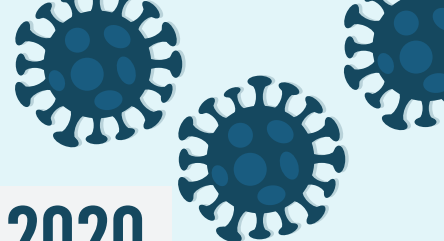


The impact of COVID-19 on the Canadian labour market



March 2020

Introduction

In March 2020, measures to contain the COVID-19 virus caused sudden interruptions in business operations across Canada. This prevented many Canadians from working as they usually would.

The Labour Force Survey collects information during a single week each month and classifies the Canadian population aged 15 and older as either employed, unemployed, or not in the labour force.

Total working-age
population

31,070,000

Total number of Canadians who were
affected by either job loss or reduced hours

3,100,000

Employed

(change from February
to March 2020)

-1,000,000

People who had a job but did not work
during the week of March 15 to 21

+1,300,000

John is a machine operator and returned from a trip abroad on March 14. During the week of March 15 to 21, he was self-isolating and did not work. His employer has told John that he should return to work when his period of self-isolation is over.



People who had a job but worked less
than half their usual hours during the
week of March 15 to 21

+800,000

Mohammed is the sole proprietor of an event planning business. During the week of the LFS, he worked 15 hours instead of his usual 45 because it was not safe to interact face to face with clients.



Unemployed

(change from February
to March 2020)

+413,000

Marie worked as a hotel receptionist the week before the LFS reference week. The hotel closed temporarily on March 14 and Marie was laid off; her employer told Marie to report back to work in 3 months.



People who had worked during the first two
weeks in March and wanted to work, but did
not meet the definition of unemployed

+193,000

Lan is a restaurant server. Her employer told her on March 14 that she was laid off permanently because business had declined. Although Lan wants a new job now, she has not started to look for one because most places where she would apply are closed.



**Not in
labour force**

(change from February
to March 2020)

+644,000

People who were not in the labour force,
including those who wanted to work and those
who were either unable or unavailable to work

+450,000

Declan last worked in January and was looking for work in February. The school his children attend is now closed and Declan is not looking for work so that he can care for his family.



Numbers might not add to totals due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

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