

Edmonton's job market eases in April

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Employment in **Edmonton** went down marginally in April 2015, marking the first loss of jobs since September of 2014. Gains in part-time employment were not able to offset a loss in full-time jobs. Weakness in employment levels was most evident in manufacturing, retail trade, logistics and hospitality sectors. In contrast, financial services and public administration experienced net gains in employment during April 2015.

Overall, the Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) lost approximately 1,300 positions in April 2015. Even with these losses, during the four months of 2015 the CMA has seen employment rise by 6,500 new positions. Last month's lower job numbers combined with continuing growth of the region's labour force drove the Edmonton CMA's unemployment rate up from 5.3% to 5.8% between March 2015 and April 2015.

Labour Force Survey Results – Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area¹
Three-month moving average – seasonally adjusted

	Apr 2014	Mar 2015	Apr 2015	Mar 2015 to Apr 2015	Apr 2014 to Apr 2015	Mar 2015 to Apr 2015	Apr 2014 to Apr 2015
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1065.8	1092.1	1094.21	2.1	28.4	0.2	2.7
Labour force	785.2	797.7	800.7	3.0	15.5	0.4	2.0
Employment	746.9	755.6	754.3	-1.3	7.4	-0.2	1.0
Unemployment	38.3	42	46.3	4.3	8.0	10.2	20.9
Unemployment rate (%)	4.9	5.3	5.8	0.5	0.9
Participation rate (%)	73.7	73	73.2	0.2	-0.5
Employment rate (%)	70.1	69.2	68.9	-0.3	-1.2

Source: Statistics Canada

In contrast to Edmonton, employment in **Alberta** was up in April 2015. The net gain for the province was about 12,500 new jobs as a dramatic jump of more than 20,000 part-time positions partially offset a loss of 7,600 full-time jobs. Lower employment numbers for construction, manufacturing and energy sectors were the primary source of job losses for Alberta in April 2015. Alberta's labour force continued to grow in the past month balancing the employment gains. As a result, Alberta's unemployment rate held steady at 5.5% in April of 2015.

At the national level, employment edged down with losses of part time jobs outweighing a boost in full-time employment. Most of **Canada's** job gains were in business services and manufacturing. Job losses were concentrated in construction, retail and information, culture and recreation sectors. Canada's unemployment rate stayed unchanged at 6.8% in April 2015.

Significance

Edmonton's good job results over the first four months of 2015 indicate that any negative impacts from recent declines in oil prices have been largely limited to sectors most closely tied to oil and gas. However, April's relatively weak data in areas such as retail and hospitality suggest that the rest of the economy may be beginning to feel the effects of slower activity in the energy sector. If oil prices remain at current levels for an extended period, employment across most of the region's economy will be affected negatively.

The continuing growth in the working-age population—up by 2.7% in the 12 months to April 2015—highlights the relatively good job prospects in the local economy. Growth in the number of job seekers has been an important factor in moderating wage increases by addressing labour and skill shortages that began to emerge in Edmonton. With the unemployment rate at 5.8%, Edmonton's labour market is well balanced by national standards, providing job seekers with good employment prospects while ensuring most employers are not faced with wide-spread systemic labour shortages.

However, the ongoing year-over-year growth in the number of employed people as well as job seekers is placing stress on the city's and the region's transportation infrastructure and housing market as favourable employment conditions continue to draw in new migrants. Low rental vacancy rates have been pushing rental costs up over the past year. These higher housing costs are spilling over into the shelter component of the consumer price index boosting Edmonton's overall inflation rate.

Limitations

Since employment trends, particularly in the full-time category, tend to lag behind developments in overall economic activity, they are a better indicator of past rather than current conditions in the economy. However, employment trends are useful predictors of future changes in incomes and consumer spending. Statistics Canada publishes a three-month moving average of all labour force values for the Edmonton region, an approach that sometimes results in the number of reported jobs lagging behind developments in the Edmonton region's economy.

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ⁱ Statistics Canada released revised data for the Labour Force Survey in January 2015. As a result, historical data reported in this table may vary from that presented in earlier versions of this report.