

## Edmonton sees solid job gains in full-time employment

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Employment in the **Edmonton** Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) was up by approximately 4,000 positions in September 2017. The gains were entirely in full-time employment in sectors such as construction, health care and energy. Employment gains in these sectors more than made up for losses in professional services and public administration.

While the working age population and active labour force continued to expand, September's boost to employment was large enough to bring Edmonton's unemployment rate down from 8.7% in August 2017 to 8.5% in September 2017. The unemployment rate for Calgary stayed unchanged at 8.5% in September 2017.

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

	Sep 2016	Aug 2017	<b>Sept 2017</b>	Aug 2017 to Sep 2017	Sep 2016 to Sep 2017	Aug 2017 to Sep 2017	Sep 2016 to Sep 2017
	(000)	(000)	<b>(000)</b>	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1124.8	1139.8	<b>1141.4</b>	1.6	16.6	0.1	1.5
Labour force	812.7	832.9	<b>835.8</b>	2.9	23.1	0.3	2.8
Employment	750.3	760.3	<b>764.5</b>	4.2	14.2	0.6	1.9
Unemployment	62.4	72.5	<b>71.3</b>	-1.2	8.9	-1.7	14.3
Unemployment rate (%)	7.7	8.7	<b>8.5</b>	-0.2	0.8	...	...
Participation rate (%)	72.3	73.1	<b>73.2</b>	0.1	0.9	...	...
Employment rate (%)	66.7	66.7	<b>67</b>	0.3	0.3	...	...

Source: Statistics Canada

Employment in **Alberta** was down in September 2017, with a loss of 7,800 jobs. A marginal increase in full-time employment was completely offset by a significant fall in part-time jobs. The number of individuals seeking work in Alberta was also down in September. Consequently, Alberta's unemployment rate fell from 8.1% in August 2017 to 7.9% in September 2017.

In September, **Canada's** overall employment rose by 10,000 positions. This modest gain was driven by a strong expansion in full-time employment that more than offset a loss seen in part-time positions. Job growth was concentrated in the educational and wholesale and retail trade sectors. The Canadian unemployment rate was unchanged in September at 6.2%.

### **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 fourth quarter 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 8.5% value seen in September as the local labour force continues to expand and individuals, discouraged by very difficult employment conditions in the second half of 2016, return to the active labour force.

Growth in the working age population, up by 1.5% from September 2016 to September 2017, has been a key factor in 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 down (especially when compared to the volumes seen from 2010 to 2014), which will slow the growth in the working age population over the remainder of 2017.

### **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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