

Labour Market Notes

Service sector drives job gains

Alberta

- **Employment continues to improve.** With the Alberta economy continuing to open up in August, employment in the province surged (+19,500). The gains were led by full-time positions in the service and private sector.
- **Unemployment rate quickly approaching pre-COVID levels.** Alberta's unemployment rate dropped by 0.6 percentage points to 7.9 per cent in August, slightly higher than the February 2020 level of 7.5 per cent. Meanwhile, the participation rate was unchanged at 69%, well below the pre-COVID levels.
- **Strength in full-time employment.** Employment gains were almost exclusively in full-time positions (+16,300 m/m), which have now recovered 86 per cent of the jobs lost between February and April 2020. Part-time positions were also up (+3,100 m/m) in the month and remained (+3.1%) above the pre-pandemic level.
- **Service sector leading the recovery.** Employment in the service sector increased (+26,300 or +1.6% m/m), as many businesses continued to expand following the reopening in July. With the monthly gain, employment in the services sector surpassed February 2020 for the first time since the onset of the pandemic led by strength in finance, insurance, real estate and leasing (+21,300), Educational services (+17,700), transportation & warehousing (+12,700) and professional, scientific & technical services (+9,700).
- **Goods sector lagging.** After widespread gains in July, employment in the goods-producing sector decreased (-6,700 or -1.2% m/m). Employment in all sub-sectors, except utilities, declined, led by forestry, fishing, mining, oil & gas (-3,400 or -2.3%), manufacturing (-2,400 or -1.9%) and agriculture (-2,000 or -5.6%).
- **Employment remains below pre-COVID levels.** Alberta has recovered 95% (321,100) of the 337,000 jobs lost between February and April 2020. Employment is now 1.6% below the February 2020 level.
- **Labour underutilization eases.** The labour underutilization rate fell to 15.2% in August from 15.5% in July as more people worked usual hours. However, there were 133,400 who were employed, but worked zero hours or missed more than half of their usual hours during the reference week. This was up 5,800 (-4.5% m/m) from July. The number of Albertans who wanted a job but did not look for one also increased in August, but stood at 7.5% below the February 2020 level.
- **Wages hold steady.** The average hourly wage in Alberta was unchanged at \$31.99. Compared to a year ago, it remained down 1.8%, primarily due to a sharp growth in wages last spring.

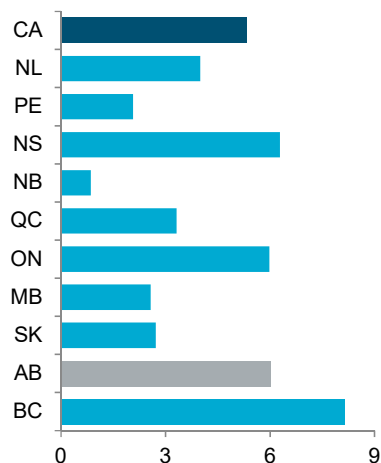
Canada

- **National employment advances.** A total of 90,200 jobs were added in August, as many provinces had little public health measures in place. Employment increased in 7 out of 10 provinces, led by Ontario (+53,000 m/m).
- **Unemployment rate falls.** With the employment gain, the national unemployment rate declined by 0.4 percentage points to 7.1% in August.
- **Wages tick up.** The national average hourly wage edged up to \$29.73 (+0.5% m/m), and they were up 1.3% compared to a year ago.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH BY PROVINCE

August 2021 vs. August 2020

(year-over-year
% change)



Sources: Statistics Canada, Haver Analytics

ALBERTA LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Indicator	Latest*
Employment	2,253,300
month-over-month change	19,500
year-over-year % change	6.0%
Alberta Unemployment Rate (UR)	7.9%
Edmonton UR**	8.2%
Calgary UR**	9.6%
Participation Rate	69.0%
Average Weekly Earnings (AWE)	\$1,220.68
year-over-year % change	1.4%
Average Hourly Wage	\$31.99
year-over-year % change	-1.8%
Job Vacancy Rate	4.2%

Sources: Statistics Canada, Haver Analytics

* All data is from the August 2021 Labour Force Survey, except AWE which is from the June 2021 Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours, and the Job Vacancy Rate which is from the June 2021 Job Vacancy and Wage Survey.

