

Payroll employment, earnings and hours, and job vacancies, September 2021

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Payroll employment, as measured by the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours (SEPH), rose by 91,100 (+0.5%) in September, the fourth consecutive monthly increase. Whereas Labour Force Survey (LFS) employment returned to its pre-COVID level in September, SEPH payroll employment was 250,200 (-1.5%) lower than in February 2020.

Do you use labour market information **as part of your work?** Statistics Canada and the Labour Market Information Council are teaming up to gather feedback from professionals who regularly use labour statistics, including journalists, policy analysts, sector association representatives and career counsellors, to assess their labour market information needs. Tell us what your priorities are and the gaps you face when using labour market information by answering a few questions on the [Questionnaire on Labour Market Information Gaps](#) page. Your opinions will help shape action to address labour market information gaps.

When used in combination with each other, and with the Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (JVWS) and Employment Insurance Statistics, the LFS and SEPH paint a more complete portrait of current labour market conditions. An important advantage of SEPH is that payroll employment includes all those receiving pay or benefits from their employer, including both permanent residents and all non-permanent residents. The remaining gap between pre-COVID and current payroll employment levels is an indication that labour supplied by non-permanent residents continues to be disrupted directly or indirectly by the pandemic.

Payroll employment increased in eight provinces in September, led by Ontario (+43,100; +0.7%), British Columbia (+17,800; +0.8%) and Quebec (+14,100; +0.4%). Nationally, gains were driven by the services-producing sector (+80,500; +0.6%), particularly accommodation and food services (+19,800; +1.8%), public administration (+15,900; +1.4%) and finance and insurance (+14,700; +1.9%).

Construction (+6,700; +0.6%) was the only goods-producing sector to increase in September and total goods-producing employment was 0.7% below its pre-COVID level.



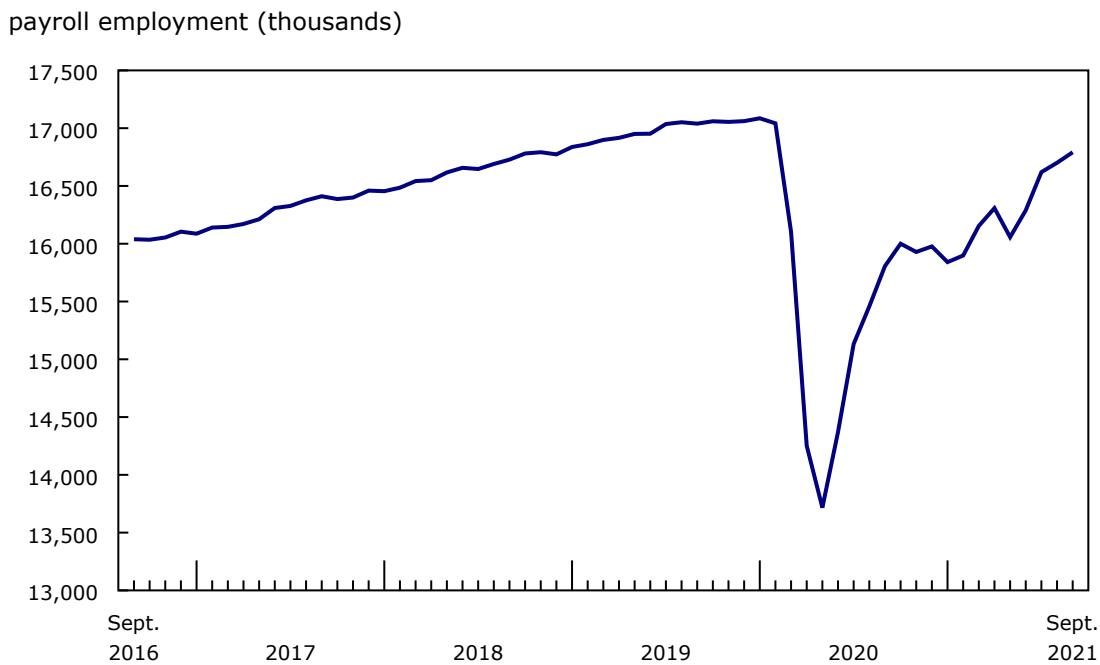
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Chart 1

Payroll employment increases for the fourth consecutive month in September



Source(s): Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours (2612), table 14-10-0220-01.

