UNIFOR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS

A monthly review of labour market indicators

October 2026










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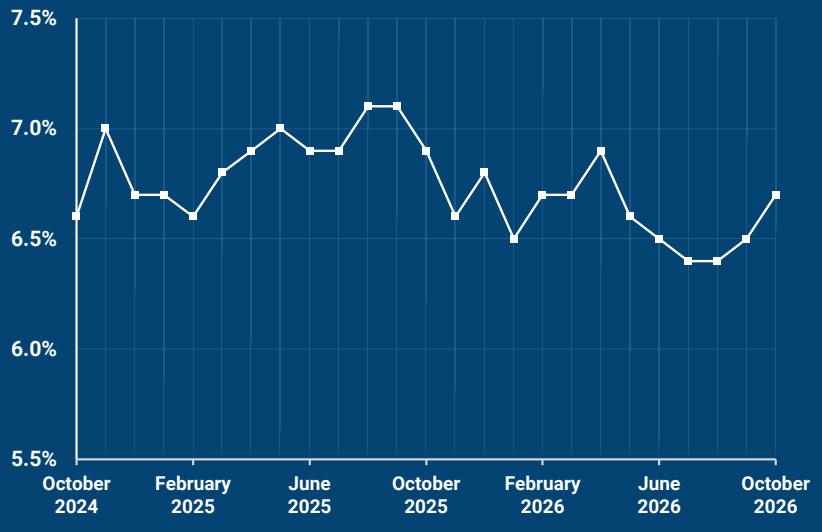
National Statistics

Employment remained nearly level in October as the labour market recorded a marginal decline of 4,700 jobs (0.0%). The unemployment rate climbed to 6.7% as population growth led to an influx of jobseekers and a higher proportion of unemployed workers. Nevertheless, the participation rate remained level at 64.8%, which continues to represent a nearly three-decade low, outside of the peak 2020 pandemic months. There was a sharp disparity between sectors, with the public sector gaining around 50,000 jobs while the private sector recorded its largest decline since February, with a loss of 53,000 jobs.

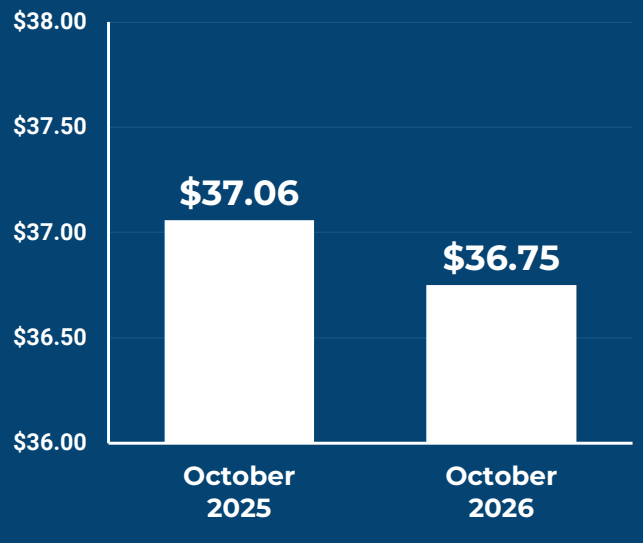
Wage growth remained weak, falling to 2.2% on a year-over-year basis (down slightly from 2.3% in September). With inflation climbing slightly last month to 3.1%, real average hourly wages are lower by 0.8% on an annualized basis.

