



Labour Market Bulletin

Manitoba

April 2022



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 decreased 500 in April with part-time employment losses (-4,000) outpacing full-time employment gains (+3,500). Year-over-year, provincial employment was up 11,500 (+1.8%). Employment increased in the public (+12,300 or +7.4%) and private (+3,900 or 1.0%) sectors on an annual basis, however, the number of self-employed Manitobans was down 4,700 (-5.6%).¹

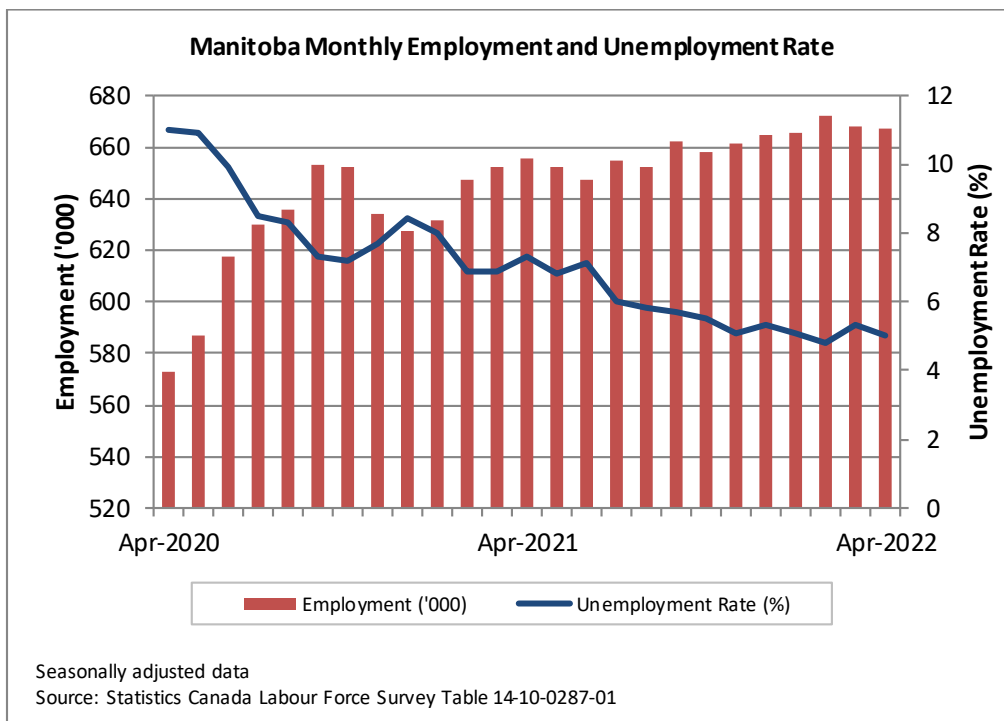
While most employment indicators in Manitoba showed positive change in April, many small businesses are still struggling. According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business' most recent Small Business Recovery Dashboard, over 50% of surveyed businesses in Manitoba have taken on pandemic related debt. In addition, only 35% of Manitoba businesses indicated they were at or above pre-pandemic normal sales levels.²

Manitoba Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	April 2022	March 2022	April 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	1,060.3	1,058.8	1,050.8	1.5	0.1	9.5	0.9
Labour Force ('000)	702.5	704.7	707.1	-2.2	-0.3	-4.6	-0.7
Employment ('000)	667.2	667.7	655.7	-0.5	-0.1	11.5	1.8
Full-Time ('000)	532.5	529.0	530.7	3.5	0.7	1.8	0.3
Part-Time ('000)	134.7	138.7	125.1	-4.0	-2.9	9.6	7.7
Unemployment ('000)	35.2	37.0	51.4	-1.8	-4.9	-16.2	-31.5
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.0	5.3	7.3	-0.3	-	-2.3	-
Participation Rate (%)	66.3	66.6	67.3	-0.3	-	-1.0	-
Employment Rate (%)	62.9	63.1	62.4	-0.2	-	0.5	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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



The Government of Manitoba released its provincial budget in April, aptly titled Budget 2022: Recover Together. The budget places an emphasis on the health and financial well-being of Manitobans to further the province’s recovery from lingering economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.³ The Province has also allocated funding to continue implementing the Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy. Launched in 2021, this strategy includes targeted actions to strengthen alignment between post-secondary institutions, immigration, training and employment services, and labour market needs.⁴