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

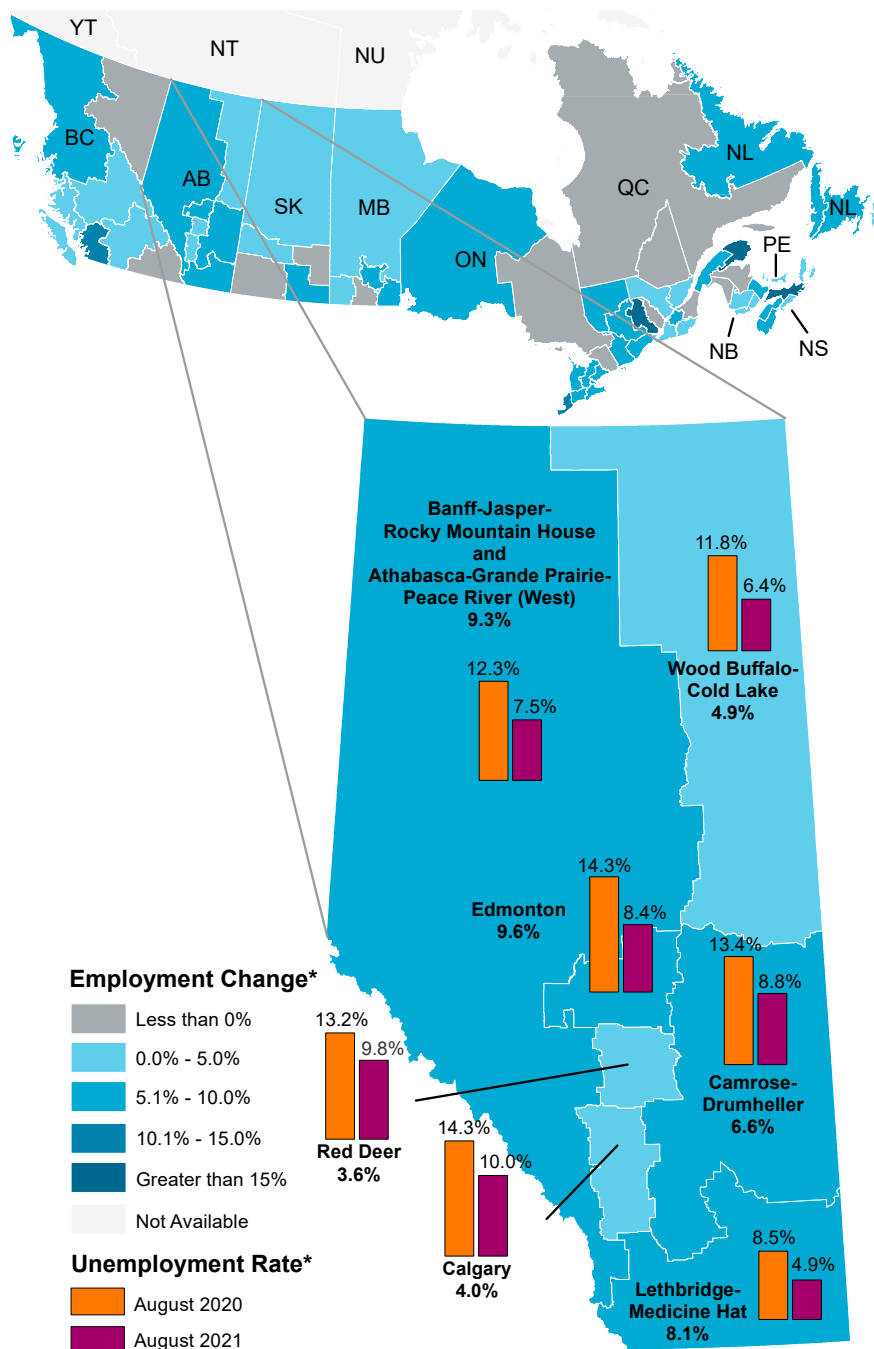
Regional labour market indicators

	2019	2020	2021 YTD
Alberta			
Population	1.6	1.5	1.1
Labour Force	1.0	-1.9	2.2
Employment	0.7	-6.6	3.9
Unemployment Rate	7.0	11.4	9.7
Calgary			
Population	2.0	1.8	1.4
Labour Force	2.4	-0.5	1.5
Employment	2.8	-5.3	3.4
Unemployment Rate	7.2	11.7	9.8
Edmonton			
Population	2.0	1.9	1.4
Labour Force	1.7	-2.9	4.7
Employment	0.7	-7.7	6.5
Unemployment Rate	7.4	12.0	10.3
West			
Population	0.6	0.4	0.1
Labour Force	-0.1	-3.4	2.1
Employment	0.1	-9.2	4.2
Unemployment Rate	5.5	11.1	9.2
Lethbridge - Medicine Hat			
Population	1.1	0.9	0.4
Labour Force	0.5	-2.8	0.2
Employment	-0.3	-5.4	-0.4
Unemployment Rate	6.1	8.6	7.9
Red Deer			
Population	1.2	1.2	0.8
Labour Force	-4.6	-1.9	2.1
Employment	-6.1	-6.7	4.0
Unemployment Rate	7.0	11.6	10.0
Camrose - Drumheller			
Population	0.2	0.1	-0.3
Labour Force	-6.5	0.5	-7.0
Employment	-7.8	-4.0	-5.4
Unemployment Rate	6.6	10.7	8.2
Wood Buffalo - Cold Lake			
Population	0.4	0.0	-0.3
Labour Force	2.0	-3.7	-0.1
Employment	2.3	-7.6	1.2
Unemployment Rate	5.7	9.5	7.8

