

Edmonton sees great gains in full-time jobs

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Even with the continuing weakness in Alberta's energy sector, the number of jobs in the **Edmonton** region rose in August 2015. Excellent gains in full-time employment were able to more than offset a modest reduction in part-time jobs. Employment levels were weakest in energy, manufacturing and logistics while retail, health care and construction experienced solid net gains in full-time employment during August 2015.

Overall, the **Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)** gained approximately 3,000 new positions in August and 15,000 over the past 12 months. August's very good job numbers brought the Edmonton CMA's unemployment rate down from 5.7% to 5.5% between July 2015 and August 2015. The comparable rate for Calgary in August was 6.6%.

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

	Aug 2014	July 2015	Aug 2015	July 2015 to Aug 2015	Aug 2014 to Aug 2015	July 2015 to Aug 2015	Aug 2014 to Aug 2015
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1077.6	1101.9	1104.5	2.6	26.9	0.2	2.5
Labour force	782.3	798.3	800.2	1.9	17.9	0.2	2.3
Employment	740.9	753.0	755.9	2.9	15	0.4	2.0
Unemployment	41.5	45.3	44.3	-1	2.8	-2.2	6.7
Unemployment rate (%)	5.3	5.7	5.5	-0.2	0.2
Participation rate (%)	72.6	72.4	72.4	0	-0.2
Employment rate (%)	68.8	68.3	68.4	0.1	-0.4

Source: Statistics Canada

As was the case in Edmonton, employment in **Alberta** went up in August 2015. The net gain for the province was just under 5,000 jobs. A good increase in full-time employment was largely balanced by a modest decline in part-time jobs. The primary sources of job losses in Alberta over the past 12 months were the manufacturing, professional services and energy sectors. As a result of the relatively modest scale of the net employment gain for the month, Alberta's unemployment was unchanged at 6.0% between July and August 2015.

Employment levels were little changed at the national level, with significant gains in full-time employment balancing a loss in part-time jobs for the month of August. Most of **Canada's** job gains were in public administration and education. Even with increased employment, Canada's unemployment rate moved up from 6.8% in July 2015 to 7.0% in August 2015 as Canada's labour force grew more rapidly than the very modest net increase in employment during the month.

Significance

Continuing job losses in manufacturing and logistics indicate that the rest of Edmonton's economy is feeling the effects of reduced activity in the energy sector. In the second half of 2015, employment growth is expected to weaken with the unemployment rate rising back toward the 6.5% range. However, if oil prices stabilize quickly after the recently volatile moves, Edmonton's employment levels will begin to improve in 2016.

The continuing growth in the working-age population—up 2.5% from August 2014 to August 2015—highlights Edmonton's relatively good job prospects compared to the rest of Alberta's and 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 5.5% 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.

The ongoing year-over-year growth in the number of employed people and 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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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.