

Labour Market Information News

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June 2026

Labour Force Survey -- Nova Scotia Highlights

Employment in Nova Scotia fell by 200 jobs in May 2026. The unemployment rate rose by 0.8 percentage points to 7.1%. This issue of the *Labour Market Information News* monitors the key labour market indicators in May 2026. The Labour Force Survey references the week of May 10 to 16, 2026, and compares it to the of April 12 to 18, 2026.

Snapshot of Nova Scotia's Labour Market in May 2026¹ Compared to April 2026

Labour Force
569,100

+4,600

Employment
528,500

-200

Full Time
438,400
Part Time
90,100

-1,000

+700

Unemployment Rate
7.1%

+0.8 pp

Employment Rate
57.3%

-0.1 pp

- The labour force expanded by 0.8% to 569,100 (+4,600) in May 2026. The labour participation rate fell by 0.4 percentage points to 61.7%.
- Nova Scotia's seasonally adjusted employment level remained virtually unchanged in May (-200 jobs) with losses in full-time (-1,000, -0.2%) and gains in part-time employment (+700, +0.8%). (Individuals switching between full-time and part-time status are also included in these statistics.)
- Nova Scotia's unemployment rate rose to 7.1% in May, with a 0.8% expansion in the labour force alongside a relatively unchanging employment level. 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 0.1 percentage points to 57.3% in May.

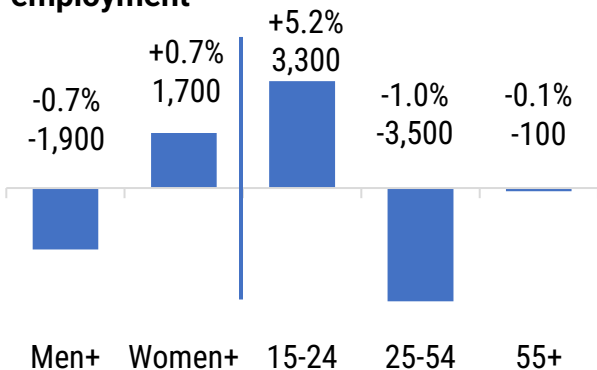
¹ Source: Statistics Canada, [Table 14-10-0287-01](#), Adjusted for Seasonality, Both Sexes, Ages 15+.

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Labour Market Trends by Population Groups

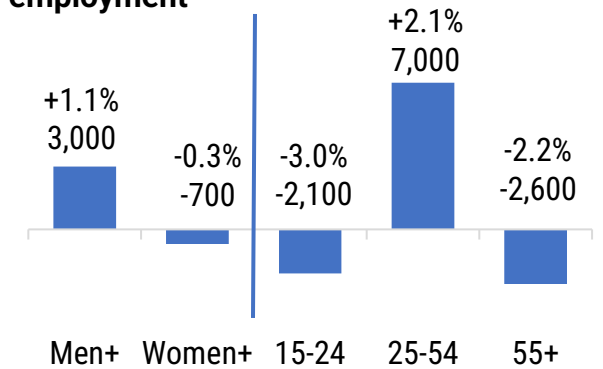
Month-over-month change in employment



- In May 2026, employment decreased for men (-0.7%) and increased for women (+0.7%). Full-time employment fell for men (-2,400 jobs) and rose for women (+1,400 jobs), while part-time employment increased for both groups, up 600 jobs for men and 200 jobs for women.

- Youth workers (15 to 24 years) experienced job gains of 3,300 (+5.2%). Core age workers (25 to 54 years) and older workers (55 years and over) experienced job losses last month of -3,500 jobs (-1.0%) and 100 (-0.1%), respectively.

Year-over-year change in employment



- Compared with May of last year, employment increased for men (+1.1%) and decreased for women (-0.3%). Men recorded net increases, with full-time employment down by 400 jobs and part-time employment up by 3,500 jobs. Women experienced net losses, with full-time employment increasing by 1,200 jobs and part-time employment decreasing by 1,900 jobs.

- Over the past 12 months, employment rose among core-age workers aged 25-54 (+7,000 jobs, +2.1%), and fell for both older workers aged 55+ (-2,600 jobs, -2.2%) and youth aged 15-24 (-2,100 jobs, -3.0%).

The unemployment rate for young women fell, while that of young men rose in the last month. Among those aged 25+, both men's and women's unemployment rates rose, by 0.8 and 1 points, respectively.

