

UNIFOR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS

A monthly review of labour market indicators

April 2021



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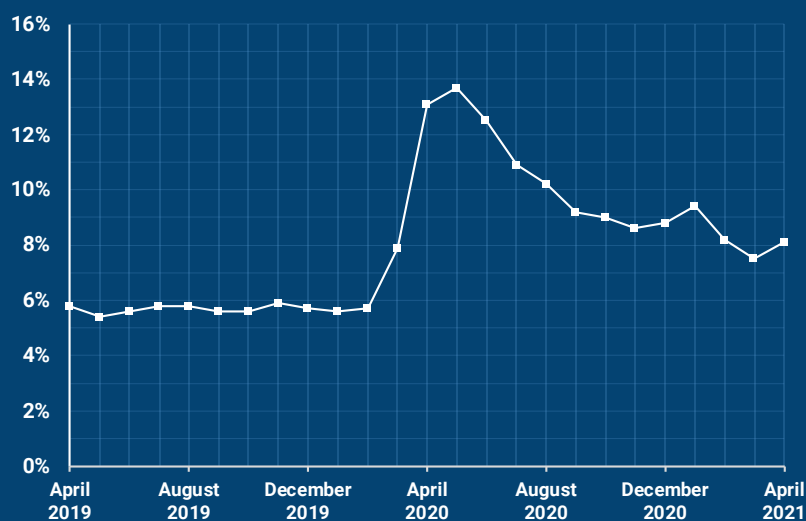
National Statistics

After seeing a promising job recovery in March, the Canadian labour market was again gripped by significant job losses caused by the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Employment fell by 207,000 (-1.1%) in April while the unemployment rate increased yet again to 8.1%. Most of these job losses were in three private sector industries (retail trade; accommodation and food services; information, culture and recreation) that continue to take the brunt of pandemic-induced lockdowns (see p. 7-8). Year-over-year, the labour market is in a much better position than when the pandemic first hit, with nearly 2.5 million jobs having returned to the labour market since April 2020. However, adjusted for inflation, wages are 4.5% lower now than at the same time last year and average weekly hours have increased. Meanwhile, the rate of union coverage has fallen, suggesting that the jobs recovery has been predominantly localized in non-unionized segments of the labour market.

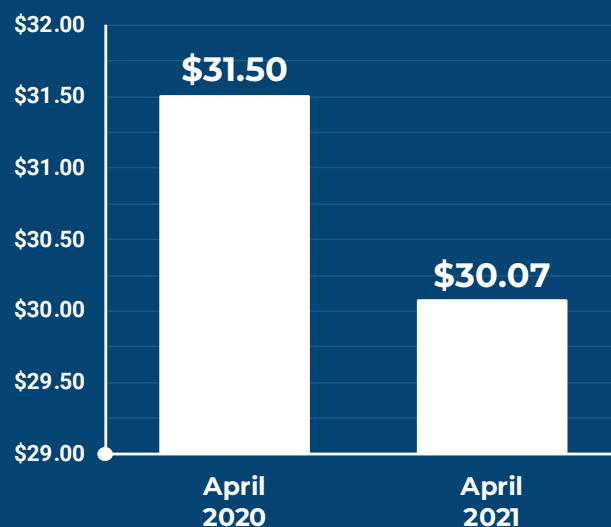
	5-year April avg. 2015–19	April 2020	April 2021	April 2020–21 Change	March–April 2021 Change
Total employment (#) ¹	18,254,100	16,141,600	18,627,200	2,485,600 15.4%	-207,100 -1.1%
Unemployment rate (%) ²	6.5	13.1	8.1	-5.0 p.p.	0.6 p.p.
Participation rate (%) ³	65.6	60.0	64.9	4.9 p.p.	-0.3 p.p.
Union coverage (%) ⁴	30.7	33.7	31.5	-2.2 p.p.	0.0 p.p.
Average hourly wage (\$) ⁵	\$27.64	\$31.50	\$30.07	-4.5%	0.6%
Average weekly hours (hrs.) ⁶	35.0	35.9	35.3	-1.7%	0.6%

*p.p. refers to percentage points.

Unemployment Rate



Average Hourly Wage



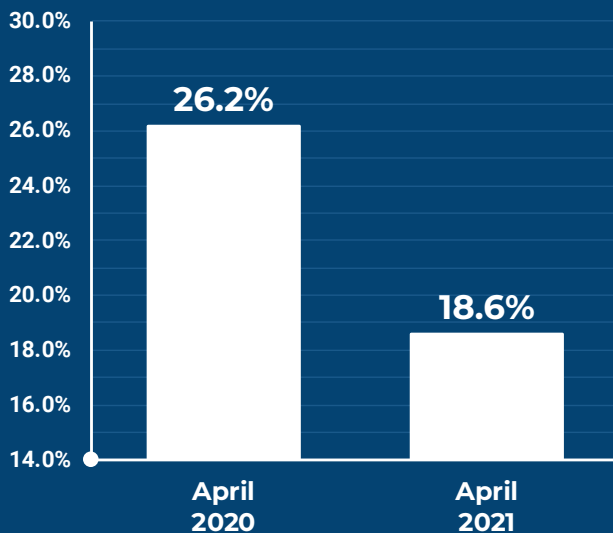
National Precarity Indicators

Most precarity indicators show worsening conditions for workers at the bottom end of the labour market, with the involuntary part-time, underutilization and underemployment rates all having increased from last month. While those holding multiple jobs decreased as a proportion of the employed, this figure is significantly higher (+1.3 p.p.) than April 2020.

