

# Labour Market Information News

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## Labour Force Survey -- Nova Scotia Highlights

Employment in Nova Scotia rose by 500 jobs (+0.1%) in January 2026. The unemployment rate rose by 0.5 percentage points to 6.9%. This issue of the *Labour Market Information News* monitors the key labour market indicators in January 2026. The Labour Force Survey references the week of January 11 to 17, 2026 and compares it to the week of December 7 to 13, 2025.

### Snapshot of Nova Scotia's Labour Market in January 2026<sup>1</sup> Compared to December 2025

Labour Force  
563,500

+3,200

Employment  
524,700

+500

Full Time  
440,900  
Part Time  
83,900

+5,900

-5,300

Unemployment Rate  
6.9%

+0.5 pp

Employment Rate  
57.1%

No Change

- The labour force expanded by 0.6% to 563,500 (+3,200) in January 2026. The labour participation rate rose by 0.4 percentage points to 61.4%.
- Nova Scotia's seasonally adjusted employment level rose by 0.1% in January (+500 jobs) with gains in full-time (+5,900, +1.4%) and losses in part-time employment (-5,300, -5.9%). (Individuals switching between full-time and part-time status are also included in these statistics.)
- Nova Scotia's unemployment rate rose to 6.9% in January, as a 0.6% expansion in the labour force outpaced a 0.1% 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) remained unchanged at 57.1% in January.

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

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Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration, Research, Accountability & Intergovernmental Affairs Division

## Labour Market Trends by Population Groups

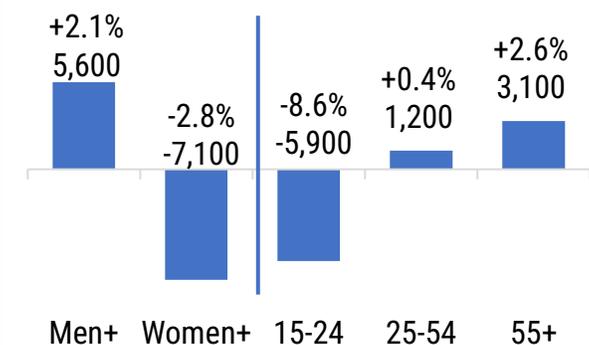
### Month-over-month change in employment



- In Nova Scotia, men's employment expanded slightly (+0.2%) while women's employment remained virtually unchanged. Women experienced an expansion in full-time employment, offset by a contraction in part-time employment (+1,600, -1,600 jobs), while men experienced an expansion in full-time and a contraction in part-time employment (+4,300, -3,800 jobs).

- Youth workers (15 to 24 years) and older workers (55 years and over) experienced job losses of 1,700 (-2.6%) and 1,400 jobs (-1.1%), respectively. Core age workers (25 to 54 years) experienced job gains (+3,600) last month, with employment rising by 1.1%.

### Year-over-year change in employment



- Compared to January last year, the employment levels of men increased by 2.1%, led by a notable increase in full-time employment (+6,400 jobs, +2.7%). Women's employment levels declined by 2.8%, with contractions in both full-time (-1,300, -0.6%) and part-time employment (-5,800, -10.4%). Youth (15 to 24 years) experienced job losses in the past 12 months, while core age workers (25 to 54 years) and older workers (age 55+) experienced job gains.

The unemployment rate for young women rose sharply by 7.0 percentage points last month, while that of young men fell by 1.0 percentage point. Among those aged 25+, men's unemployment rate rose 0.9 points, while women's fell 0.7 points.

