



# Labour Market Bulletin

British Columbia

July 2022



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of British Columbia (B.C.), including the regions of Northern B.C., Vancouver Island and Coast, Lower Mainland, Thompson–Okanagan and the Kootenays.

## OVERVIEW

Employment in British Columbia remained relatively unchanged in July, weighed down by rising inflation, labour shortages and increasing fears of a recession. Month-over-month employment in the province remained virtually unchanged, gaining only 500 jobs. This slow down in job growth signals an end to the nearly yearlong steady climb in employment.

Gains were exclusively in full-time employment (0.7% or 14,900 positions), which offset losses in part-time employment (-2.5% or 14,300 positions). Meanwhile, the province's unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage points from the previous month to 4.7%, still below the national average.

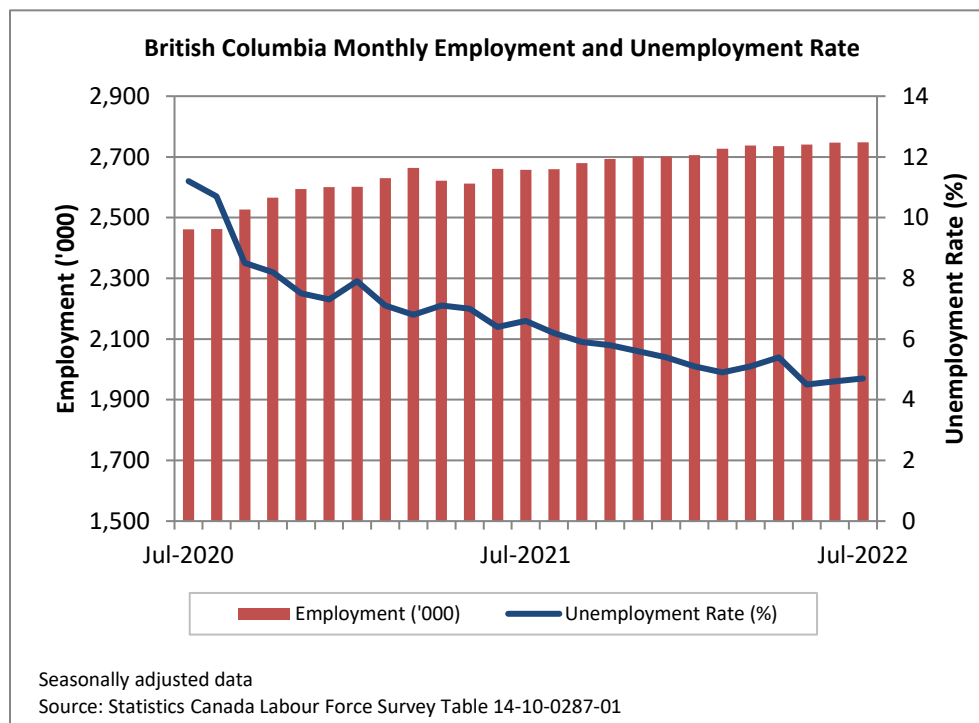
British Columbia's economy, much like the nation's, is still facing a myriad of challenges in many sectors. Labour shortages continue to weigh on sectors across the provincial economy. The rising costs of inputs associated with high inflation are negatively affecting many industries. Labour disputes are increasing as workers demand wage growth in line with inflation. The rate of consumer inflation rose to 8.1% in June, the highest gain in nearly 40 years.<sup>1</sup> Despite these challenges, year-over-year job growth in the province remained positive in all but one of British Columbia's economic regions.

