



Labour Market Bulletin

Alberta

April 2022



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Alberta, including the regions of Calgary, Edmonton, Central Alberta and Mountain Parks, Southern Alberta, and Northern Alberta.

OVERVIEW

According to Statistics Canada's annual GDP estimates for 2021, Alberta's GDP grew by 5.1% last year, slightly above the national average.¹ Much of this annual economic growth can be attributed to high global energy prices, which should remain high in the near future. The province is forecasting that West Texas Intermediate (WTI) oil price should average around US\$70 per barrel over the 2022-23 fiscal year.²

Employment should continue to grow in many different sectors as Alberta prepares for what is expected to be an especially busy summer tourist season. Job growth is expected to continue increasing as global energy prices remain high. Also, all public health mandates related to the global pandemic have been lifted, which has led to increases in employment in sectors such as accommodation and food services.

Currently, the labour market in Alberta is very tight. Alberta's job vacancy rate averaged 4.3% in the fourth quarter of 2021, compared to a 2.5% average in the four years leading up to the pandemic.³ This trend has continued into 2022 as many economic regions across the province are currently dealing with acute labour shortages in key sectors.⁴ Provincial budget documents state that the province is facing a skills gap, where unemployment continues to remain a concern but employers are also reporting challenges filling vacancies. The province believes that the pandemic has caused significant shifts in the labour market, including increased automation and digitization, changes to workplace structures and older Albertans choosing to retire early and leave the workforce.⁵

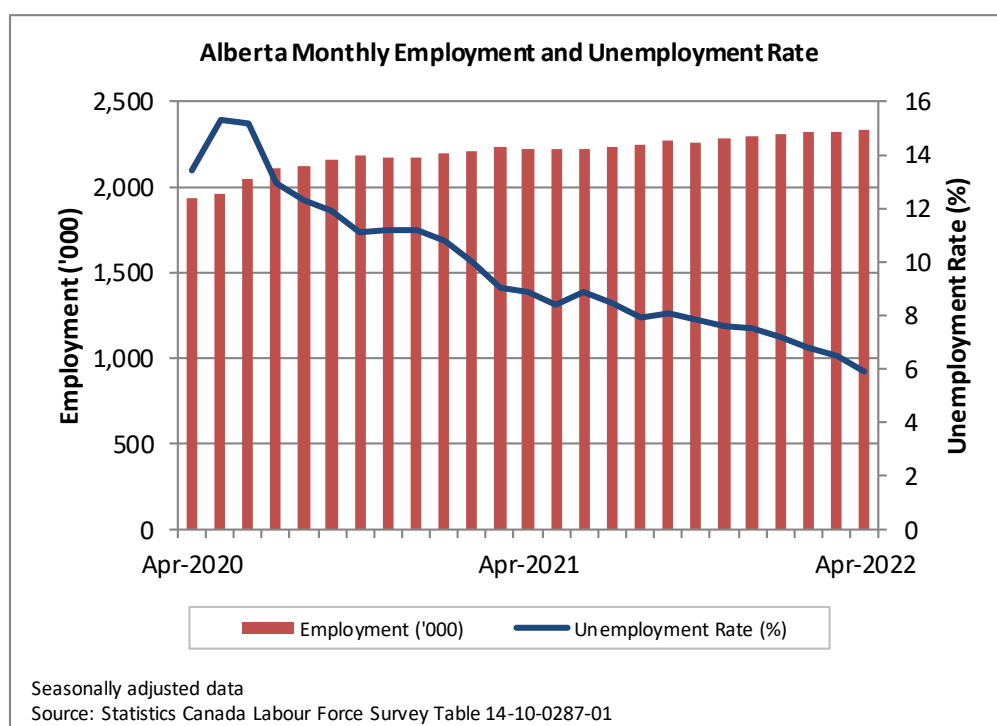
In April 2022, employment averaged around 2.3 million. Overall employment increased by 16,000 (+0.7%) from the previous month. Full time jobs increased by 9,800 (+0.5%) while part time jobs increased by 6,100 (+1.4%).

