

Labour Market Notes

Broad-based employment gains ahead of third wave

Alberta

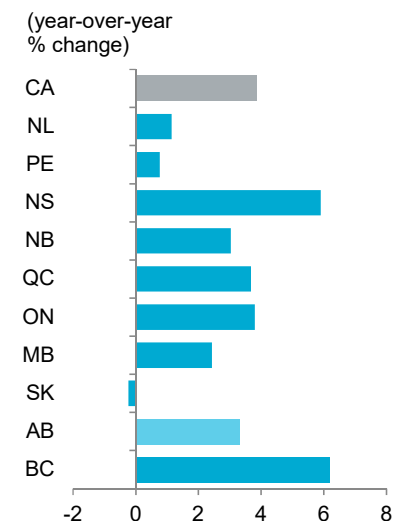
- **Employment continues to grow.** Employment surged 37,100 month-over-month (m/m) in March for the third consecutive month, amid easing public health measures.
- **Part-time employment fully recovers.** Part-time jobs (+25,100 m/m) increased and stood at 4.7% above February 2020 level. Full-time employment also gained some ground (+11,900 m/m) but still remained below pre-COVID level.
- **Strong gain in the services.** Service sector employment continued to increase (+25,800) following a solid gain in the previous month. Employment growth was led by educational services (+11,500 m/m), and supported by professional, scientific and technical services (+7,400). This was slightly tempered by declines in business, building and other support services (-3,200). Employment in accommodation and food services eased slightly following a strong pick up in February. Overall, employment increased in 7 out of 11 services sectors.
- **Goods sector recovery back on track.** Goods-producing industries saw widespread employment gains, erasing the previous month's decline. The growth was concentrated in natural resources (+4,400) and construction (+3,200) sectors. Despite a monthly gain in the manufacturing sector, employment remained weak.
- **Unemployment rate falls.** With the monthly employment gain, the unemployment rate declined 0.8 percentage points to 9.1%, the lowest since March 2020.
- **Employment remains below pre-COVID levels.** Employment stood 33,900 below the February 2020 level. Alberta has now recovered almost 90% (303,100) of the 337,000 jobs lost between February and April 2020.
- **Labour underutilization declines.** In March, the labour underutilization rate fell in the month to 16.4%, but was still up from 13.5% in February 2020. There were 128,200 who were employed, but worked zero hours or missed more than half of their usual hours during the reference week. This was down in the month but up 30,100 (+31%) from February 2020. The number of Albertans who wanted a job but did not look for one increased in March and was just 3,400 shy of February 2020 level.
- **Wages tick down.** With increase in employment in some low-paying industries, the average hourly wage in Alberta declined to \$32.50 (-1.4% m/m). The average hourly wage declined 0.6% compared to a year ago, the first annual decline since June 2017.

Canada

- **National employment grows.** A total of 303,100 jobs were gained in March, as restrictions further eased in many provinces. Employment improved in 9 out of 10 provinces led by Ontario (+182,300) and Alberta (+37,100).
- **Unemployment rate falls.** The national unemployment rate declined by 0.7 percentage points to 7.5% in March.
- **Wages edge lower.** The national average hourly wage ticked down to \$29.89 (-0.3% m/m). The average wage remained 2.1% above last year.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY PROVINCE

March 2021 vs. March 2020



Sources: Statistics Canada, Haver Analytics

ALBERTA LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Indicator	Latest*
Employment	2,235,300
month-over-month change	+37,100
year-over-year % change	+3.3%
Alberta Unemployment Rate (UR)	9.1%
Edmonton UR**	11.2%
Calgary UR**	10.0%
Participation Rate	69.6%
Average Weekly Earnings (AWE)	\$1,238.65
year-over-year % change	+4.5%
Average Hourly Wage	\$32.50
year-over-year % change	-0.6%

Sources: Statistics Canada, Haver Analytics

* All data is from the March 2021 Labour Force Survey, except AWE which is from the January 2021 Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours.

