



Labour Market Bulletin

Nova Scotia

February 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

The number of employed Nova Scotians rose to 476,300 in February, adding 3,700 (+0.8%) jobs, a slight pick-up from the pace of growth observed in January. Though employment growth in Nova Scotia was slightly softer than the national average, it was the fourth month in a row that jobs increased. Employment has been trending upwards since May 2021. The rise in employment observed in February was mainly due to a jump in part-time positions, obscuring a slight decline in full-time jobs. Higher employment levels resulted in a drop in the unemployment rate to 6.6%, the lowest rate observed since May 2019, prior to the pandemic. In fact, February's rate was the second lowest on record.

The reference week for the Labour Market Bulletin was February 13 to 19. Nova Scotia started lifting COVID-19 restrictions in three phases starting 14 February, which included increased gathering limits, and the resumption of events. Nova Scotia is expected to end all COVID-19 public health restrictions on 21 March.

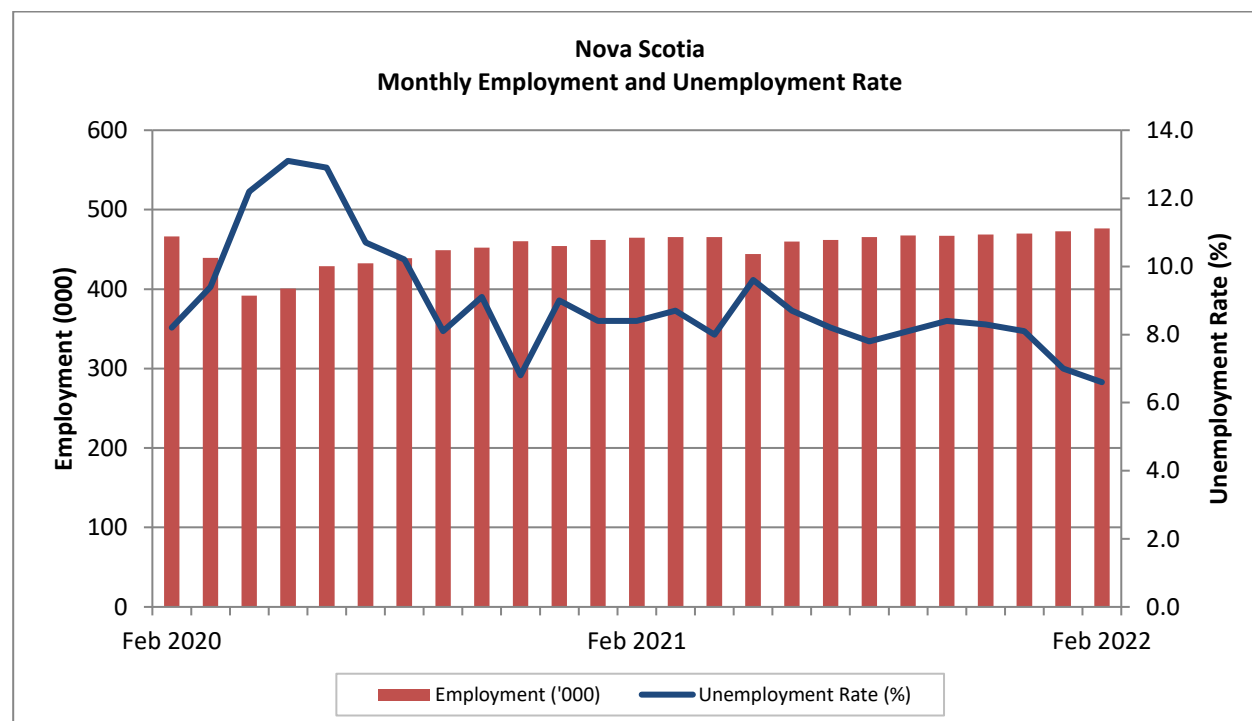
Nova Scotia Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	Feb 2022	Jan 2022	Feb 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	831.7	830.1	817.4	1.6	0.2	14.3	1.7
Labour Force ('000)	509.8	508.4	507.4	1.4	0.3	2.4	0.5
Employment ('000)	476.3	472.6	464.6	3.7	0.8	11.7	2.5
Full-Time ('000)	392.7	393.7	379.1	-1.0	-0.3	13.6	3.6
Part-Time ('000)	83.6	78.9	85.5	4.7	6.0	-1.9	-2.2
Unemployment ('000)	33.6	35.8	42.8	-2.2	-6.1	-9.2	-21.5
Unemployment Rate (%)	6.6	7.0	8.4	-0.4	-	-1.8	-
Participation Rate (%)	61.3	61.2	62.1	0.1	-	-0.8	-
Employment Rate (%)	57.3	56.9	56.8	0.4	-	0.5	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

