

Labour Market Information News

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Labour Force Survey -- Nova Scotia Highlights

Employment in Nova Scotia rose by 3,900 jobs (+0.7%) in March 2026. The unemployment rate fell by 0.5 percentage points to 6.6%. This issue of the *Labour Market Information News* monitors the key labour market indicators in March 2026. The Labour Force Survey references the week of March 15 to 21, and compares it to the week of February 15 to 21, 2026.

Snapshot of Nova Scotia's Labour Market in March 2026¹ Compared to February 2026

Labour Force
565,500

+1,600

Employment
528,000

+3,900

Full Time
434,700
Part Time
93,300

-1,200

+5,100

Unemployment Rate
6.6%

-0.5pp

Employment Rate
57.4%

+0.4pp

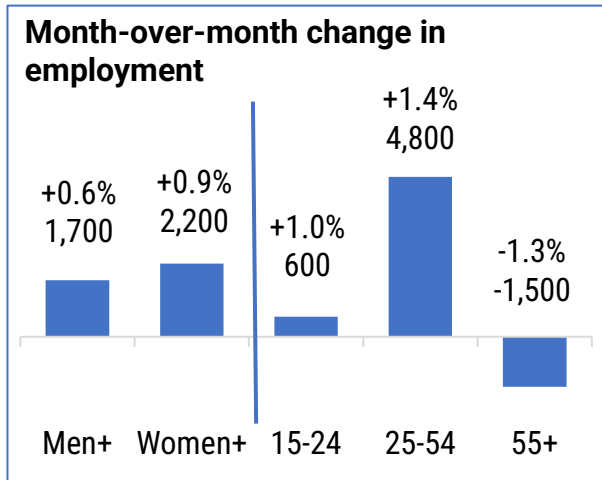
- The labour force expanded by 0.3% to 565,500 (+1,600) in March 2026. The labour participation rate rose by 0.1 percentage points to 61.4%.
- Nova Scotia's seasonally adjusted employment level rose by 0.7% in March (+3,900 jobs) with losses in full-time (-1,200, -0.3%) and gains in part-time employment (+5,100, +5.8%). (Individuals switching between full-time and part-time status are also included in these statistics.)
- Nova Scotia's unemployment rate fell to 6.6% in March, with a 0.3% expansion in the labour force alongside a 0.7% 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 0.4 percentage points to 57.4% in March.

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

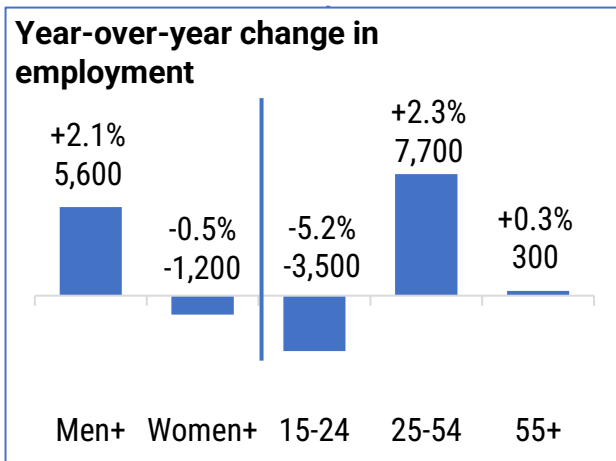
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Labour Market Trends by Population Groups



- In Nova Scotia, both men's employment (+0.6%) and women's employment expanded (+0.9%). Women experienced a contraction in full-time employment (-700 jobs) and an expansion in part-time employment (+2,900 jobs). Men also experienced a contraction in full-time employment (-500 jobs) and an expansion in part-time employment (+2,200 jobs).
- Older workers (55 years and over) experienced job losses of 1,500 (-1.3%). Core age workers (25 to 54 years) and youth workers (15 to 24 years) experienced job gains last month of 4,800 jobs (+1.4%) and 600 (+1.0%), respectively.



- Compared to March last year, men's employment levels increased by 2.1%, driven by a large increase in part-time employment (+7,700 jobs, +25.3%), partially offset by a contraction in full-time employment (-2,000, -0.8%). Women's employment levels declined by 0.5%, reflecting growth in full-time (+400, +0.2%) and a contraction in part-time employment (-1,600, -2.8%). Youth (15 to 24 years) experienced large job losses (-3,500 jobs, -5.2%) 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 fell, while that of young men rose slightly in the last month. Among those aged 25+, both men's and women's unemployment rates fell 0.2 points.

