



Labour Market Bulletin

Ontario

January 2020



This Labour Market Bulletin provides an analysis of Labour Force Survey results for the province of Ontario, including the regions of Hamilton—Niagara Peninsula, Kingston—Pembroke, Kitchener—Waterloo—Barrie, London, Muskoka—Kawartha, Northeast, Northwest, Ottawa, Stratford—Bruce Peninsula, Toronto and Windsor—Sarnia.

OVERVIEW

Labour Force Trends – The Ontario unemployment rate fell slightly in January 2020

- Employment in the province expanded by 15,900 (+0.2%) in January
- In addition, unemployment fell by 8,200 (-1.9%) over the same period
- As a result, the Ontario unemployment rate fell slightly from 5.3% to 5.2% for January

Employment in Ontario increased by 15,900 (+0.2%) from December 2019 to January 2020, to reach 7.56 million. For the first time in four months, both full-time employment (+10,000; +0.2%) and part-time employment (+6,000; +0.4%) simultaneously observed gains over the month.

In addition, unemployment in the province fell (-8,200; -1.9%) in January, falling for the second consecutive month. This resulted in the unemployment rate falling slightly from 5.3% to 5.2%. The Ontario participation rate remained flat at 65.1% over the month, while the employment rate inched up to 61.7%.

Between January 2019 and January 2020, employment in Ontario increased by 209,200 (+2.8%), with gains being observed in both full-time (+197,000; +3.3%) and part-time employment (+12,200; +0.9%). The unemployment rate fell from 5.8% to 5.2% when comparing to a year ago, while the participation rate increased by 0.2 percentage points (p.p.) during this period.

Youth employment in Ontario gained 17,200 (+1.7%) in January, as full-time youth employment climbed up strongly (+21,500; +4.2%) over the month. Correspondingly, the youth unemployment rate decreased by 1.4 percentage points to 10.2% for the month. This accompanied an increase in the youth employment rate from 54.0% to 55.0%. Between January 2019 and January 2020, estimates show stronger employment conditions for youth, with gains of 47,300 (+4.9%) over the year.

Total Canadian employment was up (+34,500; +0.2%) from December 2019 to January 2020 to reach 19.2 million, increasing for the second consecutive month. These gains were above the expectations of forecasters, with analysts having expected a gain of 17,000 positions.¹ While full-time employment (+35,700; +0.2%) observed another strong month of gains, part-time employment (-1,200; -0.03%) fell in January for the third straight month.

Ontario had the second largest employment gains in Canada in January, partly due to its larger workforce. Employment also increased in nearly all other provinces, with the sharpest employment gains observed in New Brunswick (+4,600; +1.3%) and Manitoba (+6,500; +1.0%). Alberta (-18,900; -0.8%) was the sole province to register a loss in employment in January, and has observed losses in the workforce for three consecutive months.

Across Canada, the national unemployment rate fell slightly from 5.6% to 5.5% over the month, as unemployment fell by 18,800 (-1.6%). From January 2019 to January 2020, the unemployment rate fell from 5.8% to 5.5%, as unemployment fell by 3.3% and employment gained by 1.4%.

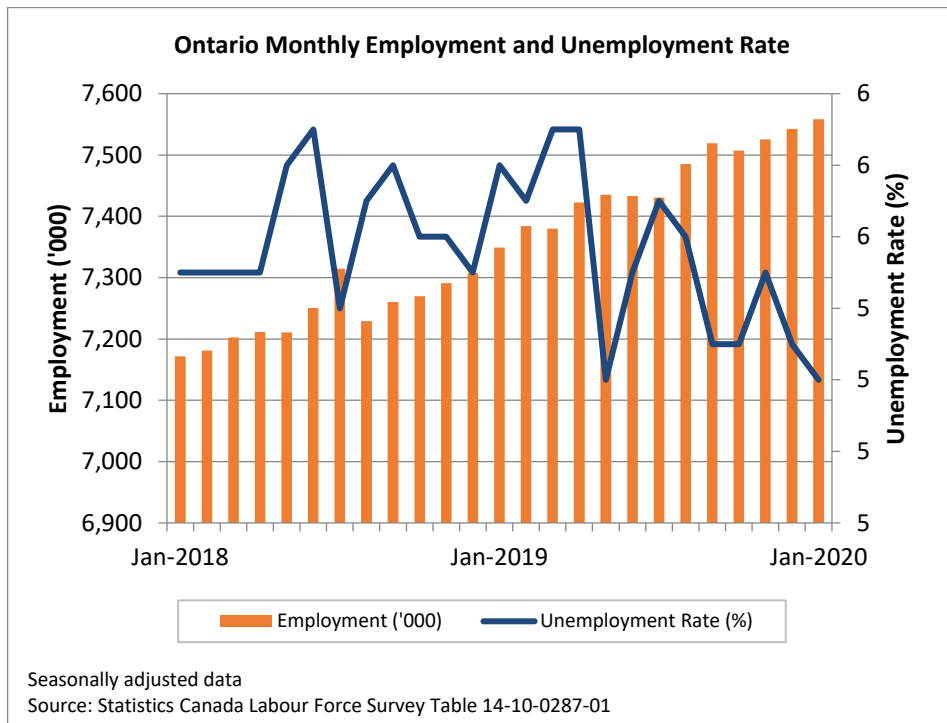
The United States (U.S.) total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 225,000 (+0.1%) in January to reach 152.2 million, while the unemployment rate ticked up slightly to 3.6%. The unemployment rate remains at historically low levels, not seen in over 50 years. The gains in employment was higher than the Wall Street forecasts of a 160,000 gain,² with the participation rate climbing by 0.2 p.p. to 63.4%, the highest level since June 2013.

