

## Edmonton's employment lower in January

February 9, 2018

Employment in the **Edmonton** Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) fell by approximately 4,600 positions in January 2018. The losses were in both part-time employment and full-time positions. Solid employment gains in the education and hospitality sectors were more than offset by job losses in construction, logistics and financial services.

Edmonton's unemployment rate remained unchanged at a revised 7.2% as the number of individuals in the active labour force also fell in January. The unemployment rate for the Calgary CMA moved up slightly from a revised 7.5% in December 2017 to 7.6% in January 2018.

**Labour Force Survey Results—Edmonton CMA<sup>1</sup>**  
**Three-month moving average—seasonally adjusted**

	Jan 2017	Dec 2017	Jan 2018	Dec 2017 to Jan 2018	Jan 2017 to Jan 2018	Dec 2017 to Jan 2018	Jan 2017 to Jan 2018
	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	(000)	%	%
Population (15 years and older)	1128.3	1145.8	<b>1147.4</b>	1.6	19.1	0.1	1.7
Labour force	815.6	834	<b>828.6</b>	-5.4	13	-0.6	1.6
Employment	749	773.7	<b>769.1</b>	-4.6	20.1	-0.6	2.7
Unemployment	66.6	60.3	<b>59.4</b>	-0.9	-7.2	-1.5	-10.8
Unemployment rate (%)	8.2	7.2	<b>7.2</b>	0	-1	...	...
Participation rate (%)	72.3	72.8	<b>72.2</b>	-0.6	-0.1	...	...
Employment rate (%)	66.4	67.5	<b>67</b>	-0.5	0.6	...	...

Source: Statistics Canada

Employment in **Alberta** was also down in January 2018 with losses of about 5,900 jobs. This was the result of a very large drop in part-time employment that was only partially made up for by

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada released revised employment data in January 2018. Consequently, the historical data in this table will vary from those reported in past months.

strong growth in full-time jobs. The number of people seeking work in Alberta was also down in January. Consequently, the unemployment rate for the province was unchanged at a revised 7%.

In January, **Canada's** overall employment fell sharply, losing 88,000 positions. This loss was driven by a dramatic contraction of part-time employment. Job losses were concentrated in the education, financial services and construction sectors. The national unemployment rate edged higher from a revised 5.8% in December 2017 to 5.9% in January 2018.

### **Significance**

The Edmonton region's job gains in 2017 demonstrated that the region has begun a recovery from the downturn in 2016. Continuing gains in the Edmonton region's full-time employment since January 2017 suggest employers are now more confident about adding to their workforce.

As well, with the past year's employment growth concentrated in full-time positions, average weekly wages grew 3.3% year over year in January 2018. Consequently, workers are seeing good gains in their income, which will help to boost consumer spending going forward.

In the first quarter of 2018, 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 7.2% seen in January 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 1.7% from January 2017 to January 2018, 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 to 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 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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