

January 2021

Labour Market Information News

Department of Labour and Advanced Education



Research, Information and Analysis on Nova Scotia's labour market collected by LAE's RAIA division.

Labour Force Survey, December 2020: Nova Scotia Highlights & Summary of Labour Impact of COVID

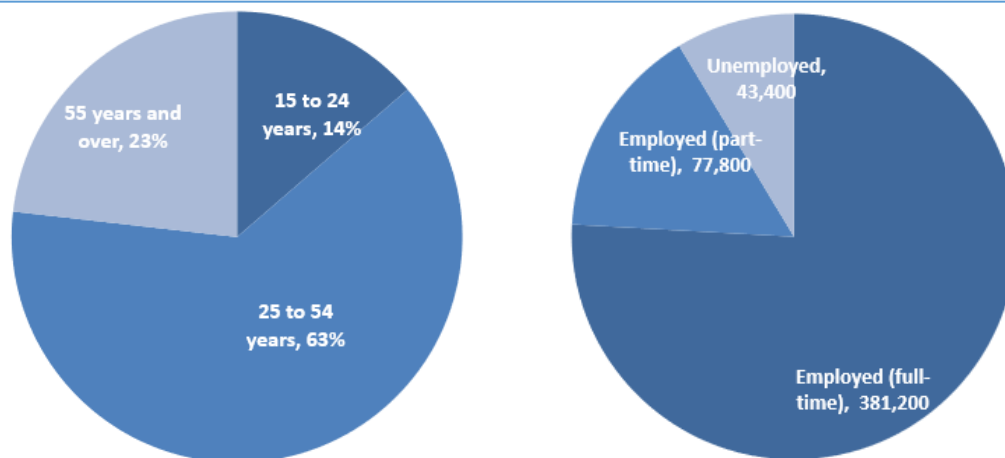
In response to the rising COVID-19 cases in Halifax and Hants counties in December, many businesses located in Halifax and Hants were ordered to shut down or comply to stricter health measures from November 26 to December 20. Fitness establishments, museums, public libraries and other establishments are ordered to close with many more businesses restricting activities and events.

This issue of the Labour Market Information News continues to measure the impact of COVID-19 and the progress of labour recovery in the December by using the December Labour Force Survey (reflecting the market conditions as of the week of **December 6 to 12** and the comparison to the week of November 8 to 14). As sub-provincial data is not available in the monthly release, the impact of restrictive measures on labour market implemented in Halifax and Hants counties will be averaged at the provincial level.

Nova Scotia's labour force experienced a small rebound from November

- Nova Scotia's **labour force** expanded by 1,600 (+0.3%) to 502,300 in December. It was 8,600 lower than the pre-COVID level (-1.7%). Compared to a year ago, the labour force is 3,100 lower (-0.6%).

Labour Force Breakdown by Age and Employment Status, December 2020



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0287-01, Adjusted for Seasonality, Both Sexes, Ages 15+.

Employment dropped as health measures tightened in Halifax and Hants counties

- Nova Scotia's **employment** fell by 9,600 jobs (-2.0%) to 458,900 in December. This has set the employment level farther from its pre-COVID levels (-12,100 jobs, -2.6%). Compared to December 2019, employment was 6,700 lower (-1.4%).
- Nova Scotia faced an **employment rate** of 55.9% in November, 1.2 percentage points lower than November and 2 percentage points lower than its pre-COVID February level (57.9%).

