

## Employment holds steady in Edmonton

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Even with the continuing contraction in Alberta's energy sector, the number of jobs in the **Edmonton** region held steady in July 2015. Very good gains in full-time employment were able to offset a significant reduction in part-time jobs. Employment levels were weakest in energy, manufacturing and retail while financial services, education, health care and construction experienced excellent net gains in full-time employment during July 2015.

Overall, the **Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)** has gained approximately 9,500 new positions over the past 12 months. July's solid job numbers combined with a slight downturn in the number of individuals seeking work brought the Edmonton CMA's unemployment rate down from 5.9% to 5.7% between June 2015 and July 2015.

**Labour Force Survey Results – Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area<sup>i</sup>**  
Three-month moving average – seasonally adjusted

	July 2014	June 2015	July 2015	June 2015 to July 2015	July 2014 to July 2015	June 2015 to July 2015	July 2014 to July 2015
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1075	1099.6	<b>1101.9</b>	2.7	26.9	0.2	2.5
Labour force	786	800.0	<b>798.3</b>	-1.7	12.3	-0.2	1.6
Employment	743.5	753.0	<b>753.0</b>	0	9.5	0	1.3
Unemployment	42.5	49.6	<b>45.3</b>	-1.6	2.8	-3.4	6.6
Unemployment rate (%)	5.4	5.9	<b>5.7</b>	-0.2	0.3	...	...
Participation rate (%)	73.1	72.8	<b>72.4</b>	-0.4	-0.7	...	...
Employment rate (%)	69.2	68.5	<b>68.3</b>	-0.2	-0.9	...	...

Source: Statistics Canada

Unlike in Edmonton, employment in **Alberta** went down in July 2015. The net loss for the province was about 4,300 jobs. A small increase in full-time employment was more than offset by a sharp decline in part-time jobs. The primary sources of job losses in Alberta over the past 12 months were the professional services and energy sectors. As a result of the net employment loss for the month, Alberta's unemployment moved up from 5.7% in May 2015 to 6.0% between June and July 2015.

As was the case in Edmonton, employment was little changed at the national level, with significant losses in full-time employment more than counteracting a gain in part-time jobs for the month of July. Most of **Canada's** job losses were in financial services. Canada's unemployment rate stayed unchanged at 6.8% in July 2015 as Canada's labour force grew in step with the very modest increase in employment during July.

## Significance

Continuing job losses in manufacturing and retail indicate that the rest of Edmonton's economy is feeling the effects of reduced activity in the energy sector. Moving into the second half of 2015, employment will be weak with the unemployment rate rising back toward the 6.5% range. However, if oil prices stabilize quickly after the recently renewed downturn, Edmonton's employment levels will begin to improve in 2016.

The continuing growth in the working-age population—up 2.5% from July 2014 to July 2015—highlights Edmonton's relatively good job prospects compared to the rest of Canada's. 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. However, with Edmonton's unemployment rate now at 5.7% and good job gains in Ontario and British Columbia, net migration into the region will slow down, especially when compared to the volumes seen over the past several years.

Nonetheless, the ongoing year-over-year growth in the number of employed people as well as job seekers has stressed Edmonton and the region's transportation infrastructure and housing market. Low rental vacancy rates have been pushing rental costs up over the past year. These increased 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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<sup>i</sup> 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.