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 GAINS IN FULL-TIME POSITIONS IN THE SERVICES AND PRIVATE SECTOR

Monthly change in employment

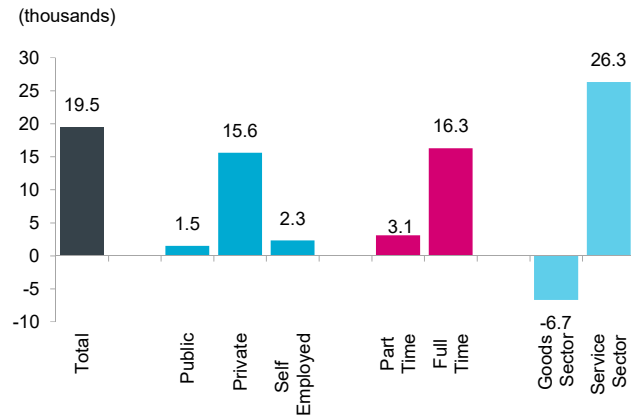


CHART 2: UNEMPLOYMENT DECLINES BUT REMAINS HIGHER THAN PRE-COVID LEVEL

Number of employed and unemployed

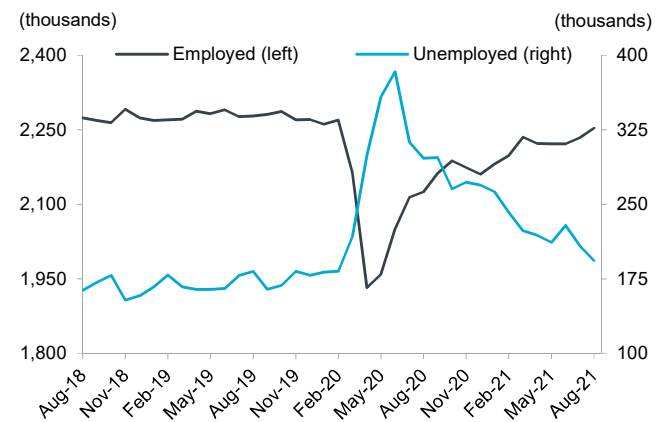


CHART 3: SOURCE POPULATION CONTINUES TO GROW WHILE THE LABOUR FORCE HOLDS STEADY

Monthly change in labour market indicators, July 2021



CHART 4: LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE INCHES DOWN AND REMAINS BELOW PRE-COVID LEVEL

Participation rate and year-over-year growth in labour force

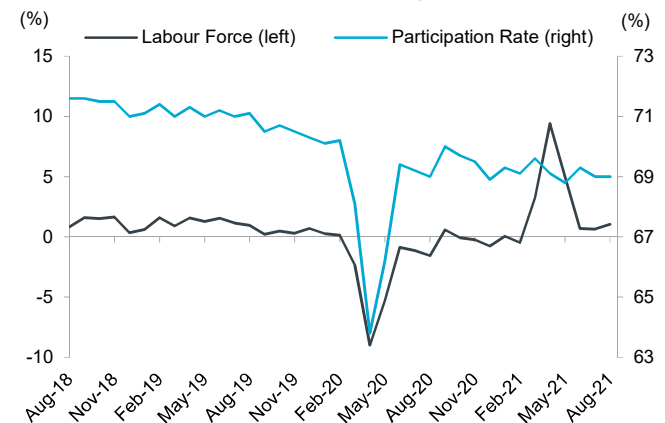


CHART 5: HOURLY WAGE UNCHANGED IN AUGUST AND DOWN 1.8% YEAR-OVER-YEAR

