



Labour Market Bulletin

Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon



November 2021

This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for all three of Canada's territories, including the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon.

OVERVIEW

The combined employment of Yukon, Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut continued to trend upward for the third consecutive month in November. The total number of people employed across the Territories increased by 1,600 to reach 60,400 in November. Employment levels in Yukon (+3.1%) and Nunavut (+8.5%) increased in November, while employment levels in Northwest Territories (NWT) fell slightly (-0.9%).

On an annual basis, employment in the Territories was up 6.7%, meaning that there were 3,800 more employed workers in November 2021 than in November 2020. Employment in all three territories increased during the year with the largest increase occurring in Nunavut (+14.6%). Meanwhile, employment levels in Yukon and Northwest Territories grew more moderately, increasing by 5.0% and 4.1% respectively.

Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon* Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Data	November 2021	October 2021	November 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	92.3	92.2	91.1	0.1	0.1	1.2	1.3
Labour Force ('000)	63.8	63.6	60.8	0.2	0.3	3.0	4.9
Employment ('000)	60.4	58.8	56.6	1.6	2.7	3.8	6.7
Unemployment ('000)	3.5	4.9	4.2	-1.4	-28.6	-0.7	-16.7
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.5	7.7	6.9	-2.2	-	-1.4	-
Participation Rate (%)	69.1	69.0	66.7	0.1	-	2.4	-
Employment Rate (%)	65.4	63.8	62.1	1.6	-	3.3	-

*Combined data - three month moving average

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey Table 14-10-0292-01 (formerly CANSIM 282-0100)

Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

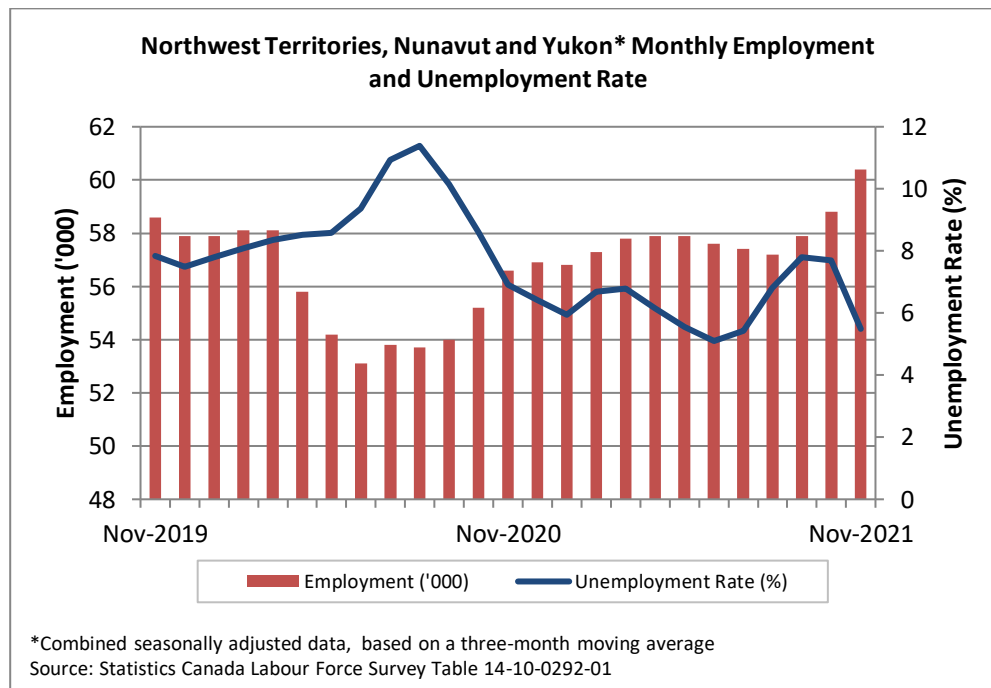
Seasonally Adjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	November 2021 ('000)	November 2020 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	November 2021 (%)	November 2020 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Territories*	60.4	56.6	6.7	5.5	6.9	-1.4
Northwest Territories	23.1	22.2	4.1	3.3	6.3	-3.0
Nunavut	14.1	12.3	14.6	12.2	12.2	0.0
Yukon	23.2	22.1	5.0	2.9	4.3	-1.4

