



Labour Market Bulletin

Nova Scotia

January 2022



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Nova Scotia, including the regions of Annapolis Valley, Cape Breton, Southern, Halifax and North Shore.

OVERVIEW

Employment in Nova Scotia rose by 2,700 (+0.6%) in January 2022, despite restrictions imposed by many provinces since December to combat the emergence of the Omicron COVID-19 variant. Overall employment growth in the province has been positive since June 2021, except in October, when it declined marginally. Higher employment levels helped to lower Nova Scotia's unemployment rate to 7.0%, down from 8.1% the previous month, the lowest rate among Atlantic Provinces.

Nova Scotia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	Jan 2022	Dec 2021	Jan 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	830.1	828.3	817.2	1.8	0.2	12.9	1.6
Labour Force ('000)	508.4	511.4	504.1	-3.0	-0.6	4.3	0.9
Employment ('000)	472.6	469.9	461.7	2.7	0.6	10.9	2.4
Full-Time ('000)	393.7	382.9	379.4	10.8	2.8	14.3	3.8
Part-Time ('000)	78.9	87.0	82.3	-8.1	-9.3	-3.4	-4.1
Unemployment ('000)	35.8	41.5	42.5	-5.7	-13.7	-6.7	-15.8
Unemployment Rate (%)	7.0	8.1	8.4	-1.1	-	-1.4	-
Participation Rate (%)	61.2	61.7	61.7	-0.5	-	-0.5	-
Employment Rate (%)	56.9	56.7	56.5	0.2	-	0.4	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287

Compared with January 2021, employment in Nova Scotia has expanded by more than 10,000 jobs (+2.4%), all of the gains in full-time work. Most labour market indicators now outdo pre-pandemic levels from February 2020, with the exception of the labour force participation rate. Labour force participation rates have been of interest since the start of the pandemic, partly because this measure includes workers that, if not for the pandemic, may have been available to work. Nova Scotia's overall participation rate was 61.2% in January 2022, down by 1.4 percentage points (p.p.) compared the level observed prior to the pandemic.



A lag in Nova Scotia's labour market recovery is apparent among broad age groups, however. Youth (aged 15-24 years), largely as a result of their higher participation in hard-hit industries like retail trade and accommodation and food services, were most impacted during the pandemic, and the only group yet to fully recover. There remain 2,500 fewer youth employed compared with February 2020, though this number masks a positive shift from part-time (down by -21.5%) to full-time jobs (up by 12.7%). Similarly, only youth experienced a decline in either population (-1,000) or labour force (-7,000) since the start of the pandemic. Prior to this, youth participation rates had been trending higher, peaking at 73.3% in February 2020. In January 2022, youth participation rates declined by 2.8 p.p., and they now sit 5.7 p.p. below the pre-pandemic level.

Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	Jan 2022	Dec 2021	Jan 2021	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
	%	%	%	(% points)	(% points)
Total	7.0	8.1	8.4	-1.1	-1.4
25 years and over	6.6	6.8	6.8	-0.2	-0.2
Men - 25 years and over	6.9	7.0	8.5	-0.1	-1.6

Women - 25 years and over	6.4	6.6	5.1	-0.2	1.3
15 to 24 years	9.3	15.4	17.6	-6.1	-8.3
Men - 15 to 24 years	13.9	17.1	20.3	-3.2	-6.4
Women - 15 to 24 years	5.0	13.6	14.6	-8.6	-9.6

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Though the number of persons employed in Nova Scotia grew in January 2022, some adverse employment impacts were apparent at the industry level. Overall employment growth in the **goods-producing** sector was positive in January, boosted by notable gains in the **manufacturing** industry, of 3,400 jobs. These employment gains offset a relatively large decline in workers in the **utilities** industry, though employment in both industries is above the pre-pandemic level. A strong rebound among several of Nova Scotia's top export categories including fish and seafood, tires and wood products in 2021, may have contributed to the gains observed in manufacturing.

Among **services-producing** industries, large employment declines occurred in the **educational services** (-2,100) and **accommodation and food services** (-2,200) industries in January 2022, although, employment in the **accommodation and food services** industry remains furthest below its pre-pandemic level, down by more than 10,000 jobs (-29.1%). The **information, culture and recreation** industry as well as **wholesale and retail trade** industries also remain well-below pre-pandemic levels. Employment in these industries continues to be impacted by the ongoing pandemic, reflecting the fact that many of these businesses are high contact and less likely to relocate workers remotely.

The **finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing** industry added the largest number of jobs in January (+3,200). This industry, along with the **transportation and warehousing** and **professional, scientific and technical services** industries, has grown the most since the onset of the pandemic. The former, positively influenced by the shift to online shopping and larger parcel delivery volume, and the latter, more adept to a remote work environment.