Ontario Monthly Labour Force Statistics

Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Data	January 2020	December 2019	January 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Number	%	Number	%
Population 15 + ('000)	12,253.3	12,239.1	12,021.3	14.2	0.1	232.0	1.9
Labour Force ('000)	7,973.6	7,965.8	7,797.7	7.8	0.1	175.9	2.3
Employment ('000)	7,558.3	7,542.4	7,349.1	15.9	0.2	209.2	2.8
Full-Time ('000)	6,173.7	6,163.7	5,976.7	10.0	0.2	197.0	3.3
Part-Time ('000)	1,384.6	1,378.6	1,372.4	6.0	0.4	12.2	0.9
Unemployment ('000)	415.3	423.5	448.6	-8.2	-1.9	-33.3	-7.4
Unemployment Rate (%)	5.2	5.3	5.8	-0.1	-	-0.6	-
Participation Rate (%)	65.1	65.1	64.9	0.0	-	0.2	-
Employment Rate (%)	61.7	61.6	61.1	0.1	-	0.6	-

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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



Ontario Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Gender and Age

Seasonally Adjusted Data	January 2020	December 2019	January 2019	Monthly Variation	Yearly Variation
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(% points)	(% points)
Total	5.2	5.3	5.8	-0.1	-0.6
25 years and over	4.4	4.3	4.7	0.1	-0.3
Men - 25 years and over	4.2	4.2	4.8	0.0	-0.6
Women - 25 years and over	4.6	4.4	4.5	0.2	0.1
15 to 24 years	10.2	11.6	12.3	-1.4	-2.1
Men - 15 to 24 years	10.5	12.0	13.4	-1.5	-2.9
Women - 15 to 24 years	9.9	11.2	10.9	-1.3	-1.0

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

Employment jumped in the goods-producing sector with widespread gains

Employment increased in Ontario's goods-producing sector by 18,400 (+1.3%) between December 2019 and January 2020. Employment went up in all goods-producing industries with the exception of forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas (-2,500; -6.6%). The construction industry posted the largest gain (+11,400; +2.1%), followed by agriculture (+4,600; +6.1%), utilities (+2,800; +5.3%), and manufacturing (+2,000; +0.3%).

The **construction** industry saw solid employment gains in January. The total value of building permits issued increased by 5.2% in Ontario between November 2018 and November 2019, with stronger growth in the non-residential sector.³ Heavy civil and engineering construction remained active as well, with several projects underway across the province. The City of Toronto started construction on the Coxwell Bypass Tunnel in January.⁴ The project will finish in 2024, and is part of a major investment to improve water quality in the region. The Government of Ontario also announced that it would invest \$200M in small, rural and northern communities to build and repair infrastructure.⁵ Despite a drop in new housing construction in Ontario in December 2019,⁶ a number of residential projects moved forward. This included plans for a multi-tower development in London that will have 110 affordable housing units,⁷ and a large-scale mixed-use development in Mississauga that will feature residential units, a transit hub, retail and office space, and community buildings.⁸

Employment in the **manufacturing** industry increased in January, after losses over the past three months. Provincial manufacturing sales grew by 1.4% in November 2019⁹ with large gains in transportation equipment manufacturing, as companies resumed activities following the General Motors labour stoppage in the United States. The Canadian Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) inched up to 50.6 in January.¹⁰ Although overall customer demand remained soft, the results suggest that business confidence has improved, with manufacturers feeling more optimistic about the global trade picture in the coming year.