**British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics**

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	July 2022	June 2022	July 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Population 15 + ('000)</b>	4,430.1	4,426.1	4,347.4	4.0	0.1	82.7	1.9
<b>Labour Force ('000)</b>	2,884.3	2,879.2	2,844.6	5.1	0.2	39.7	1.4
<b>Employment ('000)</b>	2,747.5	2,747.0	2,657.2	0.5	0.0	90.3	3.4
Full-Time ('000)	2,194.5	2,179.6	2,060.0	14.9	0.7	134.5	6.5
Part-Time ('000)	553.1	567.4	597.2	-14.3	-2.5	-44.1	-7.4
<b>Unemployment ('000)</b>	136.8	132.2	187.3	4.6	3.5	-50.5	-27.0
<b>Unemployment Rate (%)</b>	4.7	4.6	6.6	0.1	-	-1.9	-
<b>Participation Rate (%)</b>	65.1	65.1	65.4	0.0	-	-0.3	-
<b>Employment Rate (%)</b>	62.0	62.1	61.1	-0.1	-	0.9	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287, formerly CANSIM 282-0087



The youth unemployment rate increased 0.7 percentage points from the previous month and decreased 2.4 percentage points year-over-year. Month-over-month, the unemployment rate for women in the 15-24 demographic increased 0.9 percentage points while the rate was up 0.6 percentage points for men 15-24. Year-over-year, unemployment dropped 4.5 percentage points for women and 0.3 points for men. The large decrease in the unemployment rate for women over the year signals a return to normalcy post-pandemic as this demographic was particularly affected by layoffs at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## British Columbia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	July 2022 (%)	June 2022 (%)	July 2021 (%)	Monthly Variation (% points)	Yearly Variation (% points)
<b>Total</b>	4.7	4.6	6.6	0.1	-1.9
<b>25 years and over</b>	4.2	4.1	5.9	0.1	-1.7
Men - 25 years and over	4.1	4.0	6.3	0.1	-2.2
Women - 25 years and over	4.3	4.3	5.5	0.0	-1.2
<b>15 to 24 years</b>	8.2	7.5	10.6	0.7	-2.4
Men - 15 to 24 years	9.7	9.1	10.0	0.6	-0.3
Women - 15 to 24 years	6.8	5.9	11.3	0.9	-4.5

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0287, formerly CANSIM 282-0087

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Though employment growth was negligible month-over-month (500), year-over-year employment growth was positive at 3.4% (90,300). Monthly employment fell in the **goods producing sector** by 2,000 (-0.4%) while rising slightly in the **services producing sector** (2,500 or 0.1%).

## British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	July 2022	June 2022	July 2021	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
<b>Total employed, all industries</b>	2,747.5	2,747.0	2,657.2	0.5	0.0	90.3	3.4
<b>Goods-producing sector</b>	500.5	502.5	462.8	-2.0	-0.4	37.7	8.1
Agriculture	27.7	28.5	19.3	-0.8	-2.8	8.4	43.5
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	48.9	46.5	49.3	2.4	5.2	-0.4	-0.8
Utilities	16.2	15.4	18.3	0.8	5.2	-2.1	-11.5
Construction	234.1	229.5	210.2	4.6	2.0	23.9	11.4
Manufacturing	173.6	182.5	165.7	-8.9	-4.9	7.9	4.8
<b>Services-producing sector</b>	2,247.0	2,244.5	2,194.4	2.5	0.1	52.6	2.4
Trade	427.6	429.1	395.9	-1.5	-0.3	31.7	8.0
Transportation and warehousing	141.0	141.2	138.9	-0.2	-0.1	2.1	1.5
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	160.8	157.5	173.3	3.3	2.1	-12.5	-7.2
Professional, scientific and technical services	262.7	262.2	263.3	0.5	0.2	-0.6	-0.2
Business, building and other support services	102.6	102.3	120.1	0.3	0.3	-17.5	-14.6
Educational services	201.8	199.2	188.6	2.6	1.3	13.2	7.0
Health care and social assistance	375.0	384.3	364.6	-9.3	-2.4	10.4	2.9
Information, culture and recreation	152.9	140.7	122.3	12.2	8.7	30.6	25.0
Accommodation and food services	176.2	178.3	178.3	-2.1	-1.2	-2.1	-1.2
Other services	107.9	110.2	113.9	-2.3	-2.1	-6.0	-5.3
Public administration	138.5	139.6	135.3	-1.1	-0.8	3.2	2.4

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0355, formerly CANSIM 282-0088

Employment in the province's **goods-producing sector** fell by 0.4% (-2000) in July. Job growth across certain sub-sectors was all but erased by a 4.9% (-8,900) loss in **manufacturing**. **Construction** gained the most workers at 4,600 (2.0%) followed by **forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas** (2,400 or 5.2%).

