



Labour Market Bulletin

Alberta

July 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

Alberta has experienced rapid economic growth and strong job recovery in recent months, leading all other provinces in private sector employment growth. Since March, private sector jobs are up by 26,000 provincially, while the public sector added 19,000 jobs. While high energy prices and record levels of oil production have certainly helped drive this growth, it is not the sole factor. In fact, capital investment in the energy sector is only 30% of what it was compared to 2014. Businesses in the oil and gas sector are only spending about 39% of their revenues on capital investment this year. This is compared to 2013, when oil prices were similar and businesses in the sector spent almost 149% of their revenue on capital investments.

While job growth has been strong in the province, key sectors are facing acute labour shortages. According to the Business Council of Alberta's Business Expectation Survey, 78% of businesses in the province reported that labour shortages limited their ability to meet demand, compared to 52% in July 2021.¹ As with many other jurisdictions, Healthcare and social assistance facilities across the province have been affected by staff shortages due to pandemic-related absences or employees experiencing burnout. Healthcare facilities in Airdrie, Sylvan Lake, Whitecourt, and the Lakeland Region, were forced to interrupt certain service deliveries periodically throughout the month due to staff shortages.^{2 3 4 5}

While the economy has been running hot recently, employment essentially stayed the same this month. On an annual basis, employment has grown by about 133,500 jobs (+6.0%). The labour force (those working or looking for work) also slightly decreased this month.

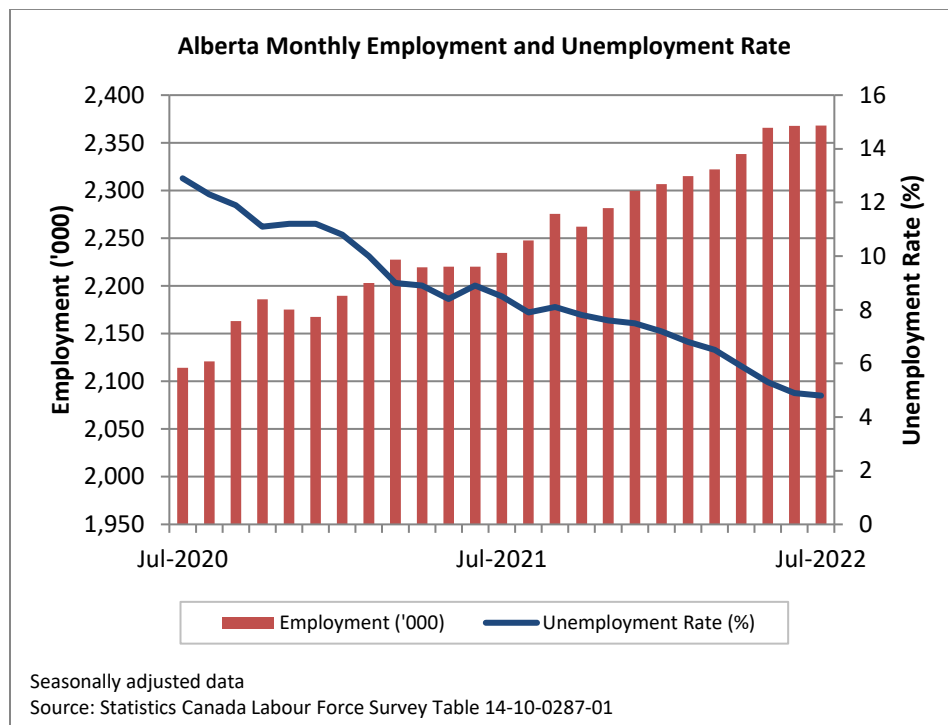
Alberta Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	July 2022	June 2022	July 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	3,616.8	3,609.0	3,540.8	7.8	0.2	76.0	2.1
Labour Force ('000)	2,488.7	2,490.2	2,443.1	-1.5	-0.1	45.6	1.9
Employment ('000)	2,368.0	2,367.7	2,234.5	0.3	0.0	133.5	6.0
Full-Time ('000)	1,949.4	1,934.4	1,801.2	15.0	0.8	148.2	8.2
Part-Time ('000)	418.6	433.3	433.3	-14.7	-3.4	-14.7	-3.4
Unemployment ('000)	120.6	122.5	208.6	-1.9	-1.6	-88.0	-42.2
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.8	4.9	8.5	-0.1	-	-3.7	-
Participation Rate (%)	68.8	69.0	69.0	-0.2	-	-0.2	-
Employment Rate (%)	65.5	65.6	63.1	-0.1	-	2.4	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Currently, Alberta is facing a very tight labour market, where the unemployment rate remains very low. The unemployment rate dropped slightly this month to 4.8%. On an annual basis, the unemployment rate has decreased by about 3.7 percentage points.