** This indicator is calculated as a three month moving average and is seasonally adjusted.

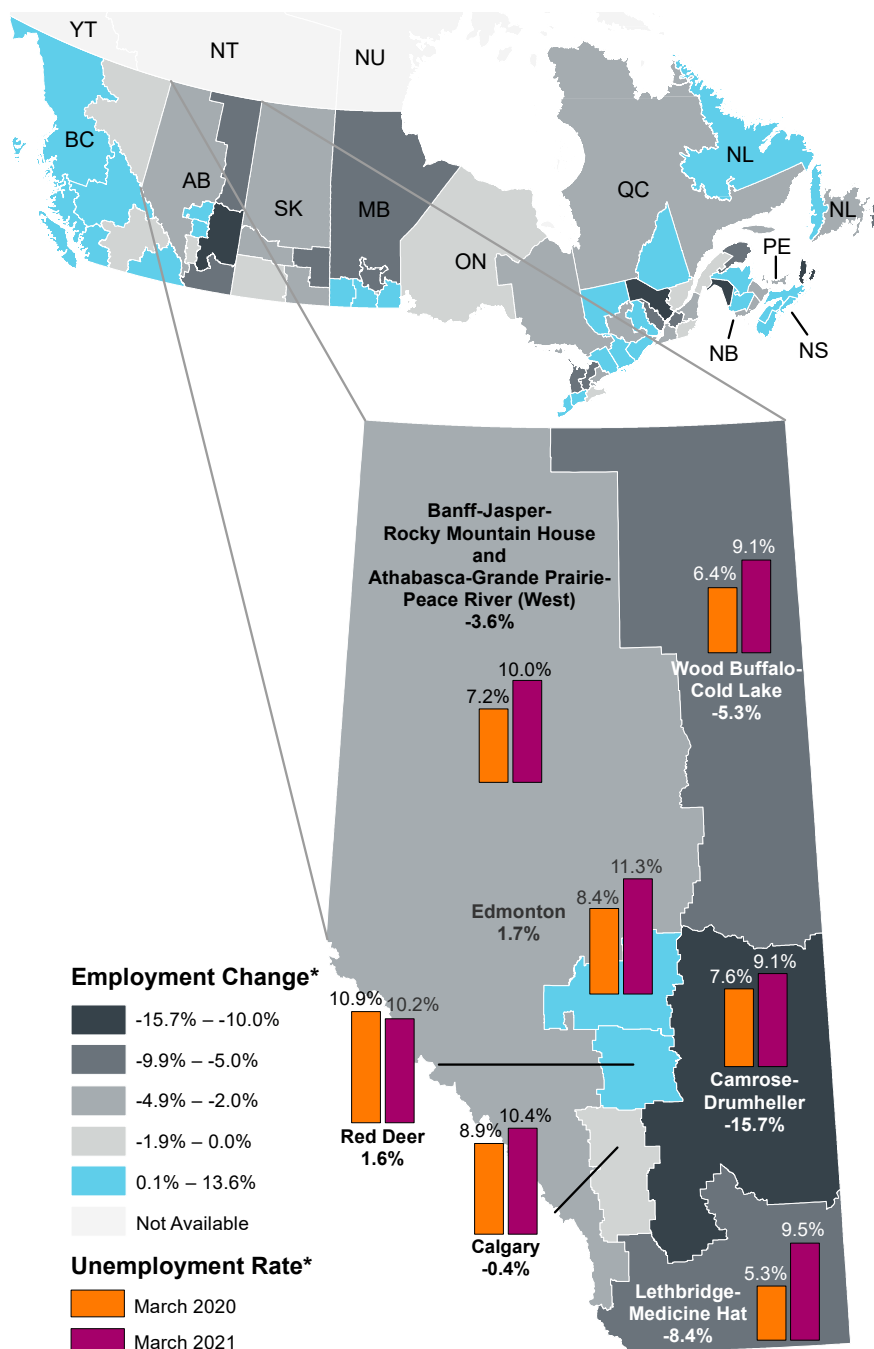
Regional labour market indicators

	2019	2020	2021 YTD
Alberta			
Population	1.6	1.5	1.2
Labour Force	1.0	-1.9	0.1
Employment	0.7	-6.6	-3.1
Unemployment Rate	7.0	11.4	10.6
Calgary			
Population	2.0	1.8	1.5
Labour Force	2.4	-0.5	1.5
Employment	2.8	-5.3	-1.4
Unemployment Rate	7.2	11.7	10.4
Edmonton			
Population	2.0	1.9	1.6
Labour Force	1.7	-2.9	1.7
Employment	0.7	-7.7	-1.9
Unemployment Rate	7.4	12.0	11.4
West			
Population	0.6	0.4	0.1
Labour Force	-0.1	-3.4	-1.0
Employment	0.1	-9.2	-4.1
Unemployment Rate	5.5	11.1	9.9
Lethbridge - Medicine Hat			
Population	1.1	0.9	0.5
Labour Force	0.5	-2.8	-2.5
Employment	-0.3	-5.4	-8.5
Unemployment Rate	6.1	8.6	10.7
Red Deer			
Population	1.2	1.2	0.9
Labour Force	-4.6	-1.9	-1.3
Employment	-6.1	-6.7	-1.7
Unemployment Rate	7.0	11.6	9.7
Camrose - Drumheller			
Population	0.2	0.1	-0.2
Labour Force	-6.5	0.5	-15.4
Employment	-7.8	-4.0	-18.2