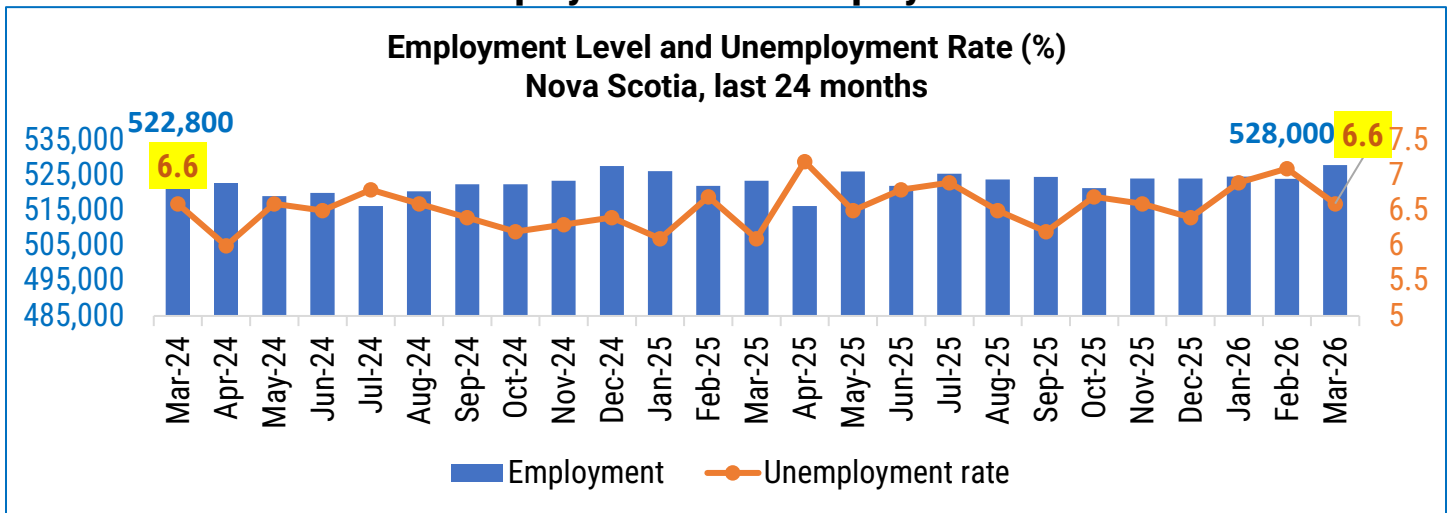
Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Sex and Age

Unemployment Rate (%)	Mar-25	Feb-26	Mar-26	Month/month change	Year/year change
Age 15-24	11.7	16.4	14.6	-1.8 pp	2.9 pp
Men+	12.8	14.2	14.3	0.1 pp	1.5 pp
Women+	10.8	18.9	15.0	-3.9 pp	4.2 pp
Age 25 and over	5.3	5.6	5.4	-0.2 pp	0.1 pp
Men+	5.8	6.1	5.9	-0.2 pp	0.1 pp
Women+	4.8	5.1	4.9	-0.2 pp	0.1 pp

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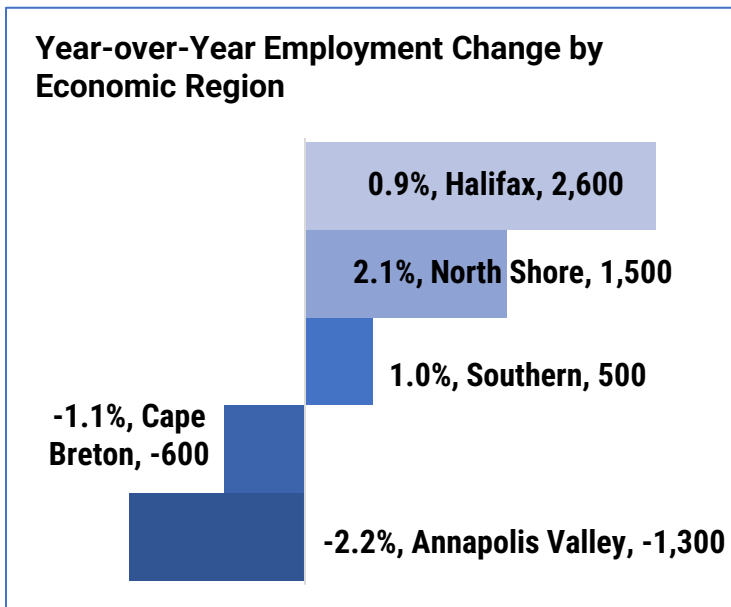
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Overall Employment and Unemployment Trend



- Employment levels remained elevated in the past twelve months, averaging 0.3% higher than the previous 12-month period.
- Over the past year, the average unemployment rate was 6.7%, staying near historical low levels.

