



Labour Market Bulletin

Manitoba

November 2021



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Manitoba, including the regions of Winnipeg, Northern Manitoba and Southern Manitoba.

OVERVIEW

Employment in Manitoba rose in November, up 1,900 from the previous month. The province saw gains in full-time employment (+4,700) alongside losses in part-time employment (-2,700). Since November 2020, employment has grown significantly, up 26,700 (4.2%). At that time, Manitoba was entering its second wave of the pandemic and facing widespread business closures and layoffs. A year later, employment is inching back toward pre-pandemic levels, sitting just 0.6% (4,200) below what it was in February 2020.¹

Manitoba Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	November 2021	October 2021	November 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	1,053.2	1,052.8	1,049.3	0.4	0.0	3.9	0.4
Labour Force ('000)	695.5	695.3	684.7	0.2	0.0	10.8	1.6
Employment ('000)	660.1	658.2	633.4	1.9	0.3	26.7	4.2
Full-Time ('000)	536.3	531.6	514.3	4.7	0.9	22.0	4.3
Part-Time ('000)	123.8	126.5	119.1	-2.7	-2.1	4.7	3.9
Unemployment ('000)	35.4	37.1	51.3	-1.7	-4.6	-15.9	-31.0
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.1	5.3	7.5	-0.2	-	-2.4	-
Participation Rate (%)	66.0	66.0	65.3	0.0	-	0.7	-
Employment Rate (%)	62.7	62.5	60.4	0.2	-	2.3	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

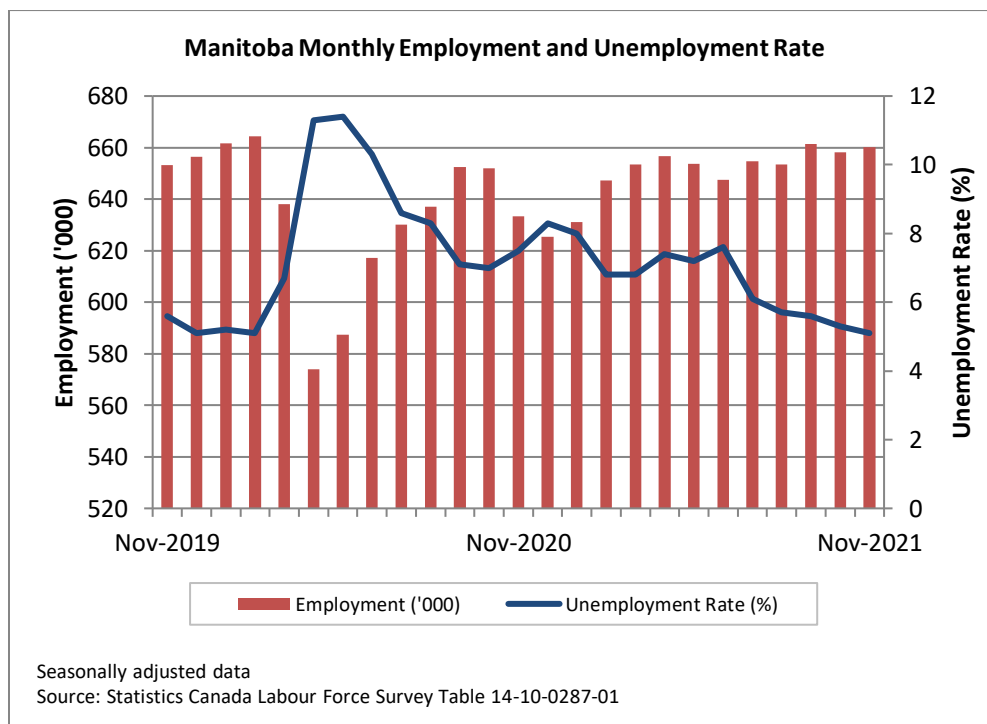
Source: Statistics Canada – Table 14-10-0287-01, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

Job growth in November was primarily in the public sector (+5,300), with losses occurring in the private sector (-3,900). A modest increase in self-employment (+400) interrupted a downward trend in self-employment, which fell 6.3% in September and 4.9% in October.²

As small businesses struggle to recover from the effects of the pandemic, they have also been hard-hit by the global supply chain crisis. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), more than two-thirds of Canadian small businesses surveyed have reported an impact from supply chain challenges.³ In Manitoba specifically, the CFIB found that just 45% of small businesses were at or above pre-pandemic staffing levels in November, and only 78% were fully open.⁴