Payroll employment growth continues in accommodation and food services and in arts, entertainment and recreation

Payroll employment in accommodation and food services increased by 19,800 (+1.8%) in September, with the majority of the gains in food services and drinking places (+13,000; +1.3%). After the Canada-United States border reopened on August 9 for fully vaccinated Americans to enter Canada without quarantine requirements, restrictions on travellers from around the globe were eased on September 7, potentially expanding tourism activity, including in food and accommodation businesses.

Payroll employment in accommodation and food services rose in seven provinces in September, with the largest increases in Ontario (+8,600; +2.1%) and Quebec (+4,200; +1.8%). Total employment in the sector was 14.8% (-199,000) below its February 2020 pre-pandemic level.

Payroll employment in arts, entertainment and recreation increased by 9,500 (+3.8%) in September, with all provinces except Alberta (-700; -2.0%) recording an increase. Nationally, nearly all of the gain was observed in the amusement, gambling and recreation subsector (+8,800; +4.9%).

Finance and insurance records its largest payroll employment increase since the beginning of the pandemic

Payroll employment in finance and insurance rose by 14,700 (+1.9%) in September, with gains spread across most subsectors, led by credit intermediation and related activities (+9,000; +2.3%) and insurance carriers and related activities (+4,300; +1.8%). Ontario (+7,700; +2.2%) and Quebec (+3,600; +2.3%) accounted for most of the increase.

Payroll employment in the finance and insurance sector has been above its pre-COVID level since March 2021, and in September was 3.3% higher than in February 2020.

Payroll employment continues to increase in professional, scientific and technical services

Payroll employment in professional, scientific and technical services rose by 9,100 (+0.9%) in September, with the gain being spread across most sub-sectors, including architectural, engineering and related services (+2,900; +1.4%) and computer systems design and related services (+2,700; +0.9%).

Compared with February 2020, payroll employment in professional, scientific and technical services was up 8.1% in September. Of all sub-sectors, scientific research and development services was furthest above its pre-pandemic level (+8,100; +14.6%). Establishments in this industry conduct research and experimental development in a variety of areas such as chemistry, medicine, health, biotechnology, and pharmacy.

Average weekly earnings and average hours worked unchanged in September

Average weekly earnings were little changed in September, at \$1,137.

Average hours worked were unchanged in September, with hourly paid employees working an average of 31.1 hours per week, while salaried employees worked an average of 37.2 hours per week.

Several sectors continue to face record-high job vacancies

Across all sectors, there were more than 1 million (1,014,600) job vacancies at the start of September. The job vacancy rate, which measures all vacant positions as a proportion of all positions (vacant and occupied), was 6.0%, the highest rate since comparable monthly data became available in October 2020 (data from the JVWS are unadjusted for seasonality).

In the accommodation and food services sector, there were 196,100 vacancies in September, more than in any other sector and up from 156,800 in August 2021. The job vacancy rate in the sector was 14.4% in September, compared with an average of 12.9% from June to August and less than 8.0% from October 2020 to May 2021.

Results from the Canadian Survey on Business Conditions for the third quarter of 2021 showed that more than half (55.3%) of businesses in accommodation and food services expected to face obstacles related to the recruitment of appropriately skilled employees, almost twice as much as the average for all businesses (30.3%).

There were 131,200 vacancies in health care and social assistance in September, twice as many as in the third quarter of 2019 (66,100). The job vacancy rate in September 2021 was 5.7%, the highest vacancy rate in this sector since comparable data became available in October 2020.

The retail trade sector also experienced record high unmet labour demand in September, with 121,700 vacancies and a job vacancy rate of 5.8%.

Job vacancies reach record highs in construction and manufacturing

After a summer during which employment growth in the goods-producing sector was relatively flat, job vacancies reached record highs in both construction and manufacturing in September. Employers in construction were actively seeking to fill 85,400 vacant positions, more than double the number (41,000) measured in the third quarter (July to September) of 2019. The job vacancy rate in the construction sector was 7.1% in September 2021, the highest monthly rate since comparable data became available in October 2020.