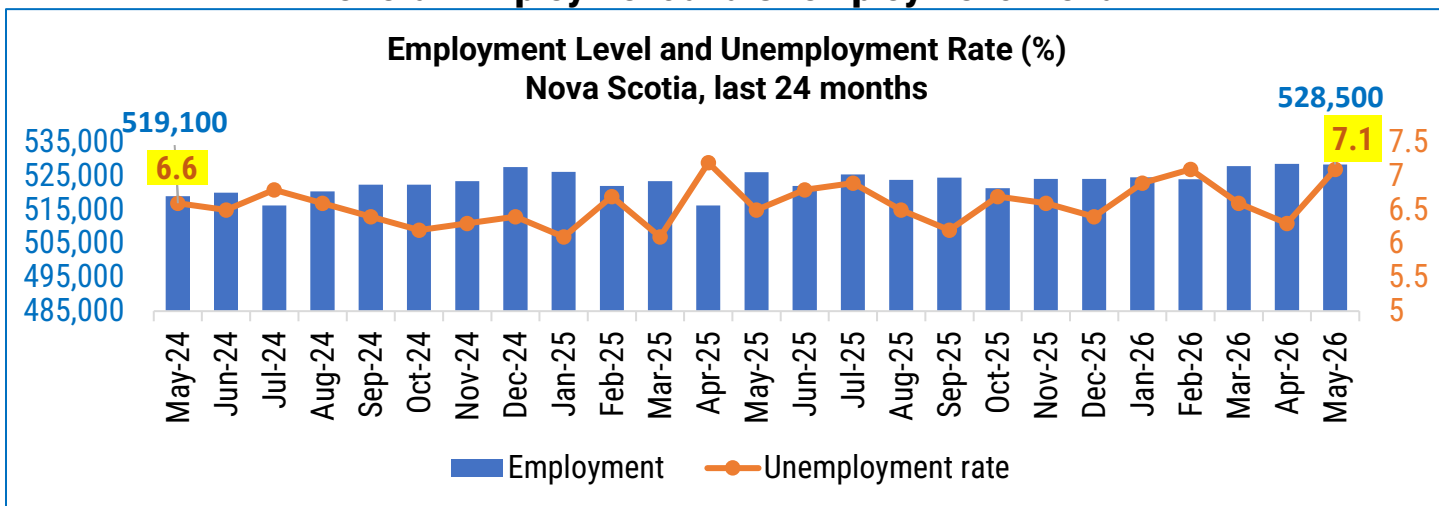
Nova Scotia Monthly Unemployment Rates, by Sex and Age

Unemployment Rate (%)	May-25	Apr-26	May-26	Month/month change	Year/year change
Age 15-24	12.0	14.2	13.7	-0.5 pp	1.7 pp
Men+	13.7	12.8	15.7	2.9 pp	2.0 pp
Women+	10.4	15.9	11.1	-4.8 pp	0.7 pp
Age 25 and over	5.7	5.1	6.1	1.0 pp	0.4 pp
Men+	6.5	5.7	6.5	0.8 pp	0.0 pp
Women+	4.7	4.6	5.6	1.0 pp	0.9 pp

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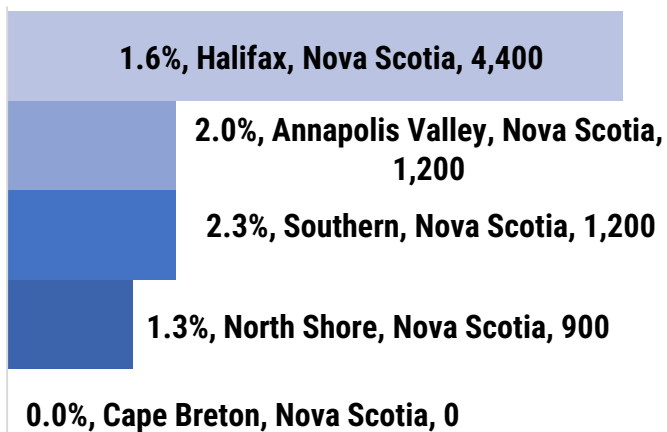
Overall Employment and Unemployment Trend



- Employment levels remained elevated in the past twelve months, averaging 0.5% 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

