



Labour Market Bulletin

Saskatchewan

May 2022



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Saskatchewan, including Regina-Moose Mountain, Swift Current-Moose Jaw, Saskatoon-Biggar, Yorkton-Melville and Prince Albert and Northern economic regions.

OVERVIEW

Saskatchewan employment was up from April and from May of last year.

In May, Saskatchewan's employment increased 0.3% (+1,500) after two consecutive months of decline. Losses in full-time employment (-4,100) were offset by part-time employment gains (+5,700), when compared to last month.

Year-over-year, total employment was up 16,900 (+3.0%) in May. Looking closer, there were more workers in the public sector (+8,700 or +5.7%), private sector (+8,000 or +2.5%) and self-employed (+200 or +0.2%), compared to the same period last year.¹

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	May 2022	April 2022	May 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	897.2	895.7	889.4	1.5	0.2	7.8	0.9
Labour Force ('000)	607.1	609.9	597.6	-2.8	-0.5	9.5	1.6
Employment ('000)	578.1	576.6	561.2	1.5	0.3	16.9	3.0
Full-Time ('000)	470.5	474.6	450.0	-4.1	-0.9	20.5	4.6
Part-Time ('000)	107.7	102.0	111.2	5.7	5.6	-3.5	-3.1
Unemployment ('000)	29.0	33.3	36.4	-4.3	-12.9	-7.4	-20.3
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.8	5.5	6.1	-0.7	-	-1.3	-
Participation Rate (%)	67.7	68.1	67.2	-0.4	-	0.5	-
Employment Rate (%)	64.4	64.4	63.1	0.0	-	1.3	-

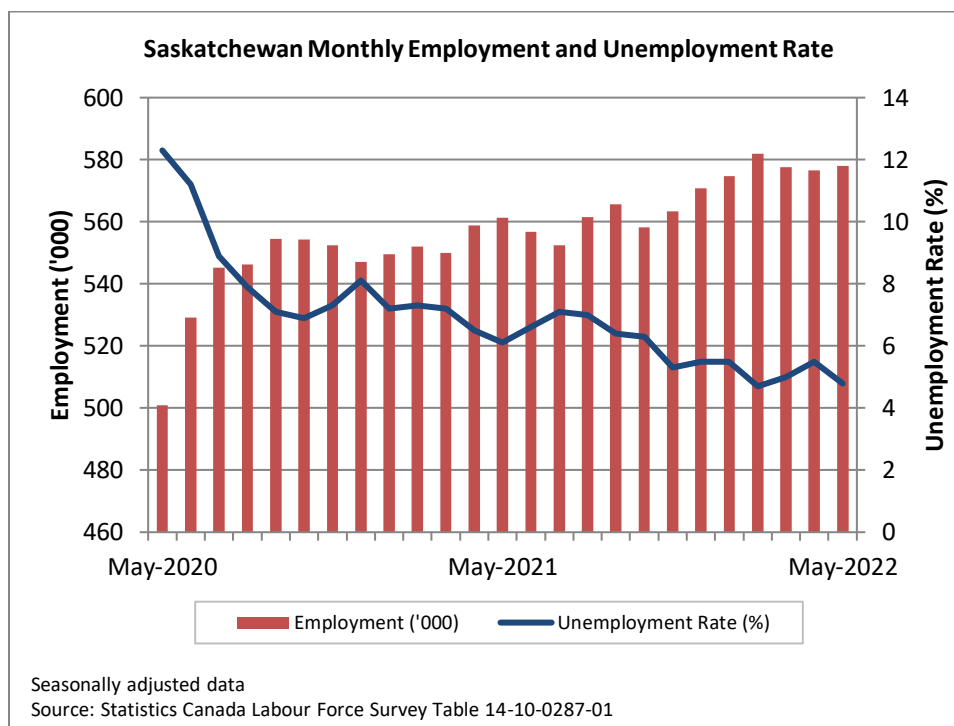
Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287-01, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

The province's public and private sectors have grown since the start of the pandemic but self-employment continues to struggle.

Comparing May's employment numbers with February 2020 the month prior to the start of the pandemic – employment was up 0.7% (+4,000 jobs). Over the same period, public sector and private sector employees have grown 11.1% and 0.4%, respectively. However, self-employment continues to struggle, down 13.4%, when compared to the same period.

