

Labour Force Statistics ♦ January 2006

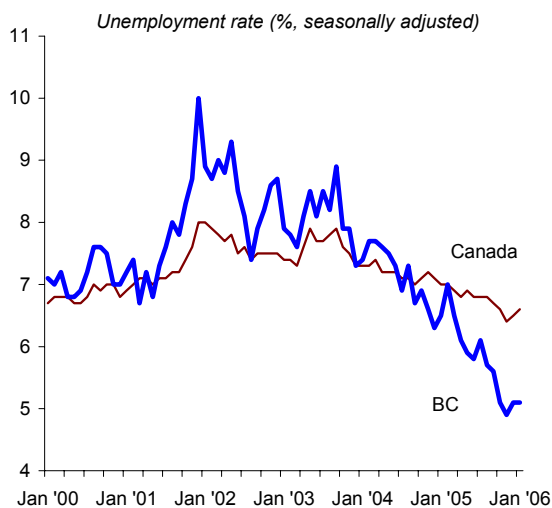
HIGHLIGHTS

All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated

Unemployment rate stays at 5.1% in January

British Columbia's unemployment rate held steady at 5.1% (*seasonally adjusted*) in January. There was little change in overall labour market conditions, with the number of jobs remaining at about 2.167 million and the size of the labour force edging up only marginally (+0.1%) from December. Residents of the province continued to enjoy one of the best job markets in the country. BC's unemployment rate was well below the national average (6.6%) and lower than in any other province except Alberta (3.5%) and Manitoba (4.3%).

BC's unemployment rate well below national average



Gains in service sector offset by cutbacks in goods industries

The number of people with jobs showed little change for the second month in a row, as employment gains in the service sector (+0.8%)

were offset by a reduction in the number of people working in goods industries (-3.0%). Manufacturing (-1.0%) and construction (-6.7%), the biggest employers in the goods sector (accounting for eight out of every ten jobs), had fewer workers on their payrolls in January. The number of jobs in agriculture slipped back (-13.6%) after soaring in December, but forestry, fishing & mining (+11.5%) and utilities (+17.8%) took on more workers.

In the service sector, job growth was most pronounced in the management & administration (+8.0%), transportation & warehousing (+4.9%) and education (+4.0%) industries, as well as miscellaneous services (+5.6%). Employment in health care & social assistance (-3.5%) continued to decline, and overall job growth was also tempered by cutbacks in information, culture & recreation (-3.3%) and accommodation & food services (-0.6%).

More women, fewer men with jobs

There were more women (+0.9%) but fewer men (-0.6%) in the labour force in January, and women (+0.8%) were also more likely to have found work than were men (-0.8%). This gender gap reflects the job losses that occurred in the traditionally male-dominated goods industries, while service industries, which are more likely to hire women, were taking on more staff. Although women benefited more from increased employment opportunities in January, men (5.0%) were still less likely to be unemployed than were women (5.3%).

The ranks of the self-employed fell 4.6%, while the number of people with paid employment increased 1.1%. Most of the job gains were in

the public sector (+3.7%), although private sector employment also expanded (+0.5%) in January. The number of full-time workers increased 0.4%, but there were 1.6% fewer people with part-time work.

The unemployment rate for 15-24 year olds was quite low, dropping to 7.6%. Among those who were 25 and older, the rate was 4.7%.

Jobless rate lowest in Northeast, highest in North Coast/Nechako

Among the regions, Northeast (3.7%¹, 3-month-moving average, unadjusted) continued to have the lowest unemployment rate in the province, while neighbouring North Coast/Nechako (9.4%) had the highest incidence of unemployment. Kootenay's jobless rate (6.4%) was also high compared to other regions. Cariboo (5.8%) and Vancouver Island/Coast (5.4%) were the only other regions where the rate was more than five percent. Job markets on the Island remained polarized, with Victoria continuing to benefit from one of the lowest unemployment rates in the province while Nanaimo (8.7%) and other parts of the region were not doing as well. The unemployment rate in Mainland/Southwest was 4.6%; in Thompson/Okanagan, it was 4.1%.

Jobless rates in every region of the province were well below January 2005 levels, in most

cases as a result of strong job growth. Kootenay and North Coast/Nechako were the exceptions: in these regions, the unemployment rate was lower because job losses were not as great as the reduction in the size of the labour force during the twelve-month period ending in January.

Vancouver's unemployment rate climbs, but Victoria sees continued improvement

Vancouver's unemployment rate rose to 5.4% (*seasonally adjusted*) in January, as the number of people with jobs dropped 2.2% to 1.145 million. Abbotsford's unemployment rate fell, going from 5.6% in December to 5.0% last month. In Victoria, the job market remained robust, and the unemployment rate continued to improve. It was 3.6% in January, the second-lowest rate observed since 1987 (the first year for which data is available). Victoria's lowest jobless rate (2.4%) was recorded just a few months ago, in June 2005.

The National Scene

The Canadian jobless rate inched up 0.1 percentage points to 6.6% in January, as unemployment rates increased in Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland. In Manitoba, the rate edged up 0.1 points, but it was flat or declined in the rest of the country.

Selected Statistics	Jan-06	Dec-05	Jan-05
BC Unemployment Rate (%)	5.1	5.1	6.5
Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)	6.6	6.5	7.0
BC Employment ('000)	2,167	2,167	2,102
BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	65.6	65.6	65.8
January % change in employment relative to:	-	0.0	3.1
January % change in labour force relative to:	-	0.1	1.6

NOTE: On January 25th, 2006, Statistics Canada released revised *Labour Force Survey* estimates for January 1987 through December 2005.

¹Estimate by BC Stats using Statistics Canada data