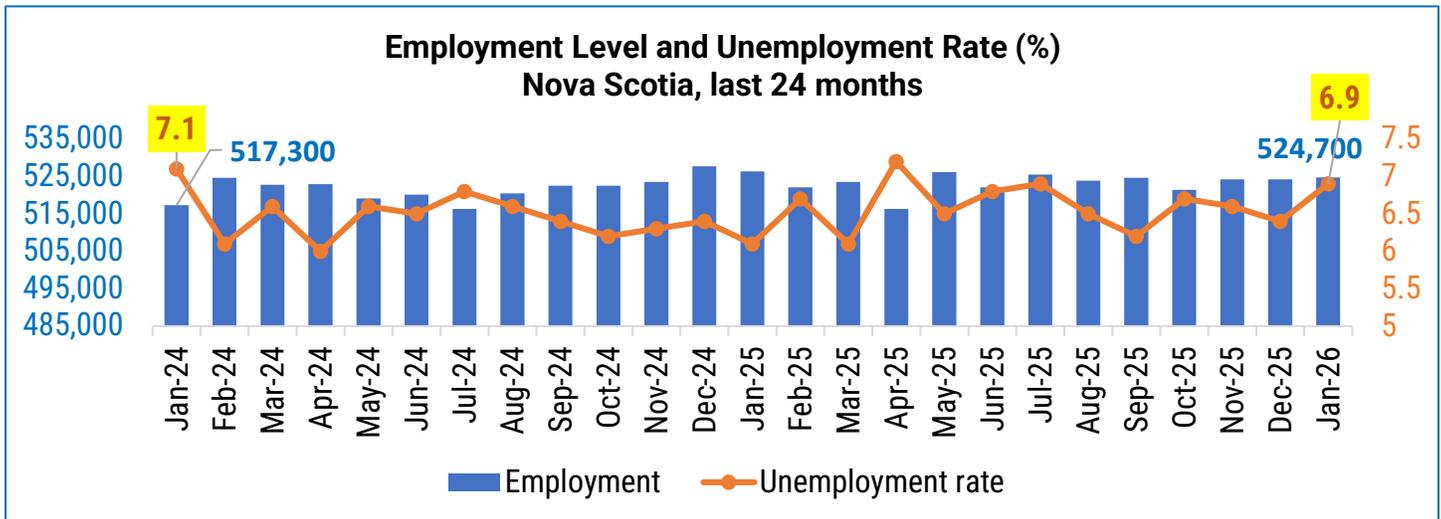
### Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Sex and Age

Unemployment Rate (%)	Jan-25	Dec-25	Jan-26	Month/month change	Year/year change
<b>Age 15-24</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>2.7 pp</b>	<b>1.6 pp</b>
Men+	15.0	13.4	12.4	-1.0 pp	-2.6 pp
Women+	11.5	10.8	17.8	7.0 pp	6.3 pp
<b>Age 25 and over</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>0.2 pp</b>	<b>0.8 pp</b>
Men+	5.4	5.6	6.5	0.9 pp	1.1 pp
Women+	4.3	5.5	4.8	-0.7 pp	0.5 pp

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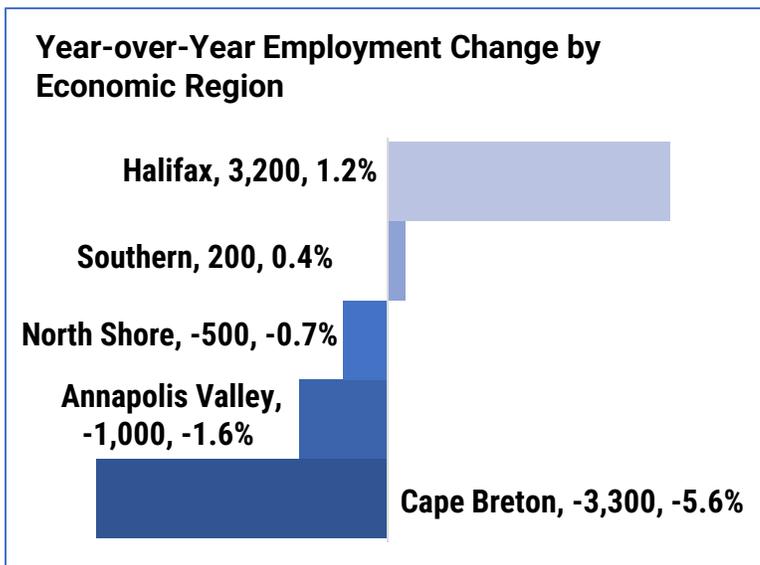
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## Overall Employment and Unemployment Trend



- Employment levels remained elevated in the past twelve months, averaging 0.2% higher than the previous 12-month period.
- Over the past year, the average unemployment rate was 6.6%, staying near historical low levels.

