
Labour Force Statistics ♦ December 1999

HIGHLIGHTS

- **B.C.'s seasonally adjusted level of employment grew by 8,700 or 0.5 per cent in December from November.** Employment in B.C. has grown steadily in the last 6 months and stands 29,700 higher than June 1999's level.
- **The labour force participation rate in December rose due to both additional employment and more persons actively looking for work (unemployed).** The unemployment rate rose to 8.2 per cent in December from 8.0 per cent in November.
- **In 1999 full-time employment growth of 2.4 per cent outpaced part-time growth of 1.7 per cent.** Full-time employment growth was led by men with growth chiefly in the services sectors in the large urban regions.
- **In terms of overall employment growth in 1999, B.C.'s increase of 2.2 per cent trailed Ontario's 3.1 per cent growth, but was close to the 2.4 per cent rise in Quebec and the 2.8 per cent rise in Alberta.**

Selected Statistics (SA)*	Dec 1999	Nov 1999	Dec 1998
B.C. Unemployment Rate	8.2%	8.0%	8.2%
Canada Unemployment Rate	6.9%	6.9%	8.0%
B.C. Help Wanted Index (1996=100)	136.0	132.0	120.0
B.C. Employment - Monthly Change	0.5%	0.7%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Monthly Change	0.8%	1.2%	-
B.C. Participation Rate	65.3%	64.9%	65.2%

* 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 Finance and Corporate Relations and the Research, Evaluation and Accountability Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or R,E&A (250) 952-6111.

The B.C. Labour Market in 1999

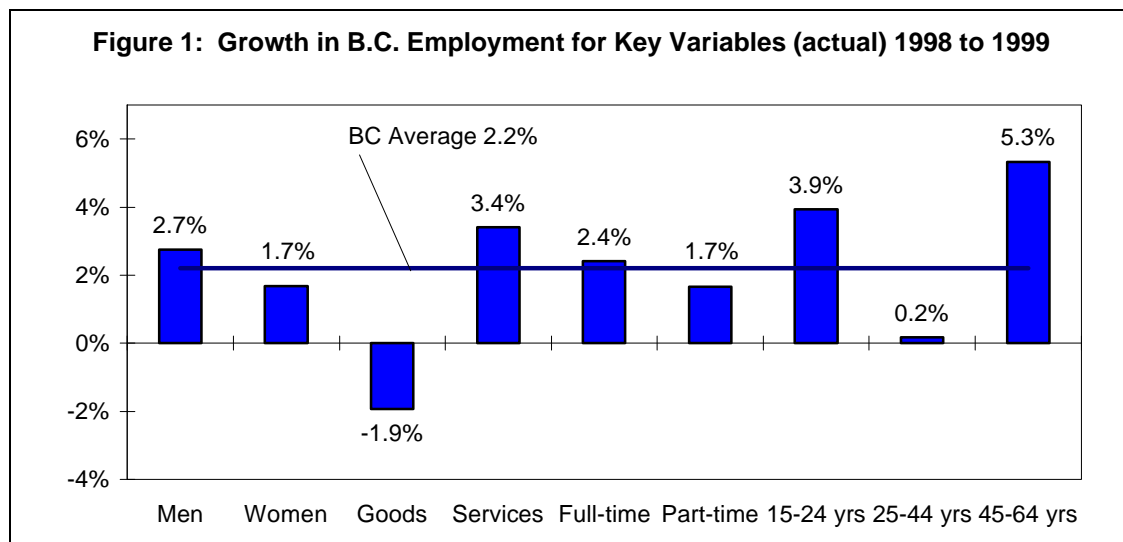
Employment Gains . . . Employment growth in the services sector, led by adult men and youth, paced employment growth in B.C. in 1999. The fastest growth, as well as most of the employment increases were seen in full-time work, in the two largest development regions of Vancouver Island/Coast and the Lower Mainland/ Southwest.