Nova Scotia Monthly Employed Labour Force, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	Jan 2022	Dec 2021	Jan 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	472.6	469.9	461.7	2.7	0.6	10.9	2.4
Goods-producing sector	92.5	88.9	91.8	3.6	4.0	0.7	0.8
Agriculture	7.1	6.6	7.8	0.5	7.6	-0.7	-9.0
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	9.7	9.8	10.4	-0.1	-1.0	-0.7	-6.7
Utilities	4.7	5.7	4.3	-1.0	-17.5	0.4	9.3
Construction	35.1	34.2	36.1	0.9	2.6	-1.0	-2.8
Manufacturing	36.1	32.7	33.2	3.4	10.4	2.9	8.7
Services-producing sector	380.0	381.0	369.8	-1.0	-0.3	10.2	2.8
Trade	74.2	74.1	72.4	0.1	0.1	1.8	2.5
Transportation and warehousing	24.6	24.7	23.0	-0.1	-0.4	1.6	7.0
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	25.0	21.8	23.0	3.2	14.7	2.0	8.7

Professional, scientific and technical services	37.4	37.4	33.7	0.0	0.0	3.7	11.0
Business, building and other support services	19.0	18.6	17.7	0.4	2.2	1.3	7.3
Educational services	36.7	38.8	40.6	-2.1	-5.4	-3.9	-9.6
Health care and social assistance	75.3	75.5	74.3	-0.2	-0.3	1.0	1.3
Information, culture and recreation	14.8	14.2	15.3	0.6	4.2	-0.5	-3.3
Accommodation and food services	26.5	28.7	24.1	-2.2	-7.7	2.4	10.0
Other services	15.6	16.1	14.7	-0.5	-3.1	0.9	6.1
Public administration	30.8	31.1	31.2	-0.3	-1.0	-0.4	-1.3

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0355

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Labour market indicators among economic regions of Nova Scotia are generally positive compared to last January. In the **Cape Breton** economic region, there were 2,300 more persons employed. However, the region's unemployment rate rose to 14.1% as more persons (2,900) joined the labour force in search of work. Among industries, the largest employment change over the past year was in the construction industry, which fell by 1,400 jobs, while the largest declines during the pandemic have been in the accommodation and food services industry and wholesale and retail trade.

Labour market data were generally positive for the **North Shore** economic region as well. Employment rose by 1,200 over the past year and the unemployment rate was 6.6%, the lowest rate outside of Halifax. Among industries, the largest annual employment change occurred in the manufacturing industry, falling by 2,600. The region has the largest concentration of manufacturing employment outside Halifax, including several large employers.

The **Annapolis Valley** economic region experienced positive labour market results overall compared to a year ago and compared pre-pandemic levels. Population, labour force and employment all advanced. Among industries, the largest employment growth was observed in health care and social assistance, up by 3,000 since January 2021. Most notably, employment in the professional, scientific and technical services industry, a sector generally benefitting by the shift to remote work, rose by 700 over the year, and are nearly double levels observed prior to the pandemic (+2,200).

Despite adding 1,500 jobs over the past year, Nova Scotia's **Southern** economic region was one of only two regions with employment levels below pre-pandemic levels, albeit only slightly (-200 jobs). In January 2022, the region's unemployment rates was 10.7%, up from 9.1% in January of last year, and up from 8.3% prior to the pandemic, reflecting more persons joining the labour force in search of work. The most notable employment changes among industries has been a doubling of employment in the transportation and warehousing industry, not quite enough to offset job losses in the accommodation and food services industry, which halved.

The **Halifax** economic region, representing roughly half of the Nova Scotia labour market, experienced strong positive employment growth over the past year. Overall, the number of persons working in Halifax grew by 3,900

since last January. Eight of every ten jobs created in the province since the pandemic have been in Halifax. The region's unemployment rate fell to 5.6% in January 2022, the lowest rate since July 2019. The largest employment gains over this period have occurred in the professional, scientific and technical services industry, with 3,600 positions added in the past year, and 7,500 since the first wave of the pandemic. The construction industry has also experienced a notable rise of 3,100 positions over this year, likely buoyed by a large number of infrastructure projects nearby as well as an exceptionally strong local housing market.

Nova Scotia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	Jan 2022 ('000)	Jan 2021 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	Jan 2022 (%)	Jan 2021 (%)	Yearly Variation (%)
Nova Scotia	466.3	454.1	2.7	7.6	8.0	-0.4
Economic Regions						
Cape Breton	49.3	47.0	4.9	14.1	13.8	0.3
North Shore	67.7	66.5	1.8	6.6	6.5	0.1
Annapolis Valley	59.7	56.4	5.9	7.9	5.8	2.1
Southern	48.3	46.8	3.2	10.7	9.1	1.6
Halifax	241.2	237.3	1.6	5.6	7.4	-1.8

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0387

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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