



# Labour Market Bulletin

Alberta

August 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. This has helped the province's fiscal outlook in the short term. The Premier announced that the province is on track to post a \$13.2 billion surplus in this budget year. The amount is well above the \$511 million surplus forecasted back in February. Alberta's finances have benefited greatly from high energy prices along with higher royalty payouts from maturing oil sands projects. The improved fiscal outlook will allow the province to once again tie personal taxes to inflation, meaning the average Albertan would see a \$300 benefit.<sup>1</sup>

While the province has been experiencing an economic windfall recently, labour shortages in key sectors continue to threaten growth. The health care sector has seen persistent staff shortages that have impacted service delivery in many different regions throughout the province. As a result, Alberta Health Services (AHS) was forced to extend the temporary closure of 10 out of the 30 acute care inpatient beds at the Peace River Community Health Centre. AHS also closed the Elk Point Emergency Department over four consecutive nights in August due to the lack of registered nursing staff and a failure to secure nurses for temporary coverage.<sup>2</sup> Alberta Precision Laboratories was forced to reduce in-city hematology testing at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital for at least the next four months due to staffing shortages.<sup>3</sup>

Other sectors are also being severely impacted by acute labour shortages. There are currently about 5,000 vacant jobs in Banff, Canmore and the surrounding ski hills as local businesses grapple with the vacancies in anticipation of the upcoming winter tourist season. Many people in the area retired, or left the work force during the pandemic, leaving a glut of open jobs that have been difficult to fill.<sup>4</sup>

While the economy has been running hot recently, employment declined slightly this month (0.3%). On an annual basis, employment has grown by about +113,800 jobs (+5.1%). The labour force (those working or looking for work) increased slightly this month by +6,800 workers (+0.3%).

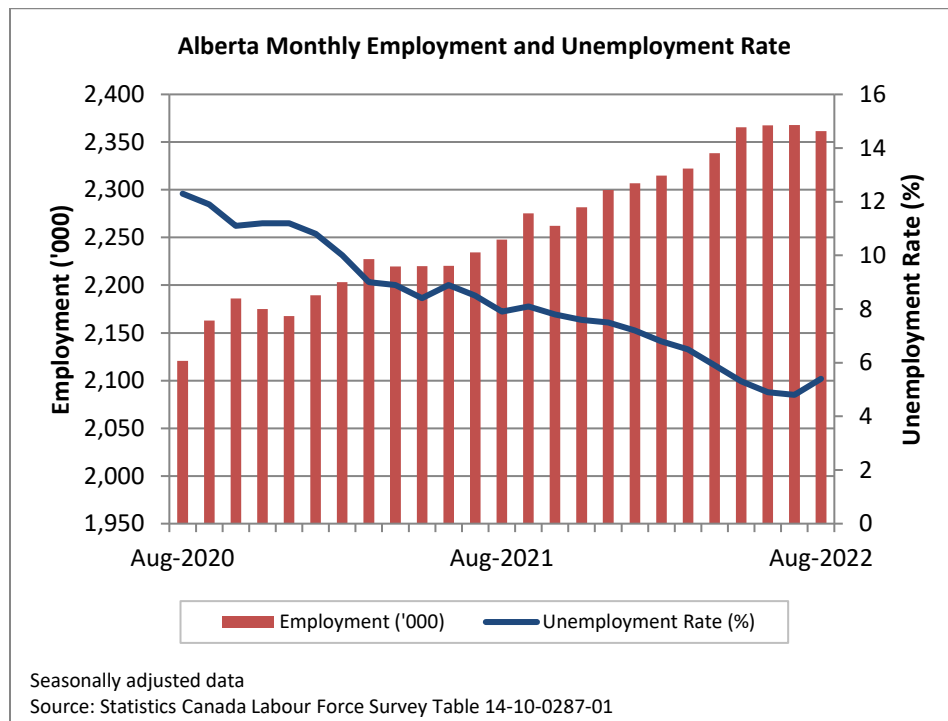
**Alberta Monthly Labour Force Statistics**

