Employment Insurance, December 2023

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There were 464,000 Canadians receiving regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in December, up 6,600 (+1.4%) from November. On a year-over-year basis, the total number of regular EI beneficiaries increased by 60,000 (+14.8%).

Data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) show that the unemployment rate held steady at 5.8% in December, following increases in six of the previous seven months. From April to November, the unemployment rate rose by 0.7 percentage points.

In general, variations in the number of EI beneficiaries can reflect changes in the circumstances of different groups, including those becoming beneficiaries, those going back to work, those exhausting their regular benefits, and those no longer receiving benefits for other reasons.

Chart 1
The number of regular Employment Insurance beneficiaries rises slightly since July 2023

number of regular Employment Insurance beneficiaries
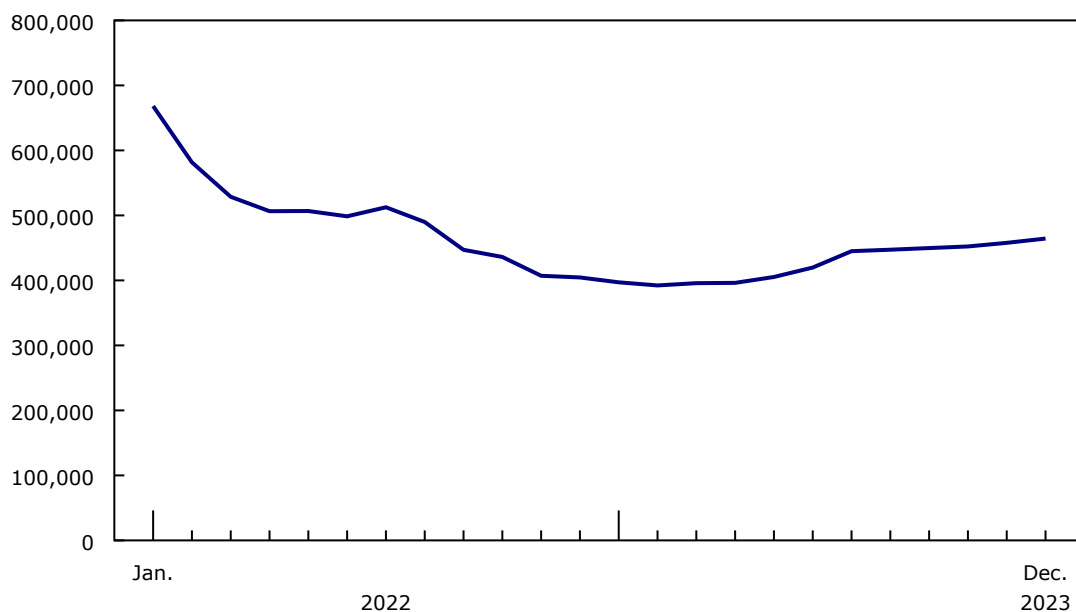
Source(s): Employment Insurance Statistics (2604), table 14-10-0011-01.

More core-aged men and women receive regular Employment Insurance benefits

In December, there were 2,700 (+1.5%) more core-aged men receiving regular EI benefits, the fourth consecutive monthly increase. On a year-over-year basis, the number of core-aged men receiving benefits rose by 31,000 (+20.2%).

The number of regular EI recipients also increased among core-aged women in December (+2,400; +2.2%), the second consecutive monthly increase. On a year-over-year basis, there were 15,000 (+15.5%) more core-aged women receiving regular EI benefits.

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In December, there were also more men aged 55 years and older (+900; +1.2%) receiving regular benefits, marking the fourth consecutive monthly increase. On a year-over-year basis, the number of older men receiving regular EI benefits increased by 5,500 (+7.6%).

The number of young (aged 15 to 24 years) women and men and the number of women aged 55 years and older receiving regular EI benefits were little changed in December.

The number of regular Employment Insurance recipients up in four provinces, led by Ontario and Alberta

The number of regular EI beneficiaries rose in four provinces in December. Ontario posted the largest proportional increase, followed by Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick. The number of regular EI recipients declined in British Columbia, and there was little change in the other provinces.