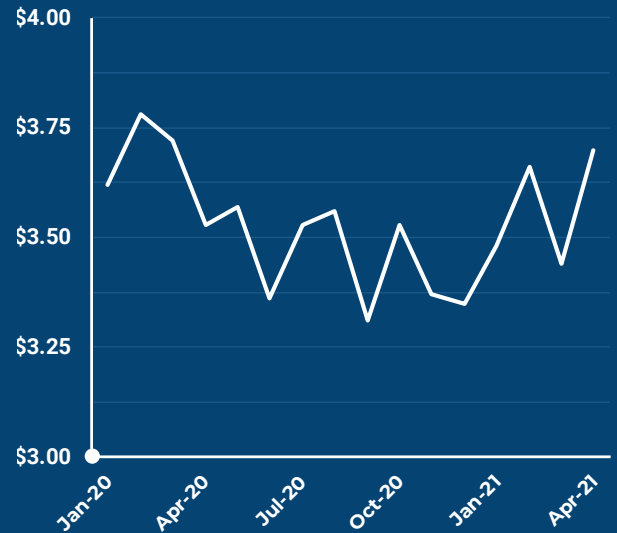
Perhaps most significantly, there has been a marked increase in the gender pay gap, both year over year and from March to April 2021. What this suggests is that women's average wages, which briefly appeared to catch up during the pandemic, have yet again started to fall behind those of men, with women being disproportionately concentrated in the kind of lower waged employment that has been sporadically recovering over the past few months.

	Apr. 2020	Apr. 2021	April 2020–21 Change (p.p.)	Mar.–Apr. 2021 Change (p.p.)
Part-time rate (%) ⁷	16.1	18.6	2.5	-0.5
Involuntary part-time (%) ⁸	48.5	46.5	-2.0	1.6
Underutilization (R8) rate (%) ⁹	18.0	11.7	-6.3	0.3
Underemployment rate (%) ¹⁰	26.2	18.6	-7.6	0.6
Multiple job holders (%) ¹¹	3.6	4.9	1.3	-0.3
Temporary job holders (%) ¹²	10.0	11.4	1.4	0.2
<i>Casual/other (%)</i>	2.9	3.1	0.2	-0.1
<i>Temporary/contract (%)</i>	6.2	7.0	0.8	0.1
<i>Seasonal (%)</i>	1.0	1.4	0.4	0.3
Low wage incidence (%) ¹³	22.0	19.8	-2.2	-0.6
Gender pay gap ¹⁴	\$3.57	\$3.70	3.6%	7.6%
NEETs (x1,000) ¹⁵	1,642.8	839.0	-48.9%	4.3%

Underemployment Rate



Gender Pay Gap



Regional Statistics

Across Canada, there were diverging labour market outcomes depending on the extent to which each region was affected by the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ontario was the focal point for some of the highest infection rates in the country, forcing the government to institute stronger lockdown measures. As expected, the bulk of the employment losses in April were seen there, with a decline of -152,700 (-2.1%) and an increase in the unemployment rate to 9.0%, the second highest in Canada.

The B.C. region saw the second highest employment losses at -43,100 (-1.6%) with the unemployment rate rising to 7.1%. Meanwhile, Quebec, which had maintained most of its public health measures between the second and third waves of the pandemic, experienced a marginal decline in employment of -13,300 (-0.3%) and saw its unemployment rate increase by just 0.2 percentage points to 6.6%, the lowest in Canada.

In the Atlantic region, there was a marginal increase in employment of 0.2% while the unemployment rate declined slightly to 9.4% while the employment figures in the Prairies region were virtually unchanged from the previous month. Across all regions, the labour market fared much better last month when compared to April 2020, although union coverage rates and average wages were down across the board.