Employment Trend by Economic Region²

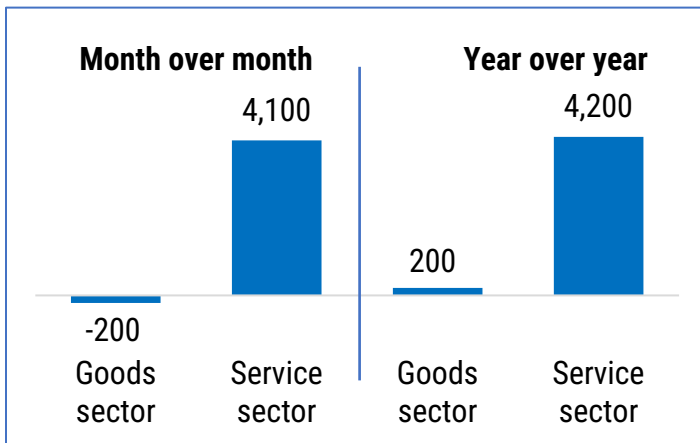


- In March 2026 (three-month average from January 2026 to March 2026), compared to February 2026 (December 2025 to February 2026), Halifax (+0.6%) and Cape Breton (+0.4%) experienced job gains. Southern (-0.8%), North Shore (-1.0%), and Annapolis Valley (-1.5%) experienced job losses.
- Compared to one year ago in March 2025, Cape Breton and Annapolis Valley reported job losses, while the other three regions recorded job gains³.

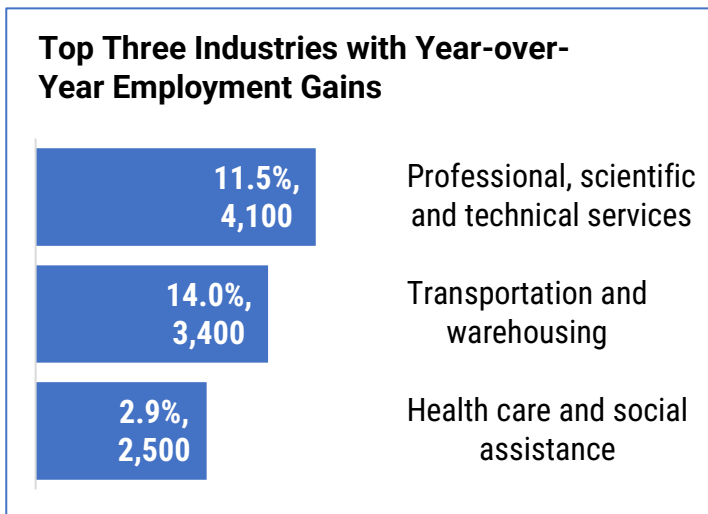
² ***Note:** The regional statistics is a 3-month moving average and is seasonally unadjusted. Therefore, it is not comparable to the statistics used in the rest of the report and may show a delay in data demonstrating sudden impacts to labour.

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

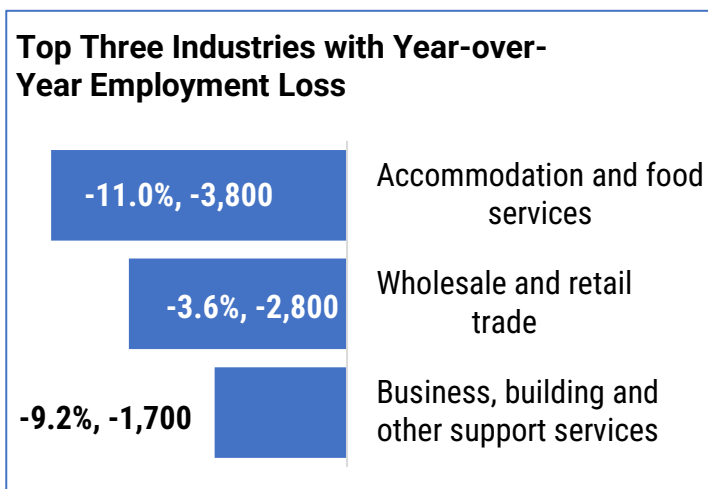
Employment Trend by Industry



- Employment in the goods-producing sector fell month-over-month (-0.2%) and rose year-over-year (+0.2%), while employment in the services-producing sector rose both month-over-month (+1.0%) and year-over-year (+1.0%).
- In the last month, the top expanding industry was “professional, scientific and technical services” (+1,600 jobs, +4.2%). The top contracting industry was “manufacturing” (-2,400 jobs, -6.8%).

