



Labour Market Bulletin

British Columbia

October 2022



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of British Columbia (B.C.), including the regions of Northern B.C., Vancouver Island and Coast, Lower Mainland, Thompson–Okanagan and the Kootenays.

OVERVIEW

British Columbia added 9,800 (0.3%) jobs in October, despite widespread concerns of a slowing economy. There were employment gains for both full-time employees (+4,100 or 0.2%) and part-time employees (+5,800 or 1.0%). On a yearly basis, overall employment is up 67,100 (1.5%) and the number of self-employed British Columbians was up 13,300 (3.1%) from the previous month.¹

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	October 2022	September 2022	October 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	4,442.8	4,438.3	4,375.7	4.5	0.1	67.1	1.5
Labour Force ('000)	2,884.6	2,874.8	2,858.3	9.8	0.3	26.3	0.9
Employment ('000)	2,762.1	2,752.3	2,693.4	9.8	0.4	68.7	2.6
Full-Time ('000)	2,177.2	2,173.1	2,110.7	4.1	0.2	66.5	3.2
Part-Time ('000)	585.0	579.2	582.6	5.8	1.0	2.4	0.4
Unemployment ('000)	122.5	122.5	164.9	0.0	0.0	-42.4	-25.7
Unemployment Rate (%)	4.2	4.3	5.8	-0.1	-	-1.6	-
Participation Rate (%)	64.9	64.8	65.3	0.1	-	-0.4	-
Employment Rate (%)	62.2	62.0	61.6	0.2	-	0.6	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

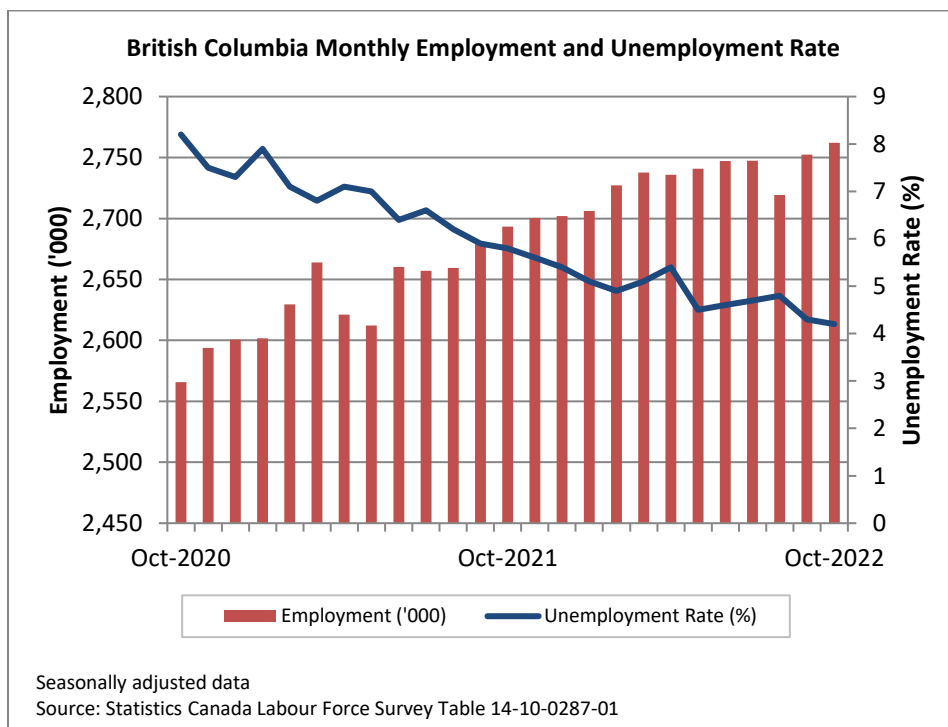
Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

The Government of British Columbia is implementing regulatory changes to provincial employment standards, raising the minimum age for workers across various sectors to 16 and 18 years according to risk level. Sixteen will now be the minimum age for workers to engage in construction, silviculture, forest firefighting, and work from heights requiring fall protection. Eighteen years old is now the minimum age for a variety of forestry harvesting and manufacturing jobs, oil and gas field work, working with asbestos and any other work requiring a respirator.²

These new regulations, which will come into effect on January 01, 2023, are aimed at improving health and safety measures for young workers in British Columbia. Training programs overseen by SkilledTradesBC will allow younger workers to engage in higher risk activities through apprenticeships and training programs. The regulations will include a phase-in period allowing workers who are less than six months from reaching the prescribed age for high-risk activities to continue their employment.³

In response to rising economic pressures on businesses, the Government of British Columbia is expanding access to the small business tax rate. Under the previous rules, the small business tax rate was reduced as businesses moved from \$10M to \$15M in taxable capital. The rate will now be gradually reduced between \$10M and \$50M in taxable capital, allowing many more businesses to benefit from a lower tax rate. The implementation of the new rate, along with PST rebates and the increased employment incentive program, is estimated to cost \$1.5 billion.⁴