Regional Statistics Continued

Atlantic

	April 2020	April 2021	Apr. 2020–21 Change	Mar.–Apr. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	966,700	1,127,800	161,100 16.7%	1,700 0.2%
Unemployment rate (%)	13.3	9.4	-3.9	-0.1
Participation rate (%)	54.8	60.9	6.1	0.0
Union coverage (%)	35.7	32.7	-3.0	-0.6
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$27.38	\$25.97	-5.2%	0.5%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	37.0	36.1	-2.4%	0.2%



Quebec

	April 2020	April 2021	Apr. 2020–21 Change	Mar.–Apr. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	3,527,400	4,227,300	699,900 19.8%	-13,300 -0.3%
Unemployment rate (%)	17.6	6.6	-11.1	0.2
Participation rate (%)	60.8	63.8	3.0	-0.1
Union coverage (%)	42.5	40.6	-1.9	0.6
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$29.85	\$28.61	-4.2%	1.2%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	35.6	35.0	-1.5%	1.3%



Ontario

	April 2020	April 2021	Apr. 2020–21 Change	Mar.–Apr. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	6,409,900	7,215,400	805,500 12.6%	-152,700 -2.1%
Unemployment rate (%)	11.3	9.0	-2.2	1.5
Participation rate (%)	59.2	64.4	5.2	-0.3
Union coverage (%)	28.6	27.6	-1.0	-1.5
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$32.36	\$31.06	-4.0%	0.4%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	36.2	35.7	-1.4%	0.8%



Regional Statistics Continued

Prairies

	April 2020	April 2021	Apr. 2020–21 Change	Mar.–Apr. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	3,006,700	3,438,600	431,900 14.4%	100 0.0%
Unemployment rate (%)	12.7	8.3	-4.4	-0.1
Participation rate (%)	63.3	68.5	5.1	-0.1
Union coverage (%)	32.6	28.6	-4.0	0.0
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$33.29	\$30.94	-7.1%	-0.9%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	37.0	36.3	-2.0%	0.3%



British Columbia

	April 2020	April 2021	Apr. 2020–21 Change	Mar.–Apr. 2021 Change
Total employment (#)	2,230,700	2,618,100	387,400 17.4%	-43,100 -1.6%
Unemployment rate (%)	11.5	7.1	-4.5	0.1
Participation rate (%)	58.8	65.1	6.3	-1.0
Union coverage (%)	34.2	30.5	-3.7	0.0
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$31.86	\$30.51	-4.2%	0.8%
Average weekly hours (hrs.)	35.9	34.8	-3.0%	0.6%



Average Wages and Employment Gains/Losses by Industry

Comparisons with April 2020 show a sharp decline in real wages, with many industries experiencing wage decreases at or above 5%. The manufacturing sector was particularly hard hit, with average wage declines of more than 7%, while retail and wholesale trade both saw wage declines nearing 5% year over year. Mining, oil and gas; utilities; and construction fared somewhat better with wage decreases in the 2-3% range. Consistent with previous months' trends, the finance and insurance and real estate and rental and leasing industries saw notable wage increases, in line with the continuing strength of the housing and financial markets.

Our employment change by industry figures (p. 8) continue to use February 2020 as a baseline month. After having shown a strong recovery in March, the retail trade industry took a step back in April to -96,369. Likewise, the accommodation and food services industry saw a marginal recovery in March but employment losses mounted again in April. The employment decline in the

accommodation and food services industry (-340,855) accounts for approximately 70% of all jobs lost since the start of the pandemic. Meanwhile, the non-durables manufacturing industry continues to post impressive employment gains, increasing from +11,294 jobs in March to +25,698 in April.

Average Hourly Wages by Industry

Industry	April 2021	April 2020–21 Change
Agriculture	\$20.97	1.9%
Forestry	\$32.48	3.3%
Fishing, hunting, and trapping	\$20.04	-15.5%
Mining, oil, and gas	\$44.66	-2.7%
Utilities	\$45.27	-3.2%
Construction	\$31.78	-2.3%
Manufacturing - durables	\$29.59	-7.7%
Manufacturing non-durables	\$27.40	-7.4%
Wholesale Trade	\$29.22	-4.7%
Retail Trade	\$20.83	-4.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	\$29.68	-0.5%
Finance and Insurance	\$37.19	3.4%
Real Estate and rental and leasing	\$28.72	4.6%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	\$36.66	-6.7%
Business, building and other support	\$22.72	-3.1%
Educational Services	\$35.73	-4.9%
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$29.23	-4.0%
Information, Culture and Recreation	\$32.31	-0.3%
Accommodation and Food Services	\$17.19	-3.8%
Other Services	\$26.25	-5.7%
Public Administration	\$40.06	-3.7%

Average Wages and Employment Gains/Losses by Industry Continued

Employment Change by Industry, February 2020 to April 2021

Agriculture	-18,202	
Forestry		9,632
Fishing, hunting, and trapping		3,350
Mining, oil, and gas	-7,698	
Utilities		4,388
Construction		2,117
Manufacturing - durables		3,897
Manufacturing non-durables		25,698
Wholesale Trade	-15,504	
Retail Trade	-96,369	
Transportation and Warehousing	-72,421	
Finance and Insurance		41,668
Real Estate and rental and leasing		7,362
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services		91,003
Business, building and other support	-62,565	
Educational Services		25,589
Health Care and Social Assistance		18,491
Information, Culture and Recreation	-89,646	
Accommodation and Food Services	-340,855	
Other Services	-57,021	
Public Administration		37,110



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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