

Labour Force Statistics ♦ November 2002

HIGHLIGHTS

- **B.C. seasonally-adjusted employment in November was down slightly by 2,300 from October.** All of the drop was in part-time employment, while full-time employment was up by 4,800 in November. Overall, youth employment for persons aged 15 to 24 was up by 200 in November from October, and since December, 2001 was up by 15,000.
- **The B.C. unemployment rate edged up to 8.5 per cent in November due to lower overall employment and an increase of 5,100 in the number of unemployed persons.** The labour force participation rate in November held at the 65.3 per cent level seen in October, and is up by 1.1 percentage points from December, 2001. All of this increase in labour force has been by youth, and women aged 25 and older.
- **B.C. employment by industry for the first eleven months of 2002 compared to the same period in 2001, shows above-average growth in agriculture, construction, retail and wholesale trade, education services, and health and social services.** Sectors where employment is down include other primary (logging, fishing and mining), public administration, and professional, technical and business services.
- **Canadian employment grew by 42,300 in November, led by net gains in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec.** B.C. and Newfoundland experienced employment declines in November. In the past eleven months, Canadian employment was up by 501,600, of which 84,300 was in B.C.

Selected Statistics (SA)*	Nov. 2002	Oct. 2002	Nov. 2001
B.C. Unemployment Rate	8.5%	8.3%	8.7%
Canada Unemployment Rate	7.5%	7.6%	7.6%
B.C. Help Wanted Index - (1996=100)	87.1	90.3	100.6
B.C. Employment - Change from prev.	-0.1%	-0.1%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Change from prev.	0.1%	0.0%	-
B.C. Labour Force Participation Rate	65.3%	65.3%	63.9%

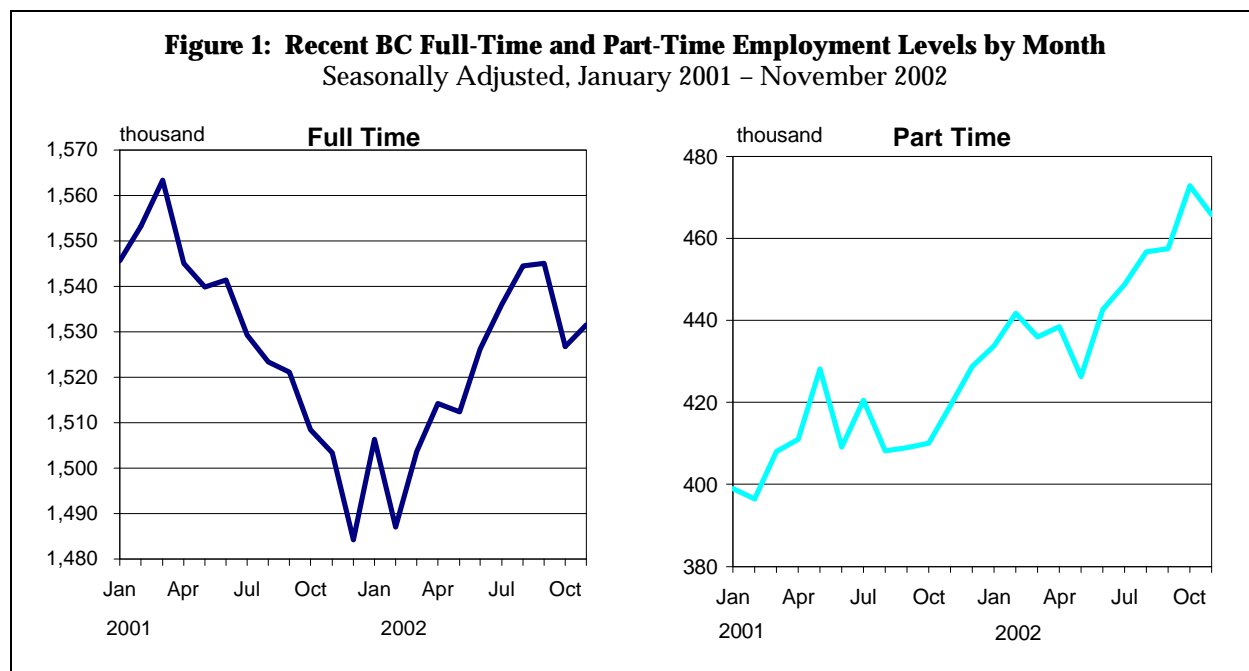
* Unless otherwise indicated, all labour force variables are seasonally adjusted.