Employment was up in the fourth quarter of 1999 in the service sector (up 51,400) but some employment declines were seen in the goods producing sector (down 8,000). During 1999, the labour market saw overall employment growth in all but the second quarter. For 1999 overall, total employment for the year increased by 41,700 or 2.2 per cent from 1998, well up from the 1.2 per cent growth seen in 1998.

The breadth of B.C. labour market gains in 1999 was greater than the more mixed results seen in

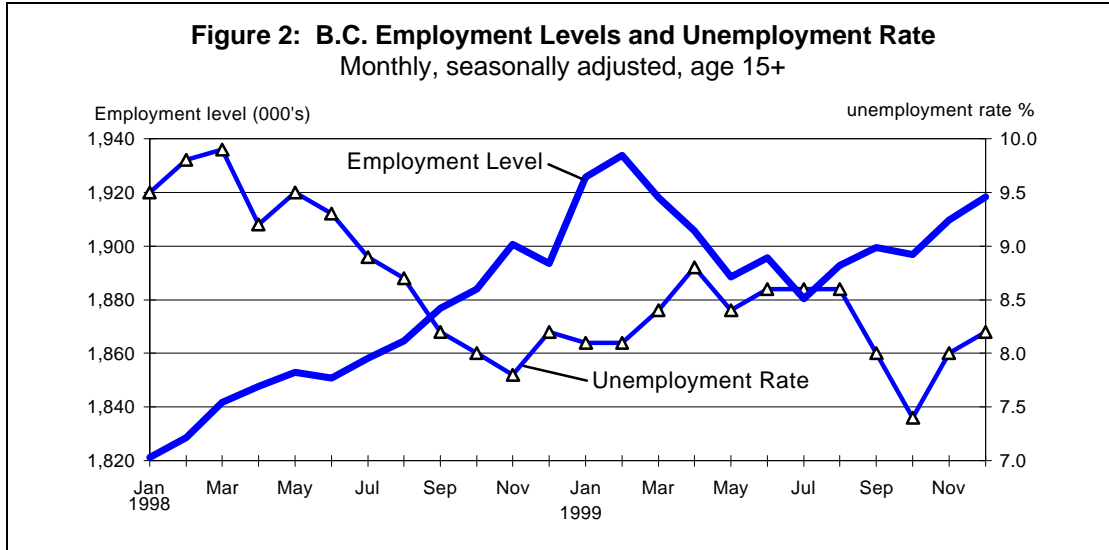
1998 between men and women, age groups and hours of work. In 1999:

- Men saw employment growth of 2.7 per cent compared to a 1.7 per cent increase for women.
- Youth aged 15 to 24 experienced job growth of 3.9 per cent, compared to a 0.2 per cent rise for those aged 25 to 44. The age 45 to 64 group experienced the fastest growth in employment (up 5.2 per cent), which in part was driven from a rise in demographics for that group.
- Full-time employment increased by 2.4 per cent (up 35,000) from 1998 to 1999. Part-time employment grew by 1.7 per cent (up 7,000).



Employment Levels and Unemployment Rates . . . Figure 2 shows the seasonally adjusted employment levels (left axis) and unemployment rate (right axis) for persons in B.C. aged 15 and older. On the whole, employment levels have generally been increasing and unemployment rates have been falling over the past two years. After a drop in employment levels in the early

part of 1999, employment in B.C. has been steadily growing since July 1999, with employment levels sitting 24,700 higher in December 1999 over December 1998. The unemployment rate has continued to remain below 8.5 per cent in each of the last four months of 1999 ending with December.



Employment by Age Group . . . Figures 3a and 3b show actual employment levels for persons aged 15 to 64 and the relative employment shares for three core age groups. Annual data for the three most recent years as well as 1990 and 1980 is displayed. This data over time partly reflects a demographic impact of the baby boomers to employment levels. Between 1980 and 1999 the number of employed youth has declined while the number of older workers (age 45-64) has almost doubled. It is noted there are some employed persons aged 65 and older, but they have been excluded from the discussion in this section for illustrative purposes.