Average hourly wage and y/y growth, non-seasonally adj

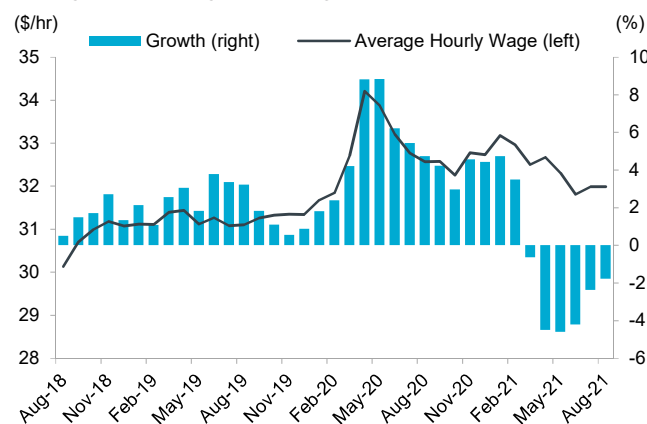


CHART 6: LABOUR UNDERUTILIZATION EASES FURTHER

Unemployment rate and labour underutilization rate

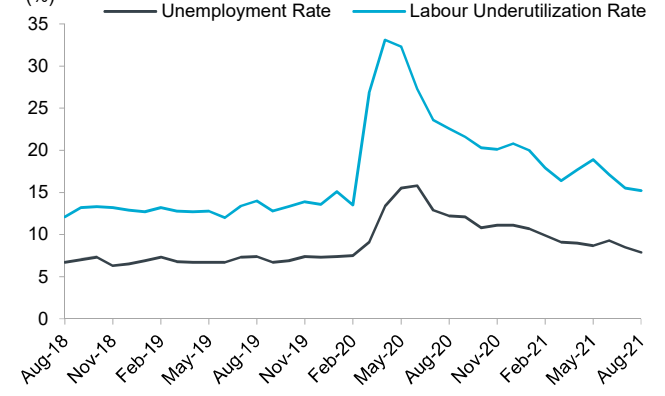


CHART 7: EMPLOYMENT BELOW PRE-PANDEMIC LEVEL, MOST LOSSES IN PRIVATE AND SERVICES SECTORS
Change in employment since Feb 2020



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

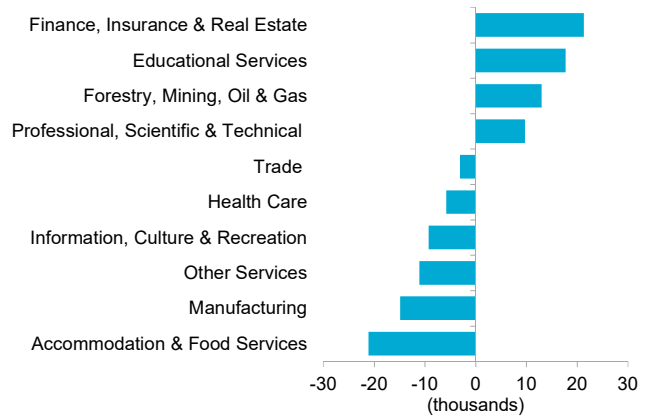


CHART 9: EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY IN THE SERVICE SECTOR BACK ON TRACK

Alberta employment indexed to 2020 peak, by sector

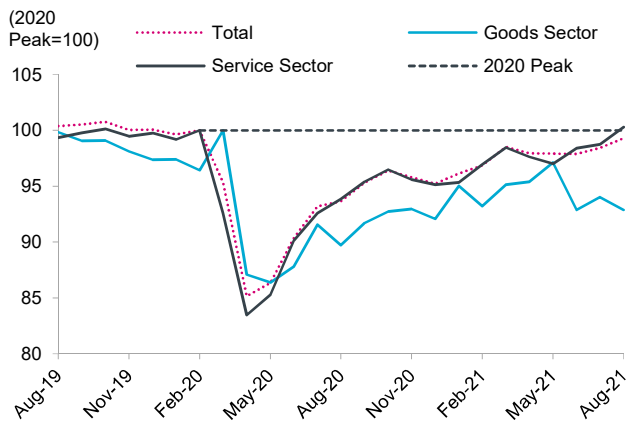


CHART 10: FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT MOVES UP, PART-TIME AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT DECLINE