This month saw a number of expansion plans in advanced manufacturing, as well as some closure announcements. Equispheres will invest about \$50M to expand operations at its Ottawa facility;¹¹ the company produces a unique aluminum alloy powder used in additive manufacturing that has the potential to support applications in the automotive and aerospace industries. Eclipse Automation Inc. also plans to expand its workforce at its Cambridge facility, with their greatest need being workers in manufacturing-related skilled trades.¹² Meanwhile, Weston Foods announced that it would close its Maplehurst Bakeries facility in Cobourg by June 2020 affecting up to 180 jobs,¹³ and Cooper Standard announced that it would close its automotive parts plant in Halton Hills in July 2020 affecting 275 jobs.¹⁴

Employment in the **goods-producing sector** grew by 22,400 (+1.5%) between January 2019 and January 2020. The strongest annual gains were in construction (+37,400; +7.1%) and agriculture (+7,900; +11.0%). The manufacturing industry suffered the largest employment loss (-21,600; -2.8%) during this period.

Employment levels were flat in the services-producing sector in January

Employment in Ontario's services-producing sector decreased marginally by 2,500 (-0.04%) between December 2019 and January 2020. This was the sector's first monthly employment decline since August 2018. The biggest losses were in educational services (-7,700; -1.4%), while the sharpest losses were in other services such as personal and laundry services (-6,800; -2.2%) and transportation and warehousing (-4,700; -1.2%). Sizeable job gains took place in trade (+11,800; +1.1%) and professional, scientific and technical services (+10,700; +1.5%).

The **trade** industry saw a significant amount of activity over the past month. While employment and retail sales figures for November 2019¹⁵ were upbeat, the retail landscape saw multiple layoff announcements that may affect its outlook in the near-term future, as companies assessed year-end financial results.

IKEA announced that it would close its pick-up-point locations in Kitchener, London, Windsor, St. Catharines and Whitby by the end of January, affecting as many as 150 employees.¹⁶ Schurman Retail Group announced that it would close all of its Carlton Cards and Papyrus stores across North America, including 76 Canadian locations, over the next four to six weeks.¹⁷ Things Engraved also shuttered all of its 73 Canadian stores in early January, affecting close to 300 staff.¹⁸

In addition, Ten Thousand Villages, which sells handcrafted products from disadvantaged artisans, announced that it will be shutting down all its corporate operations in Canada, including eight corporate stores in Ontario, by May 2020.¹⁹ Summit Foods Distributors, a wholesale food distributor, announced the closure of two of its distribution plants, in Ottawa and London, affecting about 140 workers in total.²⁰ Finally, Pier 1 Imports, an American home furnishings retailer, announced it will be closing up to 450 stores across the United States and Canada.²¹

Despite limited job growth in January, there were some announcements in the **information, culture and recreation** industry that should bode well for future employment. The Pickering Casino Resort is set to open this April, employing more than 2,500 staff. The casino is part of the first phase of a \$2B entertainment, recreation and tourism destination called Durham Live.²² Construction started on the \$75M Starlight Casino in London, scheduled to open in 2021,²³ with the facility expected to employ about 1,000 employees when operational. Further, Miovision Technologies Inc. announced that it plans to add 100 staff to its Kitchener workforce in 2020.²⁴

Employment in the **services-producing sector** rose by 186,800 (+3.2%) between January 2019 and January 2020. The strongest annual gains were in professional, scientific and technical services (+48,900; +7.4%), health care and social assistance (+37,100; +4.2%), and finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (+34,900; +6.2%). Only the transportation and warehousing (-6,300; -1.6%) and other services (-2,700; -0.9%) industries experienced notable declines over the past year.