The fourth wave of the pandemic intensified in Manitoba in November as the province posted the highest infection rate in Canada.⁵ The provincial government introduced new public health measures as COVID-19 cases climbed, capping religious gatherings in the Southern Health region and requiring proof of vaccination for indoor youth recreational sports province wide.⁶ Manitoba’s other public health measures include retail capacity limits in areas of the province where vaccination rates are low, a vaccine passport program for non-essential venues, and a province wide mask mandate.⁷ According to the Conference Board of Canada, these targeted measures should not derail economic recovery, and in fact, Manitoba’s early implementation of vaccine passports has likely helped to limit the damage of the fourth wave. The report ultimately predicts that employment in Manitoba will surpass pre-pandemic levels by the end of the year.⁸

Economic Development Winnipeg and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce recently launched the Retrain Manitoba initiative in an effort to speed up the province’s pandemic recovery. The \$12.5 million program, offered in partnership with the Government of Manitoba, will reimburse businesses that pay for employees’ training.⁹ The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce is also partnering with the Province on the Digital Manitoba Initiative, a \$1.5 million fund that provides grants to businesses for digital upgrades to help them weather the shift to online sales spurred on by the pandemic. More than 1,000 businesses answered the call for applications.¹⁰



Manitoba's unemployment rate has declined since June and was the lowest provincial rate in Canada in October (5.3%). In November, the rate fell further to 5.1%, still well below the national average (6.0%) and sitting exactly where it was prior to the pandemic.

The youth unemployment rate remained relatively unchanged at 8.7%, declining just 0.1 percentage point from last month as the rate for young men rose by 1.3 percentage points and the rate for young women fell by 1.4. On an annual basis, however, the youth unemployment rate is down substantially, dropping 7.7 percentage points since the pandemic's second wave a year ago. According to a Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives analysis of the first year of the pandemic in Manitoba, young workers were more severely affected than their older counterparts and their economic recovery has been slower, largely due to COVID-19's impact on the accommodation and food services industry.¹¹

Manitoba Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	November 2021 (%)	October 2021 (%)	November 2020 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	5.1	5.3	7.5	-0.2	-2.4
25 years and over	4.4	4.7	5.9	-0.3	-1.5
Men - 25 years and over	4.7	5.2	6.0	-0.5	-1.3
Women - 25 years and over	4.0	4.2	5.8	-0.2	-1.8
15 to 24 years	8.7	8.6	16.4	0.1	-7.7
Men - 15 to 24 years	10.3	9.0	19.6	1.3	-9.3
Women - 15 to 24 years	6.8	8.2	13.3	-1.4	-6.5

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

In November, employment fell 1.9% in Manitoba's **goods-producing sector** (-2,700), due largely to losses in **construction** (-2,000) and **manufacturing** (-700). The services-producing sector, on the other hand, saw an increase of 0.9% (+4,600), led by job gains in **trade** (+3,600), **educational services** (+1,200), and **accommodation and food services** (+1,200).

Goods-producing sector

Employment in Manitoba's **agriculture** sector declined slightly on a monthly basis (-0.9%) and more significantly on an annual basis (-8.3%). Agricultural producers, still reeling from severe drought conditions this summer, are now facing an unseasonably warm and dry November with fading chances of getting the soil moisture they need for next year.¹² Due to the poor conditions this growing season, some farmers signed delivery contracts with grain companies for volumes they ultimately were not able to fulfill.¹³ Now, with flooding in British Columbia disrupting road and rail lines, they face difficulties getting grain to market during what is normally prime shipping season.¹⁴

Although employment in the **manufacturing** sector dropped on a monthly basis in November (-1.1%), it increased year-over-year (+1.9%). The National Research Council's \$62-million advanced manufacturing facility is preparing

to open in Winnipeg, with a 25-person research team expected to be hired before spring 2022. The NRC facility will focus on research in digital manufacturing and sustainable packaging, both areas of increasing consumer interest amid the pandemic.¹⁵ The pandemic also increased market demand for medical-grade masks. Manitoba company Humn Pharmaceuticals is currently importing masks from Europe but has announced plans to purchase a warehouse in Winnipeg next year and hire a staff of 20-25 to produce them in-house.¹⁶

