Employment expands in July

August 6, 2021

Seasonally adjusted employment in the Edmonton census metropolitan area (CMA) expanded by 6,600 individuals in July 2021 from June. The region’s labour force contracted for the third consecutive month in July, though by a lesser extent compared to month-over-month reductions in May and June. The unemployment rate moved lower in July to 8.8 per cent from 9.7 per cent in June, bringing it within one percentage point of the region’s pre-pandemic benchmark (eight per cent in February 2020).

Source: Statistics Canada, seasonally adjusted data series ending July 2021
Notes: Employment data are charted on the left vertical axis (LHS), whereas unemployment rates are charted on the right vertical axis (RHS). Historical data were revised by Statistics Canada due to the rebasing of populations to reflect counts from the 2016 Census. Revised data are available going back to 2006 for the Edmonton CMA.

Unadjusted employment estimates in July indicate higher employment in part-time work both year-over-year and compared to July 2019. Full-time employment has been improving, though it is still significantly below July 2019 levels by almost 22,000 individuals.
Significance
July’s Labour Force Survey release is the first release on labour market conditions in the Edmonton CMA after the province moved into stage 3 of its Open for Summer plans\(^1\). Part-time employment appears to be recovering at a faster pace than full-time employment, which is reflective of the impact restrictions have had on many services-producing industries that tend to hire more part-time workers. It is worth noting that employment in the services-producing sector as of July’s estimates is now above July 2019 levels. A notable contributor to this was hiring in the accommodation and food services sector, even though employment remained below its corresponding monthly level in 2019. Across the remaining sectors, employment levels in July for most were still below July 2019 levels with few exceptions.

### Key Labour Force Survey Results—Edmonton CMA
Three-month moving average—seasonally adjusted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>July 2020 (000)</th>
<th>June 2021 (000)</th>
<th>July 2021 (000)</th>
<th>Month-over-month</th>
<th>Year-over-year</th>
<th>Month-over-month</th>
<th>Year-over-year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour force</td>
<td>799.9</td>
<td>839.1</td>
<td>837.9</td>
<td>-1.2</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>679.2</td>
<td>757.5</td>
<td>764.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>120.7</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>-7.9</td>
<td>-46.9</td>
<td>-9.7</td>
<td>-38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate (%)</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>-6.3</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation rate (%)</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0380-01

Limitations
Employment trends tend to lag developments in overall economic activity. Because of this, they are a better indicator of past, rather than current, conditions in the economy. However, employment trends are still useful predictors of future changes in incomes and consumer spending. Statistics Canada publishes a three-month moving average of all labour force estimates for the Edmonton region, which sometimes results in the number of reported jobs lagging behind developments in the Edmonton region’s economy.

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\(^1\) On July 1, Alberta moved to Stage 3 of its Open for Summer Plan which effectively lifted restrictions on: social gathering; recreation, performance entertainment activities; business closures and capacity restrictions; and large events.