



Niagara Workforce Planning Board Presents

The Eye on Employment: March 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	Jan 2018	Feb 2018	2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019
Labour force	209,900	208,500	215,800	215,400	213,000	212,200
Employment	197,800	196,800	201,700	201,800	199,100	197,400
Full-time employment	151,500	149,200	153,100	155,400	154,000	153,200
Part-time employment	46,300	47,500	48,600	46,400	45,100	44,100
Unemployment	12,200	11,700	14,200	13,600	13,900	14,800
Unemployment rate	5.8%	5.6%	6.6%	6.3%	6.5%	7.0%
Participation rate	60.0%	59.5%	61.2%	60.8%	60.1%	59.8%
Employment rate	56.5%	56.2%	57.2%	57.0%	56.1%	55.6%

Month-over-month, we can see 800 fewer people either working or looking for work (a decrease in the labour force) between January 2019 and February 2019. There were 800 fewer people in full-time employment and 1000 fewer people in part-time employment in February compared to January. Compared

to this time last year, February 2019 reports 600 more people with employment than was observed in February 2018. This change was largely attributed to increases in full-time employment. Specifically, February 2019 saw 4,000 more people employed in a full-time capacity than was observed in February 2018. With respect to part-time employment, there were 3,400 fewer people employed in a part-time capacity in February 2019 than in February 2018.

Niagara's unemployment rate increased from 6.5% in January 2019 to 7.0% in February 2019. This increase occurred alongside the month-over-month employment rate decreasing from 56.1% to 55.6%. Niagara's labour market participation rate decreased slightly from 60.1% to 59.8%. 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	Jan 2018	Feb 2018	2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019
Labour force	212,000	211,900	215,800	214,100	214,700	215,700
Employment	199,600	200,700	201,700	199,200	200,200	201,000
Unemployment	12,400	11,200	14,200	14,900	14,500	14,700
Unemployment rate	5.8%	5.3%	6.6%	7.0%	6.8%	6.8%
Participation rate	60.6%	60.5%	61.2%	60.4%	60.5%	60.8%
Employment rate	57.1%	57.3%	57.2%	56.2%	56.4%	56.6%

Table 2 shows that there were 800 more people employed in Niagara between January and February 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 adjusted data indicate that the unemployment rate remained steady at 6.8% in February, and the employment rate increased from 56.4% to 56.6%. The participation rate similarly increased slightly from 60.5% to 60.8% between January and February.

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 seasonal factors (e.g. expected and historical seasonal slowdowns in Niagara's economy) 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	Jan 2018	Feb 2018	2018	Dec 2018	Jan 2019	Feb 2019
Labour force	26,600	25,000	34,300	36,000	35,800	34,900
Employment	23,500	22,000	29,900	31,800	32,100	31,000
Full-time employment	11,100	9,300	15,400	18,200	18,400	17,200
Part-time employment	12,300	12,700	14,500	13,600	13,700	13,800
Unemployment	3,200	2,900	4,400	4,200	3,700	3,900
Unemployment rate	12.0%	11.6%	12.8%	11.7%	10.3%	11.2%
Participation rate	63.3%	59.8%	68.7%	64.7%	63.3%	62.9%
Employment rate	56.0%	52.6%	59.9%	57.2%	56.7%	55.9%

Here we see 1,100 fewer youth working in February compared to January. There were 1,200 fewer youth working in a full-time capacity, and the number of youth working in a part-time capacity increased by 100. February saw the youth unemployment rate increase from 10.3% to 11.2%, and the participation rate decrease from 63.3% to 62.9%. Similarly, the employment rate decreased from 56.7% to 55.9%. Compared to this time last year, February 2019 reports 7,900 more youth employed in a full-time capacity and 1,100 more youth working in a part-time capacity. While the month-over-month numbers show fewer youth working while more youth are looking for work, the overall annual trend remains a positive one.

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