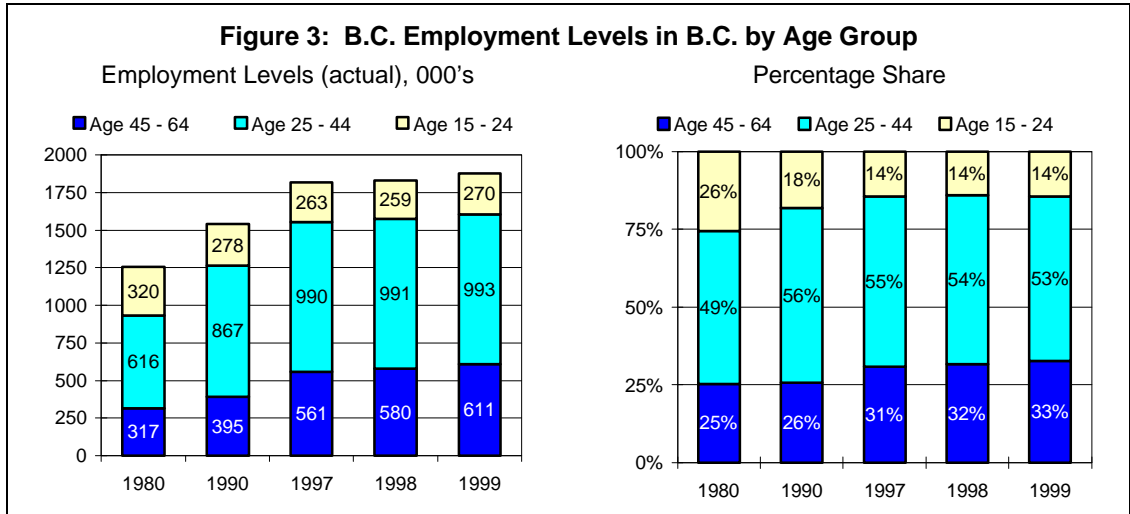
Reasons for the shift in employment by age groups are multifaceted. Increased participation by youth in post-secondary education and training has in part delayed their average age of labour market entry. B.C. youth did however experience net employment gains between 1998 and 1999 with an increase of 10,200 employed on a population base that remained virtually unchanged.

Employment levels for the group aged 45 to 64 are starting to see the effects of demographic shifts. Currently, there are many more 44 year olds entering this age group each year than there are 64 year olds leaving the cohort. For example,

this age group saw a net population increase of almost 30,000 individuals in 1999 from 1998. This trend will continue each year for the next two decades as the baby boomers continue to flow out of this cohort. In 1999, there was also an increase of 30,000 in employment for this age 45 to 64 group, with an increase in the employment/population ratio of 1.2 percentage points between 1998 and 1999.

The core group of 25 to 44 year olds actually lost population in 1999 from 1998 as the number of 44 year olds turning 45 exceeded those entering the front end of the cohort. Despite this fact, there was an increase in employment for this group in 1999, and a rise in their employment/population ratio.

In terms of percentage share of employment, the 25 to 44 year old age group has continued to hold about a 50 per cent share, while the other 50 per cent is shared by younger and older workers. In 1980 those aged 15 to 24 and those aged 45 to 64 held equal shares of employment, (about 25 per cent each) but this has been changing. In 1999 youth held only 14 per cent of all employment amongst 15 to 64 year olds, while those aged 45 to 64 now make up almost one third of employed workers.