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	August 2022	July 2022	August 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Population 15 + ('000)</b>	3,627.6	3,616.8	3,545.5	10.8	0.3	82.1	2.3
<b>Labour Force ('000)</b>	2,495.5	2,488.7	2,441.2	6.8	0.3	54.3	2.2
<b>Employment ('000)</b>	2,361.5	2,368.0	2,247.7	-6.5	-0.3	113.8	5.1
Full-Time ('000)	1,929.8	1,949.4	1,812.2	-19.6	-1.0	117.6	6.5
Part-Time ('000)	431.7	418.6	435.5	13.1	3.1	-3.8	-0.9
<b>Unemployment ('000)</b>	134.0	120.6	193.5	13.4	11.1	-59.5	-30.7
<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	5.4	4.8	7.9	0.6	-	-2.5	-
<b>Participation Rate (%)</b>	68.8	68.8	68.9	0.0	-	-0.1	-
<b>Employment Rate (%)</b>	65.1	65.5	63.4	-0.4	-	1.7	-

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 at 5.4%. However, the rate did increase by 0.6 percentage points in August on a monthly basis, caused primarily by employment losses in the services-producing sector.



### Alberta Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	August 2022 (%)	July 2022 (%)	August 2021 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>Total</b>	5.4	4.8	7.9	0.6	-2.5
<b>25 years and over</b>	4.5	4.0	7.1	0.5	-2.6
Men - 25 years and over	3.9	4.0	6.7	-0.1	-2.8
Women - 25 years and over	5.2	3.9	7.4	1.3	-2.2
<b>15 to 24 years</b>	10.6	10.3	13.5	0.3	-2.9
Men - 15 to 24 years	12.4	10.4	16.5	2.0	-4.1
Women - 15 to 24 years	8.7	10.2	10.4	-1.5	-1.7

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Young women (aged 15-24 years) had the most significant decline in the unemployment rate, with a 1.5 percentage point drop compared to last month. Young men (aged 15-24 years) on the other hand saw an unemployment rate increase of 2.0 percentage points. Young men also had the highest unemployment rate of any of the age and gender groups at 12.4%. The unemployment rate for young workers (15-24 years) was at 10.6% in August, compared to 4.5% for workers 25 years and over.

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Employment in the goods-producing sector increased by about +7,400 jobs (+1.3%). Meanwhile, employment in the services-producing sector decreased by -14,000 jobs (-0.8%) on a monthly basis. Both the goods-producing and services-producing sector have experienced substantial employment growth on an annual basis at 20,200 jobs (+3.8%) and 93,500 jobs (+5.5%) respectively.

### Goods-producing industries

Increased demand, relatively high energy prices and record levels of oil production have continued to support strong growth in the **resource extraction sector (forestry, mining, and oil and gas)** sector in recent months. Employment increased by about 4,400 jobs (+3.1%) on a monthly basis. 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 August was \$71.89 USD, a decrease of -\$7.29 (-9%) on a monthly basis. However, on an annual basis, a barrel of WCS was up by +\$17.32 (+32%) compared to August 2021. Further increases in employment in the sector are dependent on robust capital growth going forward. Capital spending in Canada's oil and gas sector is up for the sixth consecutive quarter. Seasonally adjusted capital expenditures came in at \$9.3 billion in the second quarter of 2022, the highest capital spending since Q4 of 2018. Over the first half of the year, capital spending in the sector was up 40.6% compared to 2020 levels and 58.6% above 2021 levels. Despite the recent increases, however, capital spending in the sector is still less than half of what it was in Q1 of 2014 (the historical peak). Companies in the sector remain cautious about further spending given the volatility of global markets, limited transportation capacity and global efforts to reduce carbon emissions.<sup>5</sup>