Employment in British Columbia's **agriculture** sector declined by 2.8% or 800 jobs month-over-month, while compared to the same time in 2021 it employs around 8,400 (43.5%) more workers. The sector continues to adapt to the changing realities of the province's climate. Farmers are experiencing later harvests because of cooler weather earlier in the season. Corn harvests in the Fraser valley have been delayed and some farmers are reporting up to a 20% reduction in crop this year.<sup>2</sup> The Government of B.C. is implementing new supports for farmers to aid with unpredictable climate conditions. The Extreme Weather Preparedness for Agriculture program will provide \$35,000 in funding to eligible projects that address climate-change preparedness and resilience to wildfires, flooding and extreme heat.<sup>3</sup> The Government is also adding \$4.4M in funding to its Beneficial Management Practices program to address drought resilience and greenhouse gas reduction projects.<sup>4</sup>

Employment in the province's **construction** industry continued to grow on a monthly basis in July (4,600 or 2.0%) and increased 23,900 jobs or 11.4% year over year. Housing activity in the province rebounded in June from a dip in May with the number of housing starts up 36.7% month-over-month; year-over-year housing starts decreased 14.5%, however.<sup>5</sup> Looking ahead, according to June 2022 data, the number of building permits issued in the province remained flat compared to May while permits are down 11.6% year-over-year.<sup>6</sup>

Employment in the province's **services-producing sector** was unchanged over the month (2,500 positions or 0.1%) but was still up over the year (52,600 or 2.4%). Gains within the sector were driven by monthly employment boosts in **finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing** (2.1%), **educational services** (1.3%), and **business, building and other support services** (0.3%). However, employment gains in these sectors were offset by losses in **health care and social assistance** (-2.4%), **other services** (-2.1%) and **accommodation and food services** (-1.2%).

Employment in **health care and social assistance** decreased in July (-2.4% or 9,300 positions), although the industry still employs approximately 10,400 (2.9%) more workers now than at the same time a year ago. The industry has been struggling with worker shortages and employee burnout following over two years of stress brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses especially are in high demand but workers in this occupation are seeking better compensation and better working conditions.<sup>7</sup> As a result of shortages, hospitals and healthcare facilities, especially in rural areas, continue to implement temporary closures of certain departments.<sup>8</sup>

Employment in the province's **transportation and warehousing** industry remained flat over the previous month (-200 or -0.1%) but was still up over the year (2,100 or 1.5%). The province's transportation industry continues to face challenges of staff shortages and logistical issues. Canada's airline industry is still suffering staffing shortages and has been subject to a myriad of delays and cancellations.<sup>9</sup> Despite these delays, passenger traffic at Vancouver International Airport surged to over two million passengers in July, the highest seen since December 2019.<sup>10</sup> In marine transportation, BC Ferries cancelled a number of sailings throughout July due to staffing availability issues.<sup>11</sup>

Though employment in the **accommodation and food service** industry has largely recovered since the April 2020 low driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, employment was down 2,100 (-1.2%) compared to both the previous month and the same time in 2021. Many businesses in the industry face a shortage of workers, and many accommodation and food service workers have shifted to other sectors in search of better wages and working conditions.<sup>12</sup> Increasing costs of inputs and business expenses have caused some businesses in the sector to close, while rising rents in Metro Vancouver's commercial real estate sector have put pressure on profitability.<sup>13</sup>

## REGIONAL ANALYSIS

While overall month-to-month employment in British Columbia remained flat, there was year-over-year improvement in the majority of British Columbia's economic regions. Job growth remained strong, especially in B.C.'s metropolitan regions. The unemployment rate declined in all of the province's economic regions except for the **Cariboo**. The largest improvements were reported in the **North Coast and Nechako** (-4.2 percentage points), **Kootenay** (-2.8) and **Lower Mainland and Southwest** (-2.5) economic regions.

Please note that the statistics for the economic regions are not seasonally adjusted and should only be compared on a year-over-year basis. Employment is sometimes influenced by seasonal and calendar effects occurring at the same time and with the same magnitude every year, which can bring about changes in the data that make monthly comparisons difficult.