The federal government is forgiving up to 50% of loans taken through the Indigenous Business Initiative, a COVID-19 support measure to aid Indigenous-owned businesses during the pandemic. The loan forgiveness program will apply to around 3,800 small and medium businesses across the country representing approximately \$82.5M in forgiven loan amounts.⁵



The youth unemployment rate increased 0.5 percentage points from the previous month but remained 2.2 percentage points below last year’s rate. Month-over-month, the unemployment rate for men in the 15-24 age category increased 0.7 percentage points while the rate was up 0.2 percentage point for women 15-24. Year-over-year, youth unemployment rates improved by 0.9 percentage points for women and 3.5 points for men.

British Columbia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	October 2022 (%)	September 2022 (%)	October 2021 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	4.2	4.3	5.8	-0.1	-1.6
25 years and over	3.5	3.6	4.9	-0.1	-1.4
Men - 25 years and over	3.5	3.5	5.0	0.0	-1.5
Women - 25 years and over	3.4	3.7	4.7	-0.3	-1.3
15 to 24 years	9.1	8.6	11.3	0.5	-2.2
Men - 15 to 24 years	9.8	9.1	13.3	0.7	-3.5
Women - 15 to 24 years	8.3	8.1	9.2	0.2	-0.9

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Monthly employment grew in the **goods producing sector** by 18,700 (3.8%) while employment in the **services producing sector** fell by 8,900 (-0.4%).

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	October 2022	September 2022	October 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	2,762.1	2,752.3	2,693.4	9.8	0.4	68.7	2.6
Goods-producing sector	516.4	497.7	489.3	18.7	3.8	27.1	5.5
Agriculture	27.7	28.5	22.7	-0.8	-2.8	5.0	22.0
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	49.4	47.8	47.2	1.6	3.3	2.2	4.7
Utilities	17.3	16.7	15.0	0.6	3.6	2.3	15.3
Construction	244.5	238.5	220.5	6.0	2.5	24.0	10.9
Manufacturing	177.5	166.0	183.9	11.5	6.9	-6.4	-3.5
Services-producing sector	2,245.7	2,254.6	2,204.0	-8.9	-0.4	41.7	1.9
Trade	411.0	415.2	421.4	-4.2	-1.0	-10.4	-2.5
Transportation and warehousing	136.0	137.0	142.3	-1.0	-0.7	-6.3	-4.4
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	160.6	167.7	167.5	-7.1	-4.2	-6.9	-4.1
Professional, scientific and technical services	275.6	272.7	244.7	2.9	1.1	30.9	12.6
Business, building and other support services	97.3	95.0	101.7	2.3	2.4	-4.4	-4.3
Educational services	201.8	208.9	194.6	-7.1	-3.4	7.2	3.7
Health care and social assistance	377.8	378.8	371.4	-1.0	-0.3	6.4	1.7
Information, culture and recreation	158.6	151.7	131.5	6.9	4.5	27.1	20.6
Accommodation and food services	175.6	181.2	174.8	-5.6	-3.1	0.8	0.5
Other services	114.5	110.3	109.8	4.2	3.8	4.7	4.3
Public administration	137.0	136.0	144.4	1.0	0.7	-7.4	-5.1

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 province's **goods-producing sector** fell by 3.8% (18,700) in October. Strong job growth over the month in **manufacturing** (11,500 or 6.9%), **construction** (6000 or 2.5%) and **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** (1,600 or 3.3%) supported the sector; however, there was still some job loss in the sector including a decline in **agriculture** (-800 or -2.8%).

Employment in the province's **construction** industry continued to grow on a monthly basis by 6,000 (2.5%) and increased by 24,000 workers or 10.9% year-over-year. Housing activity in the province increased in September month-over-month, with the number of housing starts rising 11.3% to 50,180. Compared to last year, however, housing starts were up significantly in September (59.0%).⁶ Looking ahead, building permits are down 10.9% year-over-year and 14.5% month-over-month, signalling a contraction in activity.⁷

Forestry is a key economic driver in many B.C. communities. Employment in **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** increased 1,600 or 3.3% over the month, while rising 2,200 or 4.7% year-over-year. BC's forestry sector continued to adapt to the ongoing challenges of a shrinking timber supply, insect infestations and wildfires, and U.S. trade tariffs. In the longer term, logging in BC will be further limited by measures to protect caribou habitat and old-growth forest areas.