Alberta Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	July 2022 (%)	June 2022 (%)	July 2021 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	4.8	4.9	8.5	-0.1	-3.7
25 years and over	4.0	4.0	7.7	0.0	-3.7
Men - 25 years and over	4.0	4.5	7.4	-0.5	-3.4
Women - 25 years and over	3.9	3.5	8.2	0.4	-4.3
15 to 24 years	10.3	10.2	13.8	0.1	-3.5
Men - 15 to 24 years	10.4	11.6	15.0	-1.2	-4.6
Women - 15 to 24 years	10.2	8.8	12.5	1.4	-2.3

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Young men (aged 15-24 years) had the most significant decline in the unemployment rate, with a 1.2 percentage point drop compared to last month. However, young men also had the highest unemployment rate of any of the age and gender groups at 10.4%. The unemployment rate for young women (15 to 24 years) increased by 1.4 percentage points to 10.2 percentage points. The unemployment rate for young workers (15-24 years) was at 10.3% in July, compared to 4.8% for workers 25 years and over.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Employment in the goods-producing sector decreased by about 2,700 jobs (-0.5%). Meanwhile, employment in the services-producing essentially stayed the same on a monthly basis. Both the goods-producing and services-producing sector have experienced substantial employment growth on an annual basis at 6,000 jobs (+1.1%) and 127,500 jobs (+7.5%) respectively.

Alberta Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	July 2022	June 2022	July 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	2,368.0	2,367.7	2,234.5	0.3	0.0	133.5	6.0
Goods-producing sector	549.5	552.2	543.5	-2.7	-0.5	6.0	1.1
Agriculture	36.5	37.3	35.5	-0.8	-2.1	1.0	2.8
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	140.8	139.6	146.6	1.2	0.9	-5.8	-4.0
Utilities	21.2	19.9	17.6	1.3	6.5	3.6	20.5
Construction	231.8	232.0	219.7	-0.2	-0.1	12.1	5.5
Manufacturing	119.2	123.4	124.1	-4.2	-3.4	-4.9	-3.9
Services-producing sector	1,818.5	1,815.5	1,691.0	3.0	0.2	127.5	7.5
Trade	373.7	371.1	330.1	2.6	0.7	43.6	13.2
Transportation and warehousing	136.1	136.3	127.0	-0.2	-0.1	9.1	7.2
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	119.8	122.8	121.1	-3.0	-2.4	-1.3	-1.1
Professional, scientific and technical services	207.2	205.4	186.9	1.8	0.9	20.3	10.9
Business, building and other support services	71.5	77.1	71.2	-5.6	-7.3	0.3	0.4
Educational services	161.9	160.0	173.4	1.9	1.2	-11.5	-6.6
Health care and social assistance	313.5	314.2	291.1	-0.7	-0.2	22.4	7.7
Information, culture and recreation	78.7	78.2	65.4	0.5	0.6	13.3	20.3
Accommodation and food services	139.3	137.0	126.1	2.3	1.7	13.2	10.5
Other services	103.9	103.1	97.2	0.8	0.8	6.7	6.9
Public administration	112.8	110.1	101.5	2.7	2.5	11.3	11.1

