

UNIFOR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS

A monthly review of labour market indicators

September 2025



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October 10, 2025

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National Statistics

There was a surprise expansion of employment in September as Canada's economy appeared to defy the impact of U.S. tariffs and 60,400 jobs were added to the labour market. Notably, however, the unemployment rate remained at 7.1% as more jobseekers joined the labour force, raising the participation rate to 65.2% (+0.1) and offsetting the effect of jobs gains on the unemployment rate. September marked the first time since June that the employment level increased, following consecutive months of jobs losses in July and August.

Year-over-year wage growth remained ahead of inflation at 3.3%, which translated to a 1.4% annualized increase in real wages. The end of the summer months also saw union coverage surge back to 30.8%, which is 0.1 percentage point above its September 2024 level.

Statistic	September 2019–23 average	September 2024	August 2025	September 2025	Year-over-year (Y/Y) change	Monthly (M/M) change
Total employment (#) ¹	19,442,240	20,779,300	20,954,900	21,015,300	236,000 1.1%	60,400 0.3%
Unemployment rate (%) ²	6.5	6.6	7.1	7.1	0.5	0.0
Participation rate (%) ³	65.7	65.2	65.1	65.2	0.0	0.1
Union coverage (%) ⁴	30.9	30.7	29.5	30.8	0.1	1.3
Average hourly wage (\$) ⁵	\$31.20	\$35.61	\$36.31	\$36.78	3.3%	1.3%
Real average hourly wage (\$) ⁶	\$34.75	\$35.61	\$35.63	\$36.11	1.4%	1.3%

Unemployment Rate

Real Average Hourly Wage



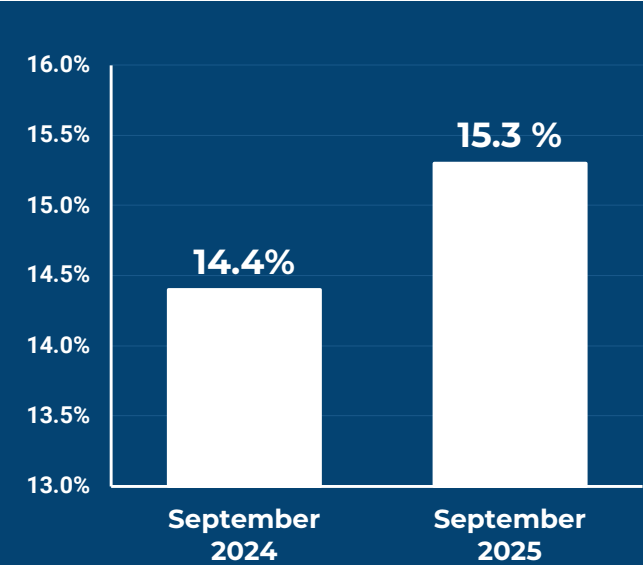
National Precarity Indicators

Monthly trends in Unifor’s precarity indicators reveal a drastic decline in a number of key measures, including the underutilization and underemployment rates (-1.6), the proportion of involuntary part-timers (-7.1), and temporary job holders (-1.4); however, these decreases tend to occur at the start of the fall semester as students return to school and the proportion of seasonal job holders falls (-1.4). Year-over-year changes continue to reveal heightened precarity in the labour market across