Curtailments in the industry have continued with Conifex Timber Inc. curtailing production at its Mackenzie sawmill for two weeks on August 11.⁸ Canfor Pulp Products Inc. extended the curtailment of their Prince George pulp mill, which remained out of operation for most of October.⁹ Further north, Skeena Sawmills in Terrace announced staged curtailments until the end of the year.¹⁰ In the Okanagan, Gorman Bros. Lumber Ltd. laid off 11 employees, citing low log supply.¹¹ High pulp prices and low log supply continue to be the most cited factors for recent curtailments.

Employment in the province's **services-producing sector** declined over the month by 8,900 positions (-0.4%) but was still up over the year (41,700 or 1.9%). There were monthly employment drops within **finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing** (-4.2%), **educational services** (-3.4%) and **accommodation and food services** (-3.1%). However, there were still employment gains in some sub sectors including **information, culture and recreation** (4.5%), **other services** (3.8%) and **business, building and other support services** (2.4%).

Employment in **healthcare and social assistance** fell 1,000 (-0.3%) over the month while increasing 6,400 (1.7%) year-over-year. The sector continued to grapple with an acute shortage of healthcare professionals, particularly nurses and family doctors. It is estimated that 1 in 5 British Columbians do not have a family physician.¹² In response, the Government of British Columbia announced a new payment model for family doctors, set to go into effect in February 2023.¹³ Under the existing model, physicians are compensated mainly based on the number and type of procedures they carry out. The new model will allow for compensation to vary according to additional criteria, such as the time spent with a patient, the number of patients a doctor supports through their office, the complexity of the issues a patient is facing, and administrative costs currently paid directly by family doctors.¹⁴

In addition to the new physician payment model, the provincial government has agreed to a tentative physician master agreement that will be effective for the next three years. The new agreement will increase supports for family doctor practices by raising the Business Cost Premium, which covers costs of operating expenditures. The agreement also includes funding for rural programs; more funding for hiring employees; new payment rates to address issues of income disparity; and new hourly premiums for after-hours services.¹⁵

The Government of British Columbia is also facilitating the rehiring of support workers by provincial health authorities. Under Bill 47, up to 4,000 workers that had been privately contracted are now being rehired. In October, over a thousand workers were rehired in the Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health regions.^{16,17,18}

Employment in **education services** fell 7,100 (-3.4%) over the month while increasing 7,200 (3.7%) year-over-year. Despite losses in employment over the month, a new tentative collective agreement reached on October 31 may support more worker stability. The new collective agreement will substantially raise wages and provide additional benefits for public school teachers in the province.¹⁹ The pay increase for teachers should aid in attracting new workers to the province, which has been dealing with a shortage of teachers.²⁰

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Year-over-year there was improvement in the majority of the province's economic regions. Job growth remained strong, especially in B.C.'s metropolitan regions. The unemployment rate declined in all but two of the province's economic regions. The largest improvements were in the **North Coast and Nechako** (-3.1 percentage points), the **Cariboo** (-2.4 percentage points) and the **Lower Mainland - Southwest** (-1.6 percentage points) economic regions.

Please note that 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.

British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	October 2022 ('000)	October 2021 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	October 2022 (%)	October 2021 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
British Columbia	2,763.6	2,697.7	2.4	4.4	6.1	-1.7
Economic Regions						
Vancouver Island and Coast	440.7	424.9	3.7	3.9	5.0	-1.1
Lower Mainland - Southwest	1,767.5	1,723.3	2.6	4.5	6.5	-2.0
Thompson - Okanagan	308.1	307.6	0.2	4.9	4.5	0.4
Kootenay	77.2	77.9	-0.9	4.9	6.0	-1.1
Cariboo	88.6	86.2	2.8	4.3	6.7	-2.4
North Coast and Nechako	43.6	41.8	4.3	4.8	7.9	-3.1
Northeast	38.0	36.0	5.6	0.0	5.8	-5.8

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Employment in the **Vancouver Island and Coast** region rose 15,800 (2.4%) this month over the same time last year, while the unemployment rate decreased 1.1 percentage points to 3.9% over the same period. The low unemployment rate in the region suggests that the labour market remains quite tight, with a number of industries reporting shortages.

Employment in the **Lower Mainland – Southwest** region continued to rise. Year-over-year, the region added more than 44,200 jobs (2.6%) and the unemployment rate declined 2.0 percentage points to 4.5%. The region benefitted from a strong tourist season, especially from the Port of Vancouver. The port welcomed a record number of cruise ships in the 2022 season, up 6% from 2019. Despite the increase in number of ships, the number of passengers moving through the port was 815,000, below the pre-pandemic figure of 1.1 million passengers in 2019.²¹ As passenger apprehensions fade around cruise ship travel during a pandemic, passenger numbers

should continue to rebound. The industry still faces mounting pressures from environmental critics over the effects of their ships on local marine environments, however.²²