*Combined data - three month moving average

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey Table 14-10-0292-01 (formerly CANSIM 282-0100)

The overall unemployment rate for the three territories decreased significantly in November 2021 compared to November 2020. The overall unemployment rate went down 1.4 percentage points to 5.5%. This change was largely driven by unemployment trends in Northwest Territories and Yukon. The Northwest Territories' unemployment rate dropped considerably year-over-year, down 3.0 percentage points to 3.3%. The unemployment rate in Yukon decreased moderately by 1.4 percentage points to 2.9%. Yukon continues to have one of the lowest unemployment rate in the country, well below the national rate of 6.0%. The unemployment rate in Nunavut has remained stable since November 2020.



For the combined Territories, the unemployment rate for youth (15 to 24 years) was 13.0% in November, down from 20.3% in November 2020. The unemployment rate for young women was 8.1%, less than half that of the November 2020 rate (18.2%), while the unemployment rate for young men decreased by 5.1 percentage points to 17.1%.

Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon*
Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Unadjusted Data	November 2021 (%)	November 2020 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	5.4	7.0	-1.6
25 years and over	4.3	5.0	-0.7
Men - 25 years and over	3.5	6.0	-2.5
Women - 25 years and over	5.2	4.5	0.7
15 to 24 years	13.0	20.3	-7.3
Men - 15 to 24 years	17.1	22.2	-5.1
Women - 15 to 24 years	8.1	18.2	-10.1

**Combined data - three month moving average*

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – ESDC custom table

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

There were 7,800 people employed in the **goods-producing sector** in November. This reflects an 8.3% (+600) increase in employees compared to the same time last year. Most industries within the sector posted employment gains over the year. The forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying and oil and gas industry experienced the largest annual increases.

Employment growth in the goods-producing sector is expected to continue over the short-term as large-scale public infrastructure and mining projects get underway across the North. For example, Pelly Construction was awarded the \$26.9 million Carmacks Bypass Project under the Yukon Resource Gateway Program. The territorial government anticipates this project will create training and job opportunities for local residents. Work on the project is set to be completed in 2024.¹

In addition, Vancouver-based NorZinc Ltd., expects to begin production on zinc, lead, and silver at the Prairie Creek Project in Northwest Territories by the end of 2024. The project is anticipated to create about 600 jobs during construction and approximately 350 positions once the mine is operational.² The Prairie Creek mine is estimated to have a lifespan of over 20 years and will cost about \$330 million to build.³

New mineral exploration and extraction projects are also expected to boost employment in the goods-producing sector. According to Natural Resources Canada, mineral exploration-related investment rebounded across all three territories in 2021 after a major decline (-45%) in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Total expected spending in the Territories this year is projected to be \$328 million, up over 67% from 2020, but below the total investment level of \$362.4 million in 2019.⁴

Of note, Arctic Diamond Company is exploring the use of underwater mining technology to extend the life of the Ekati mine in the Northwest Territories. A pilot project is set to begin in 2023. Currently, there is no mining activity planned beyond 2028 for Ekati. The mine employs about 1,100 workers.⁵

Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon* Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Unadjusted Data ('000)	November 2021	November 2020	Yearly Variation	
			Number	%
Total employed, all industries	60.1	56.2	3.9	6.9
Goods-producing sector	7.8	7.2	0.6	8.3
Agriculture	0.2	0.0	0.2	--
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	2.7	1.5	1.2	80.0
Utilities	0.5	0.4	0.1	25.0
Construction	4.1	4.0	0.1	2.5
Manufacturing	0.0	0.8	-0.8	-100.0
Services-producing sector	52.3	48.9	3.4	7.0
Trade	5.9	6.5	-0.6	-9.2
Transportation and warehousing	3.1	3.1	0.0	0.0
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	2.2	2.4	-0.2	-8.3
Professional, scientific and technical services	2.2	2.3	-0.1	-4.3
Business, building and other support services	1.9	1.0	0.9	90.0
Educational services	6.8	5.0	1.8	36.0
Health care and social assistance	7.2	7.5	-0.3	-4.0
Information, culture and recreation	2.2	2.3	-0.1	-4.3
Accommodation and food services	2.8	2.9	-0.1	-3.4
Other services	2.1	2.2	-0.1	-4.5
Public administration	15.8	13.5	2.3	17.0