The increase in the number of EI recipients in Ontario in December (+4,900; +3.6%) was the fourth notable increase in the last five months. There were increases among core-aged men (+2,500; +4.5%), men aged 55 years and older (+1,300; +7.2%) and core-aged women (+1,100; +2.8%). According to the LFS, employment in Ontario decreased in December (-37,000; -0.5%) and the unemployment rate rose 0.2 percentage points to 6.3%. On a year-over-year basis, the number of EI recipients increased by 34,000 (+32.0%) in Ontario, the largest proportional increase among the provinces. Among Ontario's census metropolitan areas (CMAs), Windsor (+2,300; +49.5%) posted the largest increase in the number of EI recipients in December.

The number of regular EI beneficiaries in Alberta rose by 1,500 (+3.1%) in December, the third consecutive monthly increase. The increase was mostly among core-aged women (+1,000; +8.4%), with core-aged men (+500; +2.0%) and men aged 55 years and older (+100; +1.7%) also posting increases. The Edmonton (+600; +3.4%) and Calgary (+400; +2.5%) CMAs both recorded increases in their number of EI recipients in the month.

In December, there were more EI recipients in Manitoba (+200; +1.1%), and this was the smallest of three consecutive monthly increases in the province. In New Brunswick, the increase in December (+200; +1.0%) marked the first month of notable growth since August 2023.

After five months of increases and little change in November, British Columbia was the lone province to post a notable decline in the number of regular EI recipients in December (-500; -1.0%).

Chart 2
Number of regular Employment Insurance recipients rises most notably in Ontario and Alberta in December

change (%) compared with November 2023
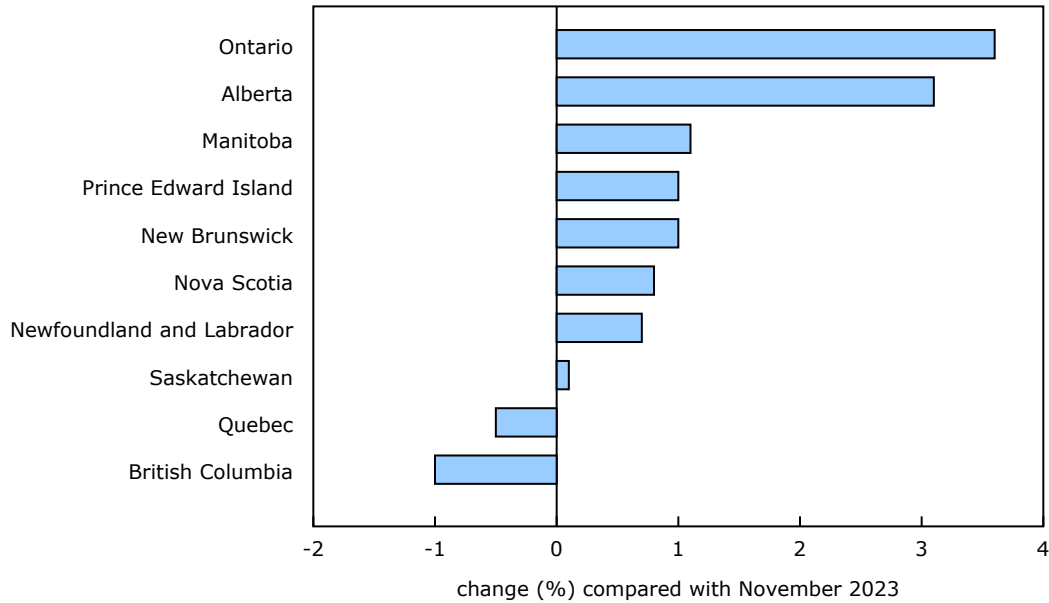
Source(s): Employment Insurance Statistics (2604), table 14-10-0011-01.

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.