Ontario Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Industry

Seasonally Adjusted Data ('000)	January 2020	December 2019	January 2019	Monthly Variation		Yearly Variation	
				Num- ber	%	Number	%
Total employed, all industries	7,558.3	7,542.4	7,349.1	15.9	0.2	209.2	2.8
Goods-producing sector	1,479.9	1,461.5	1,457.5	18.4	1.3	22.4	1.5
Agriculture	79.7	75.1	71.8	4.6	6.1	7.9	11.0
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	35.5	38.0	35.7	-2.5	-6.6	-0.2	-0.6
Utilities	55.7	52.9	56.8	2.8	5.3	-1.1	-1.9
Construction	562.3	550.9	524.9	11.4	2.1	37.4	7.1
Manufacturing	746.6	744.6	768.2	2.0	0.3	-21.6	-2.8
Services-producing sector	6,078.4	6,080.9	5,891.6	-2.5	0.0	186.8	3.2
Trade	1,114.4	1,102.6	1,091.4	11.8	1.1	23.0	2.1
Transportation and warehousing	400.0	404.7	406.3	-4.7	-1.2	-6.3	-1.6
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	601.8	599.8	566.9	2.0	0.3	34.9	6.2
Professional, scientific and technical services	707.2	696.5	658.3	10.7	1.5	48.9	7.4
Business, building and other support services	323.3	323.4	323.9	-0.1	0.0	-0.6	-0.2
Educational services	552.2	559.9	538.5	-7.7	-1.4	13.7	2.5
Health care and social assistance	922.2	928.8	885.1	-6.6	-0.7	37.1	4.2
Information, culture and recreation	308.3	308.7	294.3	-0.4	-0.1	14.0	4.8
Accommodation and food services	461.0	463.8	461.3	-2.8	-0.6	-0.3	-0.1
Other services	297.9	304.7	300.6	-6.8	-2.2	-2.7	-0.9
Public administration	390.0	387.8	365.0	2.2	0.6	25.0	6.8

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

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

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Toronto and Ottawa leading employment growth in Ontario in January 2020

Employment increased in the **Toronto** economic region by 147,300 (+4.1%) between January 2019 and January 2020 (measured on a year-over-year, seasonally unadjusted basis). Gains were solely in full-time employment (+165,000; +5.7%), with some losses in part-time employment (-17,000; -2.7%). The regional unemployment rate fell by 0.5 p.p. to 5.1%.

As the New Year began, the news of seasonal hiring in the region followed. The City of Toronto is staffing for various seasonal positions for the summer, and Canada's Wonderland²⁵ is looking to fill over 4,000 summer positions in Vaughan.²⁶ Moreover, factors such as the changing dynamics in manufacturing are playing out in the auto industry, and have forced Cooper Standard to close its operations in Halton Hills. By July of this year, about 275 Cooper Standard employees, of which almost half are local residents, will be permanently laid off.²⁷

Construction started the year strong, as a number of large investment were announced and projects broke ground.²⁸ Of note, Oxford Properties and AIMCo invested billions of dollars in the Square One District development project in Mississauga.²⁹ The City of Toronto will also welcome a new French-language university, following the provincial and federal governments' signing of an eight-year, \$126M funding agreement for the new Université de l'Ontario français.³⁰ As massive redevelopments are undertaken in the region and demand for space grows,³¹ some

of the recreation and entertainment venues in the region are being squeezed out, as a Go-Kart facility and an indoor volleyball facility on Toronto's waterfront³² closed their doors in January.³³

Employment in the **Ottawa** economic region increased by 46,800 (+6.6%) due to gains in both full-time (+33,400; +5.8%) and part-time employment (+13,300; +10.2%). The unemployment rate fell to 3.9%, which was the lowest in the province.

Numerous engineering jobs will be coming to the Ottawa region following a \$50M investment by Equispheres towards its metal powder manufacturing operations,³⁴ and the opening of a research office to develop self-driving vehicle application platforms by AutonomouStuff.³⁵ However, Loblaws Inc. announced consolidation of its two distribution centres in Laval and Ottawa by the end of 2021, which will eventually affect an estimated 230 employees in Ottawa.³⁶ In addition, McMillan, an advertising agency, laid off 38 employees,³⁷ while the Ottawa Aviation Services flight school closed down during the month.³⁸

The **Hamilton-Niagara Peninsula** region's employment levels rose by 14,800 (+2.0%) over the year. The gains were propelled mainly by part-time (+8,400; +5.4%) employment. The region's unemployment rate remained unchanged over the year at 4.7%.

News of investments and job creation in the high-tech sector dominated the region over the past month, boding well for the region's innovative future. Bell Canada is investing approximately \$400M over the next five years to expand broadband internet access in Hamilton.³⁹ Moreover, the Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) network will undertake three high-speed broadband projects over the next three years in Norfolk County, valued at \$11.5M.⁴⁰ Q4 Inc., a software company in Hamilton, will hire about 140 new employees,⁴¹ and Accenture, a business-consulting firm, expects to hire 100 employees this year in its St. Catharines office.⁴²

Employment grew by 5,400 (+0.7%) in the **Kitchener–Waterloo–Barrie** economic region over the year, as employment gains were driven wholly by full-time job growth (+9,000). However, the regional unemployment rate increased over the year, from 3.6% to 4.5%, as unemployment grew by nearly 30% from January 2019 to January 2020.