On a positive note, weekly COVID-19 hospitalization continue to decrease each week. As of June 8, 56 people are in hospital due to COVID-19 while 118 are incidental COVID-19 infections, down 17.6% and 21.9% respectively from the previous week.² As severe cases of COVID-19 continue to drop, peoples' fear and anxiety should also start to ease, allowing for a gradual return to normality.



Saskatchewan Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	May 2022 (%)	April 2022 (%)	May 2021 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	4.8	5.5	6.1	-0.7	-1.3
25 years and over	3.6	4.6	5.2	-1.0	-1.6
Men - 25 years and over	4.2	4.9	5.7	-0.7	-1.5
Women - 25 years and over	2.9	4.2	4.7	-1.3	-1.8
15 to 24 years	11.3	10.3	10.9	1.0	0.4
Men - 15 to 24 years	14.2	13.0	12.8	1.2	1.4
Women - 15 to 24 years	8.1	7.2	8.8	0.9	-0.7

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Saskatchewan's unemployment rate (4.8%) is below the national average (5.1%). However, the unemployment rate in young workers continues to rise.

Saskatchewan's unemployment rate fell 0.7 percentage points to 4.8% in May and is below the national rate of 5.1%. This is the second time the province's unemployment rate has been below 5% since the beginning of the pandemic, the last time being February 2022 (4.7%). For men aged 25 years and older, May's unemployment rate of 4.2% is the lowest it's been since September 2019. Meanwhile, women within the same age bracket, have an unemployment rate of 2.9%, a seven-and-a-half year low.

Unfortunately, the unemployment rate among young workers in Saskatchewan continues to rise. The rate for those between 15 and 24 years of age has increased for three consecutive month, reaching 11.3% in May. Young men continue to experience poor labour market outcomes as their unemployment rate increased 8.9 percentage points, from February 2022 to May, to 14.2%. By contrast, the unemployment rate for young women increased 1.3 percentage points over the same period and sits at 8.8%.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Industries are broken down to two sub-categories, goods-producing and services-producing. The goods-producing sector includes all industries that produce physical goods, while the services-producing sector includes all industries that provide services but do not make tangible goods.

Statistics Canada released their latest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) numbers in May, in which Saskatchewan was the only province to experience a decline in GDP (-0.3%) from 2020 to 2021.³ According to The Conference Board of Canada, the province will rebound in 2022 and lead the country with real growth of 7.9%, driven by gains in the goods-producing sector.⁴

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	May 2022	April 2022	May 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	578.1	576.6	561.2	1.5	0.3	16.9	3.0
Goods-producing sector	128.3	127.1	131.5	1.2	0.9	-3.2	-2.4
Agriculture	25.8	25.2	30.3	0.6	2.4	-4.5	-14.9
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	17.1	18.1	20.3	-1.0	-5.5	-3.2	-15.8
Utilities	6.3	6.4	5.5	-0.1	-1.6	0.8	14.5
Construction	47.8	46.4	42.8	1.4	3.0	5.0	11.7
Manufacturing	31.3	31.0	32.5	0.3	1.0	-1.2	-3.7
Services-producing sector	449.8	449.5	429.8	0.3	0.1	20.0	4.7
Trade	96.7	95.7	93.6	1.0	1.0	3.1	3.3
Transportation and warehousing	24.4	26.7	23.1	-2.3	-8.6	1.3	5.6
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	30.4	31.3	26.9	-0.9	-2.9	3.5	13.0
Professional, scientific and technical services	28.7	27.6	28.6	1.1	4.0	0.1	0.3
Business, building and other support services	13.3	14.0	15.8	-0.7	-5.0	-2.5	-15.8
Educational services	49.1	49.2	46.6	-0.1	-0.2	2.5	5.4
Health care and social assistance	91.0	89.1	86.3	1.9	2.1	4.7	5.4
Information, culture and recreation	19.1	20.5	18.2	-1.4	-6.8	0.9	4.9
Accommodation and food services	34.6	32.9	28.6	1.7	5.2	6.0	21.0
Other services	26.2	25.9	26.4	0.3	1.2	-0.2	-0.8
Public administration	36.4	36.5	35.7	-0.1	-0.3	0.7	2.0

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Goods-producing industries

Agriculture – Severe drought devastated Saskatchewan's GDP in 2021, but the lifting of China's ban on canola may turn things around in 2022.