Alberta Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	April 2022	March 2022	April 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	3,593.3	3,586.5	3,535.3	6.8	0.2	58.0	1.6
Labour Force ('000)	2,485.0	2,484.7	2,435.8	0.3	0.0	49.2	2.0
Employment ('000)	2,338.2	2,322.2	2,219.5	16.0	0.7	118.7	5.3
Full-Time ('000)	1,880.2	1,870.4	1,816.3	9.8	0.5	63.9	3.5
Part-Time ('000)	457.9	451.8	403.2	6.1	1.4	54.7	13.6
Unemployment ('000)	146.8	162.5	216.3	-15.7	-9.7	-69.5	-32.1
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.9	6.5	8.9	-0.6	-	-3.0	-
Participation Rate (%)	69.2	69.3	68.9	-0.1	-	0.3	-
Employment Rate (%)	65.1	64.7	62.8	0.4	-	2.3	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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



The unemployment rate decreased by 0.6% to land at 5.9%. This is Alberta's lowest monthly unemployment rate since the pandemic began. The positive economic indicators mentioned above have supported job growth and economic recovery in recent months.

Alberta Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	April 2022 (%)	March 2022 (%)	April 2021 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	5.9	6.5	8.9	-0.6	-3.0
25 years and over	5.2	5.6	7.8	-0.4	-2.6
Men - 25 years and over	5.5	5.6	7.7	-0.1	-2.2
Women - 25 years and over	4.8	5.6	7.9	-0.8	-3.1
15 to 24 years	10.5	12.4	16.2	-1.9	-5.7
Men - 15 to 24 years	9.0	11.7	16.9	-2.7	-7.9
Women - 15 to 24 years	12.0	13.1	15.6	-1.1	-3.6

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Between March and April, young men (aged 15-24 years) had the most significant decrease in their unemployment rate compared to other demographic groups, with a -2.7 percentage point decrease. Compared to the previous year the unemployment rate has declined for young men by -7.9 percentage points. In April, young women (aged 15-24 years) had the highest unemployment rate at 12.0 percent. This was a -1.1 percentage point decrease from March 2022 and a -3.6 percentage point decrease on an annual basis. Year-over-year changes among men and women 25 years of age and over have been smaller, with their unemployment rates decreasing by -2.2 and -3.1 percentage points respectively. We should expect an increase in employment for young workers in the coming months, as students take up seasonal employment in the summer.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Alberta Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	April 2022	March 2022	April 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	2,338.1	2,322.2	2,219.5	15.9	0.7	118.6	5.3
Goods-producing sector	548.0	549.4	549.3	-1.4	-0.3	-1.3	-0.2
Agriculture	33.8	32.5	37.0	1.3	4.0	-3.2	-8.6
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	147.4	148.6	136.6	-1.2	-0.8	10.8	7.9
Utilities	17.0	17.4	24.5	-0.4	-2.3	-7.5	-30.6
Construction	225.1	225.7	224.8	-0.6	-0.3	0.3	0.1
Manufacturing	124.6	125.3	126.4	-0.7	-0.6	-1.8	-1.4
Services-producing sector	1,790.2	1,772.7	1,670.2	17.5	1.0	120.0	7.2
Trade	387.3	376.1	332.3	11.2	3.0	55.0	16.6
Transportation and warehousing	124.0	121.1	125.5	2.9	2.4	-1.5	-1.2
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	114.4	112.6	115.0	1.8	1.6	-0.6	-0.5
Professional, scientific and technical services	196.0	195.1	183.9	0.9	0.5	12.1	6.6
Business, building and other support services	75.1	79.0	72.9	-3.9	-4.9	2.2	3.0
Educational services	166.9	164.3	168.7	2.6	1.6	-1.8	-1.1
Health care and social assistance	317.4	312.9	308.6	4.5	1.4	8.8	2.9
Information, culture and recreation	80.2	81.8	62.2	-1.6	-2.0	18.0	28.9
Accommodation and food services	135.3	134.2	101.5	1.1	0.8	33.8	33.3
Other services	88.3	91.9	101.4	-3.6	-3.9	-13.1	-12.9
Public administration	105.2	103.7	98.1	1.5	1.4	7.1	7.2

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

In April 2022, there was essentially no change in employment in the goods-producing sector on a monthly basis (-0.3%). Meanwhile, employment in the services-producing sector increased by +17,500 jobs (+1.0%) from March to April. On an annual basis, employment in the goods-producing sector also remained relatively stable (-0.2%); however, employment in the services-producing sector increased substantially by +120,000 (+7.2%). The goods-producing sector has generally been affected less by public health restrictions since the beginning of the pandemic, but periods of weak economic activity slowed subsequent employment growth. Meanwhile, the services-producing sector had larger employment gains due to the significant recovery that the retail, food service, and tourism industries underwent during periods when public health orders were more relaxed.

