



EDMONTON

# indicators

## November Labour Force Report

### Edmonton's job growth takes a break

After constant growth in new jobs through most of 2011, Edmonton's labour market paused in November, with both the number of people employed in the Edmonton region and those seeking work remaining basically unchanged since October. Edmonton's unemployment rate also stayed the same from October to November, holding stable at 5.4% (see Table 1 below).

Continued strength in manufacturing, transportation and trade was offset by employment losses in construction and the public sector. Much like the rest of 2011, full-time employment continued to expand throughout November, though a loss of part-time positions resulted in a slight net loss of jobs in the Edmonton economy for the month. Despite November's tepid results, Edmonton continues to benefit from low unemployment rates and has seen one of the fastest increases in job growth among the metropolitan areas reported by Statistics Canada.

Similar to Edmonton, the nation as a whole experienced a sharp drop in part-time employment, with losses of 19,000 jobs for Canada in November. As a result, Canada's unemployment rate moved up from 7.1% in September to 7.3% for November.

Alberta managed to buck the national trend in November with a modest gain of 4,500 jobs. Again, it was an increase in full-time employment that led to the increase in Alberta's job figures for November. The oil and gas sector, along with a variety of service industries, experienced employment gains, while trade and manufacturing saw a reduction in jobs for the month.

#### Significance

While Edmonton's November employment results are nothing to celebrate, there is a positive side to the lackluster job numbers. As noted above, Edmonton has experienced an excellent rebound in employment, generating almost 43,000 full-time jobs since November, 2010. However this very strong growth — if it continues into 2012 — could lead to shortages of skilled trades in manufacturing, construction, professional services and ultimately across the regional economy. Such shortages can ignite a wage and cost spiral and undercut the cost competitiveness of Edmonton's employers.

If November's tepid numbers signal a moderation in Edmonton's job gains, an opportunity is presented for employers to adjust more gradually to tighter labour conditions. This can also be seen as an opportunity to help address emerging skill shortages and re-equilibrate the labour market by enabling the supply of migrants and new entrants to the labour force to catch up with labour demand.

## Limitations

Because employment growth, particularly in the full-time category, tends to lag behind growth in overall economic activity, it's a better indicator of past, rather than current developments in the economy. However, employment growth is a useful predictor of future changes in incomes and consumer spending. Statistics Canada only publishes a three-month labour force moving average for Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) — an approach that sometimes results in the number of reported jobs lagging behind developments in a CMA's economy.

**Table 1**  
**Labour Force Survey Results – Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area**  
**Three-Month Moving Average – Seasonally Adjusted**

	Oct - 2011	Nov - 2011	Oct to Nov 2011	Nov 2010 to Nov 2011	Oct to Nov 2011	Nov 2010 to Nov 2011
15 years and older	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population	<b>969.0</b>	<b>970.4</b>	1.4	17.0	0.1	1.7
Labour force	<b>721.2</b>	<b>721.0</b>	-0.2	40.7	0.0	6.2
Employment	<b>682.1</b>	<b>681.8</b>	-0.3	41.7	0.0	7.0
Unemployment	<b>39.1</b>	<b>39.2</b>	0.1	-1.0	0.3	-2.5
Participation rate (%)	74.4	74.3	0.1	2.9	...	...
Unemployment rate (%)	5.4	5.4	0.0	-0.8	...	...
Employment rate (%)	70.4	70.3	-0.1	3.2	...	...

Source: Statistics Canada

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