

UNIFOR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS

A monthly review of labour market indicators

April 2025



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National Statistics

As expected, conditions in Canada’s labour market appeared to worsen in April, with the impact of U.S. tariffs being felt across the economy. While there was a slight overall employment increase of 7,400 jobs, the majority of job gains occurred in the public sector (+23,000) and among the self-employed (+11,000), with the private sector shedding just under 27,000 jobs.

An increase in the participation rate (+0.1) due to an influx of jobseekers drove the unemployment rate higher by 0.2 percentage points to 6.9%. Despite more people looking for work, however, the participation rate remains substantially lower compared to April 2024. Wage growth also continued to moderate last month, sitting at 3.4% year-over-year. Adjusted for inflation, annual real wage growth sits at just 1.1%.

	April 2019–23 average	April 2024	March 2025	April 2025	Year-over-year (Y/Y) change	Monthly (M/M) change
Total employment (#) ¹	18,756,160	20,700,500	20,961,900	20,969,300	268,800 1.3%	7,400 0.0%
Unemployment rate (%) ²	7.6	6.2	6.7	6.9	0.7	0.2
Participation rate (%) ³	64.6	65.7	65.2	65.3	-0.4	0.1
Union coverage (%) ⁴	31.1	30.4	31.1	30.9	0.5	-0.2
Average hourly wage (\$) ⁵	\$31.03	\$34.93	\$36.05	\$36.13	3.4%	0.2%
Real average hourly wage (\$) ⁶	\$34.66	\$34.93	\$35.34	\$35.31	1.1%	-0.1%

Unemployment Rate

Real Average Hourly Wage

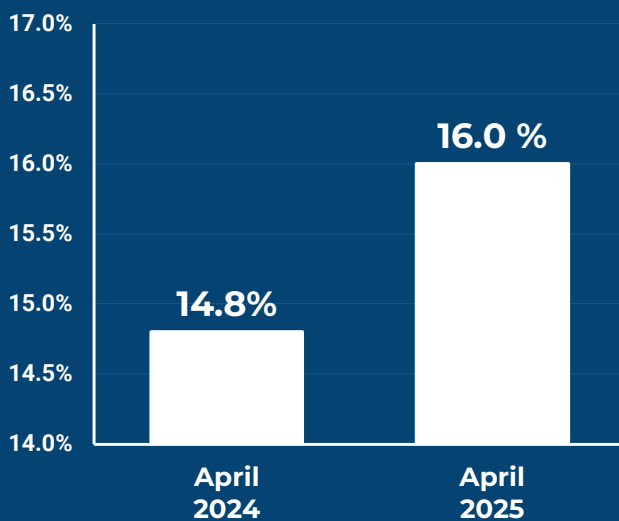


National Precarity Indicators

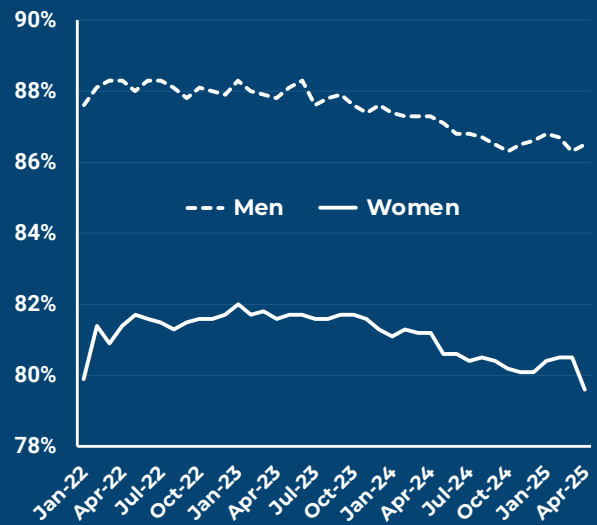
While overall numbers for the labour market were trending negatively, the picture was mixed for our precarity indicators. A number of measures such as the part-time (-0.4), underutilization (-0.3) and underemployment (-0.2) rates fell, suggesting an improvement in precariousness. However, it is important to note that similar seemingly positive trends were observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily due to the fact that more precarious workers were the first to lose their jobs, which paradoxically led to an improvement in precarity measures. This was particularly the case among women, whose core-aged employment rate dropped sharply last month from 80.5% to 79.6% – below the level observed during the peak of the Omicron COVID-19 wave in January 2022. Time will tell if this is merely a temporary drop or part of a more sustained trend.