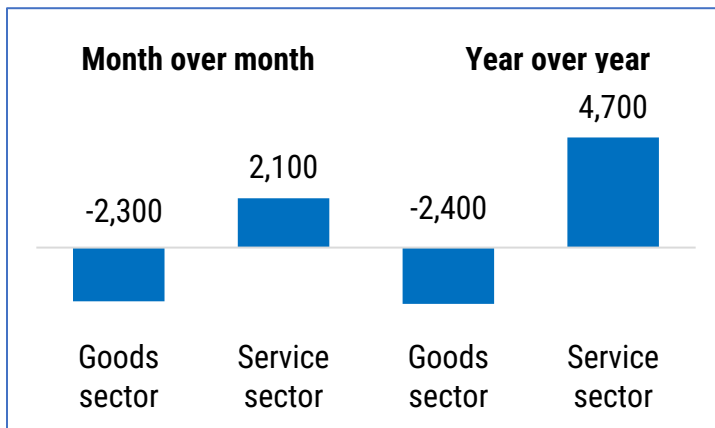
Year-over-Year Employment Change by Economic Region



- In May 2026 (three-month average from March 2026 to May 2026), compared to April 2026 (February 2026 to April 2026), all economic regions experienced job gains, led by Cape Breton (+4.1%), followed by Annapolis Valley (+2.9%), Southern (+2.3%), North Shore (+1.0%) and Halifax (+0.5%).
- Compared to one year ago in May 2025, all regions experienced job gains except Cape Breton which remained virtually unchanged.

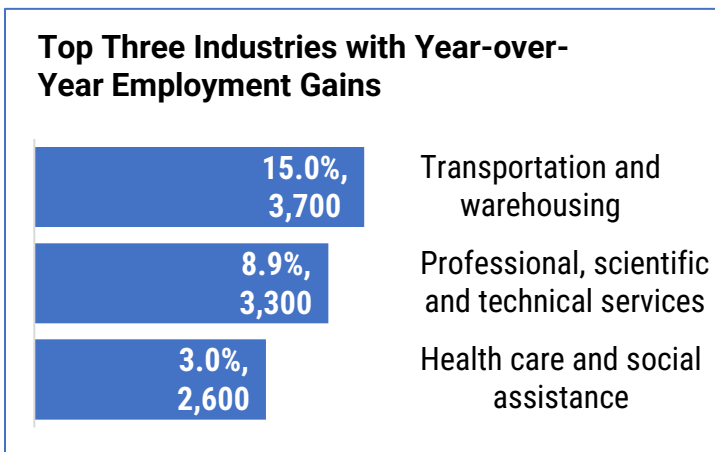
² ***Note:** The regional statistics is a 3-month moving average and is seasonally unadjusted. Therefore, it is not comparable to the statistics used in the rest of the report and may show a delay in data demonstrating sudden impacts to labour.

Employment Trend by Industry

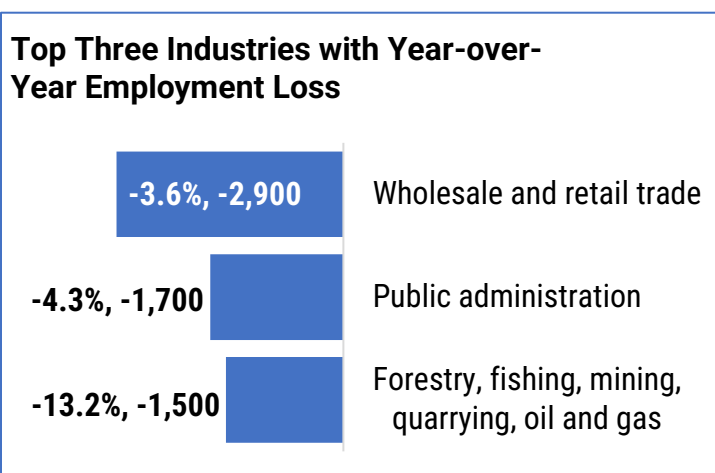


- Employment in the goods-producing sector fell both month-over-month (-2.4%) and year-over-year (-2.5%), while employment in the services-producing sector rose both month-over-month (+0.5%) and year-over-year (+1.1%).

- In the last month, the top expanding industry was “wholesale and retail trade” (+1,900 jobs, +2.5%). The top contracting industry was “construction” (-2,300 jobs, -5.1%).