Employment Insurance statistics are an example of how Statistics Canada supports reporting on global sustainable development goals. This release will be used to help measure the following goal:

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Note to readers

Availability of data by occupation

Statistics Canada is currently revising the Employment Insurance Statistics (EIS) data to conform to the 2021 National Occupational Classification (NOC) standard. This will result in EIS occupation categories aligning with the 2021 Census of Population and Labour Force Survey (LFS) NOC 2021 categories. The release of revised data is planned for later in 2024. Until then, information on Employment Insurance (EI) beneficiaries by occupation, including tables 14-10-0336-01 and 14-10-0337-01, will not be available.

Concepts and methodology

EI statistics are produced from administrative data sources provided by Service Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada. These statistics may, from time to time, be affected by changes to the Employment Insurance Act or administrative procedures.

EI statistics indicate the number of people who received EI benefits and should not be confused with LFS data, which provide estimates of the total number of unemployed people. There is always a certain proportion of unemployed people who do not qualify for benefits. Some unemployed people have not contributed to the program because they have not worked in the past 12 months or their employment was not insured. Other unemployed people have contributed to the program but do not meet the eligibility criteria, such as workers who left their jobs voluntarily or those who did not accumulate enough hours of work to receive benefits.

All data in this release are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise specified. To model the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, values for all series from March 2020 to November 2021 have been treated with a combination of level shifts and outliers to determine a seasonal pattern for seasonal adjustment. For more information on seasonal adjustment, see Seasonally adjusted data – Frequently asked questions.

The number of regular EI beneficiaries for the current month and the previous month is subject to revision.

The **number of beneficiaries** is all people who received regular EI benefits from December 3 to 9, 2023. This period coincides with the reference week of the LFS.

A **census metropolitan area** (CMA) and a **census agglomeration** (CA) are formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre. A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000. A CA must have a population of at least 10,000. See Standard Geographical Classification 2016 – Definitions for more information.

Next release

Data on EI for January 2024 will be released on March 21.

Table 1
Beneficiaries receiving regular income benefits,[1] by province and territory, sex and age group – Seasonally adjusted