Despite the increase in unemployment, a number of tech, manufacturing and construction investments supported upcoming job creation in the region. Miovision Technologies Inc., a Waterloo auto data company, announced it will add 100 new employees to its workforce in 2020,⁴³ while Eclipse Automation Inc. will fill 120 positions at its Cambridge manufacturing facility.⁴⁴ The regional construction sector remains strong, as several construction projects emerged in the region,⁴⁵ including the construction of a new bus storage facility in Guelph.⁴⁶ Similarly, the County of Simcoe has revealed it is experiencing a shortage of skilled tradespeople, including electricians and welders, which has put some companies in a position where they are unable to take on additional work.⁴⁷

Employment also grew in three other economic regions from January 2019 to January 2020, including **London, Kingston-Pembroke** and **Stratford-Bruce Peninsula**

Employment declined in four ON economic regions in January

Employment in the **Muskoka-Kawarthas** region decreased by 7,100 (-4.0%) between January 2019 and January 2020. The decrease was driven fully by losses in full-time employment (-12,400; -8.5%). The participation rate registered at 55.0% in January, the lowest in the province.

Weston Foods, announced that it would close its Maplehurst Bakeries operations in Coburg by June, and eliminate up to 180 jobs.⁴⁸ However, in more positive news, Porter Airlines announced it will return their passenger service to Muskoka this summer,⁴⁹ which may give the region a bigger seasonal boost than usual, and construction began on a Hampton Inn hotel in Port Hope.⁵⁰

Employment in the **Northeast** region dipped slightly (-1,900, -0.8%) in January compared to the same time last year. The losses in full-time employment (-6,100; -3.0%) were somewhat offset by part-time employment gains of 4,300 (+9.1%). The participation rate decreased by 0.8 p.p. to 57.6% as more people exited the workforce. Lower participation was reflected in the unemployment rate, which dropped to 5.2% from 6.0% a year ago, as a number of unemployed people dropped out of the labour force.

Provincial and federal governments' funding towards various industries should help sustain job creation in the region going forward.⁵¹ Provincial government investments are supporting the region's construction industry, as a number of schools undergo renovations this summer.⁵² The construction sector was also bolstered by a new Super 8 hotel,⁵³ with construction underway in Moosonee, as well as by a \$30M replacement project of the West Ferris arena in North Bay.⁵⁴ The renovations at the Senator Hotel and Conference Centre in Timmins have been completed, and the hotel has reopened.⁵⁵ The region also welcomed new cannabis retailers in Sault. Ste Marie,⁵⁶ Timmins⁵⁷ and four locations on Manitoulin Island.⁵⁸

The **Northwest** economic region experienced an employment loss of 1,600 (-1.6%) over the past year, although the regional unemployment rate remained unchanged over the year at 5.1%.

Despite the workforce downturn, the news announcements in the region in January were generally positive for the labour market. A Kenora steel manufacturer will be expanding due to an investment from the provincial government, which will include four new jobs at the facility,⁵⁹ while the provincial government is also investing in two community development projects in the Fort Frances-Rainy River region.⁶⁰

Employment also fell in the **Windsor-Sarnia** economic region from January 2019 to January 2020.

Ontario Monthly Labour Force Statistics, by Economic Region

3-Month Moving Averages Seasonally Unadjusted Data	Employment			Unemployment Rate		
	January 2020 ('000)	January 2019 ('000)	Yearly Variation (%)	January 2020 (%)	January 2019 (%)	Yearly Variation (% points)
Ontario	7,512.5	7,293.3	3.0	5.0	5.2	-0.2
Economic Regions						
Ottawa	753.7	706.9	6.6	3.9	4.9	-1.0
Kingston - Pembroke	213.1	211.6	0.7	5.6	5.5	0.1
Muskoka - Kawarthas	172.2	179.3	-4.0	8.2	5.4	2.8
Toronto	3,700.1	3,552.8	4.1	5.1	5.6	-0.5
Kitchener - Waterloo - Barrie	754.1	748.7	0.7	4.5	3.6	0.9
Hamilton - Niagara Peninsula	772.3	757.5	2.0	4.7	4.7	0.0
London	350.1	333.9	4.9	4.1	4.9	-0.8
Windsor - Sarnia	290.7	306.7	-5.2	7.0	4.9	2.1
Stratford - Bruce Peninsula	158.8	145.0	9.5	4.1	4.5	-0.4
Northeast	248.0	249.9	-0.8	5.2	6.0	-0.8
Northwest	99.3	100.9	-1.6	5.1	5.1	0.0

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey – Table 14-10-0293, formerly CANSIM 282-0122

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

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