

Continuing employment gains for Edmonton

December 1, 2017

Employment in the **Edmonton** Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) was up by approximately 1,500 positions in November 2017. This marks the fifth consecutive month of job growth in the Edmonton CMA. The gains were part-time employment in sectors such as education and wholesale and retail trade. Employment growth in these sectors more than made up for losses in the manufacturing and hospitality sectors.

While the working age population continued to expand, the number of individuals in Edmonton's active labour force shrank in November. This reduction in job seekers combined with the net employment gains brought Edmonton's unemployment rate down from 8.2% in October 2017 to 7.8% in November 2017. The unemployment rate for **Calgary** was also down, coming in at 7.8% in November compared to 8.3% in November 2017.

Labour Force Survey Results—Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area
Three-month moving average—seasonally adjusted

	Nov 2016	Oct 2017	Nov 2017	Oct 2017 to Nov 2017	Nov 2016 to Nov 2017	Oct 2017 to Nov 2017	Nov 2016 to Nov 2017
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1126.6	1143	1144.4	1.4	17.8	0.1	1.6
Labour force	805.4	839.2	837.5	-1.7	32.1	-0.2	4.0
Employment	750.1	770.6	772.1	1.5	22	0.2	2.9
Unemployment	55.3	68.6	65.4	-3.2	10.1	-4.7	18.3
Unemployment rate (%)	6.9	8.2	7.8	-0.4	0.9
Participation rate (%)	71.5	73.4	73.2	-0.2	1.7
Employment rate (%)	66.6	67.4	67.5	0.1	0.9

Source: Statistics Canada

Employment in **Alberta** was also up in November 2017, with a gain of 5,400 jobs. As was the case with Edmonton, a large increase in part-time employment offset a decrease in Alberta's full-time jobs. The number of individuals seeking work in Alberta was also down in November.

Consequently, Alberta's unemployment rate fell from 7.8% in October 2017 to 7.3% in September 2017.

In November, **Canada's** overall employment rose by a very strong 80,000 positions. This robust gain was driven by expansion in both full-time employment and part-time positions. Job growth was concentrated in manufacturing, construction and educational services. The Canadian unemployment rate moved down to 5.9% in November compared to 6.3% in October 2017.

Significance

The Edmonton region's job losses during 2016 in the goods-producing sector demonstrated that the region was not immune to the impact of decreased oil prices. Nonetheless, gains in the Edmonton region's full-time employment since January 2017 suggest employers are now more confident about adding to their workforce.

Over the remainder of 2017, employment in Edmonton should see growth in the manufacturing, professional services and logistics sectors. However, the unemployment rate is unlikely to move much lower than the 7.8% value seen in November as the local labour force will expand and individuals, discouraged by very difficult employment conditions in the second half of 2016, return to the active labour force.

Between November 2016 and 2017, Edmonton's growth in the working age population was 1.6%—higher than Canada's national average of 1.1%. This has been key to addressing labour and skill shortages that began to emerge in Edmonton prior to the downturn in energy prices in 2014. However, with Edmonton's unemployment rate well above the national average, net migration into the region has slowed (especially when compared to the volumes seen from 2010 to 2014), which will slow the growth in the working age population over the rest of 2017 and into 2018.

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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