	December 2022	November 2023[p]	December 2023[p]	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023
	number			change		% change	
Canada							
Both sexes	**404,530**	**457,770**	**464,370**	**6,600**	**59,840**	**1.4**	**14.8**
15 to 24 years	37,090	42,710	42,960	250	5,870	0.6	15.8
25 to 54 years	250,840	291,830	296,970	5,140	46,130	1.8	18.4
55 years and over	116,600	123,220	124,440	1,220	7,840	1.0	6.7
Men	**254,260**	**290,780**	**294,580**	**3,800**	**40,320**	**1.3**	**15.9**
15 to 24 years	27,420	30,980	31,150	170	3,730	0.5	13.6
25 to 54 years	154,260	182,680	185,380	2,700	31,120	1.5	20.2
55 years and over	72,580	77,120	78,060	940	5,480	1.2	7.6
Women	**150,270**	**166,990**	**169,790**	**2,800**	**19,520**	**1.7**	**13.0**
15 to 24 years	9,670	11,730	11,810	80	2,140	0.7	22.1
25 to 54 years	96,590	109,160	111,600	2,440	15,010	2.2	15.5
55 years and over	44,010	46,100	46,380	280	2,370	0.6	5.4
Newfoundland and Labrador							
Both sexes	**29,880**	**29,460**	**29,680**	**220**	**-200**	**0.7**	**-0.7**
15 to 24 years	2,550	2,570	2,580	10	30	0.4	1.2
25 to 54 years	14,970	14,680	14,760	80	-210	0.5	-1.4
55 years and over	12,360	12,220	12,330	110	-30	0.9	-0.2
Men	**17,790**	**17,990**	**18,180**	**190**	**390**	**1.1**	**2.2**
Women	**12,080**	**11,480**	**11,490**	**10**	**-590**	**0.1**	**-4.9**
Prince Edward Island							
Both sexes	**7,960**	**7,110**	**7,180**	**70**	**-780**	**1.0**	**-9.8**
15 to 24 years	1,690	1,310	1,340	30	-350	2.3	-20.7
25 to 54 years	3,690	3,470	3,490	20	-200	0.6	-5.4
55 years and over	2,580	2,330	2,360	30	-220	1.3	-8.5
Men	**4,730**	**4,350**	**4,330**	**-20**	**-400**	**-0.5**	**-8.5**
Women	**3,230**	**2,750**	**2,850**	**100**	**-380**	**3.6**	**-11.8**
Nova Scotia							
Both sexes	**22,600**	**21,500**	**21,670**	**170**	**-930**	**0.8**	**-4.1**
15 to 24 years	2,170	2,060	2,190	130	20	6.3	0.9
25 to 54 years	13,080	12,510	12,640	130	-440	1.0	-3.4
55 years and over	7,350	6,930	6,840	-90	-510	-1.3	-6.9
Men	**14,470**	**14,010**	**14,230**	**220**	**-240**	**1.6**	**-1.7**
Women	**8,130**	**7,490**	**7,430**	**-60**	**-700**	**-0.8**	**-8.6**
New Brunswick							
Both sexes	**26,370**	**23,930**	**24,170**	**240**	**-2,200**	**1.0**	**-8.3**
15 to 24 years	2,270	2,160	2,160	0	-110	0.0	-4.8
25 to 54 years	14,220	12,990	13,000	10	-1,220	0.1	-8.6
55 years and over	9,880	8,790	9,010	220	-870	2.5	-8.8
Men	**17,210**	**16,100**	**16,100**	**0**	**-1,110**	**0.0**	**-6.4**
Women	**9,160**	**7,830**	**8,060**	**230**	**-1,100**	**2.9**	**-12.0**
Quebec							
Both sexes	**96,540**	**105,710**	**105,210**	**-500**	**8,670**	**-0.5**	**9.0**
15 to 24 years	6,590	7,550	7,410	-140	820	-1.9	12.4
25 to 54 years	57,780	65,620	65,290	-330	7,510	-0.5	13.0
55 years and over	32,170	32,540	32,500	-40	330	-0.1	1.0
Men	**63,090**	**69,380**	**68,460**	**-920**	**5,370**	**-1.3**	**8.5**
Women	**33,450**	**36,320**	**36,750**	**430**	**3,300**	**1.2**	**9.9**
Ontario							
Both sexes	**106,060**	**135,130**	**140,050**	**4,920**	**33,990**	**3.6**	**32.0**
15 to 24 years	10,310	12,750	12,900	150	2,590	1.2	25.1
25 to 54 years	71,160	92,370	95,920	3,550	24,760	3.8	34.8
55 years and over	24,600	30,020	31,230	1,210	6,630	4.0	27.0
Men	**64,990**	**81,900**	**85,720**	**3,820**	**20,730**	**4.7**	**31.9**
Women	**41,070**	**53,240**	**54,320**	**1,080**	**13,250**	**2.0**	**32.3**

Table 1 - continued
Beneficiaries receiving regular income benefits,[1] by province and territory, sex and age group – Seasonally adjusted

