

Modest employment gains for Edmonton in June

July 10, 2015

After two months of job losses, the number of jobs in the **Edmonton** region grew in June 2015. Solid gains in full-time employment were able to offset a slight drop in part-time jobs. Employment levels were weakest in energy, manufacturing and retail while financial services, education, health care and construction experienced net gains in employment during June 2015.

Overall, the **Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)** gained approximately 1,600 positions in June 2015. Employment has risen in the CMA by 8,400 new positions over the past 12 months. June's uptick in job numbers combined with a slight downturn in the number of individuals seeking work drove the Edmonton CMA's unemployment rate down from 6.3% to 5.9% between May 2015 and June 2015.

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

	June 2014	May 2015	June 2015	May 2015 to June 2015	June 2014 to June 2015	May 2015 to June 2015	June 2014 to June 2015
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1072.3	1096.5	1099.6	3.1	26.9	0.2	2.5
Labour force	788.7	801.7	800.0	-1.7	11.3	-0.2	1.4
Employment	744.6	751.4	753.0	1.6	8.4	0.2	1.1
Unemployment	44.1	50.3	49.6	-0.7	2.8	-6.8	6.3
Unemployment rate (%)	5.6	6.3	5.9	-0.4	0.3
Participation rate (%)	73.6	73.1	72.8	-0.3	-0.8
Employment rate (%)	69.4	68.5	68.5	0.0	-0.9

Source: Statistics Canada

Unlike Edmonton, employment in **Alberta** went down in June 2015. The net loss for the province was about 5,000 jobs in both full- and part-time employment. The primary sources of job losses for Alberta in May 2015 were the logistics, professional services and energy sectors. In spite of the net employment loss for the month, Alberta's unemployment edged down from 5.8% in May 2015 to 5.7% in June 2015 as the number of Albertans seeking employment fell.

Also in contrast to Edmonton, at the national level, employment was down marginally, with significant losses in part-time employment more than counteracting a gain in full-time jobs for the month of June. Most of **Canada's** job losses were in manufacturing, business services and hospitality sectors. Canada's unemployment rate stayed unchanged at 6.8% in June 2015 as Canada's labour force shrank in step with the decrease in employment.

Significance

Continuing job losses in areas such as manufacturing and retail indicates that the rest of Edmonton's economy is now feeling the effects of reduced activity in the energy sector. Moving into the second half of 2015, employment will continue to be weak with the unemployment rate rising back toward the 6.5% range. However, if oil prices resume their modest recovery after early July's downturn, Edmonton's employment levels will stabilize and begin to improve in 2016.

The continuing growth in the working-age population — up 2.5% from June 2014 to June 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 5.9% and good job gains in areas such as Ontario and British Columbia, net migration into the region will slow 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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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.