## Alberta Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	August 2022	July 2022	August 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Total employed, all industries</b>	2,361.5	2,368.0	2,247.7	-6.5	-0.3	113.8	5.1
<b>Goods-producing sector</b>	556.9	549.5	536.7	7.4	1.3	20.2	3.8
Agriculture	44.5	36.5	34.0	8.0	21.9	10.5	30.9
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	145.2	140.8	144.6	4.4	3.1	0.6	0.4
Utilities	21.7	21.2	18.8	0.5	2.4	2.9	15.4
Construction	221.2	231.8	217.5	-10.6	-4.6	3.7	1.7
Manufacturing	124.4	119.2	121.7	5.2	4.4	2.7	2.2
<b>Services-producing sector</b>	1,804.5	1,818.5	1,711.0	-14.0	-0.8	93.5	5.5
Trade	369.1	373.7	329.3	-4.6	-1.2	39.8	12.1
Transportation and warehousing	132.8	136.1	137.7	-3.3	-2.4	-4.9	-3.6
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	121.4	119.8	119.1	1.6	1.3	2.3	1.9
Professional, scientific and technical services	212.7	207.2	189.6	5.5	2.7	23.1	12.2
Business, building and other support services	72.6	71.5	68.6	1.1	1.5	4.0	5.8
Educational services	155.9	161.9	173.5	-6.0	-3.7	-17.6	-10.1
Health care and social assistance	308.2	313.5	292.6	-5.3	-1.7	15.6	5.3
Information, culture and recreation	86.8	78.7	71.1	8.1	10.3	15.7	22.1
Accommodation and food services	132.0	139.3	130.3	-7.3	-5.2	1.7	1.3
Other services	103.2	103.9	96.7	-0.7	-0.7	6.5	6.7
Public administration	109.8	112.8	102.5	-3.0	-2.7	7.3	7.1

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Employment in the **construction** sector decreased by -10,600 jobs (-4.6%) on a monthly basis. On an annual basis, employment has increased by +3,700 (+1.7%). Despite the monthly employment decrease, Construction intentions in the province remain high. Indeed, the seasonally adjusted value of building permits issued in Alberta stood at \$1.5 billion in July. This was \$100 million (+7.1%) higher than June and was mostly driven by non-residential permits, which offset the second consecutive decline in residential permits. On an annual basis, total permits issued in Alberta were up by \$1.2 billion (+15.3%) from the same seven-month period in 2021. It should be noted that inflationary pressures have helped to push the value of building permits up across the country.<sup>6</sup>

### 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.

There have been severe labour shortages in the **health care and social assistance sector** that have affected service delivery in many different regions of Alberta. In August, employment in the sector decreased further, by 5,300 jobs (-1.7%). Every single economic region in Alberta has experienced health care service delivery issues due to staff shortages in the month of August. On a positive note, a couple of economic regions have been able to hire desperately needed paramedics and physicians recently. In the Calgary region, Okotoks and Chestermere

now have local, 24-hour ambulance coverage, along with four additional paramedics who have been working since August 15, 2022. Previously, ambulances from nearby communities were responding to calls out of Okotoks and Chestermere beyond set coverage hours.<sup>7</sup> Associated Ambulance has hired two operational staff for its Cold Lake location following the transition of Emergency Medical Services effective September 1, 2022. Associated Ambulance transitioned a total of 35 paramedics from the Cold Lake Ambulance Society.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Alberta Health Services has announced that it was in the process of hiring four physicians and onboarding new locum physicians to help overcome recent temporary closures of the Sylvan Lake Advanced Ambulatory Care Service at the Community Health Centre.<sup>9</sup>

Employment in the **accommodation and food services** sector decreased by 7,300 jobs (-5.2%) in the month of August. Much of this decrease could be due to students who are leaving summer jobs in the food service industry to return to school in the September. The sector has been experiencing labour shortages throughout the busy summer tourist season. The Banff-Canmore Job Resources Centre estimates that there could be up to 5,000 vacant jobs in Banff, Canmore and the surrounding ski hills. Businesses are looking to hire workers as the winter tourism season begins.

## 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 most economic regions in the province except in **Red Deer, Banff - Jasper - Rocky Mountain House and Athabasca - Grand Prairie - Peace River, and Wood Buffalo - Cold Lake**. The largest job gains occurred in Calgary (+11.0%) and **Camrose – Drumheller (+5.7%)**.