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

Increased demand, high energy prices and record levels of oil production have supported strong growth in the **resource extraction sector (forestry, mining, and oil and gas)** sector in recent months. Employment increased by about 1,200 jobs (+0.9%) on a monthly basis. Oil production in Alberta was 17.0 million cubic metres in June 2022, down 0.6% compared to June 2021. Non-conventional (or oil sands) production, which constituted 84.1% of all oil production in Alberta in June 2022, decreased by 3.1% year-over-year, while production of conventional oil increased by 15.2%.⁶ The price of oil spiked to historical highs earlier this year after war broke out in Ukraine and western nations began to sanction Russian oil, but in recent months prices have begun to decrease. The

price of Western Canadian Select (WCS) in July was \$79.18 USD, a decrease of \$16.36 (-17%) on a monthly basis. However, on an annual basis a barrel of WCS was up substantially, by \$20.60 USD (+35%) compared to July 2021.

This month, the federal government announced its intention to reduce emissions from the oil and gas sector by 40% by 2030. The government is proposing to use an industry-specific cap-and-trade system or a modified carbon pricing system to set a ceiling for emissions.⁷ While the government did not mention a specific cap in its discussion paper on the topic, background documents and government sources suggest it will be close to the 110 million tonnes proposed in the national Emissions Reduction Plan in March—a 46% reduction from 2019 levels.⁸ The government hopes to unveil a final plan by 2023, while input on the two options will be accepted until September 30. Regardless of the details of the final plan, there is no doubt that this will have major implications for the oil and gas sector going forward.

Employment in **the construction** sector essentially stayed the same in July compared to the previous month. However, on an annual basis, employment in the construction sector has increased by +12,100 jobs (+5.5%). Housing starts slightly cooled in June, although the housing market remains relatively strong. On a monthly basis, the rate of housing starts decreased by -16% compared to May, although the rate was still 38% higher than the five-year average.⁹ While a strong housing market has helped employment in the sector recently, renewable energies provide an opportunity for employment growth in the sector in the short to medium term. The Business Renewables Centre Canada, a coalition of renewable energy companies, expects that Alberta will see \$3.7B worth of renewables energy construction by 2023 along with the creation of 4,500 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.

Employment in the **health care and social assistance sector** decreased slightly in July compared to June. The sector is facing acute labour shortages across the province, which is leading to periodic interruptions in services. In July, Alberta Health Services (AHS) paused obstetrical services at the Whitecourt Healthcare Centre for a fourth consecutive month due to the limited availability of obstetrics-trained physicians.¹¹ While many of the smaller rural regions are facing shortages, so too are the large metropolitan centres. The urgent care centre in Airdrie, just outside Calgary, closed overnight on the weekends for the next eight weeks due to a shortage of doctors.¹² Many occupations in the sector are affected by acute labour shortages. In July, ambulance services in Edmonton were under stress, increasingly unable to respond to 911 calls due to lack of available paramedics. Nine new ambulances have been added province wide, with a further 11 expected by end of September.¹³ The demand for workers in various occupations in the **health care and social assistance** sector is high, right across the province.

The **accommodation and food services** sector had an employment increase of +2,300 jobs (+1.7%) on a monthly basis. The sector has also been experiencing labour shortages in the second quarter as the busy summer tourist season gets underway. The labour market remains extremely tight in this sector, with many jobs available across the province.

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 quarterly comparisons difficult.

In July, employment increased on an annual basis in every economic region in the province except in **Red Deer**. The largest job gains occurred in the province's main metropolitan areas of Calgary (+11.1%) and Edmonton (+6.0%). In contrast, employment in **Red Deer** decreased by -7.9 percentage points. The region also had the highest unemployment rate in the province at 5.4%.