The budget also includes \$5 million for immigration programming. Increasing immigration is another way the Province plans to address Manitoba’s labour shortages found across all sectors and within businesses of all sizes.⁵ According to the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, Manitoba will require almost 5,000 Red Seal certified trades people between 2021 and 2025. In fact, the expected certification requirements for this province exceeds projected trade certification completions for cooks, bricklayers, welders, automotive service technicians, boilermakers, industrial mechanics, and mobile crane operators.⁶

Manitoba Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	April 2022 (%)	March 2022 (%)	April 2021 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Total	5.0	5.3	7.3	-0.3	-2.3
25 years and over	4.0	4.5	5.8	-0.5	-1.8
Men - 25 years and over	4.2	4.3	5.3	-0.1	-1.1
Women - 25 years and over	3.8	4.7	6.3	-0.9	-2.5
15 to 24 years	10.1	9.1	14.9	1.0	-4.8
Men - 15 to 24 years	10.6	11.9	15.8	-1.3	-5.2
Women - 15 to 24 years	9.7	6.4	14.1	3.3	-4.4

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Manitoba's unemployment rate decreased 0.3 percentage points to 5.0% in April, remaining below the national average (5.2%). While the province's youth unemployment rate edged up 1.0 percentage point to 10.1% on a monthly basis, there was significant improvement on an annual basis (-4.8 percentage points). Year-over-year, youth employment in the province increased 7.1% (+7,000) while the youth labour force grew 1.3% (+1,500).

While employment has improved over the last year for Manitobans aged 15 to 24, this demographic group has been disproportionately affected by job losses induced by pandemic-related business restrictions. Over 45% of youth employed in Manitoba work in either retail trade or accommodation and food services — two of the most heavily restricted industries during the pandemic. Employment prospects should continue to improve for youth in the province as the Government of Manitoba lifted all remaining public health orders in mid-March, allowing businesses to operate at full capacity without any Covid-19 related restrictions.⁷

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

In April, employment decreased in Manitoba's **goods-producing sector** (-4,400) due to job losses in **construction** (-1,100) and **agriculture** (-3,100). Meanwhile, monthly employment growth in the province's **services-producing sector** (+4,000) was led by gains in **public administration** (+2,400), **professional, scientific and technical services** (+1,300) and **other services** (+1,500).

Year-over-year, employment in Manitoba's **construction** sector is down 2,300 (-4.7%). According to BuildForce Canada, employment in residential construction is expected to rise by 330 workers in 2022, while non-residential construction employment will increase by 224.⁸ As construction of the \$8.7 billion Keeyask Generating Station winds down in 2022, provincial employment in this sector is expected to be replaced by work on infrastructure projects.⁹

As part of Budget 2022, the Government of Manitoba is spending \$2.4 billion on infrastructure.¹⁰ This spending includes \$1.5 billion over three years on a highway network project. The Manitoba Trade and Commerce Grid is one of the Province's key infrastructure initiatives that will allow heavier loads on provincial highways and eliminate road restrictions that limit the movement of goods and services.¹¹

Employment in Manitoba's **manufacturing** sector edged up in April (+300) but remains down 2,700 on an annual basis (-4.2%). Local furniture manufacturer, DeFehr Furniture recently announced plans to permanently close their production facility in Winnipeg effective August 10, 2022.¹² DeFehr has been in operation for 75 years manufacturing furniture and other similar products. The company is offering support programs for the 224 employees that will be laid-off, including hosting job fairs and working with local companies to help them secure employment elsewhere.¹³

For the last ten years, DeFehr supplied casegoods such as cabinets, bookshelves and dressers to the hospitality industry. The demand for such products was greatly diminished during the pandemic, while supply chain disruptions negatively impacted production costs.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Palliser Furniture is planning to expand their Winnipeg manufacturing operations to meet increased demand for Canadian-made upholstered furniture.¹⁵ The company plans on hiring 300 people as part of this expansion. The recent uptick in demand for upholstered furniture is due in part to newly imposed duties on some furniture products originating from China and Vietnam.