In manufacturing, there were 82,600 vacant positions in September and the job vacancy rate was 5.1%, both record highs.

Looking ahead

In common with other economies, the Canadian labour market has seen a sharp increase in job vacancies in recent months, even as employment and unemployment have continued to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

In general, increases in job vacancies can signal a number of developments. First, such increases can signal an increase in economic activity and hiring, as employers create new positions to be filled. Second, an increase in vacancies can signal new or worsening structural labour market imbalances, such as shortages of specific skills or geographic mismatches between available positions and workers who could fill them. Third, increasing vacancies can be an indication of shifts in the willingness of workers to accept the wages, benefits and conditions associated with a particular job.

While monthly JVWS results are sufficient to track changes in the overall level of vacancies, quarterly results include the occupation, wage and geographic details associated with each vacancy. Third quarter (July to September) results, to be released on December 20, will shed light on the factors contributing to the recent increase in unmet labour demand, as well as the possible implications of this unmet demand for businesses, workers and the broader economy.

Sustainable Development Goals

On January 1, 2016, the world officially began implementing the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)—the United Nations' transformative plan of action that addresses urgent global challenges over the following 15 years. The plan is based on 17 specific sustainable development goals.

The Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours is an example of how Statistics Canada supports reporting on the global sustainable development goals. This release will be used to measure the following goals:



Note to readers

Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours

The key objective of the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours (SEPH) is to provide a monthly portrait of the level of earnings, employment and hours worked, by detailed industry, at the national, provincial and territorial levels.

Payroll employment, as measured by the SEPH, refers to the number of employees receiving pay or benefits (employment income) during a given month. The survey excludes the self-employed, owners and partners of unincorporated businesses and professional practices, and employees in the agricultural sector.

SEPH estimates are produced by integrating information from three sources: a census of approximately 1 million payroll deduction records provided by the Canada Revenue Agency; the Business Payrolls Survey, which collects data from a sample of 15,000 establishments; and administrative records of federal, provincial and territorial public administration employment, provided by these levels of government.

Estimates of average weekly earnings and hours worked are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling variability. This analysis focuses on differences between estimates that are statistically significant at the 68% confidence level. Payroll employment estimates are based on a census of administrative records and are not subject to sampling variability.

With each release of SEPH data, data for the preceding month are revised. Users are encouraged to use the most up-to-date data available for each month.

Statistics Canada also produces employment estimates from its Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS is a monthly household survey, the main objective of which is to divide the working-age population into three mutually exclusive groups: the employed (including the self-employed), the unemployed and those not in the labour force. This survey is the official source for the unemployment rate, and it collects data on the sociodemographic characteristics of all those in the labour market.

As a result of conceptual and methodological differences, estimates of changes from the SEPH and the LFS differ occasionally. However, the trends in the data are similar. For a more in-depth discussion of the conceptual differences between employment measures from the LFS and the SEPH, refer to Section 8 of the Guide to the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours ([72-203-G](#)).

Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which facilitate comparisons because the effects of seasonal variations are removed. For more information on seasonal adjustment, see [Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions](#).

Non-farm payroll employment data are for all hourly and salaried employees and for the "other employees" category, which includes piece-rate and commission-only employees.

Unless otherwise specified, average weekly hours data are for hourly and salaried employees only and exclude businesses that could not be classified to a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code.

All earnings data include overtime and exclude businesses that could not be classified to a NAICS code. Earnings data are based on gross taxable payroll before source deductions. Average weekly earnings are derived by dividing total weekly earnings by the number of employees.

Job Vacancy and Wage Survey

Beginning with the release of October 2020 data, preliminary monthly estimates from the Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (JVWS) are published on a monthly basis. These estimates provide more timely information on the number of job vacancies and the job vacancy rate by province and by industrial sector.

JVWS collection is done on a quarterly basis. The quarterly sample of business locations is allocated to the three collection months of the quarter, approximately balanced by province and by industrial sector across each of the three months. This allows both quarterly and monthly estimates to be produced.