Unemployment Rate	6.6	10.7	9.5
Wood Buffalo - Cold Lake			
Population	0.4	0.0	-0.2
Labour Force	2.0	-3.7	-1.9
Employment	2.3	-7.6	-5.5
Unemployment Rate	5.7	9.5	9.3

Sources: Statistics Canada, Haver Analytics
All numbers are percent growth, except unemployment rates.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY ECONOMIC REGION

Per cent change in year-over-year employment



*Based on three-month moving averages.

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Have a question? Send us an [email](#)

CHART 1: EMPLOYMENT LED BY GAINS IN THE SERVICES SECTOR AND PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT
Monthly change in seasonally adjusted employment

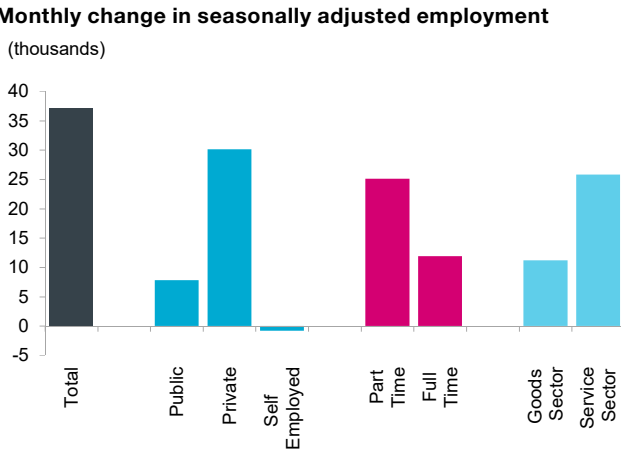


CHART 2: UNEMPLOYMENT DOWN FROM PANDEMIC PEAK, BUT STILL HIGHER THAN PRE-COVID LEVEL
Seasonally adjusted number of employed and unemployed

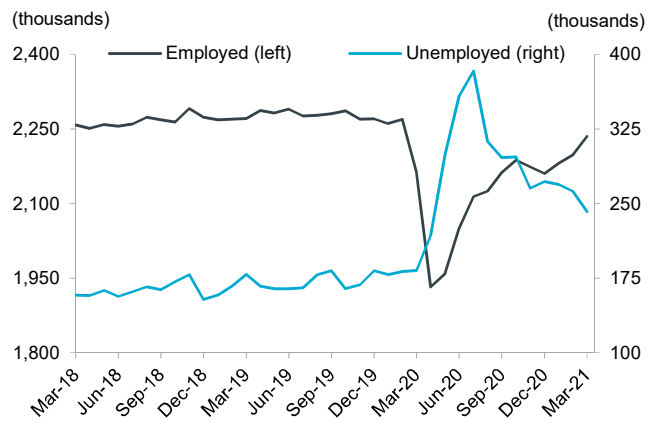


CHART 3: SOURCE POPULATION CONTINUES TO GROW; LABOUR FORCE BOUNCED BACK
Monthly change in labour market indicators, March 2020