Manitoba Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	November 2021	October 2021	November 2020	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	660.1	658.2	633.4	1.9	0.3	26.7	4.2
Goods-producing sector	140.9	143.6	141.1	-2.7	-1.9	-0.2	-0.1
Agriculture	23.1	23.3	25.2	-0.2	-0.9	-2.1	-8.3
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	3.5	3.5	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	2.9
Utilities	4.9	4.8	4.6	0.1	2.1	0.3	6.5
Construction	46.3	48.3	46.0	-2.0	-4.1	0.3	0.7
Manufacturing	63.1	63.8	61.9	-0.7	-1.1	1.2	1.9
Services-producing sector	519.1	514.5	492.3	4.6	0.9	26.8	5.4
Trade	97.1	93.5	92.1	3.6	3.9	5.0	5.4
Transportation and warehousing	42.0	42.7	40.9	-0.7	-1.6	1.1	2.7
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	37.2	36.8	34.8	0.4	1.1	2.4	6.9
Professional, scientific and technical services	31.1	32.0	31.2	-0.9	-2.8	-0.1	-0.3
Business, building and other support services	20.2	19.7	21.6	0.5	2.5	-1.4	-6.5
Educational services	59.0	57.8	57.1	1.2	2.1	1.9	3.3
Health care and social assistance	104.1	105.1	102.5	-1.0	-1.0	1.6	1.6
Information, culture and recreation	24.7	24.8	19.7	-0.1	-0.4	5.0	25.4
Accommodation and food services	36.8	35.6	27.3	1.2	3.4	9.5	34.8
Other services	27.1	27.6	29.3	-0.5	-1.8	-2.2	-7.5
Public administration	39.7	39.0	35.9	0.7	1.8	3.8	10.6

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Services-producing sector

Employment fell slightly in the **information, culture, and recreation** sector on a monthly basis (0.4%) but rose dramatically year-over-year (25.4%) as live performances returned to stages across the province. The Manitoba Opera,¹⁷ the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre,¹⁸ and the Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium¹⁹ all hosted their first in-person performances since the outset of the pandemic.

The **transportation and warehousing** sector posted a decrease in employment in November (-1.6%), but also rose in comparison with November 2020 (2.7%) as passenger traffic continues to pick up at airports. On November 1, WestJet-owned, ultra-low-cost airline Swoop resumed international service at the Winnipeg Richardson International Airport.²⁰ United Airlines has no immediate plans to restart flights after pausing service out of Winnipeg at the beginning of the pandemic. The Winnipeg Airports Authority is currently operating at 40-

50% capacity and is working with airlines toward a return to pre-pandemic levels.²¹ One development that may incentivize travellers to return is the addition of a COVID-19 testing facility at Richardson International, which offers same-day service for rapid antigen tests.²²

Meanwhile, Manitoba's latest labour market outlook forecasts that 1,000 new truck drivers will need to be recruited and retained each year over the next five years to cover anticipated job vacancies.²³ The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) is launching its largest ever industry image campaign, hoping to appeal to younger drivers through social media and expand an aging workforce.²⁴

Labour shortages also continue to trouble the **trade** sector. Nevertheless, employment in the sector increased both month-over-month (3.9%) and year-over-year (5.4%). Manitoba's labour market outlook for 2021-2025 projects there will be 5,400 job openings for retail tradespeople during that period.²⁵ While recruitment challenges persist in a tight labour market, significant wage increases have not occurred.²⁶ Currently retailers are struggling with maintaining adequate stock for the holiday shopping season, and some rolled out Black Friday sales and Christmas product early to avoid supply chain-induced backlogs.²⁷

A recent survey by the CFIB had more bad news for small retailers: almost in 1 in 4 of those polled said they planned to spend less on holiday shopping this year than last, and respondents expected to spend twice as much at big box stores and large online retailers than at small businesses.²⁸ The arrival of Ottawa-based delivery service Trexity in Winnipeg may help to level the playing field in the city. Trexity will offer same-day delivery service to local retailers, enabling them to compete with larger companies on the speedy shipping front.²⁹ GoodLocal, an organization devoted to promoting Manitoba businesses, is also offering a courier service to Manitoba companies, and recently opened a brick-and-mortar shop in Winnipeg's Exchange District selling goods from Manitoba vendors.³⁰

In **finance, insurance, real estate and leasing**, employment was up on a monthly basis (1.1%), while also showing growth year-over-year (6.9%). This month, Canadian fintech company Neo Financial Technologies announced it will establish a second headquarters in Winnipeg and hire 300 new staff. The Government of Manitoba is providing \$1.6 million toward training for the new hires, along with 32 existing employees.³¹

Employment in **health care and social assistance** is down this month (-1.0%) and up year-over-year (1.6%). The province's nursing shortage persists, with an overall vacancy rate of 17.3% in October³² and rates ranging from 20 to 30% in the Southern and Northern health regions.³³