Statistic	October 2020–24 average	October 2025	September 2026	October 2026	*Year-over-year (Y/Y) change*	*Monthly (M/M) change*
Total employment (#)[1]	19,805,200	21,083,600	21,104,800	21,100,100	*16,500* *0.1%*	*-4,700* *0.0%*
Unemployment rate (%)[2]	6.5	6.9	6.5	6.7	*-0.2*	*0.2*
Participation rate (%)[3]	65.5	65.2	64.8	64.8	*-0.4*	*0.0*
Union coverage (%)[4]	30.4	30.6	30.6	30.8	*0.2*	*0.2*
Average hourly wage ($)[5]	$32.57	$37.06	$37.64	$37.89	*2.2%*	*0.7%*
Real average hourly wage ($)[6]	$35.66	$37.06	$36.55	$36.75	*-0.8%*	*0.5%*

Unemployment Rate



Real Average Hourly Wage

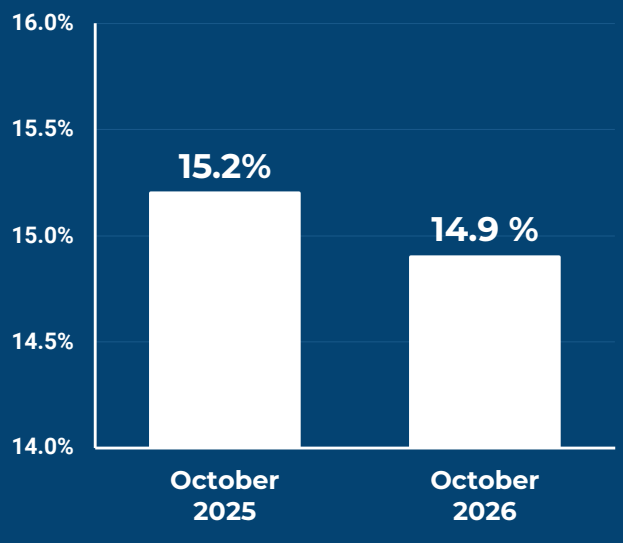


National Precarity Indicators

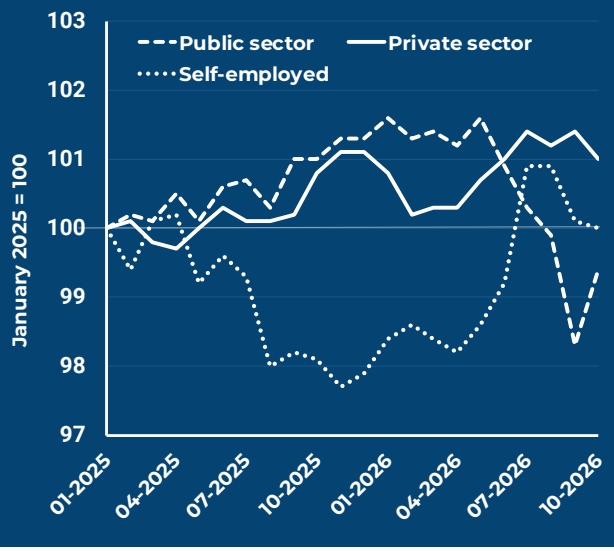
Unifor's precarity indicators were generally in line with levels in October 2025, with marginally similar levels of part-time workers (-0.1) and underutilization rates (-0.1), although the underemployment rate showed a more substantial 0.3 percentage point decline, suggesting that the proportion of individuals marginally attached to the labour force has fallen. The proportion of multiple job holders rose by 0.4 percentage points to 5.9%, indicating that more Canadians are having to work two or more jobs to make ends meet. Disaggregating employment figures by workers in the private sector, public sector and those who are self-employed, the bulk of jobs gained since January 2025 has been the result of private sector gains (see chart below). Meanwhile, employment in the public sector has drastically declined since May 2026, although there was a notable rebound last month.