	December 2022	November 2023[p]	December 2023[p]	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023
Manitoba							
Both sexes	**14,410**	**16,120**	**16,300**	**180**	**1,890**	**1.1**	**13.1**
15 to 24 years	1,960	2,240	2,300	60	340	2.7	17.3
25 to 54 years	9,340	10,340	10,560	220	1,220	2.1	13.1
55 years and over	3,100	3,540	3,440	-100	340	-2.8	11.0
Men	**9,200**	**10,780**	**10,780**	**0**	**1,580**	**0.0**	**17.2**
Women	**5,210**	**5,340**	**5,520**	**180**	**310**	**3.4**	**6.0**
Saskatchewan							
Both sexes	**12,930**	**13,960**	**13,970**	**10**	**1,040**	**0.1**	**8.0**
15 to 24 years	1,520	1,700	1,670	-30	150	-1.8	9.9
25 to 54 years	8,240	8,930	8,970	40	730	0.4	8.9
55 years and over	3,170	3,340	3,330	-10	160	-0.3	5.0
Men	**8,560**	**9,270**	**9,210**	**-60**	**650**	**-0.6**	**7.6**
Women	**4,370**	**4,700**	**4,760**	**60**	**390**	**1.3**	**8.9**
Alberta							
Both sexes	**43,990**	**50,190**	**51,730**	**1,540**	**7,740**	**3.1**	**17.6**
15 to 24 years	4,370	5,460	5,480	20	1,110	0.4	25.4
25 to 54 years	29,410	33,980	35,400	1,420	5,990	4.2	20.4
55 years and over	10,210	10,750	10,850	100	640	0.9	6.3
Men	**28,420**	**33,720**	**34,350**	**630**	**5,930**	**1.9**	**20.9**
Women	**15,570**	**16,470**	**17,380**	**910**	**1,810**	**5.5**	**11.6**
British Columbia							
Both sexes	**41,430**	**51,880**	**51,360**	**-520**	**9,930**	**-1.0**	**24.0**
15 to 24 years	3,430	4,670	4,660	-10	1,230	-0.2	35.9
25 to 54 years	27,310	34,970	34,730	-240	7,420	-0.7	27.2
55 years and over	10,690	12,240	11,970	-270	1,280	-2.2	12.0
Men	**24,320**	**31,590**	**31,320**	**-270**	**7,000**	**-0.9**	**28.8**
Women	**17,120**	**20,300**	**20,050**	**-250**	**2,930**	**-1.2**	**17.1**
Yukon							
Both sexes	**490**	**580**	**580**	**0**	**90**	**0.0**	**18.4**
15 to 24 years	40	50	40	-10	0	-20.0	0.0
25 to 54 years	300	370	380	10	80	2.7	26.7
55 years and over	150	160	150	-10	0	-6.3	0.0
Men	**310**	**390**	**380**	**-10**	**70**	**-2.6**	**22.6**
Women	**180**	**190**	**200**	**10**	**20**	**5.3**	**11.1**
Northwest Territories							
Both sexes	**460**	**580**	**580**	**0**	**120**	**0.0**	**26.1**
15 to 24 years	30	50	40	-10	10	-20.0	33.3
25 to 54 years	320	400	400	0	80	0.0	25.0
55 years and over	110	140	140	0	30	0.0	27.3
Men	**310**	**380**	**390**	**10**	**80**	**2.6**	**25.8**
Women	**150**	**210**	**190**	**-20**	**40**	**-9.5**	**26.7**
Nunavut							
Both sexes	**420**	**410**	**420**	**10**	**0**	**2.4**	**0.0**
15 to 24 years	40	40	40	0	0	0.0	0.0
25 to 54 years	330	310	310	0	-20	0.0	-6.1
55 years and over	50	60	60	0	10	0.0	20.0
Men	**270**	**250**	**260**	**10**	**-10**	**4.0**	**-3.7**
Women	**160**	**160**	**150**	**-10**	**-10**	**-6.3**	**-6.3**

[p] preliminary

1. Includes people who receive regular income benefits, whether or not they participate in one of three employment benefit programs, namely the Skills Development Program, the Job Creation Partnerships Program and the Self-employment Program.

Source(s): Table **14-10-0011-01**.

Table 2
Initial and renewal claims received, by province and territory – Seasonally adjusted

	December 2022	November 2023p	December 2023p	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023
	number			change		% change	
Canada	**247,120**	**258,150**	**257,160**	**-990**	**10,040**	**-0.4**	**4.1**
Newfoundland and Labrador	8,240	8,510	8,570	60	330	0.7	4.0
Prince Edward Island	2,660	2,540	2,570	30	-90	1.2	-3.4
Nova Scotia	8,010	8,930	9,140	210	1,130	2.4	14.1
New Brunswick	9,880	9,400	9,600	200	-280	2.1	-2.8
Quebec	61,910	66,300	65,930	-370	4,020	-0.6	6.5
Ontario	78,160	87,270	87,440	170	9,280	0.2	11.9
Manitoba	8,970	9,690	8,770	-920	-200	-9.5	-2.2
Saskatchewan	6,790	6,900	6,770	-130	-20	-1.9	-0.3
Alberta	29,500	27,850	27,360	-490	-2,140	-1.8	-7.3
British Columbia	32,160	29,810	30,130	320	-2,030	1.1	-6.3
Yukon	260	270	280	10	20	3.7	7.7
Northwest Territories	280	280	270	-10	-10	-3.6	-3.6
Nunavut	180	190	180	-10	0	-5.3	0.0