**Alberta Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region**

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	August 2022 ('000)	August 2021 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	August 2022 (%)	August 2021 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>Alberta</b>	2,392.4	2,258.0	6.0	5.4	8.8	-3.4
<b>Economic Regions</b>						
Lethbridge - Medicine Hat	149.0	147.2	1.2	3.9	4.9	-1.0
Camrose - Drumheller	102.1	96.6	5.7	6.4	8.8	-2.4
Calgary	956.1	861.5	11.0	5.6	10.0	-4.4
Banff - Jasper - Rocky Mountain House and Athabasca - Grand Prairie - Peace River	179.0	179.2	-0.1	5.4	7.5	-2.1
Red Deer	103.2	107.2	-3.7	4.4	9.8	-5.4
Edmonton	830.1	792.9	4.7	5.3	8.4	-3.1
Wood Buffalo - Cold Lake	72.9	73.4	-0.7	6.3	6.4	-0.1

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 +1,800 jobs (+1.2%) on an annual basis. Like many other economic regions, Lethbridge-Medicine Hat has experienced disruptions to health care services due to acute labour shortages. In August, Alberta Precision Laboratories announced that it would be reducing in-city hematology testing at the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital for at least the next four months due to staffing shortages. Instead, blood samples will be forwarded to Calgary's Diagnostic and Scientific Centre for testing.<sup>10</sup>

In the **Camrose – Drumheller** region, employment increased by 5,500 jobs (+5.7%). This was the second highest rate of employment growth by any region in August. This positive momentum should continue as there was some positive news regarding job creation in August. CGC Inc., the Canadian division of USG Corporation, announced that it will be 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.<sup>11</sup>

Employment in **Banff – Jasper – Rocky Mountain House** and **Athabasca – Grande Prairie – Peace River** essentially stayed the same as it was in August of 2021. The fact that employment was essentially unchanged on an annual basis is likely due to the seasonal nature of much of the employment in the region. Still, the region has been facing acute labour shortages, especially in the tourism related industries. Businesses have struggled to hire staff throughout the busy tourist season. The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge is currently offering relocation or sign-on bonuses for a variety of positions including banquet chef, night cleaners and cooks.<sup>12</sup> Despite many businesses adopting measures to attract workers, the busy winter tourist season could be threatened by labour shortages. The Banff-Canmore Job Resource Centre estimates that there are currently about 5,000 vacant jobs in Banff, Canmore and the surrounding ski hills.<sup>13</sup>

In **Red Deer** employment decreased slightly by -4,000 jobs (-3.7%) on annual basis. During this same period, the unemployment rate also decreased by 5.4 percentage points. The labour force continues to shrink in the region, due in part to older workers leaving the workforce and creating unfilled vacancies. In encouraging news, the new HIREd (Hope Inspired Resource and Employment Development) workforce development program by MCG Careers in Red Deer says demand is increasing for workers in various industries including the oil field, security, hospitality and professional truck driving sectors.<sup>14</sup>

Employment in **Wood Buffalo – Cold Lake** decreased slightly by -500 jobs (-0.7%) The **Wood Buffalo – Cold Lake** region is facing acute labour shortages in both the health care and education sector. Alberta Health Services closed the Elk Point Emergency Department over four consecutive nights due to the lack of registered nursing staff and a failure to secure nurses for temporary coverage.<sup>15</sup> There are also some school divisions within the Lakeland region that are facing a shortage of teachers, educational assistants, custodians, speech language pathologists, French Immersion teachers and school bus drivers. Some districts are relying on substitute teachers and short-term contract employees to fill the void.<sup>16</sup>

The **Calgary** region led the province in terms of employment growth on annual basis in August. Employment increased by a provincial high of +94,600 jobs (+11.0%) on an annual basis. There were also numerous job creation related announcements in the **Calgary** region. Helcim, a Calgary-based fintech company that offers payment solutions for businesses across Canada and the US, is planning to add 100 new employees by the end of 2022. Helcim aims to hire young professional's right out of school and provide on-the-job training and mentorship amidst a high demand for tech sector workers in the city.<sup>17</sup> TD is opening a wealth hub at its TD