Indicator	Oct. 2025	Sept. 2026	Oct. 2026	*Y/Y change*	*M/M change*
Part-time rate (%)[7]	18.5	18.0	**18.4**	*-0.1*	*0.4*
Involuntary part-time (%)[8]	42.2	43.6	**42.8**	*0.6*	*-0.8*
Underutilization (R8) rate (%)[9]	8.2	8.1	**8.1**	*-0.1*	*0.0*
Underemployment rate (%)[10]	15.2	15.1	**14.9**	*-0.3*	*-0.2*
Multiple job holders (%)[11]	5.5	5.9	**5.9**	*0.4*	*0.0*
Temporary job holders (%)[12]	12.0	12.1	**11.8**	*-0.2*	*-0.3*
Casual/other (%)	3.5	3.5	**3.6**	*0.1*	*0.1*
Temporary/contract (%)	6.3	6.3	**6.2**	*-0.1*	*-0.1*
Seasonal (%)	2.1	2.3	**2.0**	*-0.1*	*-0.3*
Low wage incidence (%)[13]	20.2	20.9	**20.5**	*0.3*	*-0.4*
Gender wage gap[14]	$4.57	$4.53	**$4.50**	*-1.5%*	*-0.7%*
NEETs (x1,000)[15]	875.6	813.8	**797.4**	*-8.9%*	*-2.0%*

Underemployment Rate



Employment Change by Sector



Regional Statistics

Employment trends diverged across Unifor's five regions, with gains in Atlantic Canada (+5,100; +0.4%), British Columbia (+12,300; +0.4%), and Quebec (+7,500; +0.2%) offset by a marginal decline in Ontario (-8,600; -0.1%) and more substantial losses in the Prairie region (-21,000; -0.5%).

Jobs growth in Quebec partially reversed a recent decline of close to 68,000 jobs from July to September, although Quebec continues to be the only region to observe a year-over-year decline in employment, having lost 106,000 jobs since October 2025 (-2.3%). Ontario extended its recent slide in jobs figures, having lost close to 47,000 jobs since July, which contributed to the unemployment rate climbing back to 7.3% (+0.5 percentage points since its July low).

In line with September's observations, trends in average hourly wage growth diverged across regions, with the annualized change in real hourly wages continuing to outpace inflation in Atlantic Canada (+0.3%), B.C. (+0.3%) and Quebec (+0.7%), while remaining negative in the Prairies (-0.5%) and falling even further behind in Ontario (-2.3%).



Regional Statistics Continued

Atlantic

Statistic	Oct. 2025	Oct. 2026	*Y/Y change*	*M/M change*
Total employment (#)	1,264,600	1,297,100	*32,500*	*5,100*
			2.6%	*0.4%*
Unemployment rate (%)	7.8	7.2	*-0.6*	*-0.1*
Participation rate (%)	60.5	60.9	*0.4*	*0.1*
Union coverage (%)	32.9	32.4	*-0.5*	*0.1*
Average hourly wage ($)	$32.61	$33.71	*3.4%*	*0.4%*
Real avg. hourly wage ($)	$32.61	$32.70	*0.3%*	*0.3%*



Quebec

Statistic	Oct. 2025	Oct. 2026	*Y/Y change*	*M/M change*
Total employment (#)	4,652,300	4,546,800	*-105,500*	*7,500*
			-2.3%	*0.2%*
Unemployment rate (%)	5.3	5.7	*0.4*	*-0.3*
Participation rate (%)	64.6	63.6	*-1.0*	*-0.1*
Union coverage (%)	40.2	39.2	*-1.0*	*0.8*
Average hourly wage ($)	$35.63	$37.00	*3.8%*	*0.6%*
Real avg. hourly wage ($)	$35.63	$35.89	*0.7%*	*0.4%*



Ontario

Statistic	Oct. 2025	Oct. 2026	*Y/Y change*	*M/M change*
Total employment (#)	8,252,500	8,277,900	*25,400*	*-8,600*
			0.3%	*-0.1%*
Unemployment rate (%)	7.6	7.3	*-0.3*	*0.3*
Participation rate (%)	65.0	64.6	*-0.4*	*0.0*
Union coverage (%)	25.9	27.5	*1.6*	*0.3*
Average hourly wage ($)	$38.68	$38.96	*0.7%*	*0.6%*
Real avg. hourly wage ($)	$38.68	$37.79	*-2.3%*	*0.5%*