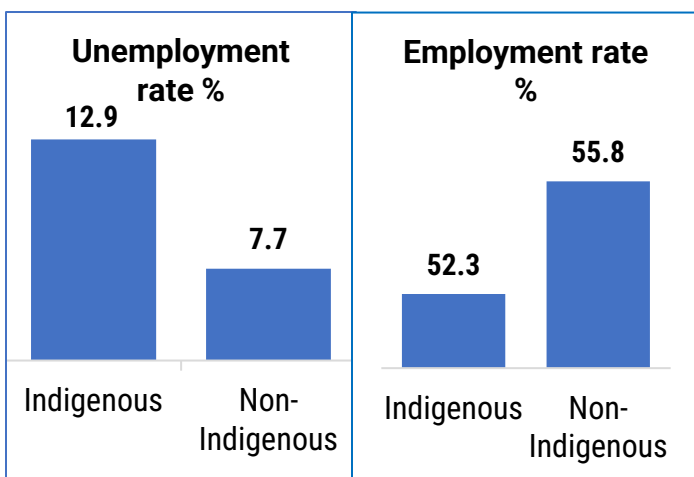
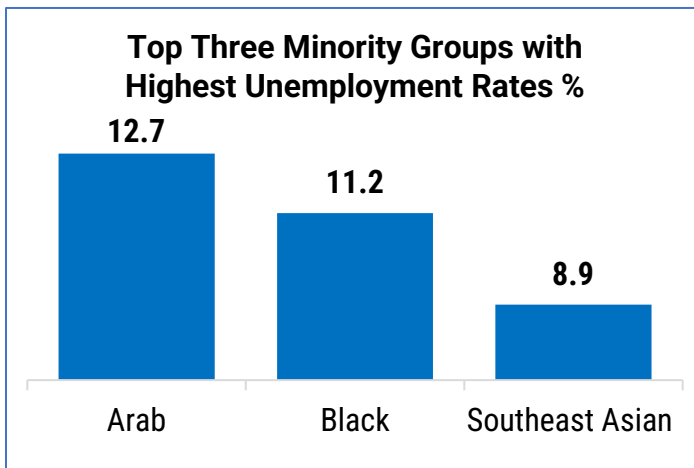
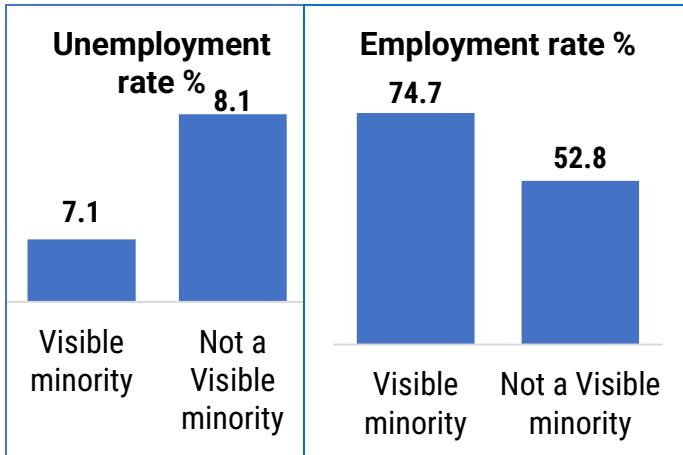


- Compared to twelve months ago (May 2025), employment gains were largest in “transportation and warehousing” (+3,700 jobs, +15.0%). This was followed by “professional, scientific and technical services” (+3,300 jobs, +8.9%) & “health care and social assistance” (+2,600 jobs, +3.0%).



- Employment declines compared to twelve months ago were largest in “wholesale and retail trade” (-2,900 jobs, -3.6%), “public administration” (-1,700 jobs, -4.3%), and “forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas” (-1,500 jobs, -13.2%).

Labour Market Outcomes of Diversity Groups in Atlantic Canada³



- The employment rate (number of employed for and non-visible minorities) for visible minorities was higher than that of non-visible minorities (74.7% vs 52.8%) on average in the last three months ending in May 2026. This can mostly be attributed to the higher labour participation of visible minorities.
- Compared to April 2026 (3-month average from February 2026 to April 2026), the employment rate of visible minorities rose by 0.9 percentage points, while that of non-visible minorities rose by 0.8 percentage points in Atlantic Canada.
- There are large gaps among different visible minority groups. Among the groups with available data⁴, Arab, Black, and Southeast Asian people face the highest unemployment rates (12.7%, 11.2%, & 8.9%, respectively), while 3.9% of Filipinos in the labour force were unemployed in the last three months.
- Indigenous people in Atlantic Canada have a higher unemployment rate than the non-indigenous population (12.9% versus 7.7%), while they face a lower employment rate (52.3% versus 55.8%). Indigenous employment rate rose by 0.9 percentage points since April 2026.
- It is worth noting that aggregate data masks the fact that visible minorities and indigenous people face additional labour market barriers.

³ Source: Statistics Canada, Table: [14-10-0373-01](#); [14-10-0401-01](#), three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.

⁴ Data not available for West Asian, Korean, and Japanese minority groups.

The next Labour Force Survey will be released on **July 10, 2026**, covering the June 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