Labour Force Statistics is a joint compilation and review by BC STATS of the Ministry of Management Services and the Accountability Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or the Accountability Branch (250) 952-6776.

Trends in Full-time and Part-time Employment in British Columbia

Introduction . . . Employment is often thought of as either full or part-time. These labels simply measure hours of work per week. For purposes of measurement, Statistics Canada classifies those who normally work 30 hours or more per week at their main job as full-time workers, and those who normally work less than 30 hours per week as part-time workers. In B.C., over the past twenty-five years both full and part-time employment has grown but part-time work has grown faster. Students aged 15 to 29 accounted for 27 per cent of all part-time workers in 2001.

Recent changes in Full and Part-time Employment . . . In Figure 1, full-time employment in B.C. fell for most of 2001 resulting in a net loss of 86,400 jobs from December 2000 to December 2001. During 2002, full-time employment rebounded upward steadily until August, before falling back slightly to November 2002. During 2002, full-time employment has risen by 47,400 (3.2 per cent) from December 2001 to November 2002. Part-time employment has been rising fairly steadily during both 2001 and 2002, with net gains of 27,100 (6.7 per cent) in 2001 and 36,900 (8.6 per cent) to November 2002.



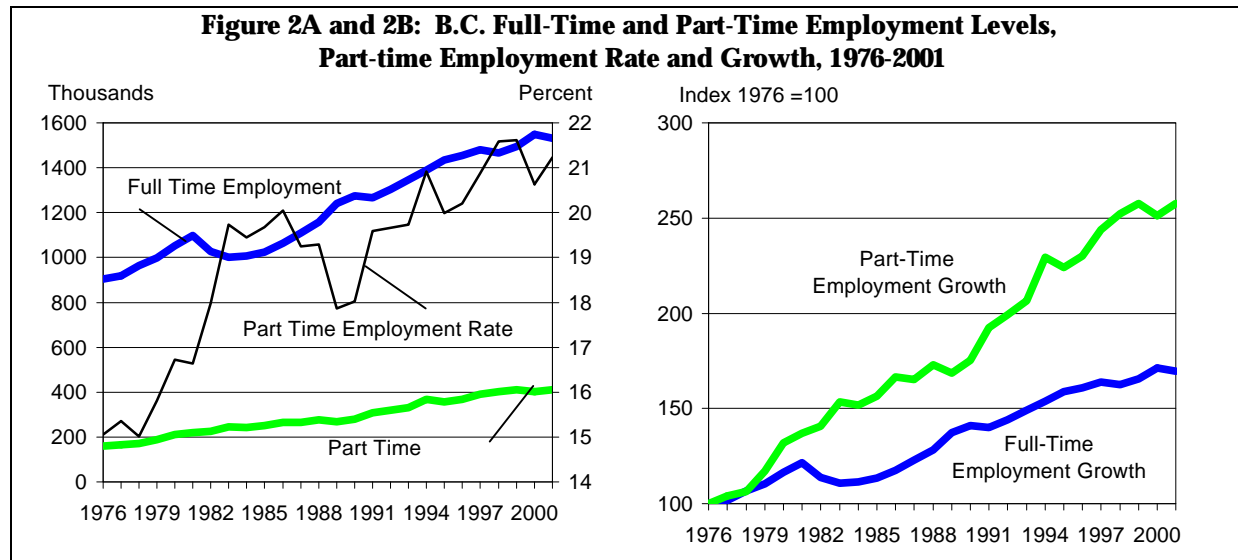
Full and Part-time Levels and Rate of Growth . . . Taking a longer-term view, Figure 2A shows that both full-time and part-time employment in B.C. have been generally increasing since 1976. Full-time employment in 2001 outnumbered part-time employment by almost 4 to 1.

The share of all employment that is part-time, sometimes called the part-time employment rate, is also displayed in Figure 2A (with the scale on the right hand axis).

The part-time employment rate has generally trended upwards since 1976. However, the part-time employment rate has tended to ratchet upwards in times of weaker economic activity, then settle back down in years of economic growth (e.g. in 1989, 1995 and 2000). This suggests that after impacts of business cycles are removed, there has been a structural increase in the part-time employment rate in B.C. This has also been the case in other provinces.

Figure 2B shows the considerable growth in part-time employment that has taken place since 1976. Part-time employment has grown about twice as fast as full-time employment. However, owing to its greater size in overall employment, the full-time component generally continues to produce double the net gains of part-time work each year.