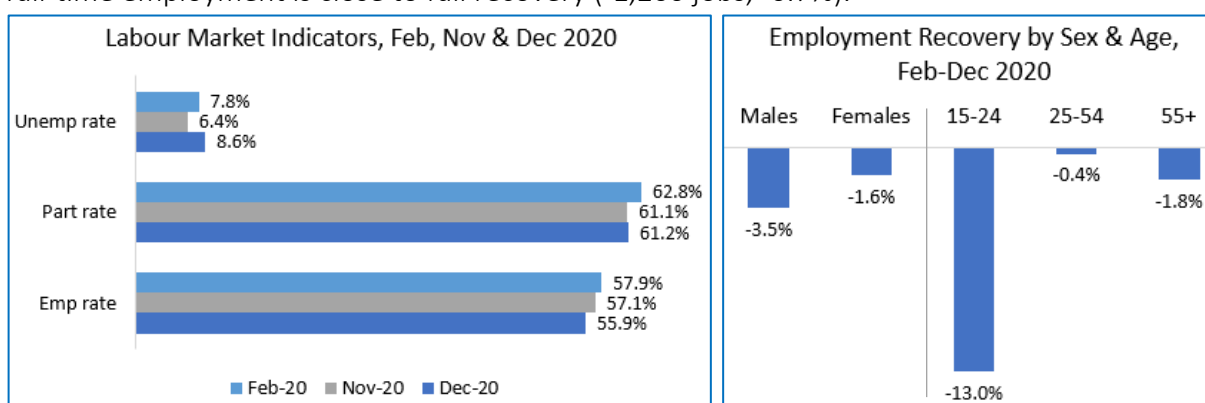
- **Unemployment rate** rose from 6.4% in November to 8.6% in December, 0.8 percentage points higher than its pre-COVID level (7.8%).
- Labour underutilization rose for the first time since May, mostly driven by the rise in unemployment level (+11,200 people, +34.8%). **The number of Nova Scotians affected by COVID rose to 21,400 in December from 10,500 in November**, including 12,100 who lost jobs, 1,400 people who lost more than half of their work hours, and 7,900 more people who lost all their work hours compared to February. **Labour underutilization rate** rose from 15.3% in November to 17.1% in December, moving farther from its pre-COVID level (13.9%).^{1,2}

Youth employment once again felt the disproportionate impact of the tightened health measures

- Youth employment dropped by 5.7% (-3,600 jobs) in the last month. In comparison, the employment of core-aged workers (aged 25-54) and older workers (aged 55 and over) dropped by 1.8% (-5,500 jobs) and 0.4% (-400 jobs) respectively. Youth employment is farthest from its February pre-COVID level (-13.0%) as opposed to -0.4% and -1.8% for core-aged and older workers.

Male part-time employment took the blunt of the tightened health measures

- Both **male employment** and **female employment** shrank due to the tightened health measures in Halifax and Hants counties. Male employment dropped by 2.7% (-6,300 jobs) while female employment dropped by 1.4% (-3,300 jobs).
- **Part-time employment** was more impacted by the business shutdowns, especially male part-time employment (-5,200 jobs, -17.2%). **Full-time employment** only dropped by 2,000 jobs (-0.5%), evenly distributed among male full-time employment (-1,100 jobs) and female full-time employment (-900 jobs).
- Male full-time employment remains higher than its pre-COVID levels (+2,200 jobs, +1.1%). Female full-time employment is close to full recovery (-1,200 jobs, -0.7%).



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0287-01, Adjusted for Seasonality, Both Sexes, Ages 15+.

