



Niagara Workforce Planning Board Presents

The Eye on Employment: February 2019 Edition

The Eye on Employment is NWPB's monthly breakdown of the latest data from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey. In this document, we will provide you with a summary of changes in local labour market indicators, offer comparisons to historical benchmarks, and show how seasonality affects employment in Niagara.

First, a foreword on our source: Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey or LFS. The LFS is a robust tool that provides us with a considerable amount of data. At its core, however, it exists to sort Canadians into one of three groups: people who are employed, people who are not employed but are looking for work, and people who are not in the labour force. This is a people-focused survey, and the important thing to remember is that a count of people is not a count of jobs. **People might do a job, either for an employer or through self-employment, but the LFS is counting the people, not the job.** Bearing this in mind, let's turn our eye toward employment.

Monthly and Yearly Overview

Table 1: Niagara – Current and Historical Trends – Seasonally Unadjusted

Labour force characteristics	Dec 2017	Jan 2018	2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019
Labour force	211,400	209,900	215,800	215,700	215,400	213,000
Employment	198,500	197,800	201,700	202,600	201,800	199,100
Full-time employment	152,700	151,500	153,100	156,000	155,400	154,000
Part-time employment	45,800	46,300	48,600	46,600	46,400	45,100
Unemployment	12,900	12,200	14,200	13,100	13,600	13,900
Unemployment rate	6.1%	5.8%	6.6%	6.1%	6.3%	6.5%
Participation rate	60.5%	60.0%	61.2%	60.9%	60.8%	60.1%
Employment rate	56.8%	56.5%	57.2%	57.2%	57.0%	56.1%

Month-over-month, we can see 2,400 fewer people either working or looking for work (a decrease in the labour force) between December 2018 and January

2019. There were 1,400 fewer people in full-time employment and 1,300 fewer people in part-time employment in January 2019 compared to December 2018. Compared to this time last year, January 2019 reports 1,300 more people with employment than was observed in January 2018. This change was largely attributed to increases in full-time employment. Specifically, January 2019 saw 2,500 more people employed in a full-time capacity than was observed in January 2018. With respect to part-time employment, there were 1,200 fewer people employed in a part-time capacity in January 2019 than in January 2018.

Niagara's unemployment rate increased from 6.3% in December 2018 to 6.5% in January 2019. This increase occurred alongside the month-over-month employment rate decreasing from 57.0% to 56.1%. Niagara's labour market participation rate decreased slightly from 60.8% to 60.1%. In an ideal state of affairs, we would see decreases in the unemployment rate with increases in the participation and employment rate.

It's also important to keep in mind that the data in Table 1 are **seasonally unadjusted** figures. That means factors like holidays, expected employment slowdowns or pickups due to weather, and other factors that can be reasonably be predicted to influence employment are not accounted for in these data. Table 2 shows what the labour force looks like when we adjust for seasonality.

Table 2: Niagara – Current and Historical Trends – Seasonally Adjusted

Seasonal Labour Force Characteristics	Dec 2017	Jan 2018	2017	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019
Labour force	210,400	212,000	215,800	214,400	214,100	214,700
Employment	196,400	199,600	201,700	199,300	199,200	200,200
Unemployment	14,000	12,400	14,200	15,100	14,900	14,500
Unemployment rate	6.7%	5.8%	6.6%	7.0%	7.0%	6.8%
Participation rate	60.2%	60.6%	61.2%	60.6%	60.4%	60.5%
Employment rate	56.2%	57.1%	57.2%	56.3%	56.2%	56.4%

Table 2 shows that there were 1,000 more people employed in Niagara between December and January which contrasts the decrease seen in the unadjusted data. When we look at the unemployment, participation, and employment rates, the month-over-month adjusted comparisons also show different trends compared to the unadjusted figures. The unadjusted data indicate that the unemployment rate decreased from 7.0% to 6.8% in January,

and the employment rate increased from 56.2% to 56.4%. The participation rate increased slightly from 60.4% to 60.5% between December and January.

Given some of the differences between the adjusted and unadjusted datasets, one might ask which of these figures is correct and/or should be used when reporting these statistics. The answer is that both are equally valid. Both measures are essential tools to understanding labour force trends in Niagara. In this case, these trends would suggest that when compensating for predictable and seasonable factors (e.g. expected slowdowns in retail sales in January compared to December or a slower local tourism economy in cold months) we would see a more active labour force.

The Youth Lens

LFS data also allow us a snapshot of youth (defined as people age 15 to 24) employment in Niagara. Once again these data do not account for seasonality.

Table 3: Niagara – Current and Historical Trends – Youth Age 15 to 24 – Seasonally Unadjusted

Labour force characteristics	Dec 2017	Jan 2018	2018	Nov 2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019
Labour force	28,200	26,600	34,300	34,100	36,000	35,800
Employment	25,500	23,500	29,900	30,300	31,800	32,100
Full-time employment	12,700	11,100	15,400	17,600	18,200	18,400
Part-time employment	12,800	12,300	14,500	12,800	13,600	13,700
Unemployment	2,700	3,200	4,400	3,800	4,200	3,700
Unemployment rate	9.6%	12.0%	12.8%	11.1%	11.7%	10.3%
Participation rate	67.1%	63.3%	68.7%	63.4%	64.7%	63.3%
Employment rate	60.7%	56.0%	59.9%	56.3%	57.2%	56.7%

Here we see 300 more youth working in January compared to December. There were 200 more youth working in a full-time capacity, and the number of youth working in a part-time capacity increased by 100. January saw the youth unemployment rate decrease from 11.7% to 10.3%, and the participation rate decreased from 64.7% to 63.3%. Similarly, the employment rate decreased from 57.2% to 56.7%. Compared to this time last year, January 2019 reports 7,300 more youth employed in a full-time capacity and 1,400 more youth working in a part-time capacity.



Would you like to know more? NWPB is ready for your questions. Reach out to Mario De Divitiis, NWPB's CEO (mario@niagaraworkforceboard.ca).