These duties significantly increased the resale value of these imported goods, making locally produced furniture more competitive.¹⁶

Manitoba 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	667.2	667.7	655.7	-0.5	-0.1	11.5	1.8
Goods-producing sector	136.1	140.5	146.7	-4.4	-3.1	-10.6	-7.2
Agriculture	18.8	21.9	23.9	-3.1	-14.2	-5.1	-21.3
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	3.2	2.9	3.8	0.3	10.3	-0.6	-15.8
Utilities	4.9	5.7	4.8	-0.8	-14.0	0.1	2.1
Construction	46.9	48.0	49.2	-1.1	-2.3	-2.3	-4.7
Manufacturing	62.3	62.0	65.0	0.3	0.5	-2.7	-4.2
Services-producing sector	531.2	527.2	509.1	4.0	0.8	22.1	4.3
Trade	97.5	99.6	96.1	-2.1	-2.1	1.4	1.5
Transportation and warehousing	40.3	40.0	41.1	0.3	0.7	-0.8	-1.9
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	39.9	39.4	35.2	0.5	1.3	4.7	13.4
Professional, scientific and technical services	33.3	32.0	33.0	1.3	4.1	0.3	0.9
Business, building and other support services	22.1	22.6	22.0	-0.5	-2.2	0.1	0.5
Educational services	59.6	59.6	58.8	0.0	0.0	0.8	1.4
Health care and social assistance	104.8	104.6	104.7	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Information, culture and recreation	23.8	23.3	19.9	0.5	2.1	3.9	19.6
Accommodation and food services	40.2	40.3	30.8	-0.1	-0.2	9.4	30.5
Other services	27.7	26.2	30.4	1.5	5.7	-2.7	-8.9
Public administration	42.0	39.6	37.0	2.4	6.1	5.0	13.5

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Turning to the services-producing sector, employment in Manitoba's **health care and social assistance** sector is relatively unchanged both on a monthly (+200) and annual basis (+100). This sector was highlighted as a priority in the 2022 provincial budget. The Government of Manitoba allocated a substantial amount of money towards its provincial health care system with \$630 million to support the pandemic response and \$812 million to build, expand and renovate health-care facilities across the province.¹⁷ There is also \$110 million allocated to address the surgical and diagnostic test backlogs and \$9 million to increase Manitoba's intensive care unit capacity by adding 28 beds. In terms of staffing, the Province is allocating \$7.6 million to hire 35 additional paramedics and \$11 million towards strategies to increase the number of nursing students.¹⁸

Critical staffing shortages in hospitals throughout the province have been an on-going issue in Manitoba. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) is looking for public health nurses to address staffing issues in the critical care and emergency wards at Grace Hospital, where one in three positions is currently vacant. The WRHA recently announced that hospitals across the province are currently experiencing a surge in demand, increasing pre-existing staffing pressures.

Labour shortages are also currently prevalent throughout Manitoba's **accommodation and food services** sector. While employment increased 9,400 on an annual basis for this sector, it's provincial labour force only increased by 8,400 workers for the same period. Now that the Province has removed health and capacity restrictions, businesses that offer accommodation and food services are hoping to staff up again. To help bolster recruitment efforts, the Manitoba Hotel and Restaurant Association in partnership with the Manitoba Tourism Education Council hosted a Hospitality, Tourism and Retail Job Fair in Winnipeg in late April. The fair was initially going to have 20 booths for businesses; however, this number quickly grew to 44 indicating businesses are struggling to meet staffing demands.¹⁹

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

On an annual basis, employment increased in four of Manitoba's six economic regions. In the **Southeast** region, employment is up 4.9% year-over-year (+2,900), while in **Southwest** employment is down 2.8% year-over-year (-1,600). The **Winnipeg** and **Southeast** regions had the highest unemployment rates in April, at 5.3% and 5.1% respectively.

Employment in **Winnipeg** increased 14,400 over the last year. The vast majority of these annual employment gains were in the accommodation and food services sector (70%). The Winnipeg hospitality sector will continue to benefit from a trend of increased customers as workers and visitors commence their return to the City's downtown.²⁰ According to Downtown Winnipeg Biz, the number of visitors to Winnipeg's downtown area rose 41% between the week ending January 9, 2022 and the week ending April 3, 2022.²¹

While employment in Winnipeg's construction sector declined 11% over the last year, a large new three-year downtown project is expected to bolster employment. The Hudson Bay Co. recently transferred ownership of their downtown Winnipeg store to the Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO). In turn, the SCO plans on transforming the space into affordable housing, a daycare, museum and convening space for Indigenous people.²² The Province is allocating \$35 million towards associated costs while the Government of Canada is contributing \$65 million in a combination of forgivable and low-interest loans.²³ The project titled Wehwehneh Bahgahkinahgoohn (Ojibwe for "it is visible") will contribute to revitalizing Winnipeg's downtown by creating jobs, offering services and a space for ceremony for urban Indigenous people.²⁴

Manitoba 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)
Manitoba	663.9	645.8	2.8	5.0	7.0	-2.0
Economic Regions						
Southeast	62.6	59.7	4.9	5.1	7.2	-2.1
South Central and North Central	57.9	56.1	3.2	3.3	6.5	-3.2
Southwest	56.2	57.8	-2.8	4.1	4.6	-0.5
Winnipeg	413.4	399.0	3.6	5.3	7.7	-2.4
Interlake	43.4	42.6	1.9	4.6	5.3	-0.7
Parklands and Northern	30.4	30.7	-1.0	4.4	6.7	-2.3

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Employment in the **Parklands and North** economic region decreased 300 over the last year while the regional labour force decreased 1,000 for the same period. Although the regional unemployment rate decreased 2.3 percentage points to 4.4% in the last year, this is primarily due to the large number of people leaving the labour force in this region rather than an uptick in employment.