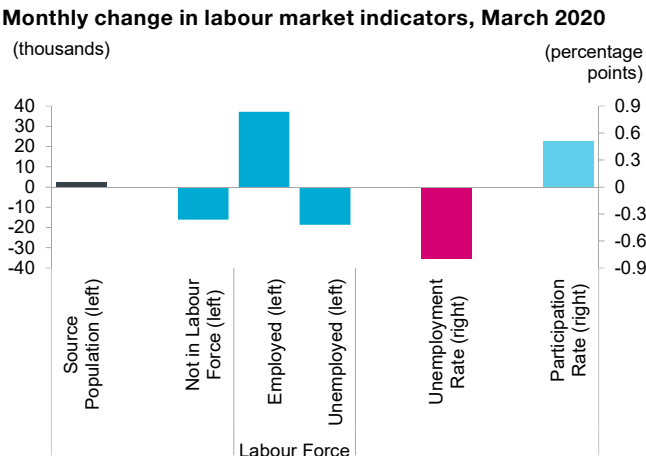


CHART 4: LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE HAS REBOUNDED, STILL BELOW PRE-COVID LEVEL
y/y growth in labour force and participation rate

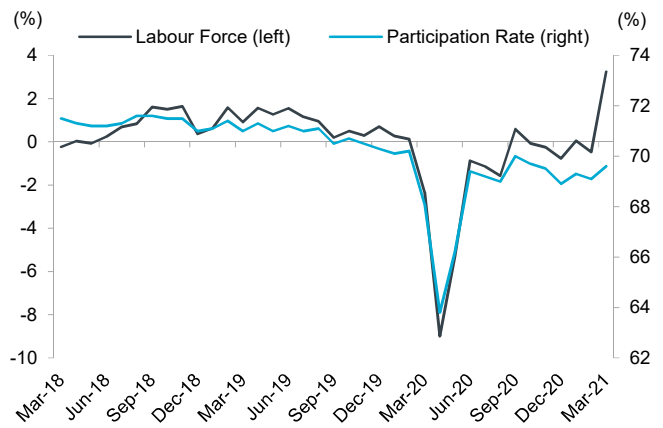


CHART 5: HOURLY WAGE DOWN 1.4% MONTH-OVER-MONTH AND 0.2% YEAR-OVER-YEAR
Seasonally unadjusted average hourly wage and y/y growth

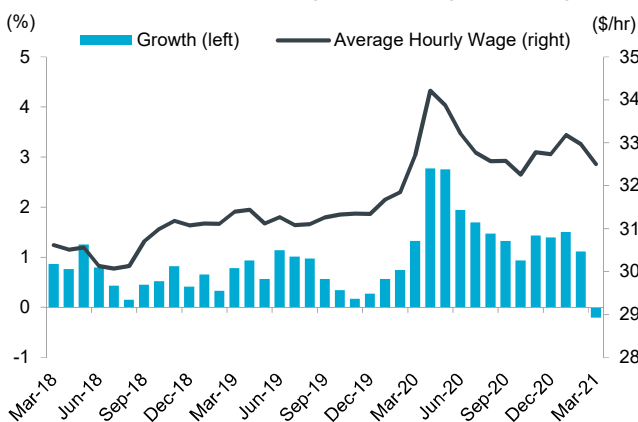


CHART 6: LABOUR UNDERUTILIZATION HAS IMPROVED FROM ITS PEAK BUT CONTINUES TO BE ELEVATED
Unemployment rate and labour underutilization rate

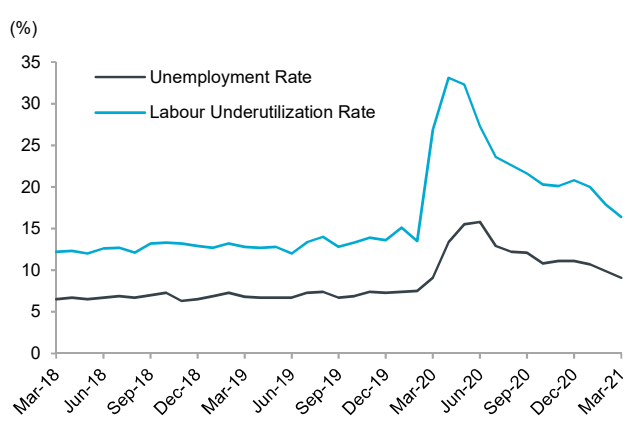


CHART 7: EMPLOYMENT BELOW PRE-PANDEMIC LEVEL, MOST LOSSES IN FULL-TIME AND PRIVATE SECTOR
Change in employment since Feb 2020