Alberta employment indexed to Feb 2020, by type

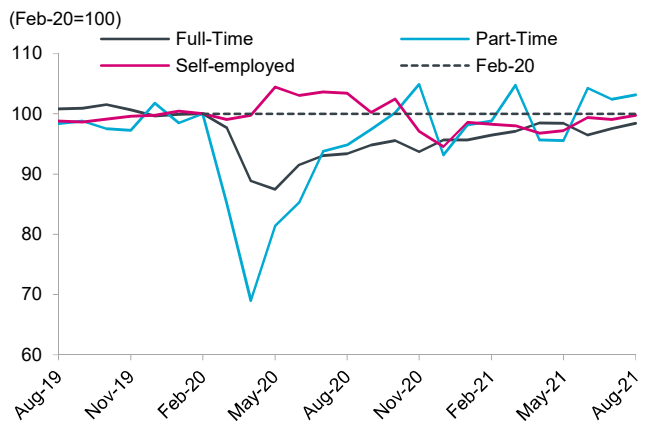


CHART 11: EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY APPEARS TO BE FASTER IN THE TWO MAJOR URBAN CENTERS
3-month average employment indexed to Feb 2020, by region

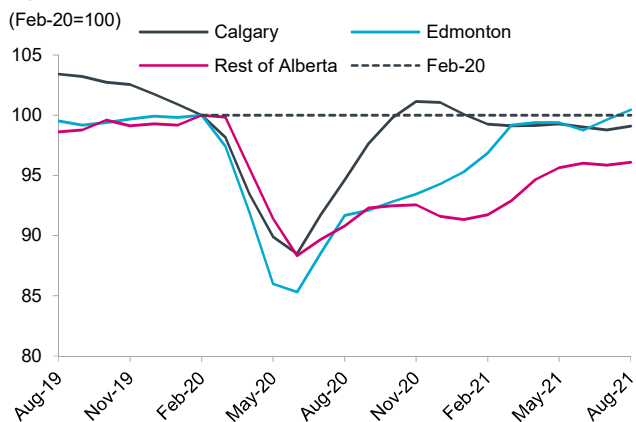


CHART 12: EMPLOYMENT RECOVERY LED BY CORE AGE (25-54); YOUTH (15-24) LAGGING BEHIND

Alberta employment indexed to Feb 2020, by age group

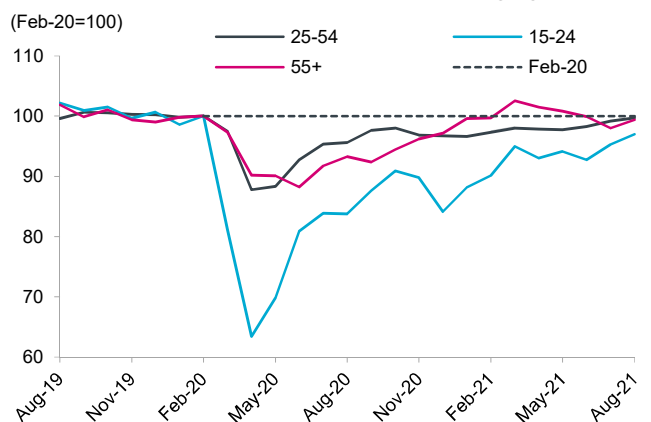


CHART 13: ALBERTA'S EMPLOYMENT 0.7% BELOW PRE-PANDEMIC LEVEL, SIMILAR TO NATIONAL AVERAGE
Percentage change in employment since Feb 2020



CHART 14: GROWTH IN ALBERTA'S EMPLOYMENT IN LINE WITH NATIONAL AVERAGE
Year-over-year growth in employment by province

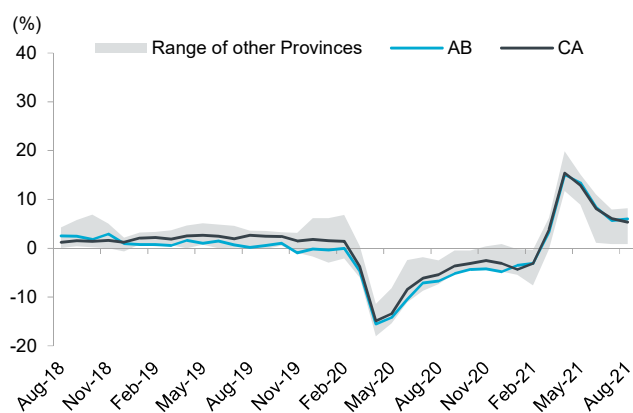


CHART 15: ALBERTA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE
Unemployment rates by province