Regional Statistics Continued

Prairies

Statistic	Oct. 2025	Oct. 2026	*Y/Y change*	*M/M change*
Total employment (#)	3,973,600	**4,037,000**	*63,400*	*-21,000*
			1.6%	*-0.5%*
Unemployment rate (%)	7.0	**6.7**	*-0.3*	*0.7*
Participation rate (%)	68.5	**68.1**	*-0.4*	*0.1*
Union coverage (%)	27.9	**27.3**	*-0.6*	*-0.4*
Average hourly wage ($)	$36.08	**$37.01**	*2.6%*	*1.4%*
Real avg. hourly wage ($)	$36.08	**$35.90**	*-0.5%*	*1.2%*



British Columbia

Statistic	Oct. 2025	Oct. 2026	*Y/Y change*	*M/M change*
Total employment (#)	2,940,500	**2,941,300**	*800*	*12,300*
			0.0%	*0.4%*
Unemployment rate (%)	6.6	**6.3**	*-0.3*	*-0.1*
Participation rate (%)	65.0	**64.7**	*-0.3*	*0.1*
Union coverage (%)	31.1	**30.7**	*-0.4*	*-0.2*
Average hourly wage ($)	$38.23	**$39.54**	*3.4%*	*0.1%*
Real avg. hourly wage ($)	$38.23	**$38.35**	*0.3%*	*0.0%*