Alberta Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	July 2022 ('000)	July 2021 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	July 2022 (%)	July 2021 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Alberta	2,395.4	2,248.4	6.5	5.1	8.8	-3.7
Economic Regions						
Lethbridge - Medicine Hat	150.0	144.2	4.0	3.8	4.4	-0.6
Camrose - Drumheller	102.1	99.9	2.2	4.9	7.2	-2.3
Calgary	951.0	856.1	11.1	5.1	9.7	-4.6
Banff - Jasper - Rocky Mountain House and Athabasca - Grand Prairie - Peace River	182.5	178.0	2.5	5.4	8.2	-2.8
Red Deer	102.6	111.4	-7.9	5.4	10.2	-4.8
Edmonton	831.8	784.9	6.0	5.2	9.0	-3.8
Wood Buffalo - Cold Lake	75.4	73.9	2.0	5.4	6.2	-0.8

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Lethbridge-Medicine Hat saw an increase of 5,800 jobs (+4.0%) on an annual basis. In July, there were job creating announcements in the region regarding renewable energy and decarbonisation projects. Firstly, RenuWell Energy Solutions announced that it is ramping up a project to transform and repurpose inactive oil and gas well sites around Alberta into solar energy sites, including one in Taber. Fifteen fossil fuel industry and Indigenous workers began working on the sites on June 27.¹⁴ Also, The City of Medicine Hat reallocated up to \$11M for initial work on its proposed carbon capture project. The 2022 city budget also allocated up to \$6M for drilling, mostly deep exploratory wells to prove the capacity of pore space to retain carbon.¹⁵

In the **Camrose – Drumheller** region, employment increased by 2,200 jobs (+2.2%). In July it was announced that CGC Inc., the Canadian division of USG Corporation, is building a \$210M, state-of-the-art wallboard manufacturing plant in Wheatland County. Construction on the plant is expected to begin in 2023. The project is expected to create approximately 200 construction jobs during the site build, and more than 100 long-term manufacturing jobs at the plant.¹⁶

Employment in **Banff – Jasper – Rocky Mountain House and Athabasca – Grande Prairie – Peace River** increased by 4,500 jobs (+2.5%) and the unemployment rate dropped by 2.8 percentage points to settle at 5.4%. The region has been facing acute labour shortages in recent months. While businesses in the region are desperately trying to ramp up employment, problems have arisen because of the need to hire so many workers rapidly. For instance, nearly 100 foreign workers employed by the temp agency One Team are out of a job after learning they did not have the proper documentation required to work. All of these employees worked as hospitality workers in Lake Louise, Jasper and Banff. Acute labour shortages could increase these types of issues in the near future.¹⁷ An extreme housing shortage in Banff is exacerbating the difficulties in hiring new workers.¹⁸ In early August, officials from Alberta Health Services (AHS) ordered the owners of a property in Banff to make multiple changes. It was discovered that close to 40 people may have been staying at the property, almost three times the maximum occupancy.¹⁹

In **Red Deer** employment decreased by 7.9 percentage points on an annual basis and the unemployment rate stands at a provincial high of 5.4%. Like much of Alberta, this region is facing acute labour shortages, especially in key sectors such as healthcare. The urgent care centre in Sylvan Lake was forced to temporarily close three times in one week in July due to a shortage of physicians. Patients were redirected to nearby communities or asked to return once service was restored.²⁰

Employment in **Wood Buffalo – Cold Lake** increased by 2.0% on an annual basis. This region has also been affected by labour shortages in its healthcare sector. Health care centres in the Lakeland region experienced service disruptions caused by staff shortages in July. Some acute care beds were temporarily unavailable in St. Paul and Lac La Biche, and the obstetrics unit in Lac La Biche has closed indefinitely.²¹

Employment in the **Calgary** region increased by a provincial high of +94,900 jobs (+11.1%) on an annual basis. There have been announcements regarding infrastructure upgrades, which should continue to boost employment in the construction sector in the short term. High River Town Council has voted to proceed with a \$15M expansion to the indoor pool at its Bob Snodgrass Recreation Complex.²² Also, the Government of Alberta has announced that it is contributing nearly \$16M to the construction of a water pipeline connecting the Bow River to water treatment facilities in Okotoks and Foothills County.²³