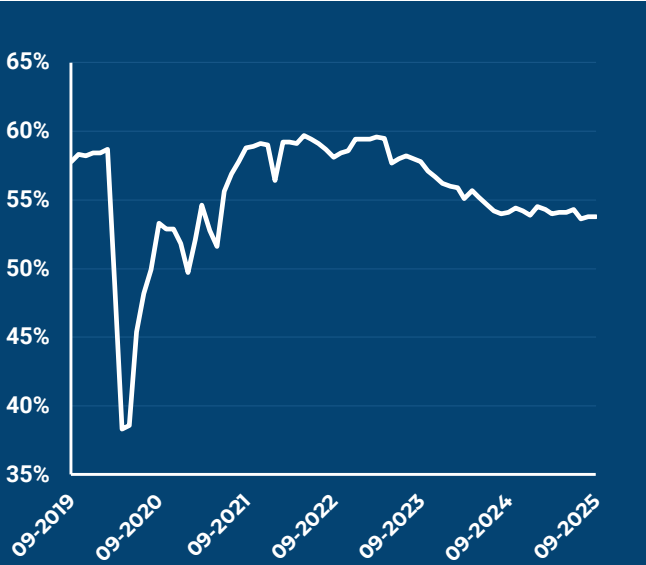
Indicator	Sept. 2024	Aug. 2025	Sept. 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Part-time rate (%) ⁷	18.0	16.3	17.9	-0.1	1.6
Involuntary part-time (%) ⁸	40.6	49.1	42.0	1.4	-7.1
Underutilization (R8) rate (%) ⁹	7.8	10.2	8.6	0.8	-1.6
Underemployment rate (%) ¹⁰	14.4	16.9	15.3	0.9	-1.6
Multiple job holders (%) ¹¹	5.5	5.2	5.3	-0.2	0.1
Temporary job holders (%) ¹²	11.1	13.5	12.1	1.0	-1.4
Casual/other (%)	3.2	3.4	3.5	0.3	0.1
Temporary/contract (%)	5.6	6.3	6.2	0.6	-0.1
Seasonal (%)	2.2	3.8	2.4	0.2	-1.4
Low wage incidence (%) ¹³	20.8	20.6	19.9	-0.9	-0.7
Gender wage gap ¹⁴	\$4.66	\$4.47	\$4.45	-4.5%	-0.4%
NEETs (x1,000) ¹⁵	799.3	2,139.7	815.8	2.1%	-61.9%

a broad spectrum of these measures, which is disproportionately impacting younger jobseekers. The youth unemployment rate climbed back to 14.7% in September while the youth employment rate remained near non-pandemic lows at 53.8%. Despite a strong recovery during the pandemic, the youth employment rate has since fallen substantially below its pre-pandemic level (see chart below).

Underemployment Rate



Youth Employment Rate



Regional Statistics

Employment growth during the month of September was notably concentrated in the Prairie region, where there was a gain of 45,700 jobs (+1.2%). Last month's employment increase more than offset a combined loss of 33,000 jobs in the Prairies during the months of July and August. However, with the regional participation rate surging by 0.6 percentage points to 68.7%, the unemployment rate fell by just 0.1 percentage point to 7.2%.

Elsewhere, employment growth was comparatively subdued, with gains of 7,800 jobs in British Columbia (+0.3%), 2,900 jobs in the Atlantic region (+0.2%), and 8,800 jobs in Ontario (+0.1%). These gains coincided with increases in the regional participation rate, which led to the unemployment rate climbing to 7.9% in the Atlantic (+0.1), 7.9% in Ontario (+0.2) and 6.4% in British Columbia (+0.2).

In Quebec, there was a marginal decline of close to 5,000 jobs (-0.1%), although the participation rate fell substantially by 0.3 percentage points, which caused the unemployment rate to decline to 5.7%. Quebec continues to record the lowest regional unemployment rate across the country.



Regional Statistics Continued

Atlantic

Statistic	Sept. 2024	Sept. 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	1,258,400	1,264,900	6,500 0.5%	2,900 0.2%
Unemployment rate (%)	7.3	7.9	0.6	0.1
Participation rate (%)	60.5	60.7	0.2	0.2
Union coverage (%)	34.0	32.5	-1.5	1.8
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$31.31	\$32.39	3.4%	1.9%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$31.31	\$31.80	1.6%	2.0%



Quebec

Statistic	Sept. 2024	Sept. 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	4,580,000	4,639,800	59,800 1.3%	-4,700 -0.1%
Unemployment rate (%)	5.5	5.7	0.2	-0.3
Participation rate (%)	64.8	64.7	-0.1	-0.3
Union coverage (%)	39.9	39.6	-0.3	1.0
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$34.23	\$35.55	3.9%	1.4%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$34.23	\$34.90	2.0%	1.4%