Average Hourly Wages by Industry

Nominal vs. Inflation-Adjusted Wage Growth

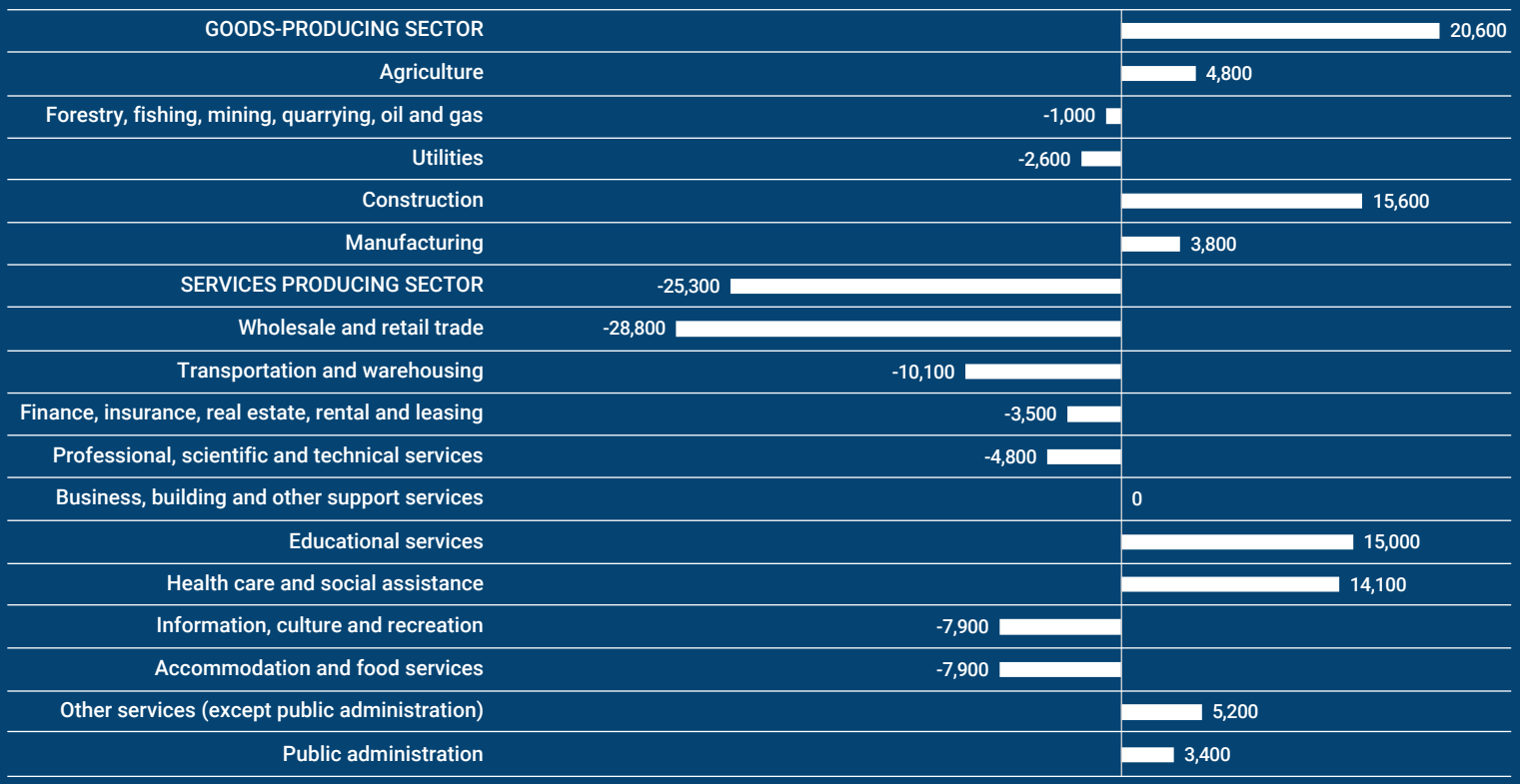
Industry	October 2025	October 2026	*Y/Y change*	*Y/Y inflation-adjusted change*
Agriculture	$25.37	**$26.42**	*4.1%*	*1.0%*
Forestry	$38.38	**$37.55**	*-2.2%*	*-5.4%*
Mining, oil and gas	$55.19	**$54.66**	*-1.0%*	*-4.1%*
Utilities	$56.24	**$56.93**	*1.2%*	*-1.8%*
Construction	$37.75	**$39.04**	*3.4%*	*0.3%*
Manufacturing: durables	$37.78	**$37.80**	*0.1%*	*-3.0%*
Manufacturing: non-durables	$33.76	**$34.93**	*3.5%*	*0.4%*
Wholesale Trade	$37.90	**$39.19**	*3.4%*	*0.3%*
Retail Trade	$24.96	**$25.52**	*2.2%*	*-0.8%*
Transportation and Warehousing	$34.40	**$35.22**	*2.4%*	*-0.7%*
Finance and Insurance	$47.97	**$48.21**	*0.5%*	*-2.6%*
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	$36.97	**$37.57**	*1.6%*	*-1.4%*
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	$50.36	**$51.32**	*1.9%*	*-1.2%*
Business, building and other support	$28.45	**$29.42**	*3.4%*	*0.3%*
Educational Services	$42.99	**$43.80**	*1.9%*	*-1.2%*
Health Care and Social Assistance	$35.13	**$36.25**	*3.2%*	*0.1%*
Information, Culture and Recreation	$35.26	**$36.55**	*3.7%*	*0.5%*
Accommodation and Food Services	$21.01	**$21.79**	*3.7%*	*0.6%*
Other Services	$32.68	**$32.47**	*-0.6%*	*-3.8%*
Public Administration	$46.83	**$48.67**	*3.9%*	*0.8%*

Industry-level declines in real wage growth moderated somewhat in October after most industries recorded negative real wage growth in September. However, continued weakness remained for key industries such as durables manufacturing (-3.0%), retail trade (-0.8%), transportation and warehousing (-0.7%), and particularly within the natural resources sector in forestry (-5.4%) and mining, oil and gas (-4.1%).

Employment losses were concentrated in the services-producing sector, led by wholesale and retail trade (-28,800) and transportation and warehousing (-10,100). In contrast, the goods-producing sector posted a gain of 20,600 jobs, driven mainly by gains in construction (+15,600).

Monthly Employment Gains and Losses by Industry and Sector

Employment Change by Industry/Sector, September to October 2026









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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