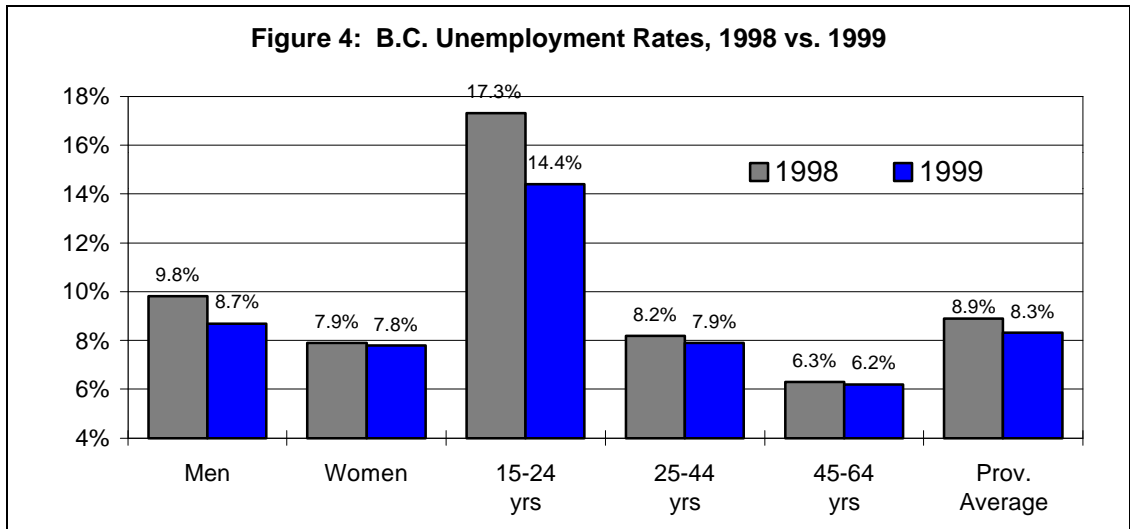


Unemployment Changes . . . With overall employment growing in B.C. for 1999, the fall in unemployment rates occurred as the numbers of unemployed persons declined from 1998 levels. The provincial annual average unemployment rate for 1999 fell to 8.3 per cent, down from 8.9 per cent in 1998.

Unemployment rates fell for both men and women, and all three core working age groups noted in Figure 4. The unemployment rate for men declined more than one full percentage point

to 8.7 per cent, from 9.8 per cent in 1998, but changed only slightly for women.

Youth experienced the most dramatic drop in their unemployment rate, falling from 17.3 per cent in 1998 to 14.4 per cent in 1999. Smaller decreases were also seen for the older two age groups. Labour force participation rates for youth were up in 1999 from 1998 indicating that the drop in their unemployment rate was due to more youth getting jobs and fewer unemployed youth.



Employment by Industry. . . In 1999, service sector employment was up 3.4 per cent from 1998, compared to a decrease of 1.9 per cent for the goods sector.

Two major components of the goods sector (Other Primary Industry and Construction) saw net employment decreases. Sub-components of these industries that were primarily responsible for employment decreases were mining extraction and support and trades contracting.

Despite overall strong gains in services there was some employment decreases in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Management, Administrative and Other Support; Health Care and Social Assistance; and Public Administration. Sub-sectors primarily responsible for employment losses in the above service industries were architectural, engineering & design; building services; social assistance; and local, municipal and regional government services.

Industry Employment Gains. . . The strongest employment growth in 1999 was seen in the following industry groups, noting sub-components showing the fastest growth:

- Transport. and Warehousing (14.9 per cent)
- Other Services (10.6 per cent)
- Finance, Insur. & Real Estate (8.7 per cent)
- Agriculture (8.1 per cent)
- Educational Services (7.3 per cent),
- Accommod. & Food services (6.2 per cent)
- Retail and Wholesale Trade (2.7 per cent),

A number of subsectors showed notable growth in 1999 despite being in industry aggregates that saw overall declines. For example within Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector, *Computer Design Systems Services* grew by 6,500. Within the Information, Culture and Recreation sector, *Motion Picture and Sound Recording* employment grew by 5,200.