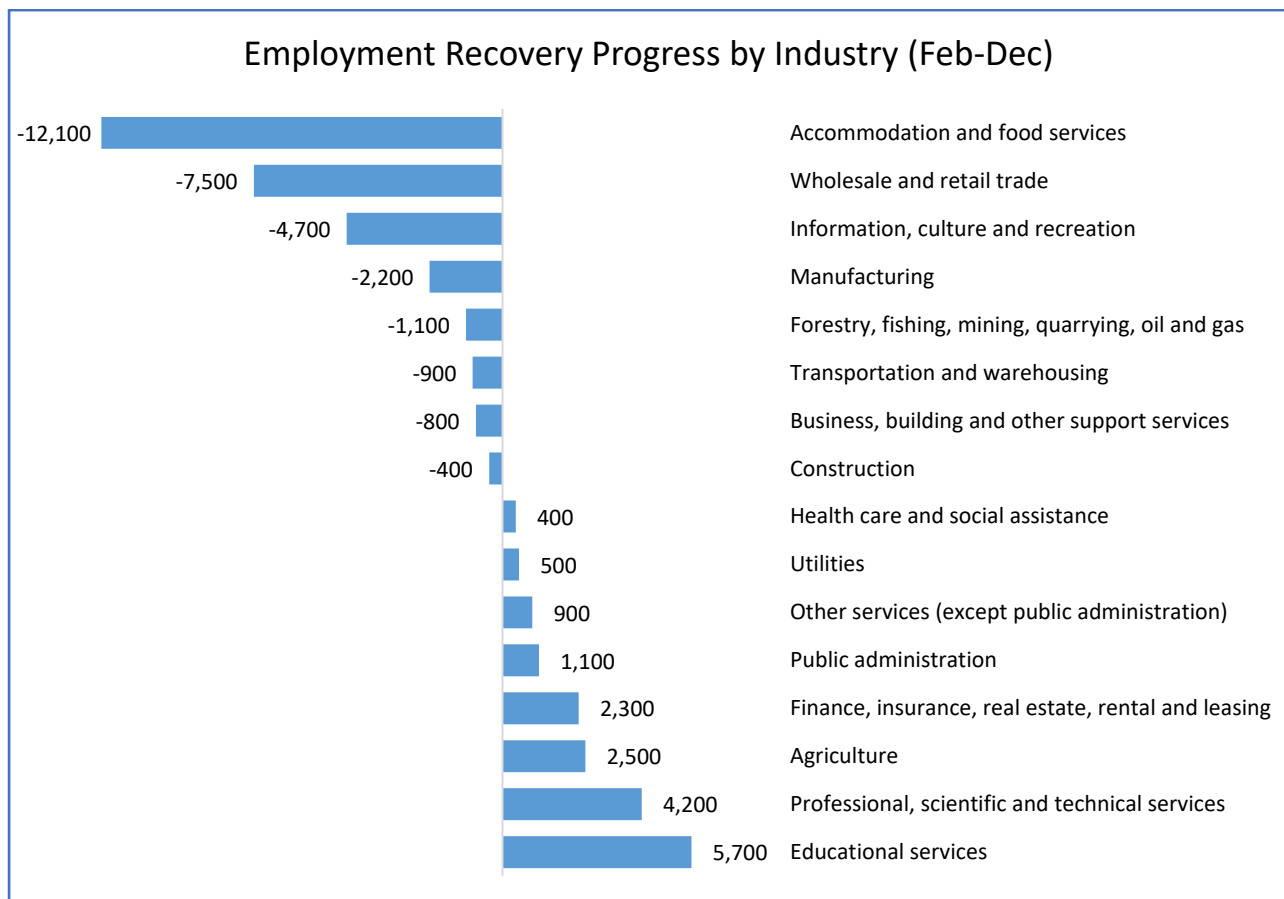
Employment contraction concentrated in service sector while goods sector remains intact

- Employment contraction concentrated in service sector (-9,600 jobs, -2.5%) while employment in goods industries remained virtually the same in December (+100 jobs, +0.1%).

¹ Labour underutilization includes those who were unemployed with those who were not in the labour force but wanted a job and did not look for one; as well as those who remained employed but lost all or the majority of their usual work hours.

² Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Supplementary Indicators used in December 2020 analysis, seasonally adjusted.

- Accommodation and food services and information, culture and recreation received great impact of tightened health measures as the businesses impacted concentrated in these two industries. The job loss for these two industries was 7,100 jobs (-21.3%) and 1,700 jobs (-10.6%) respectively.
- Compared to their pre-COVID levels, accommodation and food services has surpassed wholesale and retail trade as the industry farthest away from full recovery (-12,100 jobs, -31.6%). Wholesale and retail trade and information, culture and recreation also have long recovery paths ahead with 7,500 jobs (-9.5%) and 4,700 jobs (-24.6%) lower than their pre-COVID levels.
- Many industries have surpassed their pre-COVID employment levels. The top three industries are educational services (+5,700 jobs, +16.0%), professional, scientific and technical services (+4,200 jobs, +14.7%) and agriculture (+2,500 jobs, +42.4%).



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0355-02, Adjusted for Seasonality, Both Sexes, Ages 15+.

Labour market outcomes of visible minorities in Atlantic Canada worsened in December³

- Employment rate of visible minorities in Atlantic Canada dropped from 76.0% to 70.4% as their participation rate dropped and unemployment rate rose. The employment rate of people who are not indigenous or visible minorities also decreased in December, albeit with a lesser degree (-1.0 percentage point). However, visible minorities in Atlantic Canada still faced a higher employment rates in December (70.4% vs 63.8%).

³ Source: Statistics Canada, December 2020 LFS population groups designated as visible minorities.