

UNIFOR RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

LABOUR MARKET INSIGHTS

A monthly review of labour market indicators

April 2024



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May 10, 2024

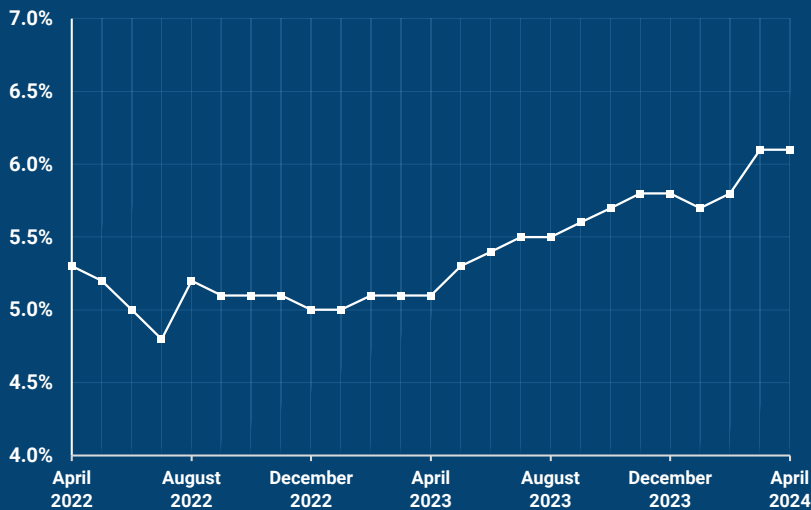
National Statistics

The Canadian job market surpassed expectations last month, with an increase of 90,000 jobs (+0.4%) in April. More than half the jobs gained, however, were part-time (+50,000) and all of the gains were concentrated in the services-producing sector (+101,000). Continued robust growth in Canada's working age population and an expanding labour force meant that the participation rate increased by 0.1 percentage point to 65.4% while the unemployment rate held steady at 6.1%.

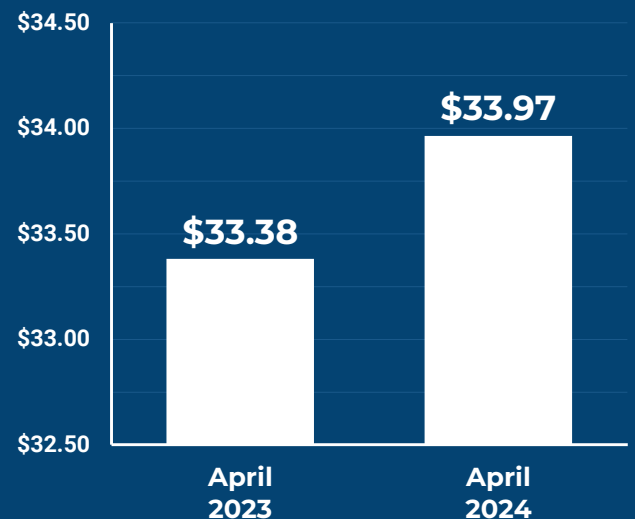
Hourly wages resumed their upwards momentum in April, rising by 0.4%, but falling to 4.7% on a year-over-year basis. Adjusted for inflation, real wages were 1.8% higher compared to April 2023. The proportion of workers covered by a collective agreement increased slightly to 30.4%, comprising 14.9% of private sector employees and 76.5% of public sector employees.

	April 2018–22 average	April 2023	March 2024	April 2024	Year-over-year (Y/Y) change	Monthly (M/M) change
Total employment (#) ¹	18,438,640	20,114,500	20,400,700	20,491,100	376,600 1.9%	90,400 0.4%
Unemployment rate (%) ²	7.7	5.1	6.1	6.1	1.0	0.0
Participation rate (%) ³	64.6	65.7	65.3	65.4	-0.3	0.1
Union coverage (%) ⁴	31.0	30.3	30.3	30.4	0.1	0.1
Average hourly wage (\$) ⁵	\$29.87	\$33.38	\$34.81	\$34.95	4.7%	0.4%
Real average hourly wage (\$) ⁶	\$33.45	\$33.38	\$33.83	\$33.97	1.8%	n/a

