Labour Market Information News

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Labour Force Survey -- Nova Scotia Highlights

Employment in Nova Scotia fell by 4,400 jobs (-0.8%) in October 2025. The unemployment rate rose by 0.5 percentage points to 6.7%. This issue of the *Labour Market Information News* monitors the key labour market indicators in October 2025. The Labour Force Survey references the week of October 12 to 18, 2025 and compares it to the week of September 14 to 20, 2025.

Snapshot of Nova Scotia's Labour Market in October 2025[1] Compared to September 2025

Labour Force
558,700 -1,600

Employment
521,000 -4,400

Full Time
435,700 -800

Part Time
85,400 -3,500

Unemployment Rate
6.7% +0.5 pp

Employment Rate
56.9% -0.5 pp

- The labour force contracted by 0.3% to 558,700 (-1,600) in October 2025. The labour participation rate fell by 0.2 percentage points to 61.0%.
- Nova Scotia's seasonally adjusted employment level fell by 0.8% in October (-4,400 jobs) with losses in both full-time (-800, -0.2%) and part-time employment (-3,500, -3.9%). (Individuals switching between full-time and part-time status are also included in these statistics).
- Nova Scotia's unemployment rate rose by 0.5 percentage points to 6.7% in October, driven by a 0.3% contraction in the labour force versus the 0.8% contraction 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) fell by 0.5 percentage points to 56.9% in October.

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

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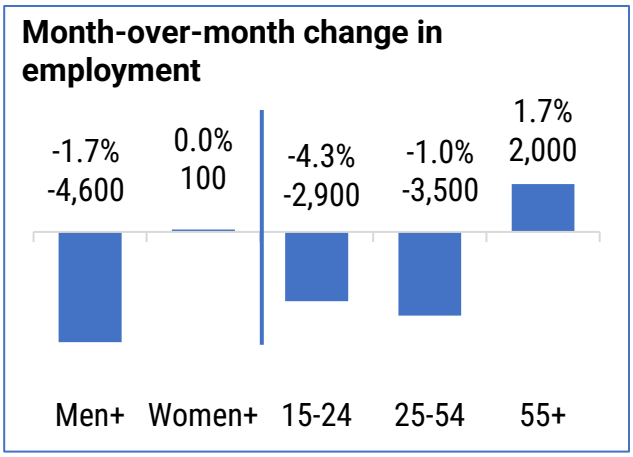
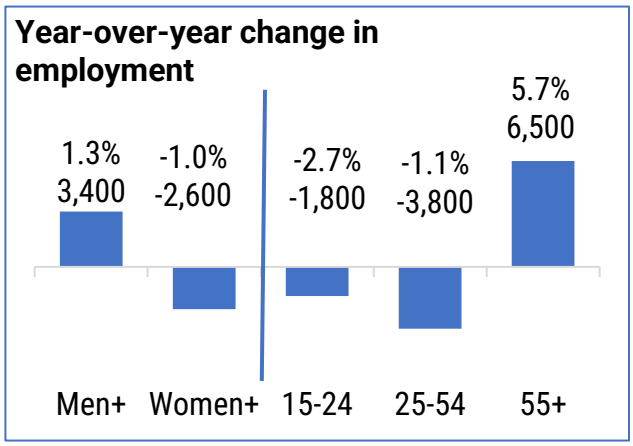
Labour Market Trends by Population Groups





- In Nova Scotia, men's employment contracted (-1.7%) while women's employment had minimal change over the past month. Men experienced a contraction in both full-time and part-time employment(-2,700 vs -1,900 jobs). In comparison, women experienced an expansion in full-time employment (+1,900 jobs) and a contraction in part-time employment (-1,600 jobs).

