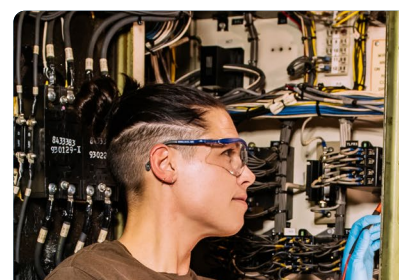


UNIFOR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

# LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS

*A monthly review of labour market indicators*  
September 2021



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October 8, 2021

# National Statistics

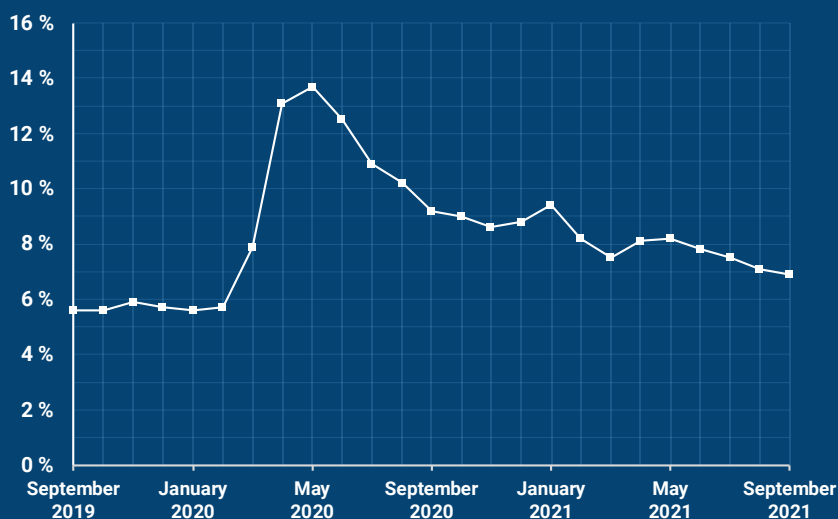
The month of September saw some of the strongest job growth figures over the past year, with more than 157,000 jobs added. While the unemployment rate only fell 0.2 percentage points from August 2021, much of the increase in employment numbers came about as a result of an influx of workers back into the labour market. As a result, the participation rate jumped by 0.4 percentage points and there were nearly 750,000 more Canadians working than during the same time last year.

Despite the positive employment figures, the unemployment rate remains stubbornly higher than the pre-pandemic era, suggesting that many Canadians continue to search for suitable employment even as the economy rebounds. Inflation has also been a concern, with real hourly wages still hovering below 2020 levels, indicating that rising prices have helped to erode the purchasing power of many Canadians.

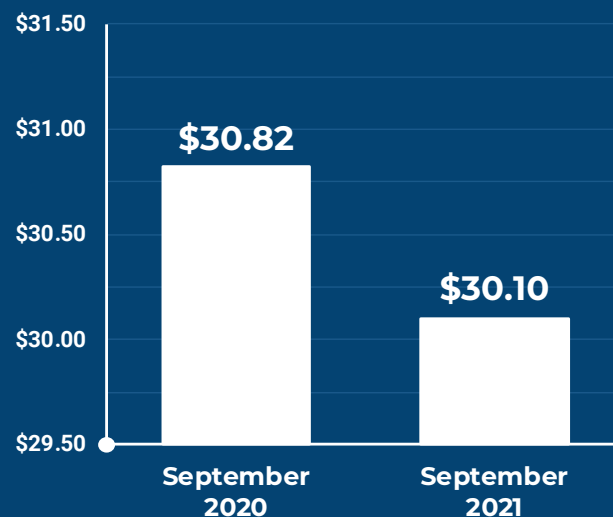
	September average 2015–19	Sep. 2020	Sep. 2021	Sep. 2020–21 Change	Aug.–Sep. 2021 Change
Total employment (#) <sup>1</sup>	18,366,220	18,388,500	19,131,200	742,700 4.0%	157,100 0.8%
Unemployment rate (%) <sup>2</sup>	6.4	9.2	6.9	-2.3 p.p.	-0.2 p.p.
Participation rate (%) <sup>3</sup>	65.5	65.1	65.5	0.4 p.p.	0.4 p.p.
Union coverage (%) <sup>4</sup>	30.7	31.6	30.7	-0.9 p.p.	1.2 p.p.
Average hourly wage (\$) <sup>5</sup>	\$27.73	\$30.82	\$30.10	-2.3%	1.2%
Average weekly hours (hrs.) <sup>6</sup>	35.4	35.3	35.4	0.3%	-1.7%

