

Edmonton sees 2,000 new full-time positions in August

September 8, 2017

After two months of job losses, employment in the **Edmonton** Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) was up by approximately 2,000 positions in August 2017. The gains occurred entirely in full-time employment in sectors such as professional services, health care and energy.

The employment losses that Edmonton CMA saw in August were concentrated in education and financial services and largely in part-time positions.

Because of a growing working age population and increased participation in the labour force, even with employment gains, the unemployment rate in the Edmonton CMA rose from 8.5% in July 2017 to 8.7% in August 2017. The unemployment rate for Calgary stood unchanged at 8.5% in August 2017.

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

	Aug 2016	July 2017	Aug 2017	July 2017 to Aug 2017	Aug 2016 to Aug 2017	July 2017 to Aug 2017	Aug 2016 to Aug 2017
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1123.4	1138.2	1139.8	1.6	16.4	0.1	1.5
Labour force	815.9	828.4	832.9	4.5	17	0.5	2.1
Employment	751	758.5	760.3	1.8	9.3	0.2	0.1
Unemployment	64.8	70	72.5	2.5	7.7	3.6	11.9
Unemployment rate (%)	7.9	8.5	8.7	0.2	0.8
Participation rate (%)	72.9	72.8	73.1	0.3	0.5
Employment rate (%)	66.9	66.6	66.7	0.1	-0.2

Source: Statistics Canada

Employment in **Alberta** was also up marginally in August 2017, with a gain of 2,300 jobs. A significant increase in full-time employment was largely offset by a fall in part-time jobs. The

number of individuals seeking work in Alberta was also up in August. Consequently, Alberta's unemployment rate went from 7.8% in July 2017 to 8.1% in August 2017.

In July, **Canada's** overall employment rose by 22,000 positions. This modest gain was driven by a strong expansion in part-time employment that more than offset a loss seen in full-time positions. Job growth was concentrated in financial services, accommodation and food services and information, culture and recreation sectors. As a result, the Canadian unemployment rate edged down from 6.3% in July 2017 to 6.2% in August 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 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 8.7% value seen in August 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 August 2016 to August 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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