p   preliminary
Source(s): Table **14-10-0005-01**.

Table 3
Beneficiaries receiving regular income benefits,[1] by census metropolitan category[2] – Seasonally adjusted

	December 2022	November 2023[p]	December 2023[p]	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023
	number			change		% change	
Newfoundland and Labrador							
Census metropolitan areas	**3,330**	**3,750**	**3,740**	**-10**	**410**	**-0.3**	**12.3**
St. John's	3,330	3,750	3,740	-10	410	-0.3	12.3
Census agglomerations	**4,050**	**3,900**	**3,910**	**10**	**-140**	**0.3**	**-3.5**
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	22,490	21,820	22,020	200	-470	0.9	-2.1
Prince Edward Island							
Census agglomerations	**3,550**	**2,980**	**3,090**	**110**	**-460**	**3.7**	**-13.0**
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	4,410	4,120	4,100	-20	-310	-0.5	-7.0
Nova Scotia							
Census metropolitan areas	**4,070**	**4,460**	**4,540**	**80**	**470**	**1.8**	**11.5**
Halifax	4,070	4,460	4,540	80	470	1.8	11.5
Census agglomerations	**7,370**	**6,560**	**6,660**	**100**	**-710**	**1.5**	**-9.6**
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	11,150	10,480	10,460	-20	-690	-0.2	-6.2
New Brunswick							
Census metropolitan areas	**4,230**	**4,090**	**4,200**	**110**	**-30**	**2.7**	**-0.7**
Moncton	2,200	2,110	2,210	100	10	4.7	0.5
Saint John	2,030	1,980	1,990	10	-40	0.5	-2.0
Census agglomerations	**5,120**	**4,660**	**4,480**	**-180**	**-640**	**-3.9**	**-12.5**
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	17,020	15,190	15,490	300	-1,530	2.0	-9.0
Quebec							
Census metropolitan areas	**50,780**	**59,670**	**59,450**	**-220**	**8,670**	**-0.4**	**17.1**
Montréal	35,850	42,880	42,790	-90	6,940	-0.2	19.4
Ottawa–Gatineau (Quebec part)	2,520	2,900	2,990	90	470	3.1	18.7
Québec	6,120	7,020	6,990	-30	870	-0.4	14.2
Saguenay	2,340	2,300	2,210	-90	-130	-3.9	-5.6
Sherbrooke	2,190	2,570	2,530	-40	340	-1.6	15.5
Trois-Rivières	1,750	2,000	1,920	-80	170	-4.0	9.7
Census agglomerations	**12,140**	**12,400**	**12,290**	**-110**	**150**	**-0.9**	**1.2**
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	33,620	33,630	33,470	-160	-150	-0.5	-0.4
Ontario							
Census metropolitan areas	**79,350**	**104,410**	**108,610**	**4,200**	**29,260**	**4.0**	**36.9**
Barrie	1,730	2,090	2,140	50	410	2.4	23.7
Belleville	1,070	1,130	1,120	-10	50	-0.9	4.7
Brantford	1,190	1,610	1,670	60	480	3.7	40.3
Greater Sudbury	1,640	1,880	1,910	30	270	1.6	16.5
Guelph	950	1,480	1,330	-150	380	-10.1	40.0
Hamilton	4,560	6,500	6,510	10	1,950	0.2	42.8
Kingston	1,190	1,390	1,420	30	230	2.2	19.3
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	3,780	5,120	5,280	160	1,500	3.1	39.7
London	4,590	5,270	5,420	150	830	2.8	18.1
Oshawa	3,100	3,820	3,950	130	850	3.4	27.4
Ottawa–Gatineau (Ontario part)	5,730	7,400	7,680	280	1,950	3.8	34.0
Peterborough	910	1,040	1,100	60	190	5.8	20.9
St. Catharines–Niagara	3,980	4,760	4,940	180	960	3.8	24.1
Thunder Bay	1,170	1,280	1,290	10	120	0.8	10.3
Toronto	40,400	55,040	55,950	910	15,550	1.7	38.5
Windsor	3,360	4,630	6,920	2,290	3,560	49.5	106.0
Census agglomerations	**11,700**	**13,520**	**13,840**	**320**	**2,140**	**2.4**	**18.3**
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	15,010	17,200	17,590	390	2,580	2.3	17.2
Manitoba							
Census metropolitan areas	**6,990**	**8,250**	**8,390**	**140**	**1,400**	**1.7**	**20.0**
Winnipeg	6,990	8,250	8,390	140	1,400	1.7	20.0
Census agglomerations	**1,090**	**1,350**	**1,390**	**40**	**300**	**3.0**	**27.5**