\*p.p. refers to percentage points.

## Unemployment Rate



## Average Hourly Wage



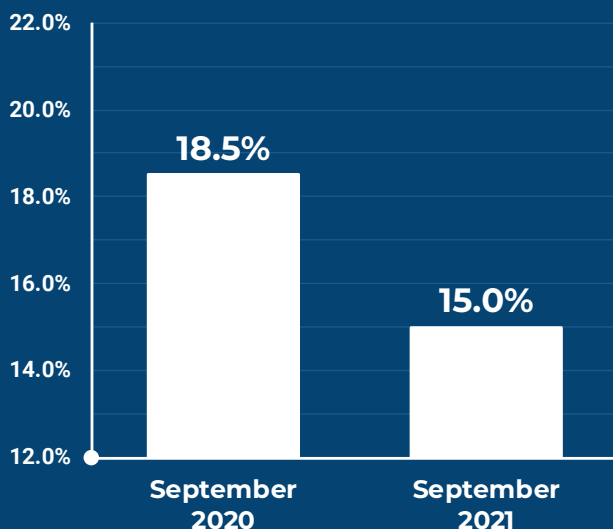
# National Precarity Indicators

The positive trends in headline labour market numbers were also reflected in our precarity indicators, with the underemployment rate seeing one of its largest year-over-year declines in 2021 (-3.5 p.p.). Decreases were also seen in the underutilization rate, the percentage of involuntary part-time workers and the proportion of workers earning low wages. Notably, there were nearly 100,000 fewer youths between the ages of 15 and 29 that are not in employment, education or training (NEET), a 21% decline from September 2020.

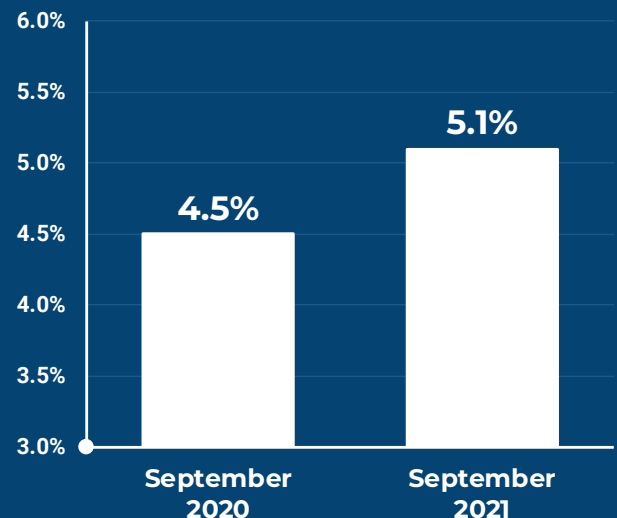
However, the proportion of workers who are being forced to work multiple jobs and temporary contracts to make ends meet continues to be higher than last year, indicating that job quality and security have fallen as employment numbers recover. In short, many of the jobs being generated in the labour market continue to be precarious in nature.

