

LABOUR MARKET Snapshot



Ministry of
Advanced Education
and Labour Market
Development

MAY 2009

B.C. EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

+0.1%
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

+0.2%
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

+0.1%
PARTICIPATION RATE

LABOUR FORCE

- The unemployment rate in B.C. increased to 7.6% over the last month; the highest monthly unemployment rate over the last year. The rate one year ago was 4.5%. B.C.'s unemployment rate is still below the national rate of 8.4%, which also increased between April and May (+0.4 percentage points).
 - Total employment in B.C. was 2.25 million, increasing by 1,400 jobs over the last month. This is 2.6%, or 60,100 less jobs, than one year ago. In May, gains in part-time in employment (+24,200) were offset by losses in full-time employment (-22,700).
 - Total unemployment in B.C. increased 2.6% since April, bringing unemployment to 184,500; an increase of 4,700 of those unemployed. Compared to May 2008, the total number of unemployed workers in B.C. increased by 68.6% or 75,100 workers.
 - Unemployment rates between April and May rose in most provinces, except for Saskatchewan (-0.1%), New Brunswick (-0.1%) and Nova Scotia (-0.3%). B.C. has the third lowest unemployment rate, with Saskatchewan and Manitoba (both at 4.9%) and Alberta (6.6%) the only provinces with lower rates.
 - The youth unemployment rate dropped slightly (-0.4 percentage points) over the last month, bringing the rate to 11.7%. This is the second consecutive month the unemployment rate for youth has decreased since December 2008. This rate, however, is still 2.9 percentage points higher than in May 2008.
 - Unemployment rates in all but one B.C. Development Region increased or remained stable since April. Kootenay was the only region where the unemployment rate declined, bringing the rate down to 9.0% (-0.7 percentage points). Vancouver Island/Coast remained stable at 6.9% and now has the lowest rate of the seven regions. The Cariboo region continued to have the highest unemployment rate in B.C. (12.9%¹). This marks the second consecutive month that this region has had the highest unemployment rate of all the regions.
- The service producing sector experienced job gains for the first time in the last six months. This sector gained 12,500 jobs between April and May. This level, however, is still 0.6% lower than one year ago. Conversely, the goods producing sector was down by 11,100 jobs (-2.4 percentage points) since April. The number of jobs in this sector is 10.0% less than in May 2008.
- In the service sector, the Health & Social Services industry lost the most jobs (-10,400), or 3.9%, over the last month. Largest gains were in Retail and Wholesale Trade (+11,400) and Public Administration (+10,900). In the goods sector, largest decreases in employment were in the Manufacturing industry, with -10,300, or 5.9%, of jobs lost over the last month. Largest increases in employment were in Agriculture, up 1,100 jobs (+3.3%).

INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS²

RETAIL AND
WHOLESALE TRADE
+3.2% (+11,400)

-3.9% (-10,400)
HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES

CONSTRUCTION
+0.3% (+500)

ACCOMMODATION,
FOOD AND BEVERAGE
+0.1% (+100)

-0.8% (-1,400)
PROFESSIONAL,
SCIENTIFIC AND
TECHNICAL SERVICES

-5.9% (-10,300)
MANUFACTURING

-5.1% (-2,100)
FORESTRY, FISHING
AND MINING³

IMMIGRATION⁴

- In 2008, 1,532 Refugee Class immigrants arrived in B.C., a decline of 18.6% from 2007 and comparable with the national decline in Refugee Class arrivals.
- The education level of Refugee Class immigrants is lower than the average among all immigrants. Of B.C. arrivals 25 years and older in the Refugee Class, 13.5% had a university degree. A further 20.3% had a college diploma or trades training, for a total of 33.8% with some form of post-secondary education or training. In comparison, 75.5% of all new immigrants arrived with some level of post-secondary education or training.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING⁵

- In 2009/10 more than 3,900 new post secondary seats will be added to priority areas including 1,845 spaces in general growth to institutions that deliver programs in high demand; 625 graduate student spaces; 32 physician spaces, and 454 new spaces in Nursing and Allied Health.

¹ Actual data.

² Industry groups are ordered by employment totals (largest to smallest).

³ These groups are part of the Other Primary category in the Labour Force Survey (categories are: Forestry & Logging; Fishing, Hunting & Trapping; and Mining and Oil & Gas Extraction).

⁴ Landed Immigrants Database, Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

⁵ B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.

Note: All labour force statistics are from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey. Data is seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated.

B.C. Unemployment Rate by Economic Development Region 3 Month Moving Average, Actual

