

Labour Force Statistics ♦ August 2006

HIGHLIGHTS

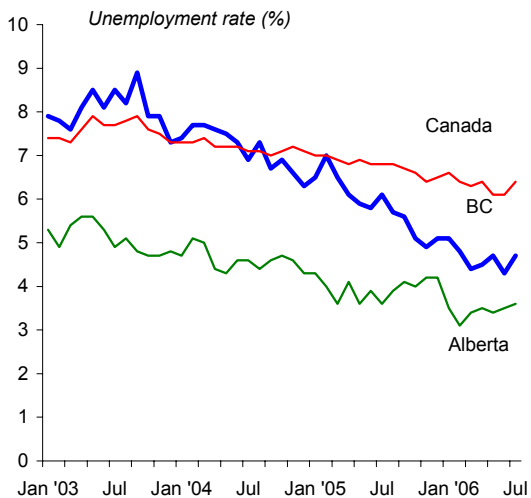
All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated

Jobless rate inches up in August but remains well below the national average

British Columbia's unemployment rate inched up to 4.8% in August, as a marginal drop in the number of jobs (-0.1%, or -2,200) was accompanied by virtually no change (+0.0%, or +200) in the number of people who were either working or looking for work.

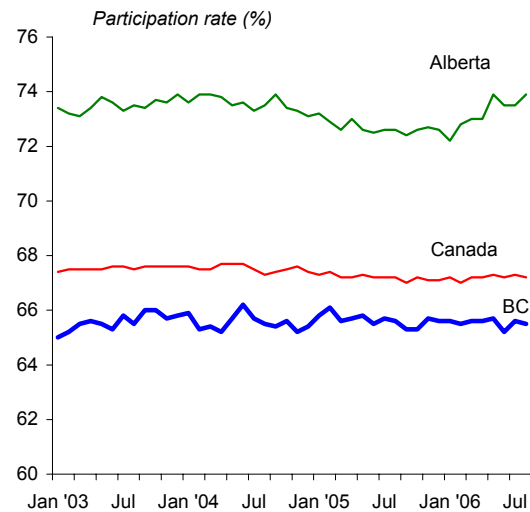
BC's unemployment rate remained among the lowest in the country, and was only 0.6 percentage points higher than Alberta's (4.2%). Manitoba (4.5%) had the second-lowest unemployment rate in the country, while BC was ranked third among the provinces.

The unemployment rate gap between BC and Alberta is shrinking...



British Columbia's participation rate remained stable in August, with 65.5% of the working age population (15 and older) in the labour force.

...but BC continues to have a lower-than-average participation rate



British Columbia's participation rate has varied over the years, but has stayed below the national average since the late 1990s, typically ranking sixth or seventh among the provinces. Alberta, which has consistently had the highest rate in the country (at least since 1977) has seen the rate increase in recent months. At 73.9%, Alberta's participation rate was considerably higher than the national average (67.2%) in August, and also well above second- and third-place Saskatchewan (69.4%) and Manitoba (69.0%).

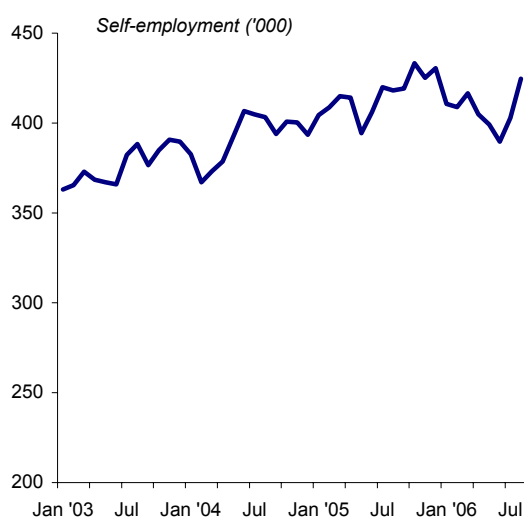
Job growth stalls in the service sector; fewer jobs in goods industries

Employment in the goods sector slipped back 1.0% as employment declined or job growth stalled in most industries. The number of jobs in construction was virtually unchanged

(-0.1%), while employment in utilities dropped (-2.2%) for the first time since April.

The service sector, which employs eight out of every ten workers in the province, recorded a marginal increase in employment (+0.1%) as job growth in some industries was offset by declines in others, particularly those with a large public sector component. However, professional, scientific & technical services (+7.2%) and management & administration (+6.0%) took on significantly more workers.

Self-employment continued to climb



More men (+0.3%) but fewer women (-0.6%) had jobs in August. Employment fell in both the public (-1.4%) and private (-1.3%) sector, but there was a big increase in the number of self-employed British Columbians (+5.4%).

Full-time employment edged up 0.8%, while the number of people with part-time jobs slipped (-3.6%). The unemployment rate for

young people (aged 18-24) remained relatively low (8.0%), but was nearly double the 4.2% rate for workers aged 25 and over.

Unemployment rate drops in most regions

Among the regions, jobless rates ranged from 3.5%¹ (3-month moving average, unadjusted) in Northeast to 6.2% in Cariboo, where the incidence of joblessness has dropped to about half the 2003 average. Unemployment rates were down in all regions except Thompson-Okanagan and Kootenay, where employment growth has failed to keep pace with an expanding labour force. Kelowna (7.7%) and Kamloops (6.3%) both recorded comparatively high jobless rates in August. North Coast/Nechako and Northeast saw the rate despite falling employment because the labour force shrank together with the number of jobs.

In Vancouver, the unemployment rate fell to 3.8% (seasonally adjusted) from 4.0% in the previous month. Victoria, however, saw a 0.6 percentage point increase (to 3.9%). Abbotsford, BC's third census metropolitan area, had an unemployment rate of 4.2% in August.

The Nation

Canada's unemployment rate crept up to 6.5% as the number of jobs (-0.1%) and the size of the labour force (-0.1%) both shrank. Unemployment rates edged down in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba and PEI but were up in the rest of the country.

¹ BC Stats estimate using data supplied by Statistics Canada

Selected Statistics	Aug-06	Jul-06	Aug-05
BC Unemployment Rate (%)	4.8	4.7	5.7
Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)	6.5	6.4	6.8
BC Employment ('000)	2,193	2,196	2,137
BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	65.5	65.6	65.6
August % change in employment relative to:	-	-0.1	2.6
August % change in labour force relative to:	-	0.0	1.7