	Sep. 2020	Sep. 2021	Sep. 2020–21 Change (p.p.)	Aug.–Sep. 2021 Change (p.p.)
Part-time rate (%) <sup>7</sup>	18.8	18.6	-0.2	1.5
Involuntary part-time (%) <sup>8</sup>	46.6	40.0	-6.6	-8.5
Underutilization (R8) rate (%) <sup>9</sup>	11.3	8.3	-3.0	-1.9
Underemployment rate (%) <sup>10</sup>	18.5	15.0	-3.5	-2.2
Multiple job holders (%) <sup>11</sup>	4.5	5.1	0.6	0.2
Temporary job holders (%) <sup>12</sup>	11.9	12.2	0.3	-1.4
<i>Casual/other (%)</i>	3.1	3.0	-0.1	-0.3
<i>Temporary/contract (%)</i>	6.5	6.9	0.4	0.0
<i>Seasonal (%)</i>	2.3	2.3	0.0	-1.1
Low wage incidence (%) <sup>13</sup>	20.8	19.8	-1.0	0.9
Gender pay gap <sup>14</sup>	\$3.39	\$3.56	5.0%	-0.7%
NEETs (x1,000) <sup>15</sup>	880.0	697.0	-20.8%	-59.3%

## Underemployment Rate



## Multiple Job Holders



# Regional Statistics

Consistent with trends seen in August, Ontario and the Prairies led the five regions in employment growth, with Ontario adding 73,600 jobs (+1.0%) while the Prairies added another 32,700 jobs (+0.9%). In stark contrast to the previous month, Quebec experienced a significant increase in employment of 31,200 (+0.7%). The Atlantic and B.C. regions also posted strong employment growth of +0.7% and +0.5%, respectively.

In the case of the Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario and Prairies regions, employment growth was primarily reflected in significant participation rate increases, which may indicate that many workers who were inactive or on leave due to the pandemic have been able to return directly to their jobs as economic conditions improve. B.C. was an exception to this trend, with the participation rate unchanged from the month of August, while the unemployment rate declined by 0.3 percentage points.

In general, however, real wages continue to be a cause for concern, with average hourly wages 5% lower in the Prairies and 3% lower in Ontario compared to September 2020. Although wages have trended upwards over the past few months, wage growth will need to accelerate to keep up with recent increases in the consumer price index (CPI).





# Regional Statistics Continued

## Atlantic

	Sep. 2020	Sep. 2021	Sep. 2020–21 Change	Aug.–Sep. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	1,095,800	1,128,400	32,600 3.0%	7,300 0.7%
Unemployment rate (%)	10.7	9.7	-1.0	0.3
Participation rate (%)	60.1	60.7	0.7	0.5
Union coverage (%)	32.2	32.4	0.2	2.0
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$26.71	\$26.28	-1.6%	1.5%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	36.8	36.8	0.0%	-1.4%



## Quebec

	Sep. 2020	Sep. 2021	Sep. 2020–21 Change	Aug.–Sep. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	4,223,300	4,319,300	96,000 2.3%	31,200 0.7%
Unemployment rate (%)	7.5	5.7	-1.8	-0.1
Participation rate (%)	64.6	64.5	-0.2	0.4
Union coverage (%)	39.7	40.2	0.5	1.8
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$29.57	\$29.02	-1.9%	0.9%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	34.8	35.1	0.9%	-2.2%



## Ontario

	Sep. 2020	Sep. 2021	Sep. 2020–21 Change	Aug.–Sep. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	7,168,900	7,499,700	330,800 4.6%	73,600 1.0%
Unemployment rate (%)	9.6	7.3	-2.3	-0.3
Participation rate (%)	64.7	65.4	0.7	0.4
Union coverage (%)	27.5	26.4	-1.1	1.7
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$31.82	\$30.87	-3.0%	1.7%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	35.7	35.9	0.5%	-0.6%



# Regional Statistics Continued

## Prairies

	Sep. 2020	Sep. 2021	Sep. 2020-21 Change	Aug.-Sep. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	3,371,800	3,501,900	130,100 3.9%	32,700 0.9%
Unemployment rate (%)	10.3	7.4	-3.0	0.0
Participation rate (%)	69.0	68.8	-0.2	0.6
Union coverage (%)	29.3	27.9	-1.4	0.0
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$32.28	\$30.66	-5.0%	0.9%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	36.3	36.6	0.7%	-1.0%