Figure 5: Industry Employment Levels and Growth in B.C.

levels in 000's

	1990	1997	1998	1999	% Change 1998-1999	Average Annual % Change 1990-1999
All Industries	1561.4	1837.7	1860.5	1902.2	2.2%	2.4%
Goods-Producing Sector	377.6	412.7	404.2	396.4	-1.9%	0.6%
Agriculture	26.2	29.2	27.3	29.5	8.1%	1.4%
Forestry, Fishing, Mining, Oil and Gas	51.0	56.9	50.1	47.8	-4.6%	-0.7%
Utilities	9.2	10.2	12.8	11.3	-12.2%	2.6%
Construction	112.8	126.3	120.5	114.6	-4.9%	0.2%
Manufacturing	178.5	190.1	193.6	193.3	-0.1%	0.9%
Services-Producing Sector	1183.9	1425.0	1456.2	1505.8	3.4%	3.0%
Retail and Wholesale Trade	269.3	289.4	299.1	307.1	2.7%	1.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	99.0	107.3	102.4	117.6	14.9%	2.1%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing	100.4	113.5	111.4	121.2	8.7%	2.3%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	84.7	119.9	131.0	128.4	-2.0%	5.7%
Management, Administrative and Other Support	42.9	59.5	67.1	63.6	-5.2%	5.4%
Educational Services	93.4	126.5	121.2	130.0	7.3%	4.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	143.0	190.9	200.3	197.0	-1.6%	4.2%
Information, Culture and Recreation	71.0	92.4	91.1	93.0	2.0%	3.4%
Accommodation and Food Services	116.8	147.5	147.9	157.1	6.2%	3.8%
Other Services	78.1	89.3	92.2	102.0	10.6%	3.4%
Public Administration	85.3	88.9	92.6	88.8	-4.1%	0.5%

Regional Labour Markets . . . Strong employment growth in 1999 was seen in the large and diversified Lower Mainland/ Southwest region (up 27,000 or 2.5 per cent). The Vancouver Island/Coast region experienced an even more dramatic growth in employment in 1999 from 1998 (up 13,000 or 4.0 per cent). Interestingly, employment growth outside the Metro Victoria region saw slightly faster growth than the regional average. The unemployment rate for Vancouver Island/Coast saw a notable drop, and a rise in the employment rate (employment to population ratio).

Regions more dependent on forestry, fishing and mining saw little improvement in employment and a drop in their employment/population ratio. While the three northern most regions all

experienced a drop in employment to population ratio in 1999 from 1998, they still have the highest employment to population ratios in the province.

The Lower Mainland/Southwest had the lowest unemployment rate in the province in 1999 (7.8 per cent). Four of the seven regions saw a drop in unemployment rates in 1999. The Cariboo region, while still having the highest unemployment rate, saw it drop by nearly three percentage points in 1999 from 1998. Due to the small sample estimates for the Northeast region, their estimated unemployment rate should always be viewed with caution.

Figure 6: B.C. Regional Labour Market Changes, Annual Average 1998 and 1999

Development Region	Employment (000's)			Unempl. Rate (%)		Employment/Pop Ratio	
	1998	1999	% Chg.	1998	1999	1998	1999
Vancouver Island/Coast	323.4	336.3	4.0%	9.8%	8.4%	56.1%	58.2%
Lower Mainland/S.W.	1,091.5	1,118.5	2.5%	8.2%	7.8%	60.3%	60.5%
Thompson/Okanagan	212.1	213.6	0.7%	8.3%	9.4%	55.6%	55.3%
Kootenay	69.7	70.1	0.4%	12.1%	8.3%	57.4%	57.4%
Cariboo	80.0	80.4	0.4%	14.7%	11.8%	62.6%	61.8%
North Coast/Nechako	49.8	49.6	-0.4%	9.8%	9.9%	67.1%	64.2%
Northeast	33.8	33.0	-2.5%	3.9%	9.1%	66.2%	64.2%
B.C.	1,860.5	1,902.2	2.2%	8.9%	8.3%	59.1%	59.8%

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