The JVWS also provides comprehensive quarterly data on job vacancies by industrial sector and detailed occupation for Canada and the provinces, territories and economic regions; offered hourly wages; and job vacancy characteristics. Quarterly data for the second and third quarters of 2020 are unavailable because survey operations were temporarily suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. More information about the concepts and use of data from the JVWS is available in the Guide to the Job Vacancy and Wage Survey ([75-514-G](#)).

Preliminary monthly estimates are produced for job vacancies, job vacancy rates and payroll employment using available responses from business locations sampled in the corresponding reference month. The reference period for the JVWS is the first day of the respective month.

These preliminary monthly estimates are revised and finalized when the corresponding quarterly estimates are released or shortly thereafter. Users are encouraged to use the most up-to-date data available for each month.

JVWS estimates are not seasonally adjusted. Therefore, month-to-month and quarter-to-quarter comparisons should be interpreted with caution as they may reflect seasonal movements.

While JVWS employment is calibrated to the SEPH, SEPH payroll employment and JVWS preliminary monthly employment figures may differ because of calibration grouping and differences in scope and reference period.

Real-time data tables

Real-time data tables 14-10-0357-01, 14-10-0358-01, 14-10-0331-01 and 14-10-0332-01 will be updated on December 13, 2021.

Next release

Data on payroll employment, earnings and hours, and job vacancies for October will be released on December 23, 2021.

Table 1
Average weekly earnings (including overtime) for all employees – Seasonally adjusted

	September 2020	August 2021 ^r	September 2021 ^P	August to September 2021	September 2020 to September 2021	August to September 2021	September 2020 to September 2021
	current dollars			change in current dollars		% change	
Sector aggregate¹	1,107.99	1,134.26	1,136.61	2.35	28.62	0.2	2.6
Forestry, logging and support	1,303.76	1,302.91	1,289.56	-13.35	-14.20	-1.0	-1.1
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	2,022.75	2,232.50	2,242.17	9.67	219.42	0.4	10.8
Utilities	1,835.83	1,940.53	1,875.43	-65.10	39.60	-3.4	2.2
Construction	1,334.60	1,377.51	1,373.07	-4.44	38.47	-0.3	2.9
Manufacturing	1,164.74	1,198.12	1,202.91	4.79	38.17	0.4	3.3
Wholesale trade	1,324.50	1,363.40	1,353.51	-9.89	29.01	-0.7	2.2
Retail trade	651.67	655.21	663.00	7.79	11.33	1.2	1.7
Transportation and warehousing	1,183.95	1,188.43	1,187.07	-1.36	3.12	-0.1	0.3
Information and cultural industries	1,527.53	1,582.61	1,657.65	75.04	130.12	4.7	8.5
Finance and insurance	1,451.13	1,424.83	1,461.11	36.28	9.98	2.5	0.7
Real estate and rental and leasing	1,140.86	1,137.19	1,217.68	80.49	76.82	7.1	6.7
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,485.81	1,539.61	1,543.95	4.34	58.14	0.3	3.9
Management of companies and enterprises	1,369.92	1,502.04	1,590.48	88.44	220.56	5.9	16.1
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	897.99	954.68	963.16	8.48	65.17	0.9	7.3
Educational services	1,154.70	1,187.86	1,187.05	-0.81	32.35	-0.1	2.8
Health care and social assistance	1,014.33	1,017.70	985.86	-31.84	-28.47	-3.1	-2.8
Arts, entertainment and recreation	711.94	704.16	725.00	20.84	13.06	3.0	1.8
Accommodation and food services	428.46	468.28	462.07	-6.21	33.61	-1.3	7.8
Other services (excluding public administration)	937.24	972.94	976.92	3.98	39.68	0.4	4.2
Public administration	1,438.15	1,473.61	1,476.00	2.39	37.85	0.2	2.6
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,094.56	1,124.34	1,131.60	7.26	37.04	0.6	3.4
Prince Edward Island	952.89	948.13	955.85	7.72	2.96	0.8	0.3
Nova Scotia	960.37	977.82	980.10	2.28	19.73	0.2	2.1
New Brunswick	1,001.11	1,005.46	1,019.74	14.28	18.63	1.4	1.9
Quebec	1,045.98	1,070.04	1,071.28	1.24	25.30	0.1	2.4
Ontario	1,147.51	1,171.07	1,166.69	-4.38	19.18	-0.4	1.7
Manitoba	990.11	1,015.99	1,027.86	11.87	37.75	1.2	3.8
Saskatchewan	1,097.51	1,119.21	1,114.29	-4.92	16.78	-0.4	1.5
Alberta	1,197.19	1,219.51	1,234.46	14.95	37.27	1.2	3.1
British Columbia	1,092.97	1,142.99	1,136.71	-6.28	43.74	-0.5	4.0
Yukon	1,275.92	1,350.32	1,327.76	-22.56	51.84	-1.7	4.1
Northwest Territories	1,478.49	1,511.70	1,545.79	34.09	67.30	2.3	4.6
Nunavut	1,438.71	1,508.29	1,485.72	-22.57	47.01	-1.5	3.3