Unemployment Rate



Real Average Hourly Wage

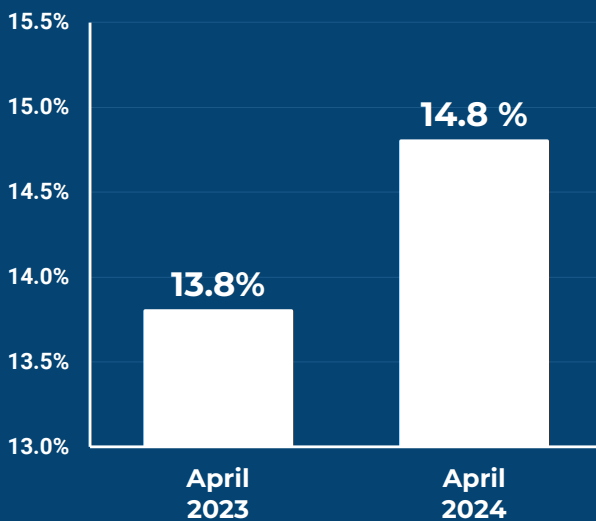


National Precarity Indicators

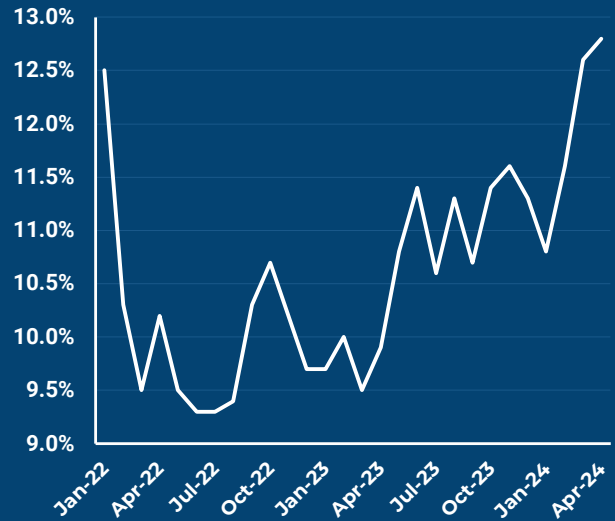
A number of Unifor's precarity indicators fell in April, with the underutilization (-0.4) and underemployment (-0.3) rates seeing significant improvement. The gender wage gap fell by 1.5% to \$4.86 although it remains essentially level on a year-over-year basis. Seasonal work ramped up in April, with the proportion of temporary job holders increasing by 0.3 percentage points and the percentage of multiple job holders trending upwards as well (+0.1). While the number of youths not in employment, education or training (NEETs) fell last month (-1.3%), the figure continues to be nearly 23% higher compared to April 2023. Youths have been disproportionately impacted by weakening labour market conditions in recent months, with the rate of youth unemployment hitting 12.8% in April (see chart below).

	Apr. 2023	Mar. 2024	Apr. 2024	Y/Y change	M/M change
Part-time rate (%) ⁷	18.7	19.0	18.9	0.2	-0.1
Involuntary part-time (%) ⁸	39.6	40.1	39.7	0.1	-0.4
Underutilization (R8) rate (%) ⁹	7.2	8.8	8.4	1.2	-0.4
Underemployment rate (%) ¹⁰	13.8	15.1	14.8	1.0	-0.3
Multiple job holders (%) ¹¹	5.7	5.6	5.7	0.0	0.1
Temporary job holders (%) ¹²	10.8	10.3	10.6	-0.2	0.3
Casual/other (%)	3.2	3.1	3.1	-0.1	0.0
Temporary/contract (%)	6.3	6.2	6.2	-0.1	0.0
Seasonal (%)	1.3	1.0	1.3	0.0	0.3
Low wage incidence (%) ¹³	20.1	19.3	22.2	2.1	2.9
Gender wage gap ¹⁴	\$4.87	\$4.93	\$4.86	-0.3%	-1.5%
NEETs (x1,000) ¹⁵	677.1	841.0	829.8	22.6%	-1.3%

Underemployment Rate



Youth Unemployment Rate



Regional Statistics

Generally speaking, employment gains during the month of April were evenly spread out throughout the country, with all five regions observing significant jobs growth. Percentagewise, British Columbia led the way, with an employment gain of 0.8% (+23,400), followed by an increase of 0.6% in Atlantic Canada (+8,000), 0.4% in Quebec (+19,200), 0.4% in the Prairies (+14,600), and 0.3% in Ontario (+25,000).