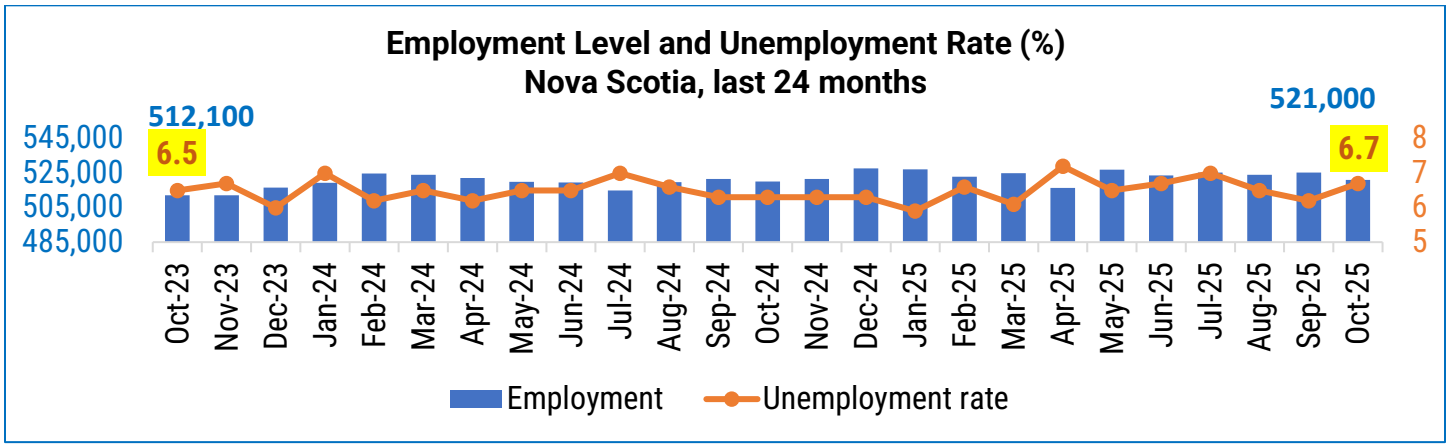
- Older workers (55 years and over) experienced job gains last month, with employment rising by 1.7%. Core-aged workers (25 to 54 years) and youth workers (15 to 24 years) experienced job losses of 3,500 (-1.0%) and 2,900 jobs (-4.3%), respectively.

- Compared to October last year, the employment levels of men rose by 1.3%, led by an increase in full-time employment (+1.9%). Women's employment levels declined by 1.0%, driven by the contraction in part-time employment (-8.8%). Older workers (55 years and over) experienced job gains in the past 12 months. Youth (15 to 24 years) and core age workers (15 to 24 years) experienced job losses.

Unemployment rates for youth women fell (-2.6pp) month overmonth, while it remained unchanged for men aged 25+ year-over-year.

Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Sex and Age

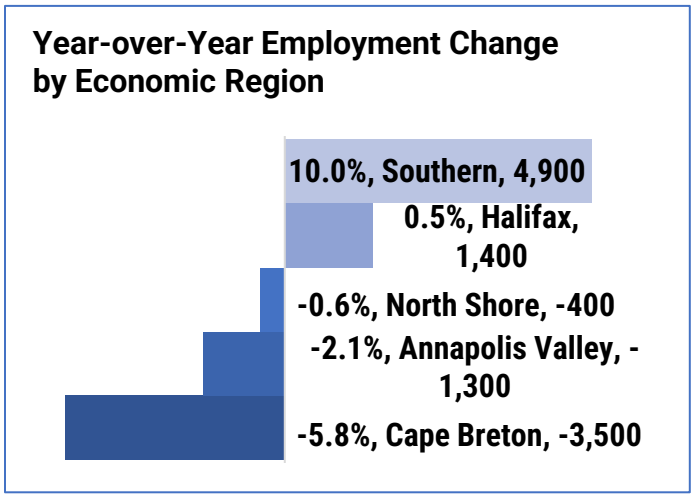
Unemployment Rate (%)	Oct-24	Sep-25	Oct-25	Month/month change	Year/year change
Age 15-24	11.2	12.7	14.1	1.4 pp	2.9 pp
Men+	12.3	10.5	15.2	4.7 pp	2.9 pp
Women+	9.9	15.2	12.6	-2.6 pp	2.7 pp
Age 25 and over	5.5	5.2	5.6	0.4 pp	0.1 pp
Men+	6.5	5.8	6.5	0.7 pp	0.0 pp
Women+	4.4	4.5	4.7	0.2 pp	0.3 pp



Overall Employment and Unemployment Trend

- Employment levels remained elevated in the past twelve months, averaging 0.8% higher than the previous 12-month period.
- Over the past year, the average unemployment rate was 6.5%, staying near historical low levels.