^r revised

^P preliminary

1. Sector breakdown is based on the 2017 North American Industry Classification System Version 3.0.

Note(s): Earnings data are based on gross payroll before source deductions.

Source(s): Table 14-10-0223-01.

Table 2
Number of employees – Seasonally adjusted

	September 2020	August 2021 ^r	September 2021 ^p	August to September 2021	September 2020 to September 2021	August to September 2021	September 2020 to September 2021
	thousands			change in thousands		% change	
Sector aggregate¹	15,806.0	16,700.5	16,791.6	91.1	985.6	0.5	6.2
Forestry, logging and support	36.5	37.5	37.7	0.2	1.3	0.6	3.5
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	183.1	191.9	191.8	-0.1	8.7	-0.0	4.8
Utilities	122.2	125.2	124.8	-0.3	2.6	-0.3	2.1
Construction	989.1	1,061.7	1,068.4	6.7	79.3	0.6	8.0
Manufacturing	1,479.1	1,525.8	1,525.2	-0.6	46.1	-0.0	3.1
Wholesale trade	774.4	791.9	795.1	3.2	20.7	0.4	2.7
Retail trade	1,886.6	1,974.1	1,977.4	3.2	90.7	0.2	4.8
Transportation and warehousing	741.8	762.4	755.8	-6.7	14.0	-0.9	1.9
Information and cultural industries	341.4	360.5	360.2	-0.3	18.8	-0.1	5.5
Finance and insurance	734.5	762.3	777.0	14.7	42.5	1.9	5.8
Real estate and rental and leasing	248.7	262.7	264.0	1.3	15.4	0.5	6.2
Professional, scientific and technical services	959.5	1,062.4	1,071.5	9.1	112.0	0.9	11.7
Management of companies and enterprises	112.9	124.0	122.0	-2.0	9.1	-1.6	8.1
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	759.1	801.0	793.1	-7.9	34.0	-1.0	4.5
Educational services	1,291.5	1,341.4	1,351.6	10.2	60.0	0.8	4.6
Health care and social assistance	2,035.3	2,167.9	2,172.3	4.5	137.0	0.2	6.7
Arts, entertainment and recreation	216.6	248.4	257.9	9.5	41.3	3.8	19.1
Accommodation and food services	1,005.1	1,122.9	1,142.8	19.8	137.6	1.8	13.7
Other services (excluding public administration)	484.4	510.6	516.6	6.0	32.2	1.2	6.6
Public administration	1,120.4	1,170.6	1,186.4	15.9	66.1	1.4	5.9
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland and Labrador	200.4	209.9	210.4	0.5	9.9	0.2	5.0
Prince Edward Island	64.8	68.5	69.9	1.5	5.1	2.1	7.9
Nova Scotia	400.5	419.3	421.5	2.2	21.0	0.5	5.3
New Brunswick	318.9	330.4	333.3	2.9	14.4	0.9	4.5
Quebec	3,631.7	3,817.3	3,831.3	14.1	199.6	0.4	5.5
Ontario	6,083.3	6,433.2	6,476.3	43.1	393.0	0.7	6.5
Manitoba	578.6	603.5	608.3	4.8	29.7	0.8	5.1
Saskatchewan	456.9	477.6	480.1	2.5	23.2	0.5	5.1
Alberta	1,831.0	1,953.4	1,953.9	0.5	122.9	0.0	6.7
British Columbia	2,175.4	2,319.7	2,337.5	17.8	162.1	0.8	7.4
Yukon	21.6	22.5	23.4	0.9	1.8	3.8	8.3
Northwest Territories	24.3	26.0	26.4	0.4	2.1	1.4	8.8
Nunavut	18.6	19.2	19.3	0.0	0.7	0.2	3.5