To address the shortage, the Government of Manitoba rolled out financial incentives for nurses³⁴ and established paid work placements for third and fourth-year nursing students in surgical, medicine, and mental health units.³⁵ In this month's Speech from the Throne, Premier Heather Stefanson reiterated the government's pledge to add 400 seats to nursing schools across Manitoba. She added that 20 of these will be part of a two-year diploma program at Thompson's University College of the North, with the Northern Health Region committing to offer a job to each graduate in 2023.³⁶

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

On an annual basis, employment fell in three of Manitoba's six economic regions in November, with **Parklands and Northern** (-6.7%) reporting the largest decrease. Job gains occurred in **Winnipeg** (+4.1), **Southeast** (+4.4%), and **Interlake** (+3.1%).

Employment in **Winnipeg** increased 16,000 year-over-year and the unemployment rate dropped to 5.4%. While the region's economy is slowly recovering, economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have worsened housing insecurity for some of Winnipeg's most vulnerable individuals. End Homelessness Winnipeg's 2021 Interim Street Census Community Report found over 1,100 individuals in the city experiencing homelessness or some form of housing insecurity, with many more currently at risk of becoming homeless.³⁷ The City of Winnipeg earmarked over \$1 million in their preliminary 2022 budget for various projects and supports for homeless individuals, such as accessible washrooms downtown and increased funding for mobile outreach and rapid housing.³⁸ Meanwhile, the Government of Manitoba announced funding of \$1.5 million for the operation of a 150-bed warming shelter in downtown Winnipeg.³⁹ Additionally, low-income housing projects have recently gained traction in Winnipeg. Construction has begun on a 47-unit supportive housing project in the Centennial neighbourhood,⁴⁰ while earlier this year the federal government earmarked \$12.8 million for the creation of 51 new affordable housing units in the city.⁴¹

Employment fell 1.5% in the **South Central and North Central** regions since November 2021. However, growth could occur in the food manufacturing and agriculture industries, which together made up just over 28% of employment in the region this month.⁴² Roquette recently opened its \$600 million pea processing plant, located outside Portage la Prairie. Construction began on the project in 2017 and the area has subsequently seen economic spinoffs and job gains, from the hundreds of contractors lodging in the region to the 120 staff now hired to work at the plant. Roquette is counting on Manitoba farmers ramping up pea production, continuing a trend that is already well underway with Statistics Canada reporting a threefold increase between 2015 and 2020.⁴³ The company is buying food-grade peas directly from producers and has agronomists on staff who will work with farmers to ensure they meet the delivery requirements and to help improve quality.⁴⁴

Manitoba Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	November 2021 ('000)	November 2020 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	November 2021 (%)	November 2020 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Manitoba	660.2	646.3	2.2	4.9	6.8	-1.9
Economic Regions						
Southeast	63.8	61.1	4.4	3.8	4.8	-1.0
South Central and North Central	57.2	58.1	-1.5	3.9	2.5	1.4
Southwest	52.8	55.6	-5.0	4.7	4.8	-0.1
Winnipeg	410.8	394.8	4.1	5.4	8.3	-2.9
Interlake	43.8	42.5	3.1	3.9	4.9	-1.0
Parklands and Northern	31.9	34.2	-6.7	3.9	3.7	0.2

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

The unemployment rate held relatively steady year-over-year (+0.2) in the **Parklands and Northern** region (3.9%). Overall employment fell 6.7% from this time last year, but employment in construction grew by 200 (+11.8%).⁴⁵ More growth could occur in the industry over the next two years as work begins on rail line repairs to the Hudson Bay Railway. Arctic Gateway Group received \$40 million in federal funding for the repairs, which will focus on the section of track between Gillam and Churchill. The Port of Churchill will remain closed until 2023 while the work is ongoing.⁴⁶ Northern Manitoba should also benefit from the Government of Manitoba's newly inked contribution agreement with Xplornet Communications. A network build will soon be underway to supply nearly 30 First Nations and approximately 350 rural and northern communities with broadband services over the next two years.⁴⁷

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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- ⁴⁶ Thompson Citizen (November 17, 2021). Construction of work camps, soil stabilization among repair work already completed on Hudson Bay Railway. <https://www.thompsoncitizen.net/local-news/construction-of-work-camps-soil-stabilization-among-repair-work-already-completed-on-hudson-bay-railway-4769947>
- ⁴⁷ Government of Manitoba (November 30, 2021). Province signs contribution agreement with Xplornet Communications Inc to start network build. <https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=52786&posted=2021-11-30>