Compared to one year earlier, most labour market indicators have improved. The number of employed Nova Scotians has grown by 11,700, all full-time positions. The working-age population experienced record growth of 14,300 persons (1.7%). The unemployment rate declined by 1.8 percentage points from 8.4% to 6.6%. Participation rates declined slightly over this period, by 0.8 percentage points, however. Participation rates remain 1.3 percentage points below the pre-pandemic level at 61.3% vs 62.6%. Nationally, participation rates are 0.2 percentage points below pre-pandemic levels.



Job gains over the past year have not been shared equally among males and females, however. More than four fifths of the gains over the past year have occurred among males (82% or 9,600 positions added). As a result, the male unemployment rate declined by 2.4 percentage points over the past year, from 9.9% to 7.5%, while the female unemployment rate declined by 1.2 percentage points from 6.9% to 5.7%.

Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	Feb 2022	Jan 2022	Feb 2021	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
	%	%	%	(% points)	(% points)
Total	6.6	7.0	8.4	-0.4	-1.8
25 years and over	5.5	6.6	7.7	-1.1	-2.2
Men - 25 years and over	5.8	6.9	9.1	-1.1	-3.3

Women - 25 years and over	5.1	6.4	6.2	-1.3	-1.1
15 to 24 years	13.2	9.3	13.0	3.9	0.2
Men - 15 to 24 years	17.4	13.9	15.0	3.5	2.4
Women - 15 to 24 years	8.9	5.0	11.1	3.9	-2.2

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

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

The largest employment changes over the past year occurred in the **services-producing sector**. This sector added 10,100 jobs compared to a gain of 1,600 in the **goods-producing sector**.

Among goods-producing industries, the **construction industry** experienced the largest employment gains over the past year, rising by 4,300 to the highest level on record (39,400). Activity in this industry has been very strong, with shortages of some labour and trade occupations reported amid a surge of capital spending on highways and health care facilities, as well as an exceptionally strong housing market. The provincial government continues to invest in the ongoing redevelopment and expansion of the QEII Health Sciences Centre and is planning to add or improve over 2,000 long-term care beds across 27 facilities. Investment in NS building construction rose by more than 20% in 2021.

Employment in the **agriculture** industry fell by 500 in February and lost 1,500 positions over the past year. In February, the European Union and nine countries, including the U.S., restricted trade on some poultry products from Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador after identifying avian flu.

Among **services-producing** industries, the **professional, scientific and technical services** industry experienced the largest employment gains over the past year, rising by 5,700. Employment in this industry is 9,300 above pre-pandemic levels. The **health care and social assistance** industry also experienced strong job gains over the past year, advancing by 4,700. Employment in this sector has been constrained by skills shortages. The new provincial health-care professional recruitment and retention office suggests there are as many as 2,100 healthcare vacancies across the health-care system and 450 family doctors and specialists are needed over the next 10 years.

Employment levels declined by 2,200 in the **accommodation and food services** industry over the past year. Compared with pre-pandemic levels, employment has fallen by 10,900. Though recent tourism figures in the province suggest the number of visitors have improved over the past year, they remain well-below pre-pandemic levels. There are some positive developments expected for this industry however. With a ban no longer in effect, the Port of Halifax expects the 2022 cruise season to begin in April. The CAT passenger ferry is scheduled to begin operations in May. The ferry service has not operated since 2018.

Nova Scotia Monthly Employed Labour Force, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	Feb 2022	Jan 2022	Feb 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	476.3	472.6	464.6	3.7	0.8	11.7	2.5
Goods-producing sector	93.0	92.5	91.4	0.5	0.5	1.6	1.8
Agriculture	6.6	7.1	8.1	-0.5	-7.0	-1.5	-18.5

Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	9.3	9.7	10.3	-0.4	-4.1	-1.0	-9.7
Utilities	4.7	4.7	5.0	0.0	0.0	-0.3	-6.0
Construction	39.4	35.1	35.0	4.3	12.3	4.4	12.6
Manufacturing	32.9	36.1	33.0	-3.2	-8.9	-0.1	-0.3
Services-producing sector	383.3	380.0	373.2	3.3	0.9	10.1	2.7
Trade	73.3	74.2	73.1	-0.9	-1.2	0.2	0.3
Transportation and warehousing	24.1	24.6	22.1	-0.5	-2.0	2.0	9.0
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	25.0	25.0	24.9	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.4
Professional, scientific and technical services	38.4	37.4	32.7	1.0	2.7	5.7	17.4
Business, building and other support services	19.6	19.0	17.2	0.6	3.2	2.4	14.0
Educational services	38.0	36.7	39.3	1.3	3.5	-1.3	-3.3
Health care and social assistance	77.0	75.3	72.3	1.7	2.3	4.7	6.5
Information, culture and recreation	14.4	14.8	15.1	-0.4	-2.7	-0.7	-4.6
Accommodation and food services	27.4	26.5	29.6	0.9	3.4	-2.2	-7.4
Other services	15.3	15.6	16.3	-0.3	-1.9	-1.0	-6.1
Public administration	30.7	30.8	30.6	-0.1	-0.3	0.1	0.3

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Employment growth was strong in three of five economic regions of Nova Scotia over the past year, and steady in the other two. The **Cape Breton** economic region experienced the largest employment gains among regions, rising by 5,400 since last February (11.5%). However, employment in the region has not returned to pre-pandemic levels. Higher levels of employment in the region resulted in a noticeable improvement in the unemployment rate, which fell from 14.2% to 13.0% over the past year. Though employment gains occurred broadly among industries, the **manufacturing** and **health care and social assistance** industries experienced the largest gains over last year, adding 1,500 and 1,400 positions, respectively.

Employment fell slightly in the **North Shore** economic region from last February. There were also fewer persons in the labour force looking for work in the past year that resulted in a decline in the region's unemployment rate, which fell to 6.4%, from 8.3% last February. This was the lowest unemployment rate outside of the Halifax economic region. Employment levels rose the most in the **construction** industry, and declined in the **manufacturing** and **wholesale and retail trade** industries.

In the **Annapolis Valley** economic region, employment levels grew by 4,700, all in full-time jobs. As a result of more people finding work, the region's unemployment rate fell slightly to 7.2% from 7.5% last February. A large portion of the employment gains over the past year occurred in the **health care and social assistance** industry. Employment rose by 3,700 in this industry compared with last February and has risen by 3,000 compared with pre-pandemic levels.

Nova Scotia's **Southern** economic region experienced a slight increase in employment compared with last February, as gains in full time jobs were offset by a drop in part time jobs. The unemployment rate was 9.6%, an increase of 0.8 percentage points from the same time last year. A decline in employment in the construction industry was partly offset by a large gain in the **health care and social assistance** industry, which added 2,200 positions since last February and 2,500 compared to pre-pandemic levels. The resumption of The CAT passenger ferry in May between Yarmouth, NS and Bar Harbor, Maine could benefit the **accommodation and food services** industry in this region. Employment in this industry has declined by 2,000 since pre-pandemic levels.

Employment in the **Halifax** economic region has risen by 3,000 since last February and are 8,200 above the pre-pandemic level, in February 2020. The increases have all been in full-time work. The unemployment rate in Halifax was 5.6% in February 2022, a notable improvement from 8.1% observed in February 2021, and well-below the pre-pandemic level of 6.7%. Among industries, the largest employment gains were observed in **professional, scientific and technical services**, rising by 4,100 over the past year and 7,600 since February 2020, prior to the pandemic. The **wholesale and retail trade** sector also experienced employment gains over the past year in the Halifax region, though employment in this industry hasn't yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels. These gains helped to offset a decline in employment in the **health care and social assistance** industry of 4,300 positions.

Nova Scotia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	Feb 2022 ('000)	Feb 2021 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	Feb 2022 (%)	Feb 2021 (%)	Yearly Variation (%)
Nova Scotia	465.2	451.8	3.0	7.2	8.8	-1.6
Economic Regions						
Cape Breton	49.6	44.2	12.2	13.0	14.2	-1.2
North Shore	66.3	66.7	-0.6	6.4	8.3	-1.9
Annapolis Valley	60.6	55.9	8.4	7.2	7.5	-0.3
Southern	48.3	47.6	1.5	9.6	8.8	0.8
Halifax	240.4	237.4	1.3	5.6	8.1	-2.5

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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