**British Columbia Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region**

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	July 2022 ('000)	July 2021 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	July 2022 (%)	July 2021 (%)	Yearly Variation (%)
<b>British Columbia</b>	2,776.6	2,668.5	4.1	4.7	6.6	-1.9
<b>Economic Regions</b>						
Vancouver Island and Coast	440.0	412.7	6.6	3.7	5.0	-1.3
Lower Mainland - Southwest	1,771.8	1,712.7	3.5	4.8	7.4	-2.6
Thompson - Okanagan	314.5	293.4	7.2	5.0	5.1	-0.1
Kootenay	83.1	81.8	1.6	3.9	5.8	-1.9
Cariboo	90.3	88.2	2.4	6.3	6.0	0.3
North Coast and Nechako	39.7	43.1	-7.9	4.6	7.9	-3.3
Northeast	37.1	36.6	1.4	4.4	0.0	4.4

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0387, formerly CANSIM 282-0122

The **Vancouver Island and Coast** economic region continues its recovery from the pandemic. Employment in the region rose 27,300 (6.6%) this month over the same time last year, while the unemployment rate declined 1.4 percentage points to 3.7% over the same period. The future of open net fishing continues to be an important subject for this region. The Government of Canada announced its intention to move away from open net fishing of salmon and develop a framework for this process.<sup>14</sup> In late July, the Government released its proposed framework and engagement approach for discussions with industry stakeholders, Indigenous peoples and the provincial government on the future of the industry.<sup>15</sup>

Employment in the **Lower Mainland – Southwest** region continued to rise. Year-over-year, more than 59,100 jobs (3.5%) were added in the region, and the unemployment rate declined 2.5 percentage points to 4.8%. Hiring remained strong with a number of companies across a variety of sectors seeking to fill positions.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Metro Vancouver's transit operator, Translink, is hiring for a number of jobs as ridership approaches pre-pandemic levels.<sup>17</sup> As well, Gateway Casinos & Entertainment is opening their new Cascades Casino Delta this fall, which will require around 600 new positions to be filled.<sup>18</sup>

The province's largest annual percentage increase in employment was in the **Thompson – Okanagan** economic region. Employment rose 21,100 (7.2%) over the year, while the unemployment rate improved by 0.4 percentage

points to 5.0%. The region has benefitted from a relatively quiet wildfire season so far compared to 2021. As such, tourism numbers in the region have rebounded above 2020 and 2021 figures, though they remain below 2019 levels.<sup>19</sup> To support these increasing numbers of visitors, Kelowna International Airport will launch a significant expansion in 2023.<sup>20</sup> To support this expansion, the Government of B.C. has committed \$500,000 in funding from its mass timber demonstration program for the new terminal wing.<sup>21</sup>

Year-over-year employment was up 1,300 (1.6%) in the **Kootenay** region. With these gains, the region's unemployment rate was down 2.8 percentage points to 3.9%. Supporting these employment gains, the Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital opened its new upgraded pharmacy and oncology department and an updated physiotherapy department at a cost of \$38.8M. As well, the Teck Trail zinc and lead smelting and refining complex is undertaking a three-month maintenance shutdown that will see upwards of 800 workers on site performing work.<sup>22</sup>

Year-over-year employment was up 2,100 (2.4%) in the **Cariboo** region, while the unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage points to 6.3%. The B.C. Summer Games returned for the first time in three years, supporting the information, culture and recreation sector in the host city of Prince George.<sup>23</sup>

Employment in the **Northeast** region grew slightly year-over-year in July (500 or 1.4%), while the unemployment rate decreased 0.4 percentage points to 4.4%. Supporting job growth in the region, the Site C Dam project continues to move forward and employment reached a new high in June with 5,200 workers on site.<sup>24</sup> As well, the Fort Nelson First Nation have been granted a permit to move ahead with their Tu Deh-Kah Geothermal project, which is anticipated to create around 50 jobs for the community.<sup>25</sup>