	April 2024	March 2025	April 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Part-time rate (%) ⁷	18.7	19.3	18.9	0.2	-0.4
Involuntary part-time (%) ⁸	40.0	41.5	42.3	2.3	0.8
Underutilization (R8) rate (%) ⁹	8.4	9.5	9.2	0.8	-0.3
Underemployment rate (%) ¹⁰	14.8	16.2	16.0	1.2	-0.2
Multiple job holders (%) ¹¹	5.7	5.8	5.7	0.0	-0.1
Temporary job holders (%) ¹²	10.6	10.7	11.2	0.6	0.5
Casual/other (%)	3.1	3.4	3.5	0.4	0.1
Temporary/contract (%)	6.1	6.3	6.4	0.3	0.1
Seasonal (%)	1.3	0.9	1.3	0.0	0.4
Low wage incidence (%) ¹³	22.1	20.6	20.6	-1.5	0.0
Gender wage gap ¹⁴	\$4.82	\$5.16	\$4.60	-4.6%	-10.9%
NEETs (x1,000) ¹⁵	842.7	902.9	869.1	3.1%	-3.7%

Underemployment Rate



Core-Aged Employment Rate



Regional Statistics

Ontario continued to record the worst regional employment trends during the month of April, following a loss of 27,500 jobs in March. A further 34,600 jobs were lost in Ontario last month (-0.4%), with the unemployment rate surging by 0.3 percentage points to 7.8% – a full percentage higher compared to April 2024 and the highest regional unemployment rate across the country. Frustrated jobseekers also continued to exit Ontario's labour force, with the participation rate falling by 0.2 percentage points to 65.0%.

While a number of Ontario's key industries such as manufacturing and retail/wholesale trade are particularly exposed to the Trump administration's imposition of tariffs on Canada, it is important to note that April's figures represent a continuation of longer-term labour market weakness in Ontario that has been observed since 2023.

The Atlantic region also recorded a sharp fall in employment (-5,500; -0.4%) in April along with a corresponding jump in the unemployment rate to 7.5% (+0.3). However, employment figures were positive for the Prairies (+23,200; +0.6%) Quebec (+18,300; +0.4%), and B.C. (+6,000; +0.2%).



Regional Statistics Continued

Atlantic

	April 2024	April 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	1,261,500	1,259,200	-2,300 -0.2%	-5,500 -0.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	7.1	7.5	0.4	0.3
Participation rate (%)	61.2	60.4	-0.8	-0.1
Union coverage (%)	32.4	33.6	1.2	-0.8
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$30.69	\$32.02	4.3%	0.2%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$30.69	\$31.29	2.0%	-0.1%



Quebec

	April 2024	April 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	4,556,300	4,645,600	89,300 2.0%	18,300 0.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	5.1	6.0	0.9	0.3
Participation rate (%)	65.0	65.3	0.3	0.4
Union coverage (%)	39.8	40.0	0.2	-0.2
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$33.66	\$34.68	3.0%	0.4%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$33.66	\$33.90	0.7%	0.1%



Ontario

	April 2024	April 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	8,118,100	8,195,200	77,100 0.9%	-34,600 -0.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	6.8	7.8	1.0	0.3
Participation rate (%)	65.4	65.0	-0.4	-0.2
Union coverage (%)	26.0	26.7	0.7	-0.3
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$35.83	\$37.36	4.3%	0.2%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$35.83	\$36.52	1.9%	-0.1%



Regional Statistics Continued

Prairies

	April 2024	April 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	3,828,100	3,918,400	90,300 2.4%	23,200 0.6%
Unemployment rate (%)	6.6	6.3	-0.3	-0.2
Participation rate (%)	68.9	67.8	-1.1	0.1
Union coverage (%)	27.5	27.8	0.3	0.2
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$34.87	\$35.15	0.8%	-0.9%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$34.87	\$34.35	-1.5%	-1.2%



British Columbia

	April 2024	April 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	2,936,600	2,950,900	14,300 0.5%	6,000 0.2%
Unemployment rate (%)	5.0	6.2	1.2	0.1
Participation rate (%)	65.8	65.1	-0.7	0.1
Union coverage (%)	30.3	31.0	0.7	0.4
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$36.49	\$38.24	4.8%	1.6%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$36.49	\$37.38	2.4%	1.3%



Average Hourly Wages by Industry

Nominal vs. Inflation-Adjusted Wage Growth

Industry	April 2024	April 2025	Y/Y change	Y/Y inflation-adjusted change
Agriculture	\$24.99	\$26.40	5.7%	2.0%
Forestry	\$36.27	\$36.91	1.8%	-0.5%
Mining, oil and gas	\$51.60	\$54.57	5.8%	3.2%
Utilities	\$51.11	\$55.72	9.0%	6.1%
Construction	\$36.83	\$38.54	4.6%	2.2%
Manufacturing: durables	\$34.92	\$36.24	3.8%	1.4%
Manufacturing: non-durables	\$33.34	\$33.55	0.6%	-1.7%
Wholesale Trade	\$36.96	\$36.65	-0.8%	-3.2%
Retail Trade	\$24.06	\$24.29	1.0%	-1.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	\$32.67	\$34.18	4.6%	2.2%
Finance and Insurance	\$44.31	\$45.82	3.4%	1.1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$35.84	\$34.54	-3.6%	-6.2%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	\$47.21	\$47.14	-0.2%	-2.5%
Business, building and other support	\$26.75	\$28.30	5.8%	3.3%
Educational Services	\$39.42	\$41.74	5.9%	3.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$32.99	\$34.62	4.9%	2.5%
Information, Culture and Recreation	\$31.53	\$34.49	9.4%	6.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	\$20.49	\$20.88	1.9%	-0.4%
Other Services	\$29.54	\$30.88	4.5%	2.1%
Public Administration	\$44.78	\$46.15	3.0%	0.7%

