

Labour Market Information News

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Labour Force Survey -- Nova Scotia Highlights

Employment in Nova Scotia rose by 10,600 jobs (+2.1%) in May 2025. The unemployment rate dropped by 0.7 percentage points to 6.5%. This issue of the *Labour Market Information News* monitors the key labour market indicators in May 2025. The Labour Force Survey references the week of week of May 11 to 17, 2025 and compares it to the week of April 13 to 19, 2025.

Snapshot of Nova Scotia's Labour Market in May 2025¹ Compared to April 2025

Labour Force
563,900

+7,400

- The labour force expanded by 1.3% to 563,900 (+7,400) in May 2025. The labour participation rate rose by 0.8 percentage point to 61.8%.

Employment
527,000

+10,600

Full Time
439,100
Part Time
87,800

+6,400

+4,100

- Nova Scotia's seasonally adjusted employment level rose by 2.1% in May (+10,600 jobs) with most gains in full-time employment (+6,400, +1.5%) (Individuals switching between full-time and part-time status are also included in these statistics).
- Nova Scotia's unemployment rate dropped by 0.7 percentage points to 6.5% in May, driven by a combination of a 0.8% expansion in labour force and 2.1% expansion in employment. For context, the province's unemployment rate has averaged 10.0% since 1976.
- The employment rate (number of employed as a proportion of the population aged fifteen and over) rose by 1.2 percentage point to 57.8% in May.

Unemployment Rate
6.5%

-0.7 pp

Employment Rate
57.8%

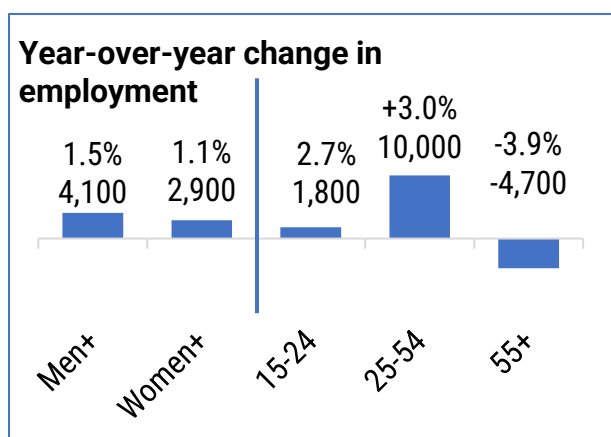
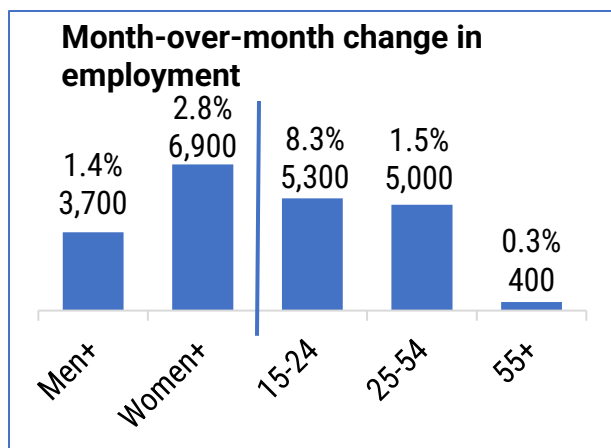
+1.2 pp

¹ Source: Statistics Canada, [Table 14-10-0287-01](#), Adjusted for Seasonality, Both Sexes, Ages 15+.

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Labour Market Trends by Population Groups