Ontario

Statistic	Sept. 2024	Sept. 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	8,197,600	8,199,800	2,200 0.0%	8,800 0.1%
Unemployment rate (%)	7.1	7.9	0.8	0.2
Participation rate (%)	65.2	64.8	-0.4	0.1
Union coverage (%)	26.6	26.7	0.1	1.4
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$37.09	\$38.17	2.9%	1.5%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$37.09	\$37.48	1.1%	1.6%



Regional Statistics Continued

Prairies

Statistic	Sept. 2024	Sept. 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	3,847,200	3,966,000	118,800 3.1%	45,700 1.2%
Unemployment rate (%)	6.9	7.2	0.3	-0.1
Participation rate (%)	68.1	68.7	0.6	0.6
Union coverage (%)	26.6	28.1	1.5	1.3
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$34.79	\$36.02	3.5%	0.8%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$34.79	\$35.36	1.6%	0.9%



British Columbia

Statistic	Sept. 2024	Sept. 2025	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	2,896,100	2,944,700	48,600 1.7%	7,800 0.3%
Unemployment rate (%)	6.0	6.4	0.4	0.2
Participation rate (%)	64.6	64.9	0.3	0.3
Union coverage (%)	31.3	30.5	-0.8	1.4
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$36.83	\$37.94	3.0%	1.0%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$36.83	\$37.25	1.1%	1.0%



Average Hourly Wages by Industry

Nominal vs. Inflation-Adjusted Wage Growth

Industry	September 2024	September 2025	Y/Y change	Y/Y inflation-adjusted change
Agriculture	\$24.69	\$25.51	3.3%	1.4%
Forestry	\$34.31	\$35.34	3.0%	1.1%
Mining, oil and gas	\$53.01	\$54.02	1.9%	0.1%
Utilities	\$54.61	\$56.13	2.8%	0.9%
Construction	\$36.79	\$37.76	2.6%	0.8%
Manufacturing: durables	\$35.96	\$36.95	2.8%	0.9%
Manufacturing: non-durables	\$33.21	\$33.79	1.7%	-0.1%
Wholesale Trade	\$35.93	\$37.91	5.5%	3.5%
Retail Trade	\$24.57	\$24.87	1.2%	-0.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	\$34.38	\$34.20	-0.5%	-2.4%
Finance and Insurance	\$44.81	\$47.35	5.7%	3.6%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$35.43	\$36.74	3.7%	1.8%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	\$48.27	\$49.89	3.4%	1.5%
Business, building and other support	\$26.94	\$28.80	6.9%	4.7%
Educational Services	\$40.83	\$43.07	5.5%	3.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$33.68	\$34.92	3.7%	1.8%
Information, Culture and Recreation	\$34.16	\$34.62	1.3%	-0.5%
Accommodation and Food Services	\$20.43	\$21.08	3.2%	1.3%
Other Services	\$30.86	\$31.43	1.8%	0.0%
Public Administration	\$44.84	\$46.04	2.7%	0.8%

By industry, annualized wage gains were remarkably strong in educational services (+5.5%), although this may reflect seasonal impacts as the fall semester started. Year-over-year wage growth was also notable in wholesale trade (+5.5%) and finance and insurance (+5.7%). Generally speaking, most industries are seeing wages outpace inflation; however, real wages declined in retail trade (-0.6%), transportation and warehousing (-2.4%) and information, culture and recreation (-0.5%).

The lion's share of jobs growth in September occurred in the goods-producing sector, with manufacturing adding close to 28,000 jobs last month, following a decline of 19,000 jobs in August. Jobs growth in the services sector was mixed, with public sector gains offset by losses in retail and wholesale trade (-21,000).

Monthly Employment Gains and Losses by Industry and Sector

Employment Change by Industry/Sector, August to September 2025

GOODS-PRODUCING SECTOR		42,000
Agriculture		13,200
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas		7,100
Utilities		2,000
Construction	-8,200	
Manufacturing		27,800
SERVICES PRODUCING SECTOR		18,400
Wholesale and retail trade	-20,800	
Transportation and warehousing	-7,400	
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing		8,500
Professional, scientific and technical services		9,400
Business, building and other support services	-600	
Educational services	-2,100	
Health care and social assistance		13,900
Information, culture and recreation	-5,800	
Accommodation and food services		7,500
Other services (except public administration)		12,100
Public administration		3,400



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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