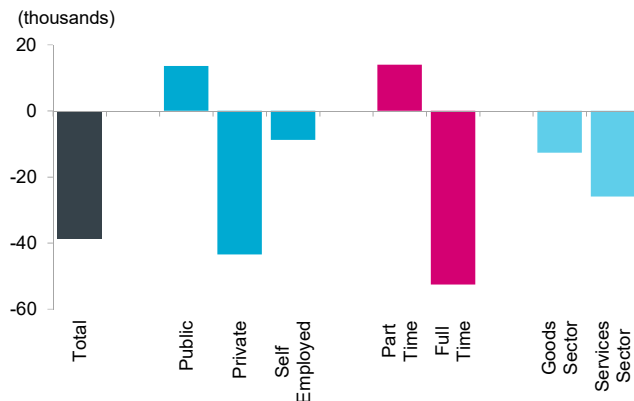


CHART 8: JOB LOSSES CONCENTRATED IN INDUSTRIES DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES
Change in seasonally adjusted employment since Feb 2020

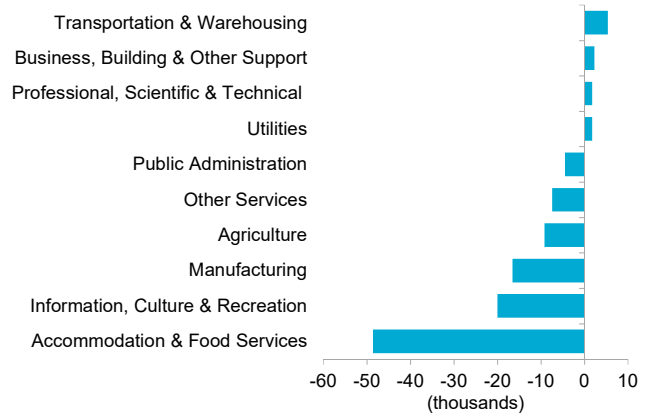


CHART 9: EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY IN THE GOODS SECTOR PICKING UP