Employment in the **North Coast and Nechako** region dropped 3,400 (-7.9%) compared to July 2021. However, the unemployment rate fell by 4.2 percentage points over the same period to 4.6%. Looking forward for the region, Seabridge Gold is spending \$150M to aid in the preparation of their KSM mining project located northwest of Stewart. Once operational the project could support up to 1,400 jobs for the area. In its current state, the project employs approximately 150 workers.<sup>26</sup>

***Note:** In preparing this document, the authors have taken care to provide clients with labour market information that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since this document was published. Users are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this document does not necessarily reflect official policies of Employment and Social Development Canada.*

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**For information on the Labour Force Survey,** please visit the Statistics Canada Web site at: [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)

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- <sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. (July 20, 2022) [Consumer Price Index, June 2022](#)
  - <sup>2</sup> CBC News. (July 13, 2022) [Corn farmers in B.C.'s Fraser Valley dealing with crop delays after unseasonably wet weather](#)
  - <sup>3</sup> Government of British Columbia. (July 15, 2022) [New program helps B.C. farmers prepare for extreme weather](#)
  - <sup>4</sup> Government of British Columbia. (July 27, 2022) [New funding supports farmers, takes action on climate resiliency](#)
  - <sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. [Table 34-10-0156-01 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing starts in all centres 10,000 and over, Canada, provinces, and census metropolitan areas, seasonally adjusted at annual rates, monthly \(x 1,000\)](#)
  - <sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. [Table 34-10-0066-01 Building permits, by type of structure and type of work \(x 1,000\)](#)
  - <sup>7</sup> Globe and Mail. (July 5, 2022) [Burnt-out Canadian nurses are shipping out for better working conditions and pay](#)
  - <sup>8</sup> CBC News. (July 13, 2022) [Rural emergency rooms are bearing the brunt of health-care shortages, B.C. doctors warn](#)
  - <sup>9</sup> CTV News. (Aug 5, 2022) [MPs on House transport committee call for study into airport delays and flight cancellations](#)
  - <sup>10</sup> Business in Vancouver. (Aug 3, 2022) [YVR's July traffic surges past two million](#)
  - <sup>11</sup> Global News. (July 16, 2022) [BC Ferries cancels 14 Saturday sailings due to 'crew availability' issues](#)
  - <sup>12</sup> CBC News. (August 01, 2022) [After the Great Resignation, where did all the Canadian workers go?](#)
  - <sup>13</sup> CBC News. (July 22, 2022) [Rent increase forces closure of Kitsilano brunch spot after 30 years of business](#)
  - <sup>14</sup> Government of Canada. (June 22, 2022) [Government of Canada outlines next steps in transition from open-net pen salmon farming in British Columbia](#)
  - <sup>15</sup> Government of Canada. (July 29, 2022) [Government of Canada launches engagement towards a plan to transition from open-net pen salmon farming in British Columbia](#)
  - <sup>16</sup> Daily Hive. (July 28, 2022) [13 companies hiring over 131 positions in Vancouver this August](#)
  - <sup>17</sup> Daily Hive. (July 12, 2022) [TransLink is hiring for lots of well-paying jobs in Metro Vancouver](#)
  - <sup>18</sup> Daily Hive. (July 21, 2022) [Up to 600 positions available as BC's newest casino hosts virtual job fairs](#)
  - <sup>19</sup> Castanet. (July 12, 2022) [Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association pleased with tourist numbers so far](#)
  - <sup>20</sup> Daily Hive. (July 11, 2022) [Mass timber design for Kelowna International Airport expansion](#)
  - <sup>21</sup> Penticton Western News. (July 11, 2022) [Kelowna Airport lands \\$500,000 in funding for terminal expansion](#)
  - <sup>22</sup> Nelson Star. (July 14, 2022) [Teck Trail shutdown to start in August](#)
  - <sup>23</sup> Global News. (July 23, 2022) [BC Summer Games kick off in Prince George, B.C.](#)
  - <sup>24</sup> Alaska Highway News (August 3, 2022) [Site C sets record employment](#)
  - <sup>25</sup> World Oil. (July 28, 2022) [British Columbia expands testing area for Fort Nelson First Nation geothermal project](#)
  - <sup>26</sup> Business in Vancouver. (July 11, 2022) [Seabridge spending \\$150M this year prepping KSM mine](#)
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