The rural and remote communities of Northern Manitoba face multiple barriers to economic growth including access to affordable, high-speed Internet.²⁵ New developments for Internet connectivity throughout the province should favorably impact labour market outcomes for northern residents. Xplornet Communications Inc. plans to spend approximately \$200 million over the next two years to increase its infrastructure in the province. These developments are expected to increase connectivity for 350 rural communities including 30 First Nations.²⁶ The company also plans to start installing fibre to the premises this spring, allowing 125,000 rural Manitobans to connect to high-speed Internet by the end of 2023.²⁷ This new development will open up opportunities for residents of the Parklands and North economic region, allowing businesses to participate and grow their presence in the digital economy while facilitating skills training for the local labour force.

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 Statistics Canada. [Table 14-10-0288-01 \(formerly CANSIM 282-0089\) Employment by class of worker, monthly, seasonally adjusted and unadjusted, last 5 months \(x1,000\)](#). Accessed May 11, 2022.
- ² CFIB (April 19, 2022). [Small business recovery dashboard](#).
- ³ Government of Manitoba (April 12, 2022). [Manitoba Government presents Budget 2022: Recover Together](#).
- ⁴ Government of Manitoba. [Manitoba's Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy](#). Accessed May 3, 2022.
- ⁵ Immigration.ca (April 16, 2022). [Manitoba earmarked \\$5M for immigration programs in 2022 budget](#).
- ⁶ CAF. [2021 LMI Facts – Apprenticeship Demand](#). Accessed May 3, 2022.
- ⁷ Government of Manitoba (March 14, 2022). [Final public health orders in Manitoba to be lifted tomorrow](#).
- ⁸ BuildForce Canada. [Construction & maintenance looking forward, Manitoba, highlights 2022-2027](#). Accessed May 11, 2022.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Government of Manitoba (April 28, 2022). [Province commits \\$1.5 billion to highway network projects](#).
- ¹¹ Government of Manitoba (April 28, 2022). [Province commits \\$1.5 billion to highway network projects](#).
- ¹² CTV News (May 6, 2022). [DeFehr Furniture shuttering Winnipeg plant, affecting hundreds of jobs](#).
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ CBC News (May 5, 2022). [‘Perfect storm’, supply chain disruptions doom Winnipeg’s DeFehr Furniture](#).
- ¹⁵ CBC News (April 4, 2022). [Furniture maker Palliser expands operations, hires 700 workers amid high demand](#).
- ¹⁶ CBC News (May 31, 2021). [Thinking of buying a new couch? The price may have just quadrupled](#).
- ¹⁷ Government of Manitoba (April 12, 2022). [Manitoba Government presents Budget 2022: Recover Together](#).
- ¹⁸ Government of Manitoba (April 12, 2022). [Manitoba Government presents Budget 2022: Recover Together](#).
- ¹⁹ Winnipeg Free Press (April 27, 2022). [Job fair a necessity amid labour shortage](#).
- ²⁰ CBC News (April 18, 2022). [Survey finds signs of slow, steady improvement for downtown Winnipeg businesses](#).
- ²¹ CBC News (April 18, 2022). [Survey finds signs of slow, steady improvement for downtown Winnipeg businesses](#).
- ²² Winnipeg Free Press (April 21, 2022). [New life for old Bay](#).
- ²³ Canadian Architect (April 25, 2022). [Hudson’s Bay Co. calls donation of Winnipeg building an act of reconciliation](#).
- ²⁴ Winnipeg Free Press (April 21, 2022). [New life for old Bay](#).
- ²⁵ Government of Canada. High-Speed Access for All: Canada’s Connectivity Strategy. Accessed on November 1, 2021: https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/139.nsf/eng/h_00002.html
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²⁶ Winnipeg Free Press (April 6, 2022). [Xplornet ramps up acquisitions, high-speed connectivity.](#)

²⁷ Ibid.