Alberta employment indexed to 2020 peak, by sector

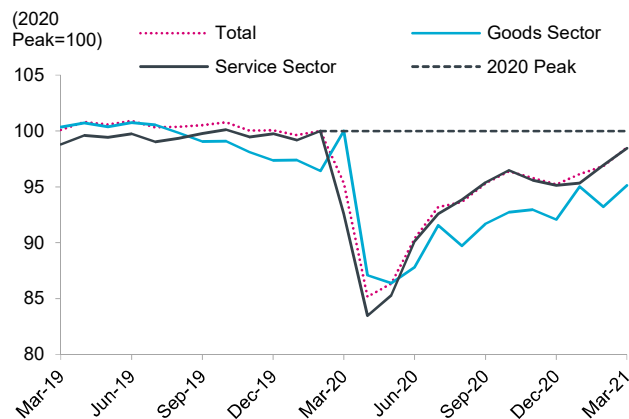


CHART 10: PART-TIME HIT HARD BUT RECOVERED FASTER; SELF-EMPLOYMENT NOT AS IMPACTED

Alberta employment indexed to Feb 2020, by type

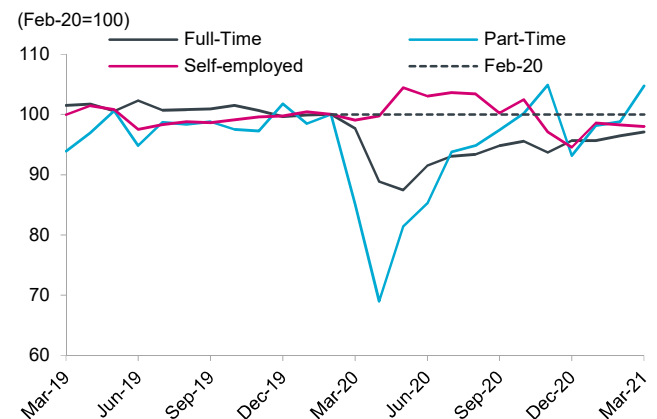


CHART 11: EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY APPEARS TO BE FASTER IN THE TWO MAJOR URBAN CENTERS

Alberta employment indexed to Feb 2020, by region

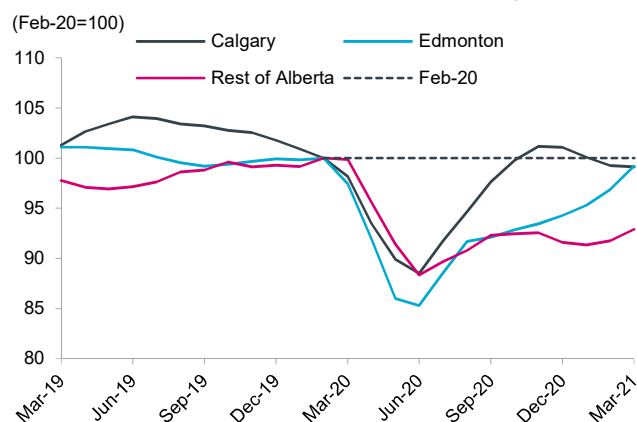


CHART 12: EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY LED BY AGED 55 AND OVER; YOUTH (15-24) REBOUNDED

Alberta employment indexed to Feb 2020, by age group

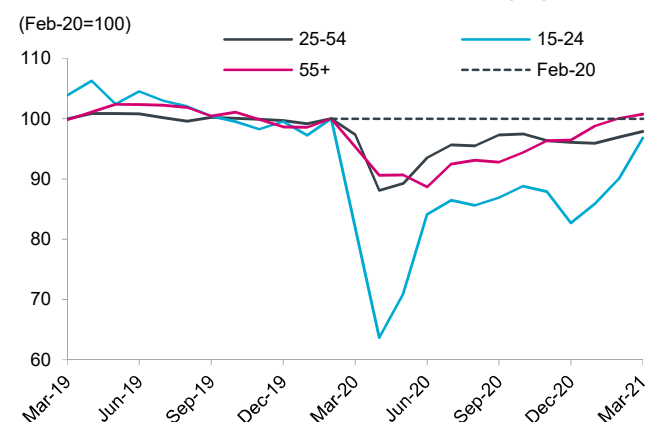


CHART 13: ALBERTA'S EMPLOYMENT 1.5% BELOW PRE-PANDEMIC LEVEL, SIMILAR TO NATIONAL AVERAGE
% change in seasonally adj. employment since Feb 2020

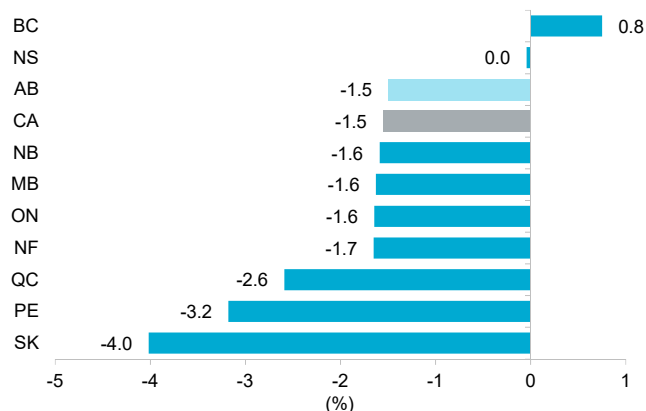


CHART 14: GROWTH IN ALBERTA'S EMPLOYMENT HAS CONVERGED WITH NATIONAL AVERAGE
y/y growth in seasonally adj. employment by province

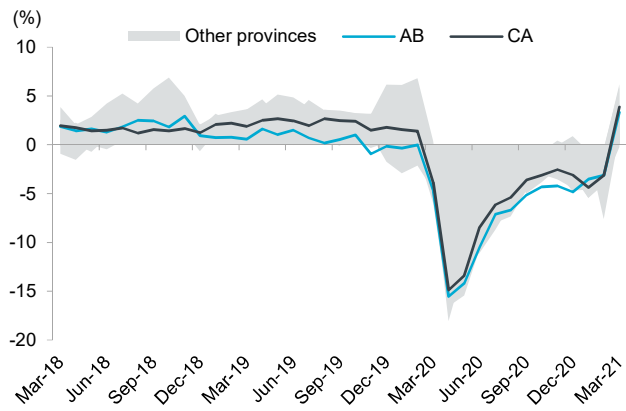


CHART 15: ALBERTA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE THE THIRD HIGHEST AMONG PROVINCES
Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates by province