^r revised

^p preliminary

1. Sector breakdown is based on the 2017 North American Industry Classification System Version 3.0.

Source(s): Table 14-10-0223-01.

Table 3
Job vacancies and job vacancy rate, unadjusted for seasonality¹

	September 2021 ^p Payroll employment ²	September 2021 ^p Job vacancies	September 2021 ^p Job vacancy rate
	thousands		%
Sector aggregate³	15,772.8	1,014.6	6.0
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	273.8	17.7	6.1
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	188.8	7.1	3.6
Utilities	126.1 ^E	F	F
Construction	1,124.8	85.4	7.1
Manufacturing	1,538.8	82.6	5.1
Wholesale trade	796.6	39.0	4.7
Retail trade	1,975.2	121.7	5.8
Transportation and warehousing	746.9	48.3	6.1
Information and cultural industries	361.4	20.0	5.2
Finance and insurance	762.3	38.3	4.8
Real estate and rental and leasing	264.7	9.9	3.6
Professional, scientific and technical services	1,064.8	64.7	5.7
Management of companies and enterprises	122.8	4.2	3.3
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	817.1	57.3	6.6
Educational services	931.5	21.8	2.3
Health care and social assistance	2,185.0	131.2	5.7
Arts, entertainment and recreation	282.9	16.4	5.5
Accommodation and food services	1,165.2	196.1	14.4
Other services (excluding public administration)	513.7	39.8	7.2
Public administration ⁴	530.4	12.0	2.2
Provinces and territories			
Newfoundland and Labrador	190.0	7.9	4.0
Prince Edward Island	65.8	3.4	4.9
Nova Scotia	416.1	21.5	4.9
New Brunswick	335.1	19.7	5.6
Quebec	3,563.8	279.2	7.3
Ontario	6,072.5	363.2	5.6
Manitoba	557.6	27.2	4.6
Saskatchewan	448.7	22.8	4.8
Alberta	1,893.4	93.2	4.7
British Columbia	2,175.2	173.0	7.4
Yukon	18.8	1.4	6.9
Northwest Territories	21.5	1.4 ^E	6.0 ^E
Nunavut	14.4	F	F

p preliminary

E use with caution

F too unreliable to be published

1. Estimates are preliminary before the associated quarterly data are released.

2. Job Vacancy and Wage Survey (JVWS) employment estimates may differ from Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours employment estimates because of calibration grouping and differences in scope and reference period. Additionally, JVWS data are not seasonally adjusted.

3. Sector breakdown is based on the 2017 North American Industry Classification System Version 3.0.

4. Excluding provincial, territorial and federal public administration, as well as international and other extraterritorial public administration.

Source(s): Tables 14-10-0371-01 and 14-10-0372-01.

Available tables: [14-10-0201-01](#), [14-10-0203-01](#), [14-10-0205-01](#), [14-10-0209-01](#), [14-10-0211-01](#), [14-10-0213-01](#), [14-10-0220-01](#) to [14-10-0223-01](#), [14-10-0255-01](#), [14-10-0371-01](#) and [14-10-0372-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [2612](#) and [5217](#).

More information about the concepts and use of the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours is available in the *Guide to the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours* ([72-203-G](#)).

The product "[Earnings and payroll employment in brief: Interactive app](#)" ([14200001](#)) is now available. This interactive data visualization application provides a comprehensive picture of the Canadian labour market using the most recent data from the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours. The estimates are seasonally adjusted and available by province and largest industrial sector. Historical estimates going back 10 years are also included. The interactive application allows users to quickly and easily explore and personalize the information presented. Combine multiple provinces and industrial sectors to create your own labour market domains of interest.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).