In 2021, severe drought affected farmers' yields and devastated crop quality. Wheat and canola production were down 48% and 45% respectively that year, causing agriculture's GDP to plummet 42.1%. Agriculture's dismal GDP is a key factor as to why Saskatchewan's 2021 GDP was so low.⁵

Employment in agriculture was up from April (600, or 2.4%) but down significantly year-over-year (-4,500 or -14.9%). Seeding delays across much of the Prairies are raising concerns about potentially lower crop yields. According to the province's weekly crop report, as of May 30, seeding is 76% complete and well below the five-year average of 93% for the same date.⁶

On an encouraging note, a three-year Chinese ban on Canadian canola has come to an end. Since March 2019, two Canadian grain trading companies, Richardson and Viterra, were prevented from exporting canola seed to China.⁷ Canola seed exports to China fell from \$2.8 billion in 2018 to \$800 million in 2019, before recovering to \$1.4 billion in 2020 and \$1.8 billion in 2021.⁸

Resource Extraction – Higher commodity prices, due to the war Ukraine, allows potash producers to increase production and brings new mining opportunities and jobs to the province.

Saskatchewan's resource extraction industry (**forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas**) lost 1,000 jobs (5.5%) on the month and 3,200 jobs (-15.8%) year-over-year. However, the outlook may be improving. Due to the war in Ukraine, commodity prices, such as potash have skyrocketed. Nutrien, the world's largest fertilizer company, and K+S Potash Canada, Saskatchewan's third-largest potash producer, are looking to increase their potash production as sanctions continue to limit shipments from Russia.^{9,10}

Meanwhile, Foran Mining Corp. recently opened a new head office in Saskatoon. The company is working to develop a carbon-neutral copper mine near Flin Flon and is likely to employ as many as 800 people during construction.^{11,12}

Manufacturing – With its GDP rebounding in 2021, a new processing and packaging facility opened in Saskatoon and new fertilizer plant is coming to Rosetown.

The **manufacturing** industry gained 300 jobs (+1.0%) on the month, however, employment is down 1,200 (-3.7%) when compared to last year. The industry's GDP rebounded in 2021, up 12.0%, after dropping 7.9% in 2019 and a further 7.4% in 2020.¹³ Above Food Corp. recently opened a new plant-based and gluten free processing and packaging facility in Saskatoon.¹⁴

In addition, Regina-based AGT Foods and Vancouver-based Lucent BioSciences are working together to bring a new \$19 million micronutrient fertilizer facility to Rosetown, southwest of Saskatoon. The new facility is expected to be operational by late 2023, creating 25 jobs.¹⁵

Services-producing industries**Education services – Inflation is creating problems for 2022-2023 budgets and some school boards release staff as a result.**

Turning to the services-producing sector, employment in **education services** didn't change much from the previous month (-0.2%), but is 5.4% higher compared to last year. The Government of Saskatchewan is providing \$17.5M in operating grants to 21 independent schools and four Historical High Schools. Funding is for the 2022-2023 school year and is based on September 2021 student enrollment numbers.¹⁶

Many school boards are currently in the process of approving their 2022-2023 budgets. Due to the current rise of inflation, expenses such as fuel, insurance and automotive parts are skyrocketing. Some school boards are planning to reduce staff to make up the shortfall. Earlier this year, the Chinook School Division announced plans to cut 20 full-time equivalent teaching positions and, more recently, the Southeast Cornerstone School Division indicated the elimination of 35 full-time equivalent positions for the 2022-23 school year. Most the positions lost will be covered though retirements or not renewing contracts.^{17,18}

Health care and social assistance – The health care system is still struggling to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic as staffing shortages continue.

Employment in **health care and social assistance** climbed 2.1% on the month, and even more on a year-over-year basis, (5.4%). Despite the current job growth, Saskatchewan's health care system still struggles with understaffing, and has in particular a shortage of lab tech workers.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Assiniboia Union Hospital has reduced its emergency services hours due to staffing shortages, from 24 hours per day down to 12. For minor emergencies, people are asked to seek care in Gravelbourg or Moose Jaw.²⁰

To address anti-Indigenous racism in the health system, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies is expanding its Indigenous Practical Nursing Diploma program to rural and remote locations.²¹ In addition, the federal government is providing \$2.1 million to the University of Saskatchewan to establish the first and only accredited Indigenous dental therapy degree program of its kind in Canada and create a new generation of Indigenous dental therapists.²²

Accommodation and food services – The industry is hoping a new training program to support Indigenous job seekers and a busy summer will help businesses continue to recover from the pandemic.