## Employment Trend by Economic Region<sup>2</sup>



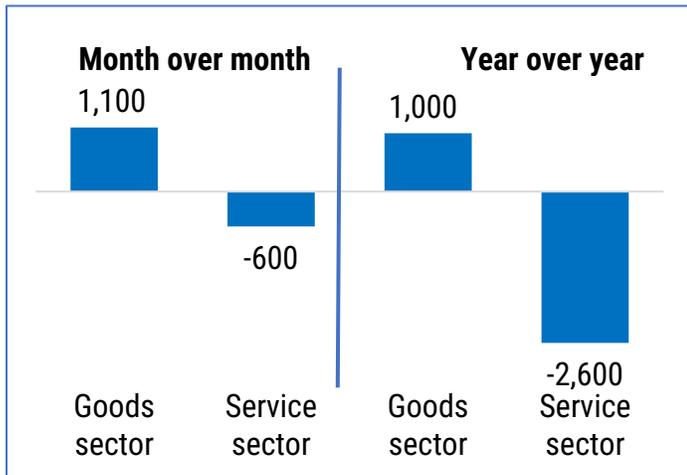
- In January 2026 (three-month average from November 2025 to January 2026), compared to December 2025 (October to December 2025), Cape Breton (-1.1%) and Annapolis Valley (-1.6%) experienced job losses. North Shore experienced job gains (+0.4%) While jobs in Southern and Halifax remained virtually unchanged.
- Compared to one year ago in January 2025, Southern and Halifax reported job gains, while the other three regions recorded job losses.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> \*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.

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

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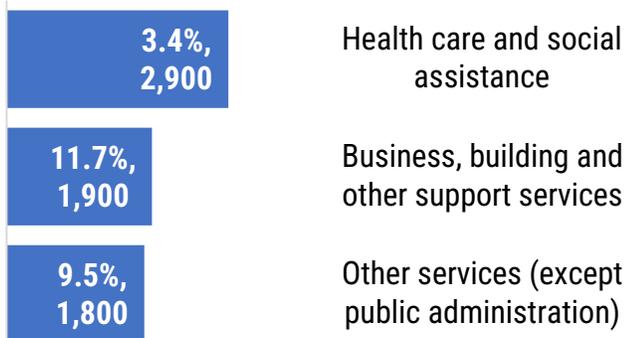
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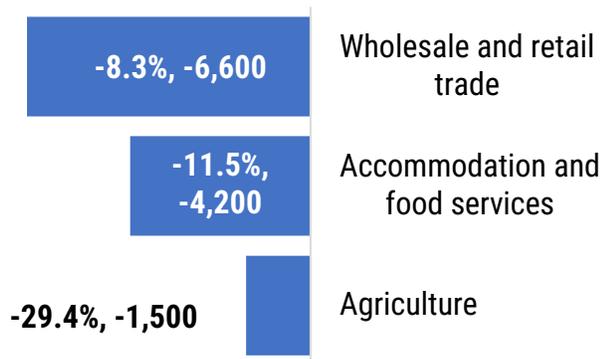
## Employment Trend by Industry

- Employment in the goods-producing sector rose both month-over-month (+1.1%) and year-over-year (+1.0%), while employment in the services-producing sector fell both month-over-month (-0.1%) and year-over-year (-0.6%).
- In the last month, the top expanding industry was “education services” (+1,200 jobs, +2.9%). The top contracting industry was “wholesale and retail trade” (-4,600 jobs, -5.9%).
- Compared to twelve months ago (January 2025), employment gains were largest in “health care and social assistance” (+2,900 jobs, +3.4%). This was followed by “business, building and other support services” (+1,900 jobs, +11.7%) & “other services” (+1,800 jobs, +9.5%).
- Employment declines compared to twelve months ago were largest in “wholesale and retail trade” (-6,600 jobs, -8.3%), “accommodation and food services” (-4,200 jobs, -11.5%), and “agriculture” (-1,500 jobs, -29.4%).