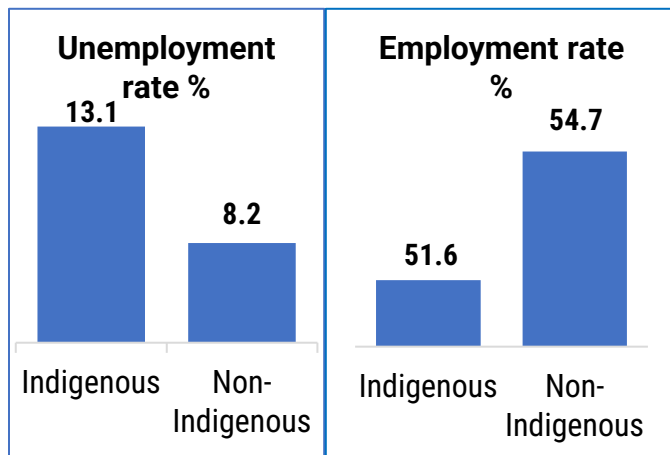
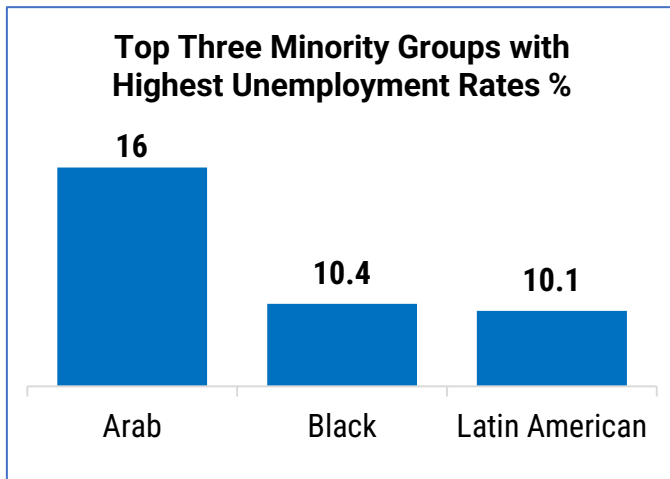
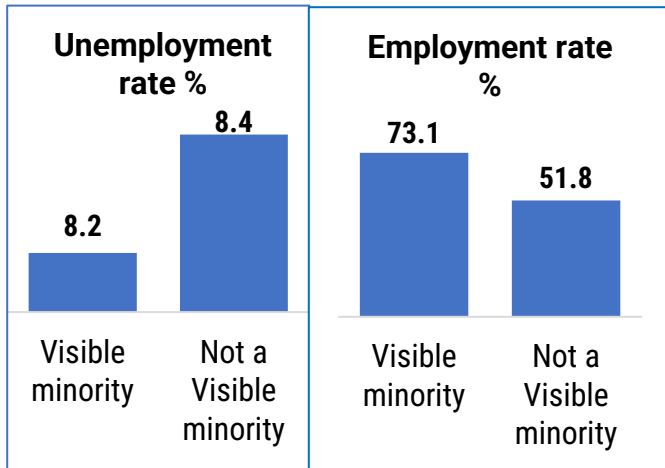


- Compared to twelve months ago (March 2025), employment gains were largest in “professional, scientific and technical services” (+4,100 jobs, +11.5%). This was followed by “transportation and warehousing” (+3,400 jobs, +14.0%) & “health care and social assistance” (+2,500 jobs, +2.9%).



- Employment declines compared to twelve months ago were largest in “accommodation and food services” (-3,800 jobs, -11.0%), “wholesale and retail trade” (-2,800 jobs, -3.6%), and “business, building and other support services” (-1,700 jobs, -9.2%).

Labour Market Outcomes of Diversity Groups in Atlantic Canada⁴



- The employment rate (number of employed for and non-visible minorities) for visible minorities was higher than that of non-visible minorities (73.1% vs 51.8%) on average in the last three months ending in March 2026. This can mostly be attributed to the higher labour participation of visible minorities.
- Compared to February 2026 (3-month average from December 2025 to February 2026), the employment rate of visible minorities rose by 0.3 percentage points, while that of non-visible minorities fell by 0.2 percentage points in Atlantic Canada.
- There are large gaps among different visible minority groups. Among the groups with available data⁵, Arab, Black, and Latin American people face the highest unemployment rates (16.0%, 10.4%, & 10.1%, respectively), while 5.2% of South Asians were unemployed in the last three months.
- Indigenous people in Atlantic Canada have a higher unemployment rate than the non-indigenous population (13.1% versus 8.2%), while they face a lower employment rate (51.6% versus 54.7%). Indigenous employment rate fell 0.5 percentage points in March 2026.
- 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.

The next Labour Force Survey will be released on **May 8, 2026**, covering the April 2026 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