Employment in **accommodation and food services** rose by 5.2% on the month, and improved quite substantially year-over-year (+21.0%). Approximately 6,000 more people were working in the industry in May compared to the same period in 2021 and the industry is hoping for a busy summer to help further recover from the pandemic.²³

In an effort to address the industry's labour shortage, the Government of Saskatchewan is providing \$532,000 for training to support Indigenous job seekers develop the skills needed to enter the hospitality and tourism sector.²⁴

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

The statistics for the economic regions are not seasonally adjusted and should only be compared on a year-over-year basis. Employment is sometimes influenced by seasonal and calendar effects occurring at the same time and with the same magnitude every year, which can bring about changes in the data that make monthly comparisons difficult.

On a year-over-year basis, employment was up in three of five economic regions. Yearly job losses of -2,000 (-3.8%) in **Swift Current – Moose Jaw** and -700 (-0.7%) in **Prince Albert and Northern. Saskatoon – Biggar** led the regions in employment growth, adding 19,900 jobs.

Saskatchewan Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	May 2022 ('000)	May 2021 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	May 2022 (%)	May 2021 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Saskatchewan	574.8	553.0	3.9	5.5	7.3	-1.8
Economic Regions						
Regina - Moose Mountain	179.1	175.9	1.8	5.6	7.9	-2.3
Swift Current - Moose Jaw	50.6	52.6	-3.8	5.9	7.2	-1.3
Saskatoon - Biggar	214.4	194.5	10.2	4.9	7.6	-2.7
Yorkton - Melville	36.3	34.8	4.3	5.0	4.9	0.1
Prince Albert and Northern	94.5	95.2	-0.7	6.4	6.5	-0.1

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0387, formerly CANSIM 282-0122

The Saskatoon – Biggar region saw the largest employment gains (+10.2%) of all five economic regions in the province.

Year-over-year, the **Saskatoon – Biggar** region experienced strong employment gains, posting an increase of 10.2% (+19,900 jobs) annually. Meanwhile, the region's unemployment rate declined 2.7 percentage points to 4.9%, the lowest rate province-wide. Looking ahead, the outlook for the regional economy is set to further improve in the coming months. The Conference Board of Canada expects the region's urban economy will benefit from a region-wide agricultural recovery, increased potash and uranium mining, and a rebound in the oil and gas sector.²⁵

The region's local technology industry received a boost as the Government of Saskatchewan is providing \$158,000 to the Saskatoon Industry Education Council. The group will provide opportunities for students to learn more about careers in the Information Technology and green energy sectors.²⁶

The Regina – Moose Mountain region posted modest employment gains in May. As construction ramps up during the summer period, the region could experience more employment growth.

The **Regina – Moose Mountain** economic region posted modest employment gains over the year. Employment in the region grew 1.8% (+3,200 jobs) between May 2022 and May 2021. Meanwhile the region's unemployment

rate declined 2.3 percentage points over the same period. According to the Conference Board of Canada, a multitude of large capital projects in various stages of development will likely support a significant economic turnaround in 2022.²⁷ For instance, work is currently underway on a new \$140M Regina Police Services Headquarters. Construction on the project began in 2021, with work expected to complete by 2024.²⁸

Similarly, work continues on the City of Regina's rapid housing initiative project, which seeks to increase the city's long-term supportive housing for those experiencing homelessness. Preliminary design work on the 29-unit complex is currently underway, with a targeted completion date of 2023.²⁹

Employment in the Prince Albert and Northern region fell for the seventh straight month. Some key construction projects may help to support regional employment.

Employment in the **Prince Albert and Northern** region fell slightly (-0.7% or 700 jobs) over the year, while the unemployment rate remained unchanged (-0.1 pp). May marked the seventh straight month the Prince Albert and Northern Saskatchewan economic region has posted an overall decrease in employment. In fact, the region has lost approximately 4,000 jobs since the beginning of 2022, the fourth most among regions across Western Canada.³⁰ Significant job losses were seen in the agriculture and health care and social assistance industries.

Employment across various industries in the region may be supported by an increase in commercial activity. For instance, businesses in municipalities across the region are observing customer volumes more consistent with pre-pandemic levels.³¹ In terms of capital projects, the Government of Saskatchewan is spending \$21.4M to twin the #3 highway west of Prince Albert. Construction on the project is currently underway.³² Similarly, Construction has begun on a new school in Blaine Lake that will accommodate 150 students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. The \$14M project will replace the current Blaine Lake Composite School and is expected to be complete by fall 2023.³³

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

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- ² Government of Saskatchewan (June 9, 2022). [Publications Centre.](#)
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