Goods-producing industries

Many industries and businesses in the goods-producing sector were deemed essential and permitted to continue operating through the peak of the pandemic. Nevertheless, weak economic activity and persistent uncertainty have weighed heavily on the sector. Recently, employment in the goods-producing sector has begun to recover as global energy prices have remained high globally.

Global energy prices have remained high in the early part of 2022, which has supported job growth in the **resource extraction (forestry, mining, and oil and gas)** sector. Annual employment increased by +10,800 jobs

(+7.9%) from April 2021 to April 2022. While oil prices decreased by -\$5.45 (-5.8%) to \$89.11 on a monthly basis in April 2022. However, Western Canadian Select (WCS) was still up about 77% on an annual basis in April.⁶ Oil production in Alberta in March totalled 18.4 million cubic metres, up +3.2% compared to March 2021. Non-conventional (or oil sands) production, which constituted 85.1% of all oil production in Alberta in March 2022, increased by +1.8% year-over-year, while production of conventional oil increased by +11.9%.⁷ Employment is expected to increase in the sector in the coming months. Eighty-six per cent of energy services executives expect to add employees at their company in the next six months, while 43 per cent of exploration and production firms anticipate adding staff according to recent surveys of the Canadian industry.⁸

Employment in the **construction** industry remained essentially unchanged on a monthly basis. While employment has essentially stayed the same, demand for construction in Alberta appears robust. Urban housing starts in Alberta totaled 2,279 in March 2022, a year-over-year increase of +15.5%. Nationally, housing starts decreased by 25.8% over the same period. Single-detached units, which make up 47.3% of all units, increased by +23.3%, while apartment units, which comprised 33.0% of all units, increased by +35.4%.⁹ Some large scale construction projects have also begun in the province recently. For instance, construction has begun on the \$744-million Springbank off-stream reservoir project, which is expected to be fully completed in 2025. The project is intended to protect Calgary and other areas along the Bow and Elbow rivers from the type of flooding that the city experienced in 2013. The province believes that the project will create around 2,200 jobs.¹⁰

Services-producing industries

The services-producing sector includes labour intensive and public-facing industries such as wholesale and retail trade, and food and accommodation. These industries were initially among the most impacted during the height of COVID-19 related closures. In recent months employment has begun to recover, especially during periods when public health orders were more relaxed. However employment still remains below pre-pandemic levels in most industries.

Employment in the educational **services** sectors increased by +2,600 (+1.6%) in April. Job prospects in the **educational services** sector appear strong in the province for the near future. The sector is dealing with acute labour shortages throughout the province. As an example, the Calgary Board of Education recently hired more than 250 new substitute teachers and will continue hiring throughout the spring and summer months in a bid to alleviate shortages. The district is currently seeking 928 substitute teachers or casual employees.¹¹

Employment increased in the **accommodation and food services** sector by +1,100 jobs (+0.8%) on a monthly basis, and also increased by +33,800 (+33.3%) on an annual basis. The phased easing of public health restrictions has helped increase employment in the sector in recent months. The province entered step 1 of its phased reopening plan on February 9, 2022. In February, seasonally adjusted receipts of food services and drinking places increased by \$72 million (+10%) to reach \$820 million, the highest point in six months. Revenues were up by \$389 million (+38%) through the first two months of 2022 compared to 2021. It should be noted that consumer inflation contributed to some of the increase, as prices of food purchased at restaurants were up by 2.7% during this timeframe.¹² However, the sector is also dealing with labour shortages throughout the province. Businesses in Banff and Canmore are continuing to deal with staff shortages and a general lack of job applicants as the region moves into the spring and summer tourist season. Hotel, retail, restaurant, sightseeing and ski resorts rely heavily on foreign workers, who are mostly absent from the job market this year.¹³

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.

In April 2022 employment increased on an annual basis in every economic region, except in **Camrose-Drumheller** where it stayed the same and in Red Deer, where it decreased by -2.7 percentage points. **Lethbridge-Medicine Hat** had the largest employment gains on a percentage basis at +12.7%, followed by Calgary at +7.6%.