Calgary Place location. The hub is expected to employ about 100 financial planning associates, within a year, who will support more senior planners. Twenty-four of the associates have already been hired.<sup>18</sup> Finally, SixRing Inc., a Calgary-based biofuels company, is scaling up production and expanding its fuel portfolio over the next two years, with a \$1.4M grant from the federal government. SixRing’s parent company, Fluid Energy Group, is matching the funding. SixRing currently employs 40 people and expects to expand to as many as 100.<sup>19</sup>

In **Edmonton**, employment was up by 37,200 jobs (+4.7) compared to a year ago. The unemployment rate in the region dropped by 3.1 percentage points to end up at 5.3%. There have been a couple of announcements regarding job growth which should carry forward this economic momentum in Edmonton. The Edmonton Police Service’s recruit selection unit is launching a new campaign to hire 100 new recruits this year and another 108 in 2023, including an “experienced officers” class of up to 10 members with policing backgrounds.<sup>20</sup> Additionally, there are about twenty-one employers in Edmonton that currently have hundreds of job openings with positions ranging from retail to finance, to engineering and professional occupations.<sup>21</sup>

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- <sup>1</sup> Government of Alberta (August 2022) [Alberta to use \\$13.2B budget surplus to pay down debt, put cash in piggy bank](#)
  - <sup>2</sup> MyLakelandNow (August 22, 2022) [Elk Point ER closes for the week](#)
  - <sup>3</sup> Medicine Hat News (August 13, 2022) [Hospital staffing shortages resulting in reduction of in-city hematology testing](#)
  - <sup>4</sup> CTV News (September 06, 2022) [Banff businesses hope to hire a few more workers before snow flies](#)
  - <sup>5</sup> ATB Financial (September 02, 2022) [The sun is shining on oil and gas investment](#)
  - <sup>6</sup> ATB Financial (September 06, 2022) [Building permits still upbeat in Alberta](#)
  - <sup>7</sup> CTV News (August 30, 2022) [Okotoks, Chestermere get boost to EMS services](#)
  - <sup>8</sup> Lakeland Today (September 06, 2022) [Cold Lake Ambulance Society replaced by new AHS contractor](#)
  - <sup>9</sup> Alberta Health Services (August 11, 2022) [AHS working to find solutions in Sylvan Lake](#)
  - <sup>10</sup> Medicine Hat News (August 13, 2022) [Hospital staffing shortages resulting in reduction of in-city hematology testing](#)
  - <sup>11</sup> Invest Alberta Corporation (July 28, 2022) [CGC announces \\$210 million investment to build state-of-the-art wallboard manufacturing plant in Alberta](#)
  - <sup>12</sup> Narcity (August 17, 2022) [Fairmont Hotels In Alberta Are Hiring & You Could Earn \\$500 For Moving To The Rockies](#)
  - <sup>13</sup> CTV News (September 02, 2022) [Banff businesses hope to hire a few more workers before snow flies](#)
  - <sup>14</sup> RDNewsNow (September 6, 2022) [New program helps Red Deerians get HIRED by increasing hope](#)
  - <sup>15</sup> MyLakelandNow (August 22, 2022) [Elk Point ER closes for the week](#)
  - <sup>16</sup> Lakeland Today (September 01, 2022) [Lakeland school divisions face challenges hiring teachers and support staff](#)
  - <sup>17</sup> CBC News (August 08, 2022) [Investment in Alberta's tech sector soars](#)
  - <sup>18</sup> Calgary Herald (August 17, 2022) [TD picks Calgary to house its western Canadian wealth hub](#)
  - <sup>19</sup> Calgary Herald (September 06, 2022) [Calgary biofuel company gets \\$1.4 million in federal funding to scale and research new applications](#)
  - <sup>20</sup> Edmonton Journal (August 13, 2022) [Edmonton police launching new campaign to hire 100 recruits in 2022](#)
  - <sup>21</sup> Daily Hive (August 29, 2022) [21 companies hiring hundreds of stellar jobs in Edmonton this September](#)
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