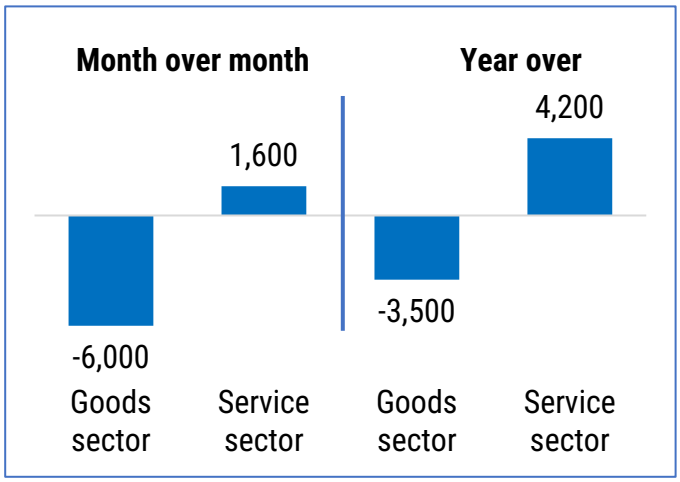
Employment Trend by Economic Region[2]



- In October 2025 (three-month average from August to October 2025), compared to September 2025 (July to September 2025), all regions experienced employment contraction except for Annapolis Valley (+1.5%) and Southern (+1.3%). Cape Breton experienced the highest job losses in Nova Scotia at -1.9%, followed by Halifax (-1.1%), and North Shore (-0.3%). Compared to one year ago in October 2024, Halifax and Southern had job gains, while the other regions had job losses.[3].

[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.*

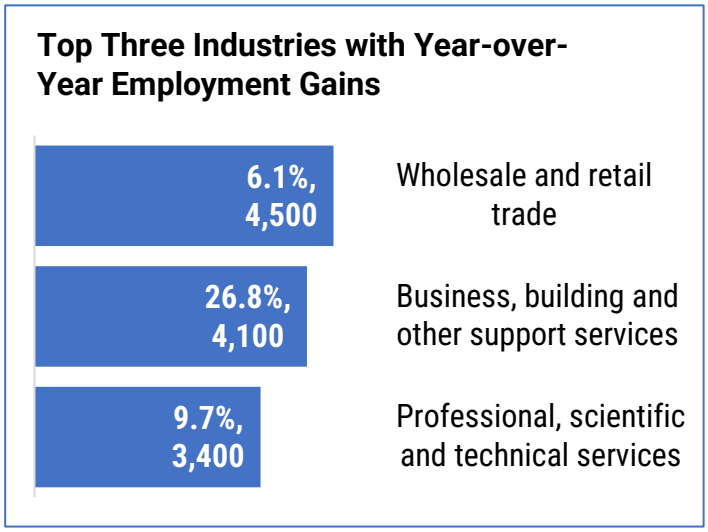
[3] *Source: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0387-01, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.*



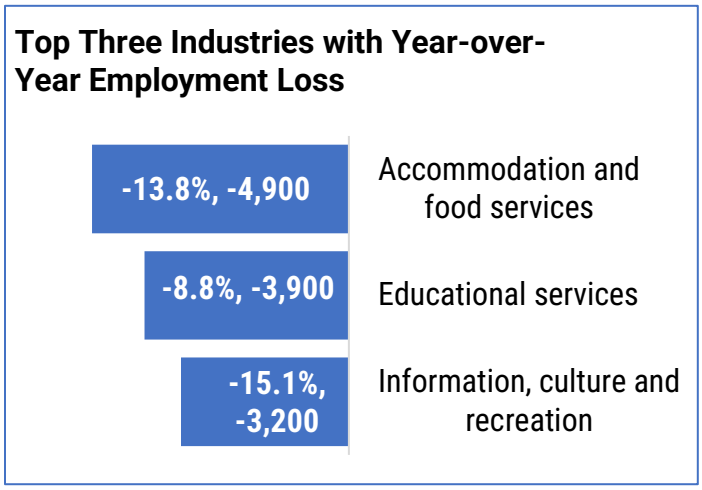
Employment Trend by Industry

- Employment in the service-producing sector rose both month-over-month (+0.4%) and year-over-year (+1.0%) while employment in goods-producing sector fell both month-over-month (-5.9%) and year-over-year (-3.5%).

- In the last month, the top expanding industry was "business, building and other support services" (+1,600 jobs, +9.0%). The top contracting industry was "construction" (-3,200 jobs, -7.1%).