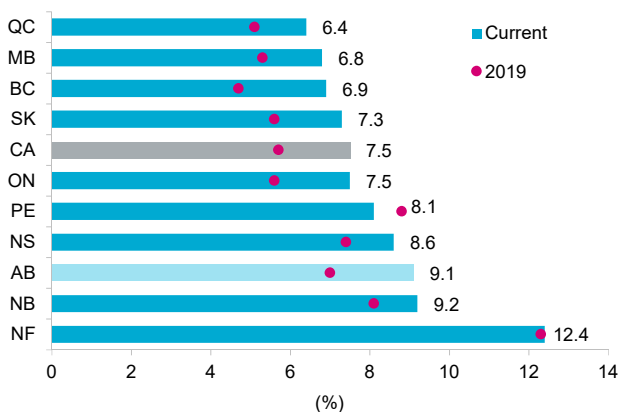


CHART 16: ALBERTA'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE SINCE THE 2015-16 RECESSION
Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates by province

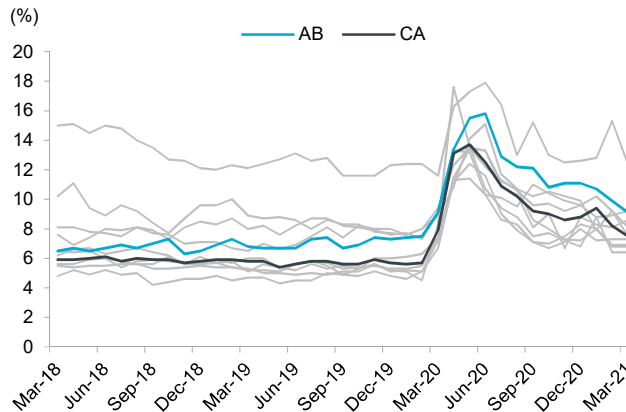


CHART 17: ALBERTA EMPLOYMENT RATE DROPPED FROM 2019 BUT STILL THE HIGHEST AMONG PROVINCES
Seasonally adjusted employment rates by province

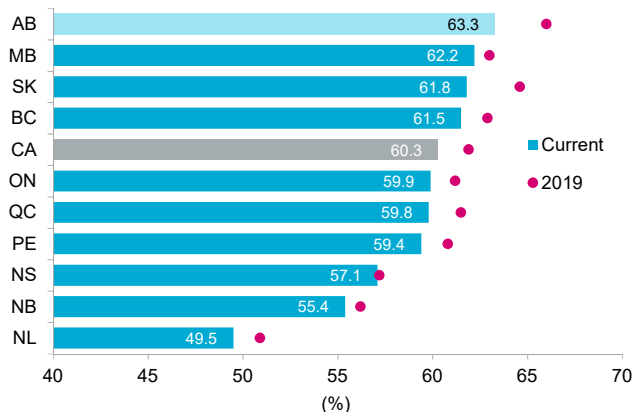
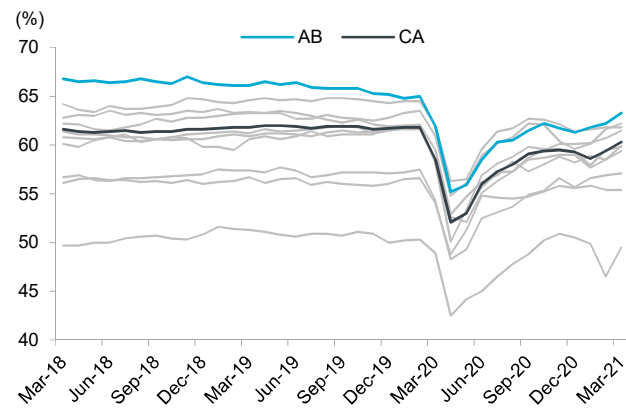


CHART 18: ALBERTA'S EMPLOYMENT RATE CONSISTENTLY HIGHEST AMONG PROVINCES
Seasonally adjusted employment rates by province



Sources: All data are from Statistics Canada and Haver Analytics. All historical data are subject to revision.