## British Columbia

	Sep. 2020	Sep. 2021	Sep. 2020-21 Change	Aug.-Sep. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	2,528,800	2,681,900	153,100 6.1%	12,300 0.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	8.6	5.9	-2.7	-0.3
Participation rate (%)	64.2	65.3	1.1	0.0
Union coverage (%)	31.7	29.5	-2.2	0.1
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$31.09	\$30.74	-1.1%	1.0%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	34.7	34.9	0.5%	-0.9%



# Average Wages and Employment Gains/Losses by Industry

Troubles with wage growth continue to show up in a large number of industries, with retail trade being one of the most prominent frontline sectors experiencing a sharp decline in real wages year-over-year (-6.3%), despite recovering a significant proportion of jobs lost during the pandemic. While declines in manufacturing, construction and mining, oil and gas were less severe, the combination of inflation and jobs growth concentrated in lower paying positions has similarly impacted traditionally blue collar sectors. Meanwhile, wage restraint imposed on the public sector has meant that wages in educational services, health care and social assistance, and public administration are falling behind. Out of the 21 industries in the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), only four saw higher real wages last month compared to September 2020.

On the jobs front, however, the vast majority of industries experienced significant employment growth year-over-year. One of the most notable exceptions was durables manufacturing (-28,133), which reflects the layoffs that have occurred as semiconductor chip shortages and global supply chain disruptions force numerous assembly lines across the country to grind to a halt.

## Average Hourly Wages by Industry

Industry	Sep. 2021	Sep. 2020–2021 Change
Agriculture	\$21.14	-2.9%
Forestry	\$31.36	6.1%
Fishing, hunting, and trapping	\$21.68	-4.2%
Mining, oil, and gas	\$43.71	-4.9%
Utilities	\$47.31	5.2%
Construction	\$31.43	-3.4%
Manufacturing - durables	\$30.06	-2.6%
Manufacturing non-durables	\$28.22	-1.2%
Wholesale Trade	\$30.30	-1.7%
Retail Trade	\$20.50	-6.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	\$29.91	1.7%
Finance and Insurance	\$38.02	1.1%
Real Estate and rental and leasing	\$27.22	-6.5%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	\$37.56	-3.6%
Business, building and other support	\$23.35	-6.2%
Educational Services	\$35.59	-4.8%
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$29.44	-4.3%
Information, Culture and Recreation	\$30.16	-2.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	\$17.39	-2.6%
Other Services	\$26.89	-4.4%
Public Administration	\$39.09	-3.0%

# Average Wages and Employment Gains/Losses by Industry Continued

Employment Change by Industry, Sep. 2020 to Sep. 2021

Agriculture	-35,912	
Forestry		4,036
Fishing, hunting, and trapping	-3,338	
Mining, oil, and gas		30,830
Utilities	-7,175	
Construction		52,153
Manufacturing - durables	-28,133	
Manufacturing non-durables		36,290
Wholesale Trade		24,416
Retail Trade		54,440
Transportation and Warehousing		55,656
Finance and Insurance		44,517
Real Estate and rental and leasing		22,074
Professional, Scientific, Technical Services		150,086
Business, building and other support		18,701
Educational Services		66,095
Health Care and Social Assistance		88,947
Information, Culture and Recreation		28,357
Accommodation and Food Services	-244	
Other Services	-50,540	
Public Administration		99,430





# 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 Canadians 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 Canadians 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 adjusted for inflation and is expressed in current dollars.
6. The average weekly hours measure is calculated by averaging usual weekly hours worked at main jobs per individual.
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 Canadians 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 Canadians aged 15 to 29 who are currently not in employment, education or training.





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