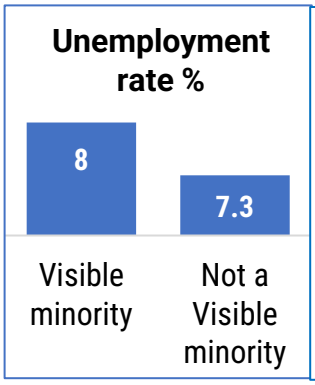


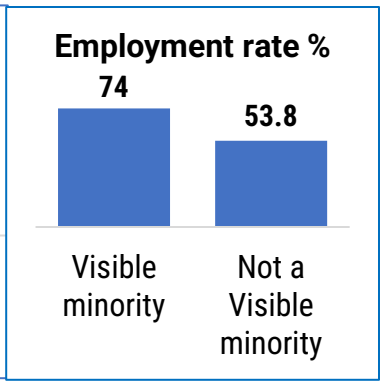
- Compared to twelve months ago (September 2024), employment gains were largest in the "wholesale and retail trade (+4,500 jobs, +6.1%). This was followed by "business, building and other support services" (+4,100 jobs, +26.8%) & "professional, scientific and technical services" (+3,400 jobs, +9.7%).

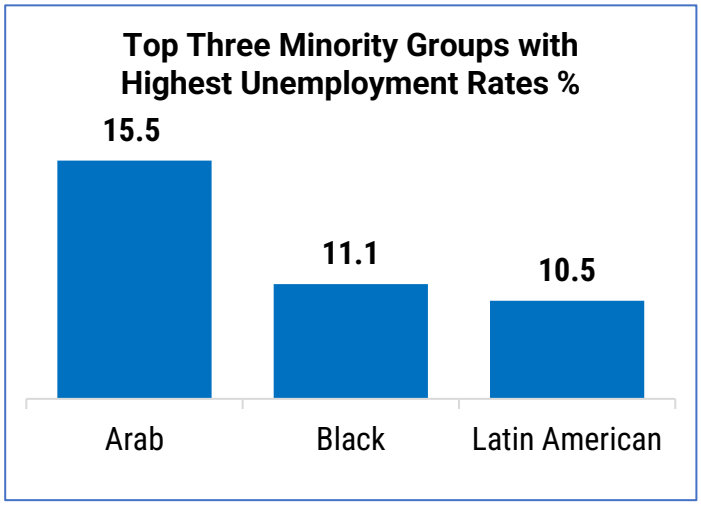


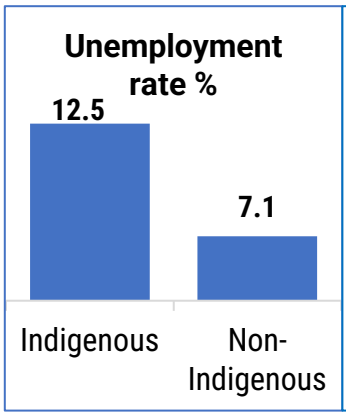
- Employment declines compared to twelve months ago were largest in the "accommodation and food services" (-4,900 jobs, -13.8%), "educational services" (-3,900 jobs, -8.8%) & "information, culture and recreation" (-3,200 jobs, -15.1%).

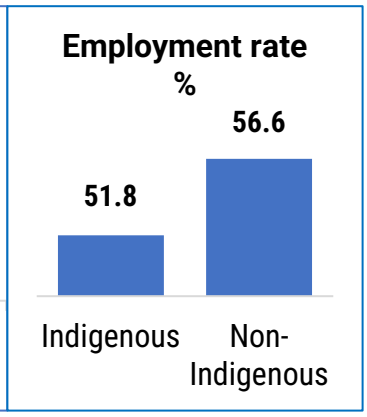
Labour Market Outcomes of Diversity Groups in Atlantic Canada[4]











- The employment rate (number of employed for the entire population 15 and over) for visible for non-visible minorities (74.0% vs 53.8%) on average in the last three months ending in October 2025. This can mostly be attributed to the higher labour participation of visible minorities.

- Compared to September 2025 (3-month average from July to September 2025), the employment rate of visible minorities increased by 0.3 percentage points. The employment rate fell by 0.6 percentage points for not visible minorities in Atlantic Canada.

- There are large gaps among different visible minority groups. Among the groups with available data[5], Arabs, Blacks, and Latin Americans face the highest unemployment rates (15.5%, 11.1% & 10.5%, respectively), while 3.8% of Southeast Asians 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 (12.5% versus 7.1%), while they face a lower employment rate (51.8% versus 56.6%).

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

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[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.

The next Labour Force Survey will be released on **December 5, 2025**, covering the November 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