In **Edmonton**, employment was up by 46,900 jobs (+6.0) compared to a year ago. The unemployment rate dropped by 3.8 percentage points to end up at 5.2%. There have been a couple of announcements regarding job growth recently, which should carry forward this economic momentum in Edmonton. For instance, Inter Pipeline Ltd.'s \$4.3B Heartland Petrochemical Complex in Strathcona County just east of Edmonton expects to have 300 employees once the facility becomes fully operational later in 2022.²⁴ In July, McKesson Canada opened its \$175M pharmaceutical distribution centre in Edmonton. Construction of the facility generated 1,800 jobs in construction and the facility will employ 150 permanent staff.²⁵

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 Business Council of Alberta (July 4, 2022) [Weekly EconMinute—Labour Shortages in Alberta](#)

² CBC News (July 22, 2022) [Closure of Airdrie urgent care centre affects entire region, says Calgary mayor](#)

³ Red Deer Advocate (July 20, 2022) [Sylvan Lake’s urgent care centre temporarily closed three times this week](#)

⁴ Lakeland Today (July 20, 2022) [Nursing shortages continue to cause disruptions across Lakeland](#)

⁵ Whitecourt Star (July, 08, 2022) [Pause in services for expecting Whitecourt moms going into fourth month](#)

⁶ Government of Alberta (August 05, 2022) [Oil Production](#)

⁷ Government of Canada (July 18, 2022) [Options to cap and cut oil and gas sector greenhouse gas emissions to achieve 2030 goals and net-zero by 2050 – discussion document](#)

⁸ CBC News (July 18, 2022) [Ottawa proposes to cap oil, gas emissions using industry-specific carbon pricing system](#)

⁹ ATB Financial (July 21, 2022) [Housing starts cooler but not cold in June](#)

¹⁰ The Narwhal (June 14, 2022) [Alberta renewable energy surge could power 4,500 jobs](#)

¹¹ Whitecourt Star (July, 08, 2022) [Pause in services for expecting Whitecourt moms going into fourth month](#)

¹² CBC News (July 22, 2022) [Closure of Airdrie urgent care centre affects entire region, says Calgary mayor](#)

¹³ Global News (July 18, 2022) [Frequent code reds, high levels of ambulance strain in Edmonton region: AHS data](#)

¹⁴ National Observer (July 4, 2022) [Solar project repurposing abandoned oil and gas wells launches pilot in sunny Alberta town](#)

¹⁵ Medicine Hat News (July 6, 2022) [City moves money to start up carbon capture project](#)

¹⁶ Invest Alberta Corporation (July 29, 2022) [CGC announces \\$210 million investment to build state-of-the-art wallboard manufacturing plant in Alberta](#)

¹⁷ CBC News (July 18, 2022) [Contract workers who thought they were in Canada legally ordered to leave](#)

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- ¹⁸ CBC News (July 30, 2022) [Dire lack of housing for Banff workers spurs worst summer staffing shortage in years](#)
- ¹⁹ Calgary Herald (August 08, 2022) [AHS issues enforcement order after more than 40 beds found in Banff home](#)
- ²⁰ Red Deer Advocate (July 20, 2022) [Sylvan Lake’s urgent care centre temporarily closed three times this week](#)
- ²¹ Lakeland Today (July 20, 2022) [Nursing shortages continue to cause disruptions across Lakeland](#)
- ²² Airdrie Echo (July 22, 2022) [Council moves forward with \\$15 million aquatic centre expansion](#)
- ²³ CBC News (July 20, 2022) [Long-awaited water pipeline for Okotoks, Foothills County receives nearly \\$16M from province](#)
- ²⁴ CBC News (July 05, 2022) [Heartland Petrochemical Complex outside Edmonton produces first plastic pellets](#)
- ²⁵ Government of Alberta (July 19, 2022) [New pharmaceutical distribution centre: Minister Schweitzer](#)