Table 3 - continued
Beneficiaries receiving regular income benefits,[1] by census metropolitan category[2] – Seasonally adjusted

	December 2022	November 2023[p]	December 2023[p]	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023	November to December 2023	December 2022 to December 2023
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	**6,330**	**6,520**	**6,530**	**10**	**200**	**0.2**	**3.2**
Saskatchewan							
Census metropolitan areas	**4,410**	**5,050**	**5,100**	**50**	**690**	**1.0**	**15.6**
Regina	1,730	2,110	2,130	20	400	0.9	23.1
Saskatoon	2,680	2,930	2,970	40	290	1.4	10.8
Census agglomerations	**2,210**	**2,320**	**2,290**	**-30**	**80**	**-1.3**	**3.6**
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	**6,310**	**6,590**	**6,580**	**-10**	**270**	**-0.2**	**4.3**
Alberta							
Census metropolitan areas	**30,190**	**34,510**	**35,540**	**1,030**	**5,350**	**3.0**	**17.7**
Calgary	14,120	15,990	16,390	400	2,270	2.5	16.1
Edmonton	15,130	17,540	18,140	600	3,010	3.4	19.9
Lethbridge	950	980	1,000	20	50	2.0	5.3
Census agglomerations	**5,950**	**6,910**	**7,100**	**190**	**1,150**	**2.7**	**19.3**
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	**7,850**	**8,780**	**9,090**	**310**	**1,240**	**3.5**	**15.8**
British Columbia							
Census metropolitan areas	**24,070**	**31,940**	**31,400**	**-540**	**7,330**	**-1.7**	**30.5**
Abbotsford–Mission	1,790	2,010	2,040	30	250	1.5	14.0
Kelowna	2,280	2,430	2,500	70	220	2.9	9.6
Vancouver	17,950	24,970	24,270	-700	6,320	-2.8	35.2
Victoria	2,050	2,530	2,580	50	530	2.0	25.9
Census agglomerations	**9,860**	**11,050**	**11,100**	**50**	**1,240**	**0.5**	**12.6**
Outside census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations	**7,510**	**8,890**	**8,870**	**-20**	**1,360**	**-0.2**	**18.1**

p   preliminary
1.   Includes people who receive regular income benefits, whether or not they participate in one of three employment benefit programs, namely the Skills Development Program, the Job Creation Partnerships Program and the Self-employment Program.
2.   2016 Standard Geographical Classification.
Source(s):   Table **14-10-0322-01**.

Available   tables: 14-10-0004-01   to 14-10-0011-01   ,   14-10-0137-01,   14-10-0322-01,   14-10-0323-01, 14-10-0343-01, 14-10-0344-01 and 14-10-0346-01.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2604.

More information about the concepts and use of Employment Insurance statistics is available in the *Guide to Employment Insurance Statistics* (**73-506-G**).

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**).