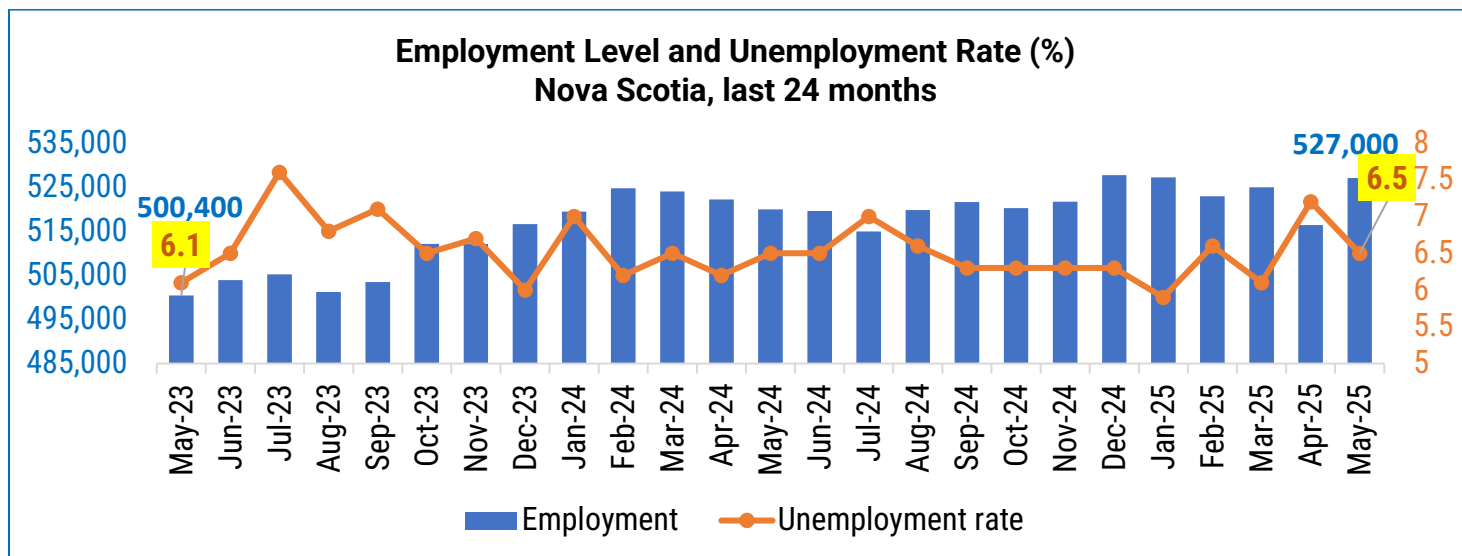


- In Nova Scotia, both men's and women's employment expanded over the past month. However, men's employment expansion is led by full-time employment growth (+3,600 jobs) while women's is led by part-time employment growth (+4,100 jobs).
- Youth (15 to 24 years), core-aged workers (25 to 54 years), and older workers (55 years and over) all experienced job gains in the last month at 1.5%, 8.3%, and 0.3%, respectively.
- Compared to May last year, the employment levels of men and women increased by 1.5% and 1.1%, respectively. Men saw an increase in full-time employment, partially offset by a decline in part-time jobs. Women experienced a smaller increase in part-time and full-time employment.
- Core-aged workers (25 to 54 years) experienced the largest job gains in the past 12 months, followed by youth (15 to 24 years). Employment for older workers (55 years and over) declined.
- The unemployment rate for both youth (15 to 24 years) and adults aged 25 and over dropped by 1.9 and 0.5 percentage points, respectively, over the last month overall across both genders.

Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Sex and Age

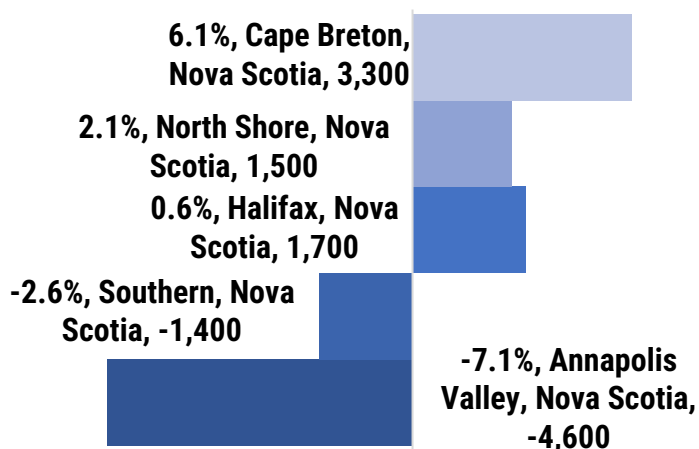
Unemployment Rate (%)	May-24	Apr-25	May-25	Month/month change	Year/year change
Age 15-24	13.2	13.6	11.7	-1.9 pp	-1.5 pp
Men+	11.4	15.1	13.3	-1.8 pp	1.9 pp
Women+	15.1	12.1	10.0	-2.1 pp	-5.1 pp
Age 25 and over	5.4	6.2	5.7	-0.5 pp	0.3 pp
Men+	6.3	6.9	6.6	-0.3 pp	0.3 pp
Women+	4.5	5.4	4.8	-0.6 pp	0.3 pp