*Combined data - three month moving average

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey - ESDC custom table

There were 52,300 people employed in the **services-producing sector** in November, up 7% (+3,400) from November 2020 to November 2021. Employment growth in the services-sector was driven by gains in several industry groups including business, building and other support services, educational services, and public administration.

In the short-term, funding from all levels of government for infrastructure projects such as roads, water treatment facilities, and recreational facilities will help to support employment growth in the services sector. Industries such as trade, transportation and warehousing, and professional, scientific and technical services will benefit from these projects. For instance, the City of Yellowknife plans to build a new \$68 million aquatic centre to replace the aging Ruth Inch Memorial Pool. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2022 and to finish in 2024.

Meanwhile, the Nunavut government approved the City of Iqaluit's plan to build a new bypass system around the contaminated ground fuel tanks close to the city's water treatment plant.⁶ Iqaluit's tap water has been undrinkable since October. Fuel was found in the water supply due to a spill from a tank buried beside the treatment plant. The city has hired an engineering firm to manage the project.⁷

Increasing federal and territorial funding commitments should drive steady employment growth in the education and health care and social assistance industries in the short- to medium-term. For example, the federal

government has pledged \$2.1 million over five years to establish a new Inuktitut Education Innovation Fund in Nunavut. The fund will be available annually to Inuit researchers and educators focused on revitalizing Inuktitut language and education.⁸

In Northwest Territories, the territorial government launched its \$1.75 million Anti-Poverty Fund for 2022. The fund helps support projects aimed at poverty reduction in partnership with NWT Indigenous governments and organizations. Priority will be given to eligible projects in areas such as child and family support, healthy living, and sustainable communities. These projects are expected to create training and job opportunities for people interested in education and social services.⁹

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 Information (LMI) Directorate, Service Canada, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and Yukon

For further information, please contact the LMI team at: http://www.esdc.gc.ca/cqi-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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¹ Government of Yukon, Work set to begin on first project under the Yukon Resource Gateway Program, November 8, 2021. <https://yukon.ca/en/news/work-set-begin-first-project-under-yukon-resource-gateway-program>

² CBC News, N.W.T. mining projects eye roads to get them up and running, November 26, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nwt-mining-projects-eye-roads-to-get-running-1.6263189>

³ Mining.com News, NorZinc posts positive PEA for Prairie Creek with extended life, higher throughput, October 21, 2021. <https://www.mining.com/norzinc-posts-positive-pea-for-prairie-creek-with-extended-life-higher-throughput/>

⁴ Natural Resources Canada, Exploration Plus Deposit Appraisal Expenditures, by Province and Territory, 2017-2020, Annual and 2021 Revised Spending Intentions. September 30, 2021. <https://mmsd.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/expl-expl/ExploTable.aspx?FileT=272020&Lang=en>

⁵ CBC News, The future of the Ekati diamond mine maybe underwater, November 27, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/future-of-ekati-mine-may-be-underwater-1.6261774>

⁶ Toronto Star, Bypass system approved for Iqaluit's water treatment plant, December 2, 2021. <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/12/02/bypass-system-approved-for-iqaluits-water-treatment-plant.html>

⁷ CBC News, Iqaluit to build bypass at water treatment plant, November 17, 2021. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/iqaluit-water-bypass-1.6251306>

⁸ Nunavut News, Nunavut Tunngavik creates fund to enhance Inuktitut education, November 8, 2021. <https://www.nunavutnews.com/news/nunavut-tunngavik-creates-fund-to-enhance-inuktitut-education/>

⁹ Government of Northwest Territories, GNWT is accepting applications for the 2022 Anti-Poverty Fund, November 9, 2021. <https://www.gov.nt.ca/en/newsroom/gnwt-accepting-applications-2022-anti-poverty-fund>