Employment in the **Thompson – Okanagan** economic region remained nearly unchanged, rising by 500 jobs (0.2%) over the year, while the unemployment rate increased by 0.4 percentage points to 4.9% over the same period. The region continues to experience a shortage of workers, especially in critical fields such as health care. The federal Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) program, which offers an expedited path for permanent residence to skilled immigrants, is expanding to include Salmon Arm, Sicamous and other Shuswap communities.²³

Year-over-year employment was down 700 (-0.9%) in the **Kootenay** region. Despite losses in employment, the region's unemployment rate was down 1.1 percentage points to 4.9%. In positive news for housing in the region, the governments of Canada and British Columbia announced \$1.41M and \$4.57M in funding respectively to support the development of a 35-unit apartment building in Fernie.²⁴

Employment in the **Northeast** region decreased slightly year-over-year in August (-200 or -0.5%). Employment in the region continued to be supported by the Site C Dam project, which employed a record 5,420 workers in September.²⁵ In terms of employment demographics, the project employed 589 women in September, the highest number to this point, and 403 Indigenous employees (7.4% of the workforce).

Employment in the **North Coast and Nechako** region increased 1,800 (4.3%) compared to October 2021. The region's unemployment rate fell by 3.1 percentage points over the same period to 4.8%. In a notable funding announcement, Cascadia Seaweed received \$4.3M from Sustainable Development Technology Canada to support the development of a 100-hectare seaweed farm and agrifood processing facility near Prince Rupert. The first phase of the three-year project is already underway. The development and expansion of seaweed farms along British Columbia's coast has the potential to boost employment using sustainable technologies amid rising issues with other forms of aquaculture involving fish.²⁶

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- ¹ Statistics Canada. [Table 14-10-0288-01 Employment by class of worker, monthly, seasonally adjusted and unadjusted, last 5 months \(x 1,000\)](#). Accessed November 04, 2022.
- ² Government of British Columbia. (October 11, 2022) [New rules increase safety for young workers](#)
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Government of British Columbia. (October 18, 2022) [B.C. small business tax rate access expanded](#)
- ⁵ Government of Canada. (October 18, 2022) [Government of Canada announces up to 50% loan forgiveness to support economic recovery of Indigenous businesses.](#)
- ⁶ Statistics Canada. [Table 34-10-0156-01 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing starts in all centres 10,000 and over, Canada, provinces, and census metropolitan areas, seasonally adjusted at annual rates, monthly \(x 1,000\)](#)
- ⁷ Statistics Canada. [Table 34-10-0066-01 Building permits, by type of structure and type of work \(x 1,000\)](#)
- ⁸ Lesprom. (October 10, 2022) [Conifex Timber temporarily curtails production at Mackenzie sawmill in British Columbia](#)
- ⁹ Western Investor. (October 18, 2022) [Shutdown extended at Prince George pulp mill as wood runs out](#)
- ¹⁰ Terrace Standard. (October 27, 2022) [Skeena Sawmills in Terrace cuts production amid high cost of logging](#)
- ¹¹ Castanet. (October 24, 2022) [Gorman Bros. trims workforce as timber supply dries up](#)
- ¹² CBC News. (September 19, 2022) [B.C.'s health-care crisis is unrelenting. What can be done to fix it?](#)
- ¹³ Government of British Columbia (October 31, 2022) [B.C. health-care system strengthened by new payment model for doctors](#)
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Government of British Columbia (October 28, 2022) [Vancouver Coastal Health welcomes back 864 environmental, food-service workers](#)
- ¹⁷ Government of British Columbia (October 03, 2022) [Fraser Health welcomes back 133 housekeeping, food-service workers](#)
- ¹⁸ Government of British Columbia (October 14, 2022) [Providence Health Care welcomes back 309 housekeeping workers](#)
- ¹⁹ Vancouver Sun. (October 31, 2022) [B.C. teachers union says new contract puts teachers in 'top tier' in Canada](#)
- ²⁰ Global News. (September 07, 2022) [B.C. teacher shortage has some districts looking for non-certified substitutes](#)
- ²¹ Dailyhive. (November 1, 2022) [Vancouver cruise ship season in 2022 comes to an end with 815,000 passengers](#)
- ²² CBC News. (April 08, 2022) [Cruise ships return to B.C., with tourist dollars and environmental concerns in tow](#)
- ²³ Vernon Morning Star. (October 11, 2022) [Rural immigration program expanding to benefit Shuswap employers](#)
- ²⁴ Yahoo News. (October 27, 2022) [Canada invests in new affordable homes in Fernie](#)
- ²⁵ Energetic City. (November 2, 2022) [September sets Site C workforce record](#)
- ²⁶ The Fish Site. (October 17, 2022) [Cascadia lands \\$4.3 million for stepping up seaweed production and processing](#)
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