Overall Employment and Unemployment Trend



- Employment levels remained elevated in the past twelve months, averaging 1.6% higher than the previous 12-month period.
- Over the past year, the average unemployment rate was 6.5%, staying near historical low levels.

Year-over-Year Employment Change by Economic Region



Employment Trend by Economic Region²

- In May 2025 (three-month average from March to May 2025) compared to April 2025 (February to April 2025), Halifax and Cape Breton each gained 2,300 jobs with the latter experiencing the highest growth at 6.1%. The other three regions, such as North Shore at 2.6%, also experienced job gains during this period.
- Compared to one year ago in May 2024, Annapolis Valley and Southern reported job

² ***Note:** The regional statistics is a 3-month moving average and is seasonally unadjusted. Therefore, it is not comparable to the statistics used in the rest of the report and may show a delay in data demonstrating sudden impacts to labour.

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loss while the other three regions recorded job gains.³

Employment Trend by Industry

- Over the past month, employment in both the goods-producing sector and service-producing sector rose, by 3.2% and 1.8% respectively. This was true on a year-over-year basis as well, where the goods-producing sector and service-producing sector recorded job growth at 2.4% and 1.1% respectively.
- In the last month, the top expanding industry was “wholesale and retail trade” (+2,800 jobs, +3.6%). The top contracting industry was “educational services” (-700 jobs, -1.7%).
- Compared to twelve months ago (May 2024), employment gains were largest in the “health care and social assistance” (+5,300 jobs, +6.6%). This was followed by “Construction” (2,200 jobs, +5.4%) & “Business, building and other support services” (+2,100 jobs, +13.0%).
- Employment declines compared to twelve months ago were largest in the “other services” (-3,400 jobs, -14.4%), “educational services” (-2,500 jobs, -5.7%) & “finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing” (-1,200 jobs, -3.8%).

Month over month

7,400

3,000

Goods sector

Service sector

Year over year

4,700

2,300

Goods sector

Service sector

Top Three Industries with Year-over-Year Employment Gains

6.6%,
5,300

Health care and social assistance

5.4%,
2,200

Construction

13.0%,
2,100

Business, building and other support services

Top Three Industries with Year-over-Year Employment Loss

-14.4%, -3,400

Other services (except public administration)

-5.7%, -2,500

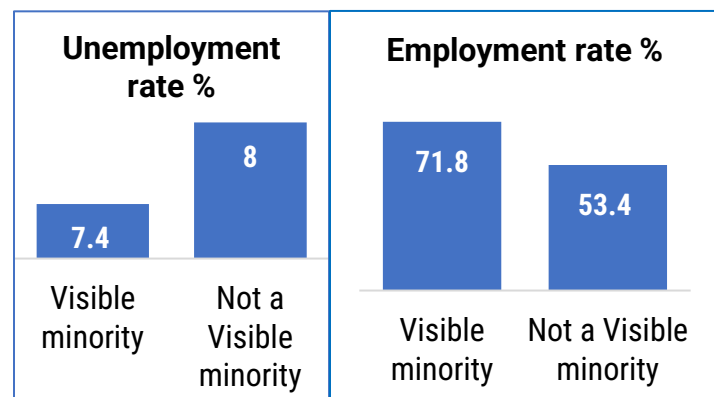
Educational services

-3.8%,
-1,200

Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and...