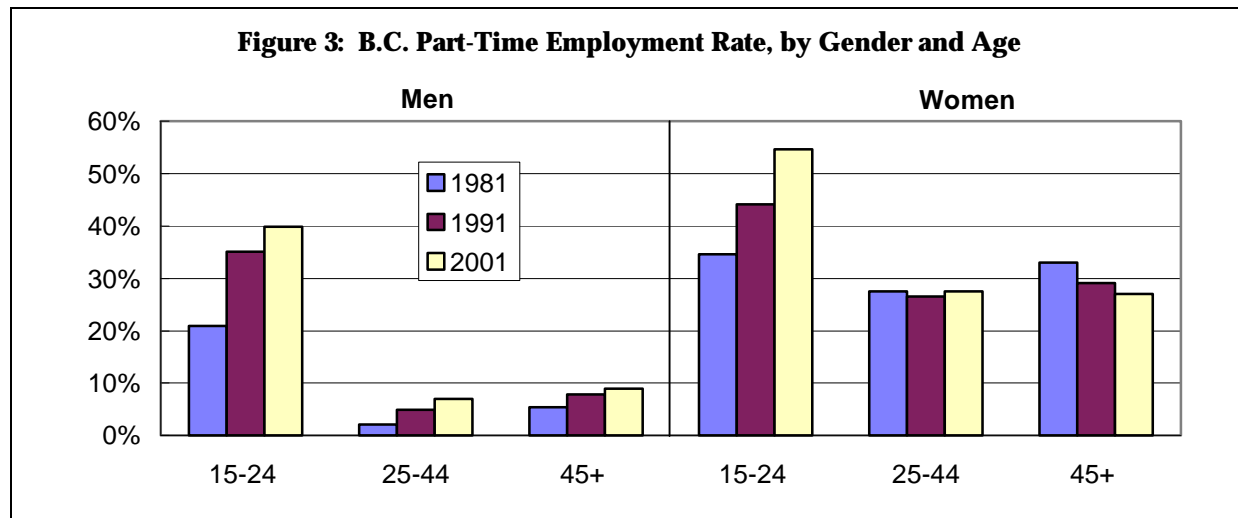
Young people aged 15 to 29 make a valuable contribution to the part-time work force and the economy. In 2001, two out of five part-time workers in B.C. were aged 15 to 29. Almost two-thirds of these young people were students, who represented fully 27 per cent of all part-time workers.



Full and Part-time Employment for Men and Women . . . The share of all employment in B.C. that is part-time has increased from 15.1 per cent in 1976 to 21.2 in 2001 (Figure 2A). Yet, as shown in Figure 3, there are considerable differences in part-time employment rates for men and women depending on age. Women have a much higher incidence of part-time employment than men. This is particularly true for women aged 25-44 and 45+. Between 1981 and 2001, women over 45 were the only group experiencing a decline in part-time employment rate. Men aged 25 to 44 and 45+ continue to have a very low part-time

employment rate, but it has increased over the past 20 years.

Figure 3 also shows that men and women aged 15 to 24 have consistently had the highest part-time employment rates, and their rates have grown faster than other age cohorts. Part-time employment rates for men and women age 15 to 24 were 21.0 and 34.7 per cent respectively in 1981. By 2001, these rates grew to 39.8 and 54.6 per cent respectively. Part of the rise in part-time employment rates for youth is due to their large increase in post-secondary participation.



Full and Part-time employment by industry . .