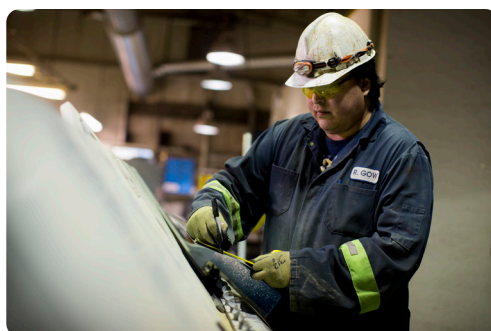
As wages moderate, a number of industries are recording year-over-year real wage declines due to the impact of inflation. Real wage declines were observed in non-durables manufacturing (-1.7%), wholesale trade (-3.2%), retail trade (-1.3%), accommodation and food services (-0.4%), and professional, scientific and technical services (-2.5%).

Employment losses last month were concentrated in the goods-producing sector, with manufacturing hit particularly hard by the current trade war (-30,600). The services-producing sector recorded overall employment growth, led by job increases in public administration (+37,100), although this was partly offset by a steep employment decline in retail and wholesale trade (-26,800).

Monthly Employment Gains and Losses by Industry and Sector

Employment Change by Industry/Sector, March to April 2025

GOODS-PRODUCING SECTOR	-33,000	
Agriculture		2,900
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	-7,500	
Utilities		3,900
Construction	-1,800	
Manufacturing	-30,600	
SERVICES PRODUCING SECTOR		40,300
Wholesale and retail trade	-26,800	
Transportation and warehousing		8,200
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing		23,700
Professional, scientific and technical services		6,200
Business, building and other support services	-14,500	
Educational services		5,400
Health care and social assistance	-7,800	
Information, culture and recreation		12,600
Accommodation and food services	-8,500	
Other services (except public administration)		4,900
Public administration		37,100



NOTES

1. Total employment counts all working age individuals (15 years old and above) who are currently employed. Seasonally adjusted.
2. The unemployment rate expresses the percentage of working age people who are unemployed and actively seeking work. It does not include unemployed individuals who are not currently searching for jobs or who are permanently without work, and who are therefore considered to fall outside the labour market. Seasonally adjusted.
3. The participation rate expresses the percentage of all working age people who are participating in the labour market, including both employed and unemployed (actively job-seeking) individuals. Seasonally adjusted.
4. Union coverage includes workers who are union members as well as those who are non-unionized but covered by the terms of a collective agreement.
5. The average hourly wage is calculated using usual wages or salaries reported by employees for their main job.
6. The real average hourly wage adjusts wages to account for the impact of inflation and is reported in dollars from the corresponding month of the previous year. Since CPI data is unavailable for the current month prior to the release of the Labour Force Survey, the previous month's CPI level is used to estimate real wages for the current period.
7. The part-time rate measures the percentage of all employed workers who are working part-time hours.
8. The involuntary part-time rate measures the percentage of part-time workers who wanted full-time employment.
9. The underutilization rate, or R8, is used by Statistics Canada to measure underutilized labour. It adds to the unemployment rate those who are waiting for recall or replies, long-term future starts, discouraged workers (those who did not search because they believed no jobs were available) and a portion of involuntary part-time workers.
10. The underemployment rate measures the percentage of people who want work but cannot find suitable employment or who do not have adequate support systems in place that would allow them to engage in job-seeking. It therefore measures the true extent of labour underutilization in Canada. The underemployment rate adds to the unemployment rate all involuntary part-time workers and the marginally attached (i.e. those who wanted to work but who were not able to actively search for jobs due to extenuating circumstances).
11. The multiple job holder rate measures the percentage of employed workers who hold two or more jobs.
12. The temporary job holder rate measures the percentage of employed workers whose jobs are temporary in tenure.
13. Low wage incidence is expressed as the percentage of hourly wage earners earning less than two-thirds of the median hourly wage. This measure is a widely accepted standard for determining the low pay threshold.
14. The gender pay gap measures the average difference in income between men and women who earn hourly wages. A positive gap indicates that men earn, on average, more than women.
15. The NEET category measures the number of people aged 15 to 29 who are not in employment, education or training.





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