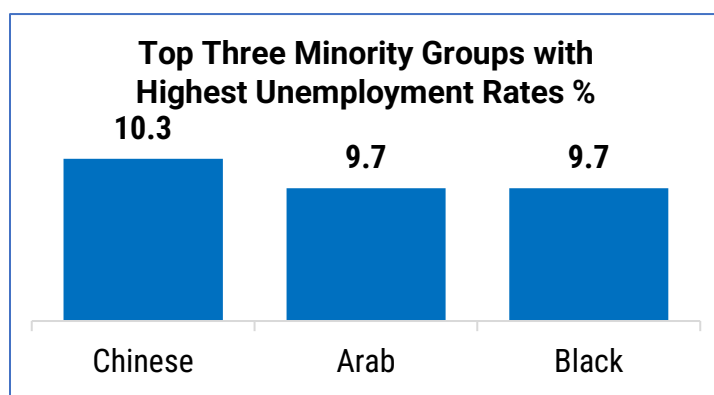
³ Source: Statistics Canada, Table [14-10-0387-01](#), three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.

Labour Market Outcomes of Diversity Groups in Atlantic Canada⁴

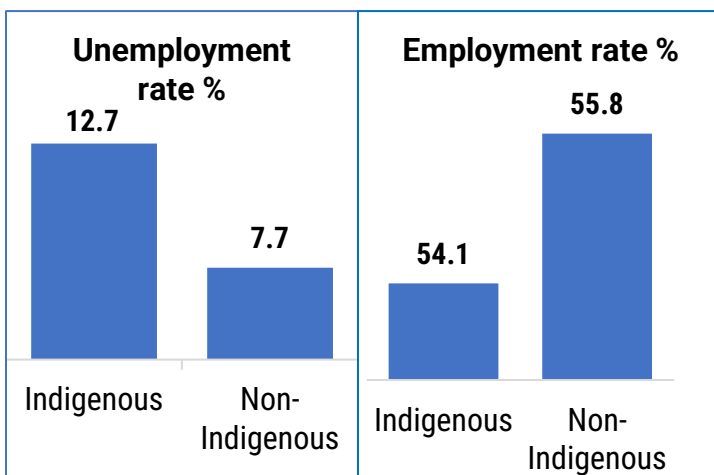


- The employment rate (number of employed for the entire population 15 and over) for visible for non-visible minorities (71.8% vs 53.4%) on average in the last three months ending in May 2025. This can mostly be attributed to the higher labour participation of visible minorities.

- Compared to April 2025 (3-month average from February to April 2025), the employment rate of visible minorities increased by 1.2 percentage points while the employment rate of people who are not visible minorities or Indigenous people rose by 1 percentage point in Atlantic Canada.



- There are large gaps among different visible minority groups. Among the groups with available data⁵, Chinese, Arabs, and Blacks face the highest unemployment rates (10.7%, 9.7% & 9.7%, respectively), while 4.7% of Filipinos were unemployed in the last three months.



- Indigenous people in Atlantic Canada have an unemployment rate that is well above that of non-indigenous population (12.7 versus 7.7%), while they face lower employment rate (54.1% versus 55.8%).

- It is worth noting that aggregate data masks the fact that visible minorities and indigenous people face additional labour market barriers.

⁴ Source: Statistics Canada, Table: [14-10-0373-01](#); [14-10-0401-01](#), three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.

⁵ Data not available for West Asian, Korean, and Japanese minority groups.

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The next Labour Force Survey will be released on **July 11, 2024**, covering the June 2025 labour market.

Labour Force Survey Glossary

Employment: Employed persons are those who, during the reference week, did any work for pay or profit or had a job and were absent from work.

Employment rate (employment/population ratio): Number of employed persons expressed as a percentage of the population 15 years of age and over. The employment rate for a particular group (for example, one defined by age, sex, marital status, or province) is the number employed in that group expressed as a percentage of the population for that group.

Labour force: Civilian non-institutional population 15 years of age and over who, during the survey reference week, were employed or unemployed. Prior to 1966, persons aged fourteen and over were covered by the survey.

Participation rate: Total labour force expressed as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and over. The participation rate for a particular group (for example, women aged 25 years and over) is the labour force of that group expressed as a percentage of the population for that group.

Unemployment: Unemployed persons are those who, during reference week, were without work, were available for work and were either on temporary layoff, had looked for work in the past four weeks or had a job to start within the next four weeks.

Unemployment rate: Number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force. The unemployment rate for a particular group (for example, one defined by age, sex, or marital status) is the number of unemployed persons in that group expressed as a percentage of the labour force for that same group.

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey Guide