Job gains translated into strong declines in the unemployment rate in the Atlantic region (-0.5) and British Columbia (-0.5), which was also partially caused by a slight decline in the participation rate (-0.1) in both regions. In the Prairies and Quebec, a larger labour force offset the impacts of employment growth, with the unemployment rate rising significantly by 0.5 percentage points to 6.4% in the Prairie region.

Hourly wages fell slightly in British Columbia (-0.1%), indicating that many of the jobs gained there were in lower-paying positions. Meanwhile, there was a notable 1.4% jump in wages in the Prairies last month, with hourly wages now 4.6% higher on a year-over-year basis.



Regional Statistics Continued

Atlantic

	Apr. 2023	Apr. 2024	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	1,208,400	1,250,900	42,500 3.5%	8,000 0.6%
Unemployment rate (%)	7.1	7.1	0.0	-0.5
Participation rate (%)	61.0	61.3	0.3	-0.1
Union coverage (%)	32.4	32.3	-0.1	0.2
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$28.98	\$30.66	5.8%	0.6%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$28.98	\$29.80	2.8%	n/a



Quebec

	Apr. 2023	Apr. 2024	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	4,505,000	4,534,400	29,400 0.7%	19,200 0.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	4.1	5.1	1.0	0.1
Participation rate (%)	65.0	64.7	-0.3	0.2
Union coverage (%)	39.2	39.7	0.5	0.0
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$32.26	\$33.69	4.4%	0.3%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$32.26	\$32.74	1.5%	n/a



Ontario

	Apr. 2023	Apr. 2024	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	7,919,400	7,995,500	76,100 1.0%	25,000 0.3%
Unemployment rate (%)	4.9	6.8	1.9	0.1
Participation rate (%)	65.5	65.0	-0.5	0.0
Union coverage (%)	26.3	26.1	-0.2	0.2
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$34.46	\$35.92	4.2%	0.1%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$34.46	\$34.91	1.3%	n/a



Regional Statistics Continued

Prairies

	Apr. 2023	Apr. 2024	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	3,718,000	3,839,000	121,000 3.3%	14,600 0.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	5.5	6.4	0.9	0.5
Participation rate (%)	68.8	68.9	0.1	0.4
Union coverage (%)	28.2	27.5	-0.7	0.0
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$33.34	\$34.87	4.6%	1.4%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$33.34	\$33.89	1.6%	n/a



British Columbia

	Apr. 2023	Apr. 2024	Y/Y change	M/M change
Total employment (#)	2,779,400	2,871,200	91,800 3.3%	23,400 0.8%
Unemployment rate (%)	5.0	5.0	0.0	-0.5
Participation rate (%)	65.2	65.2	0.0	-0.1
Union coverage (%)	29.2	30.6	1.4	0.5
Average hourly wage (\$)	\$34.17	\$36.38	6.5%	-0.1%
Real avg. hourly wage (\$)	\$34.17	\$35.35	3.5%	n/a



Average Hourly Wages by Industry

Nominal vs. Inflation-Adjusted Wage Growth

Industry	April 2023	April 2024	Y/Y change	Y/Y inflation-adjusted change
Agriculture	\$24.15	\$24.95	3.3%	0.3%
Forestry	\$35.27	\$36.15	2.5%	-0.4%
Mining, oil and gas	\$50.48	\$51.57	2.2%	-0.7%
Utilities	\$48.59	\$51.29	5.6%	2.5%
Construction	\$35.42	\$36.79	3.9%	0.9%
Manufacturing: durables	\$34.09	\$34.93	2.5%	-0.4%
Manufacturing: non-durables	\$31.78	\$33.37	5.0%	2.0%
Wholesale Trade	\$34.96	\$37.02	5.9%	2.8%
Retail Trade	\$23.08	\$24.05	4.2%	1.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	\$31.80	\$32.68	2.8%	-0.1%
Finance and Insurance	\$41.68	\$44.46	6.7%	3.5%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	\$34.10	\$35.87	5.2%	2.2%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	\$44.07	\$47.24	7.2%	4.0%
Business, building and other support	\$26.17	\$26.74	2.2%	-0.7%
Educational Services	\$38.21	\$39.48	3.3%	0.4%
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$31.46	\$33.05	5.1%	2.1%
Information, Culture and Recreation	\$31.70	\$31.47	-0.7%	-3.6%
Accommodation and Food Services	\$19.34	\$20.46	5.8%	2.7%
Other Services	\$28.85	\$29.52	2.3%	-0.6%
Public Administration	\$42.40	\$44.82	5.7%	2.7%