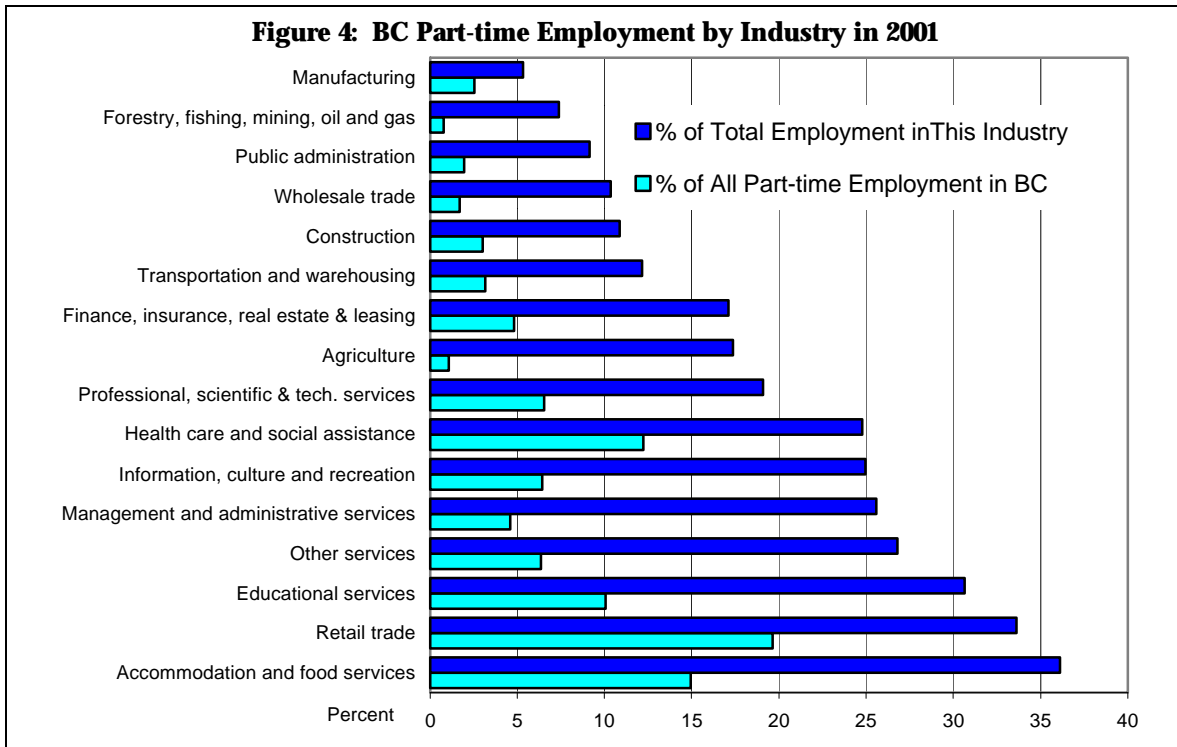
. A key dimension in examining full and part-time employment is to look at industry sectors. It is sometimes thought that service-sector part-time employment rates are above-average across most service industries. This is not uniformly the case (see Figure 4). Part-time employment rates in public administration, wholesale trade, finance, insurance, real estate & leasing, and professional, scientific & technical services were all below the B.C. average of 21.2 per cent in 2001. However, for some service-sector industries, employment is much more predominantly made up of part-time workers relative to the goods sector. Agriculture was the only industry in the goods sector that had a part-time employment rate which far exceeded the 5 to 11 per cent range of the other goods-producing industries.

The two industries shown at the bottom of Figure 4 (retail trade and accommodation & food services) had the highest part-time em-

ployment rates. Together they accounted for nearly 35 per cent of all part-time employment in BC in 2001. In the large and growing traditional service-sector industries like retail trade and accommodation & food, uneven levels of demand provide a strong incentive for utilizing a part-time work force.

Such sectors also tend to employ a higher proportion of young workers, so youth tend to have higher-than-average part-time employment rates. Further, since goods-sector employment has been dominated by men, weaker employment growth in that sector has contributed to a rise in the part-time employment rate for men.