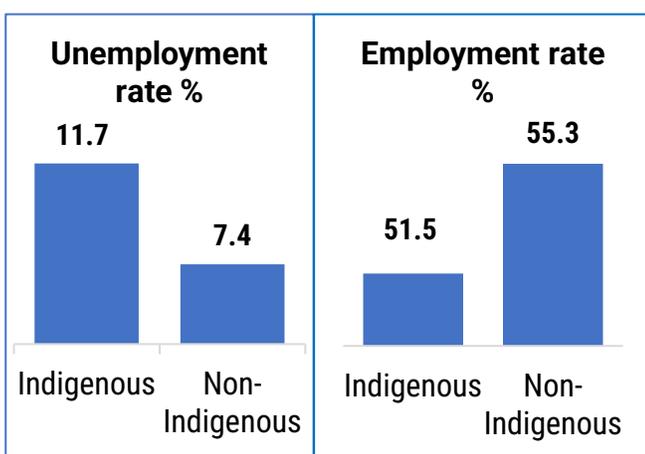
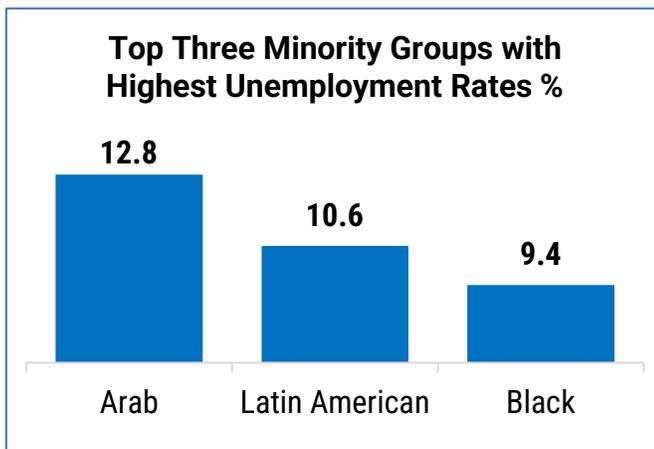
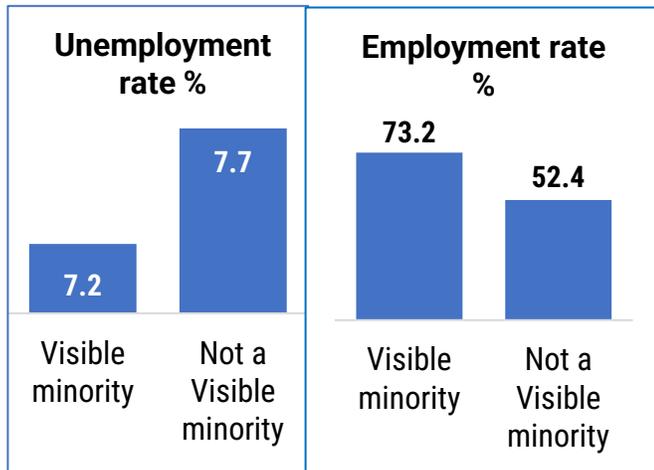
### Top Three Industries with Year-over-Year Employment Gains



### Top Three Industries with Year-over-Year Employment Loss



## Labour Market Outcomes of Diversity Groups in Atlantic Canada<sup>4</sup>



- The employment rate (number of employed for and non-visible minorities) for visible minorities was higher than that of non-visible minorities (73.2% vs 52.4%) on average in the last three months ending in January 2026. This can mostly be attributed to the higher labour participation of visible minorities.
- Compared to December 2025 (3-month average from October to December 2025), the employment rate of visible minorities and non-visible minorities fell by 0.5 percentage points each, in Atlantic Canada.
- There are large gaps among different visible minority groups. Among the groups with available data<sup>5</sup>, Arab, Latin American, and Black people face the highest unemployment rates (12.8%, 10.6%, & 9.4%, respectively), while 4.8% of Filipinos were unemployed in the last three months.
- Indigenous people in Atlantic Canada have a higher unemployment rate than the non-indigenous population (11.7% versus 7.4%), while they face a lower employment rate (51.5% versus 55.3%). Indigenous employment rate rose 0.4 percentage points in January 2026.
- It is worth noting that aggregate data masks the fact that visible minorities and indigenous people face additional labour market barriers.

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

<sup>5</sup> Data not available for West Asian, Korean, and Japanese minority groups.

The next Labour Force Survey will be released on **March 13, 2026**, covering the February 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