
Earnings and Employment Trends ♦ December 2000

Year 2000 in Review

- BC Employment grew at an annual rate of 2.3 per cent in 2000. This is the province's best labour market performance since 1997. In fact, the growth rate for 2000 exceeded the combined rate of 1998 and 1999.
- The strongest growth rates were in the Primary industries of forestry, mining and fishing. Accommodation & Food Services along with Manufacturing also had a good year. No industry registered large declines in employment in 2000. However, the worst hit were Transportation, Construction, and Retail/Wholesale Trade with declines all less than 2.5 per cent.
- Employment is made up of jobs in the public sector, the private sector and the self-employed. For the first time since 1995, the number of self employed in the province actually decreased (-6.5%). In 2000, the self-employed held 19 per cent of total employment, down from 21 per cent the previous year. A decrease in share of the self-employed can signal a healthy labour market. Many self-employed persons are involuntarily self-employed to avoid unemployment. When labour market conditions improve, many jump at the chance to get back into paid work.
- Job growth in both the Public (3.9%) and Private (4.8%) sectors was strong. The Public Sector growth was all in Education and Health Services. In fact, employment in Public Administration declined slightly.
- Among the regions, the Northeast had the strongest employment growth, followed by the Lower Mainland. Alongside the high growth, unemployment rates also declined in these areas. In 2000, the Northeast had the lowest unemployment rate in the province at 6.1 per cent.
- The only regions to see employment declines were Vancouver Island/Coast and the Cariboo. Both these regions fared well at the beginning of the year and then experienced large declines over the second half.
- Another sign of how well the labour market fared in 2000 was the shift from part-time jobs to full-time jobs. Part-time jobs now comprise 20.6 per cent of all jobs, the lowest proportion since 1996.
- Employment growth benefited men and women equally. Each increased the number of jobs by 2.3 per cent, However, the unemployment rate for women (6.7%) remained close to a full percentage point below that for men(7.6%).

- The young, age 15-24, saw their unemployment rate drop below the 14 per cent level for the first time since 1993.
- BC's average hourly wage rate was \$17.59, an increase over the previous year of 1.9 per cent. This matched the annual average increase in the Consumer Price Index. Ontario, with an average wage of \$17.57 in 2000, has now caught up with BC. BC has had the highest average hourly wages in the country since 1997 (the first year wage data was collected by the Labour Force Survey).
- BC's unemployment rate at 7.2 per cent is the lowest it has been since 1981. But it still exceeds all other provinces west of Quebec by between 1.5 percentage points (Ontario at 5.7%) and 2.3 percentage points (Manitoba at 4.9%).

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Provinces west of Quebec consistently have lower unemployment rates than Eastern Canada -- 2000

