-4.4	0.3	7.5
Business, building and other support services	2.9	2.7	2.1	0.2	7.4	0.8	38.1
Educational services	5.7	5.5	5.4	0.2	3.6	0.3	5.6
Health care and social assistance	11.2	10.3	11.2	0.9	8.7	0.0	0.0
Information, culture and recreation	2.1	2.2	2.4	-0.1	-4.5	-0.3	-12.5
Accommodation and food services	5.3	5.2	6.4	0.1	1.9	-1.1	-17.2
Other services	2.4	2.9	3.5	-0.5	-17.2	-1.1	-31.4
Public administration	8.3	8.6	8.1	-0.3	-3.5	0.2	2.5

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

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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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

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