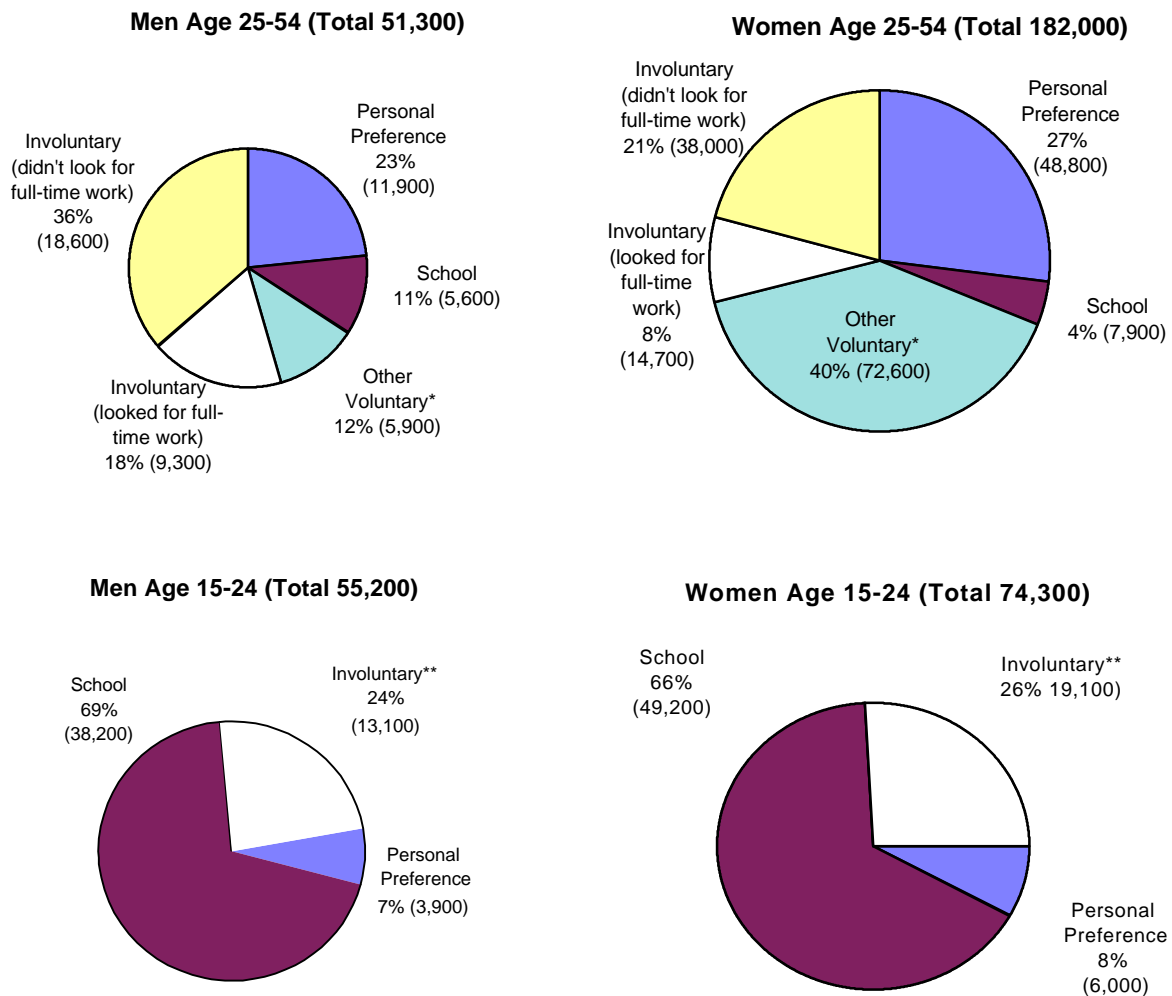
Because women are more likely to be employed in services, their part-time employment rate has stayed relatively constant, though still at a much higher level than for men.



Reasons for Working Part Time . . . Participation in part-time employment has in some cases been *voluntary*. Workers choose to work part-time because they prefer it, or it may better accommodate individual circumstances such as participation in education or family responsibilities. Individuals who are working part-time but indicate they would prefer full-time work are considered to be working part-time *involuntarily*.

Figure 5 shows some interesting differences between the reasons men and women work part-time in B.C. for 2001. The majority of men aged 25-54 who work part-time (54 per cent) indicated that they would prefer to work full-time and are thus considered to be working part-time *involuntarily*. However two-thirds of this group did not look for full-time work. Women aged 25-54 who would prefer to work full-time represented only 29 per cent of all women who

Figure 5: Reasons for Part-time Employment by Age and Gender in B.C. - 2001



* Includes persons who chose to work part-time for health reasons, to care for children, or other personal or family responsibilities.

** Includes persons who looked for full-time work in the previous month but were unsuccessful due to economic conditions or other reasons. Also included are persons who would prefer to be working full-time but did not look for full-time work because of their perceptions of unfavourable economic conditions or for other reasons.

work part-time. However, because there are so many more women than men who work part-time, there are more women (52,700) working part-time involuntarily than men (27,900). Almost three quarters of women who worked part-time involuntarily, did not look for full-time work.

There are a variety of reasons why men and women aged 25-54 choose to voluntarily work part-time. About one quarter of both

men and women prefer to work part-time by personal preference. Another reason cited for working part-time is so that individuals may attend school. Other reasons for choosing to work part-time include personal illness or disability, caring for children and other personal or family responsibilities such as attending to an elderly relative. This last group of "other reasons" represents the main reason why women aged 25-54 work part-time. Fully

72,600 (40 per cent) of women aged 25-54 cited this reason for working part-time compared to 5,900 (12 per cent) of men.

Reasons for working part-time differ for workers aged 15-24. Over 65 per cent of both men and women of this age group cite

attending school as the main reason for working part-time. Another quarter of them would prefer to work full-time. Unlike older women, young women did not cite caring for children or other family responsibilities as a main reason for working part-time.

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