The nearly double-digit wage gains in some industries during 2023 have abated, and more sluggish wage growth in recent months has resulted in negative real wage growth for some, including durables manufacturing (-0.4%), business, building and other support (-0.7%), other services (-0.6%), and, most notably, information, culture and recreation (-3.6%).

In terms of job gains, the bulk of employment growth took place in the services-producing sector last month, with professional, scientific and technical services (+25,500), and accommodation and food services (+24,200) leading the way. Job losses were concentrated in the goods-producing sector, with significant losses in the construction industry (-11,100).

Monthly Employment Gains and Losses by Industry and Sector

Employment Change by Industry/Sector, March to April 2024

GOODS-PRODUCING SECTOR	-10,400
Agriculture	-5,400
Forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	7,700
Utilities	-5,000
Construction	-11,100
Manufacturing	3,400
SERVICES PRODUCING SECTOR	100,700
Wholesale and retail trade	6,100
Transportation and warehousing	6,700
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	-400
Professional, scientific and technical services	25,500
Business, building and other support services	9,500
Educational services	-4,500
Health care and social assistance	17,400
Information, culture and recreation	9,900
Accommodation and food services	24,200
Other services (except public administration)	6,500
Public administration	-100



NOTES

1. Total employment counts all working age individuals (15 years old and above) who are currently employed. Seasonally adjusted.
2. The unemployment rate expresses the percentage of working age people who are unemployed and actively seeking work. It does not include unemployed individuals who are not currently searching for jobs or who are permanently without work, and who are therefore considered to fall outside the labour market. Seasonally adjusted.
3. The participation rate expresses the percentage of all working age people who are participating in the labour market, including both employed and unemployed (actively job-seeking) individuals. Seasonally adjusted.
4. Union coverage includes workers who are union members as well as those who are non-unionized but covered by the terms of a collective agreement.
5. The average hourly wage is calculated using usual wages or salaries reported by employees for their main job.
6. The real average hourly wage adjusts wages to account for the impact of inflation and is reported in dollars from the corresponding month of the previous year. Since CPI data is unavailable for the current month prior to the release of the Labour Force Survey, the previous month's CPI level is used to estimate real wages for the current period.
7. The part-time rate measures the percentage of all employed workers who are working part-time hours.
8. The involuntary part-time rate measures the percentage of part-time workers who wanted full-time employment.
9. The underutilization rate, or R8, is used by Statistics Canada to measure underutilized labour. It adds to the unemployment rate those who are waiting for recall or replies, long-term future starts, discouraged workers (those who did not search because they believed no jobs were available) and a portion of involuntary part-time workers.
10. The underemployment rate measures the percentage of people who want work but cannot find suitable employment or who do not have adequate support systems in place that would allow them to engage in job-seeking. It therefore measures the true extent of labour underutilization in Canada. The underemployment rate adds to the unemployment rate all involuntary part-time workers and the marginally attached (i.e. those who wanted to work but who were not able to actively search for jobs due to extenuating circumstances).
11. The multiple job holder rate measures the percentage of employed workers who hold two or more jobs.
12. The temporary job holder rate measures the percentage of employed workers whose jobs are temporary in tenure.
13. Low wage incidence is expressed as the percentage of hourly wage earners earning less than two-thirds of the median hourly wage. This measure is a widely accepted standard for determining the low pay threshold.
14. The gender pay gap measures the average difference in income between men and women who earn hourly wages. A positive gap indicates that men earn, on average, more than women.
15. The NEET category measures the number of people aged 15 to 29 who are not in employment, education or training.





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