Alberta Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	April 2022 ('000)	April 2021 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	April 2022 (%)	April 2021 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Alberta	2,303.1	2,193.7	5.0	6.7	9.9	-3.2
Economic Regions						
Lethbridge - Medicine Hat	147.7	131.0	12.7	5.1	8.7	-3.6
Camrose - Drumheller	92.1	92.1	0.0	5.6	7.6	-2.0
Calgary	901.6	838.1	7.6	7.1	9.7	-2.6
Banff - Jasper - Rocky Mountain House and Athabasca - Grand Prairie - Peace River	183.1	178.6	2.5	4.7	9.8	-5.1
Red Deer	105.5	108.4	-2.7	6.7	10.6	-3.9
Edmonton	798.0	774.7	3.0	7.2	10.6	-3.4
Wood Buffalo - Cold Lake	75.1	70.9	5.9	5.6	7.8	-2.2

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

In April 2022, employment in **Lethbridge-Medicine Hat** increased by +12.7% (+16,700 jobs) on an annual basis. The regional unemployment rate dropped by -3.6% percentage points to 5.1%. Recently a number of renewable energy projects have been announced in the region. These projects are providing employment opportunities to local college graduates in Lethbridge. Blade defence, a wind turbine blade maintenance company, and C&C Wind Energy Services, a wind turbine construction and service company, are recruiting graduates of the Lethbridge College Wind Turbine Technician (WTT) program. The one-year, nationally recognized program is designed to meet the international certification standard and prepares students to write competency exams.¹⁴

Employment in **Camrose – Drumheller** essentially stayed the same on an annual basis, while the unemployment rate fell by -2.0 percentage points. The reason the unemployment rate decreased was because the labour force in the region decreased by -2,200 workers, likely due in part to COVID-19 restrictions, but also to medium-term demographic changes. The region was one of the few in Alberta to drop in population between 2016 and 2021.¹⁵ There have been a few recent announcements regarding municipal infrastructure projects in the region. ASL Paving Ltd. has been awarded a \$1.82M contract by the City of Lloydminster for road, intersection, sidewalk and lane improvements.¹⁶ Also, the City of Wetaskiwin has approved a 2022 capital budget of more than \$5.5M. Capital projects include roadway reconstruction, asphalt overlays, and sidewalk and boulevard rehabilitation.¹⁷

Employment in **Banff–Jasper–Rocky Mountain House and Athabasca – Grande Prairie – Peace River** increased by +2.5% (+4,500 jobs) and the unemployment rate dropped by -5.1 percentage points to 4.7% on annual basis. Jasper is dealing with an acute labour shortage ahead of an expected busy summer tourist season. Jasper currently has more than 600 job vacancies across a variety of occupations as businesses deal with a shortage of applicants and a lack of affordable housing.¹⁸ The region is also experiencing labour shortages in the health care and social assistance sector. The Ridgeview Medical Clinic in Canmore is cancelling evening walk-in clinics and cutting other appointments as it deals with physician shortages. Ridgeview has had a physician vacancy it has been trying to fill since March 2020.¹⁹

The unemployment rate in **Red Deer** was 6.7% in April 2022, a decrease of -3.9% on an annual basis. Although the unemployment rate was down, total employment in the region decreased by -2.7% (-2,900 jobs) since last year. In April 2022, the labour force had decreased by -8,000 compared to April 2021. There has been a couple of recent announcements that should bode well for the labour market in the region. The Government of Alberta is providing \$7.5M to the Town of Sundre towards \$11.5M in improvements to the local wastewater treatment plant. The project is expected to create 69 construction jobs and be complete in 2023.²⁰ Also, Canyon Ski Resort near Red Deer is hiring labourers to help build an alpine pipe coaster, a gravity ride running on metal pipes, that is set to open this summer.²¹

Employment in **Wood Buffalo – Cold Lake** increased annually by +5.9% (+4,200 jobs). The unemployment rate decreased by -2.2 percentage points to 5.6%. High global energy prices have allowed Sunshine Oil Sands Ltd. to fully resume production at its West Ellis thermal oil sands operation west of Fort McKay. Operations were previously suspended due to low oil prices, COVID-19 issues and infrastructure problems.²²

Employment in the **Calgary** region increased by +7.6% (+63,500 jobs) on an annual basis. The unemployment rate was 7.1%, down -2.6 percentage points from last year. There have been a number of announcements which should support job growth in the region in the coming months. For instance, on April 6, Lynx Air officially launched its first flights to six Canadian destinations. Lynx currently employs 145 people in its Calgary office, targeting growth to 400 by the end of 2022 and 3,000 by 2027. This does not include contract workers, which will greatly expand that number.²³ Also, De Havilland Aircraft of Canada Limited is launching a water bomber aircraft manufacturing program that will bring 500 jobs and its Canadian headquarters to Calgary. Final assembly of the De Havilland DHC-515 aircraft will take place in Calgary, where support for CL-215s and CL-415s already in service takes place.²⁴

In **Edmonton**, employment was up by +3.0% (+23,300 jobs) compared to a year ago. The unemployment rate decreased by -3.4 percentage points to 7.2%. There were some recent announcements regarding job growth in the Edmonton economic region. Stantec, a global engineering and design company, is hiring for more than 100 positions in Edmonton. Walmart, EPCOR and Enbridge are among the other 17 organizations currently recruiting in Edmonton.²⁵ Also, Germany-based Alpin Sun is planning to build new \$340M solar farm project, Sol Aurora, on a site north of Fort Saskatchewan, pending regulatory approval. Construction is scheduled to start in early 2023 with the farm being operational by mid-2024.²⁶

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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¹ Lethbridge News Now (May 5, 2022) [GDP up 5.1% in Alberta in 2021, slightly outpacing national average](#)

² Financial Post (February 25, 2022) [Alberta's forecast of massive swing to surplus not just 'heyday oil prices,' says finance minister](#)

³ ATB Financial (April 29, 2022) [Job vacancies higher than before the pandemic](#)

⁴ Cold Lake Sun (April 25, 2022) [Local unemployment down as Alberta's jobless rate lowest since December 2018](#)

⁵ CBC News (April 21, 2022) [Is there a skills gap in Alberta's labour market? Two economists weigh in](#)

⁶ Kent Group (March 10, 2022). [Selected Crude Oil Prices](#)

⁷ Government of Alberta (March 2, 2022) [Oil Production](#)

⁸ Calgary Herald (April 12, 2022) [Varcoe: Oilpatch outlook solidifies for strong 2022 amid high prices](#)

⁹ Government of Alberta (April 19, 2022) [Housing Starts](#)

¹⁰ CTV News (May 5, 2022) [Work begins on \\$744M Springbank off-stream reservoir project](#)

¹¹ Calgary Herald (May 1, 2022) [CBE facing teacher shortages as substitutes can't cover every absence](#)

¹² ATB Financial (April 27, 2022) [Alberta restaurants and bars did better in February](#)

¹³ CBC News (March 25, 2022) [Alberta tourist towns struggle with staff shortages as restrictions ease](#)

¹⁴ Medicine Hat News (April 14, 2022) [Wind turbine program attracting North American recruiters](#)

¹⁵ Statistics Canada (Accessed May 10, 2022) [Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population](#)

¹⁶ Meridian Source (April 12, 2022) [ASL Paving Gets Street Improvement Contract](#)

¹⁷ Sherwood Park News (April 20, 2022) [City approves 2022 budget with 3.99 percent tax increase](#)

¹⁸ CBC News (April 10, 2022) ['Big crunch summer' expected as labour shortage strains Jasper's tourism industry](#)

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- ¹⁹ RMO Today (April 20, 2022) [Ridgeview cancelling evening walk-in clinics](#)
- ²⁰ Government of Alberta (April 30, 2022) [Innovation flowing at Sundre wastewater plant](#)
- ²¹ DailyHive (April 29, 2022) [Hills and thrills: Alberta ski resort set to open an alpine pipe coaster this summer](#)
- ²² BOE Report (April 11, 2022) [Sunshine Oilsands Ltd. business update](#)
- ²³ Calgary Herald (April 6, 2022) [Low-cost Lynx officially launches with flights to six Canadian cities](#)
- ²⁴ Calgary Herald (April 5, 2022) [Varcoe: Calgary awaits takeoff of new 'Super Scooper' plane as De Havilland Canada bases HQ in city](#)
- ²⁵ DailyHive (April 1, 2022) [17 companies hiring hundreds of positions in Edmonton this April](#)
- ²⁶ Edmonton Journal (April 27, 2022) [Developer proposes new \\$340M solar farm project for Sturgeon County](#)