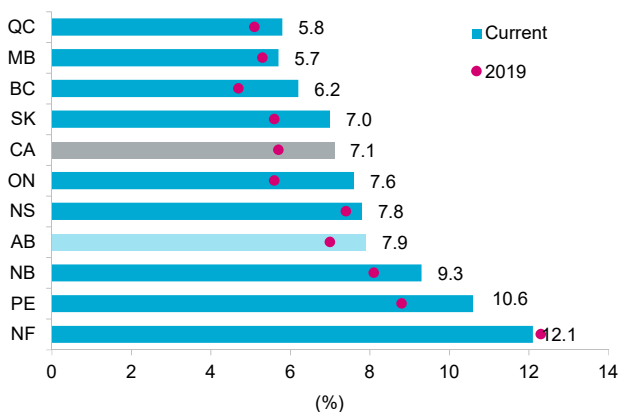


CHART 16: ALBERTA'S UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ABOVE NATIONAL AVERAGE SINCE THE 2015-16 RECESSION
Unemployment rates by province

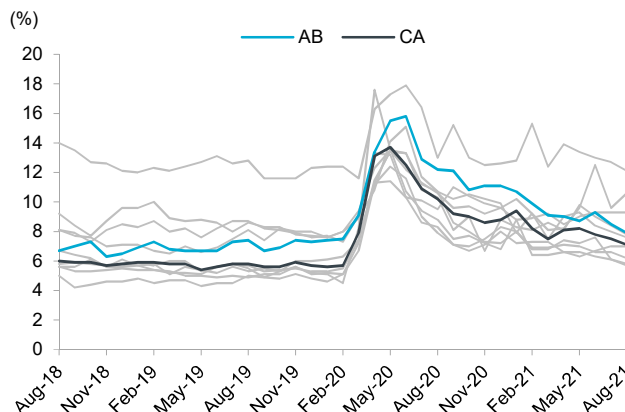


CHART 17: ALBERTA EMPLOYMENT RATE DROPS FROM 2019; STILL THE HIGHEST AMONG PROVINCES
Employment rates by province

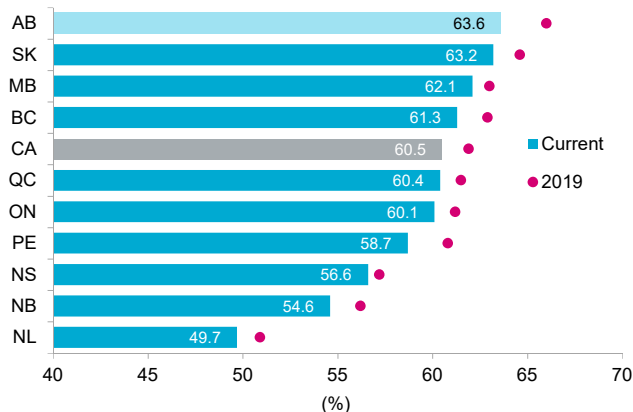
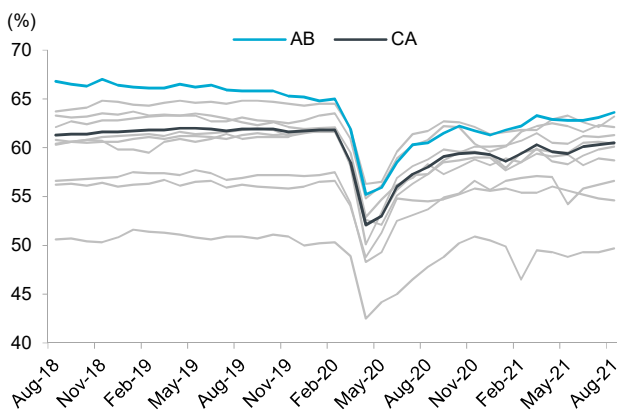


CHART 18: ALBERTA'S EMPLOYMENT RATE HIGHEST AMONG PROVINCES
Employment rates by province



Sources: Unless noted otherwise, all data are seasonally adjusted and taken from Statistics Canada and Haver Analytics.
All historical data are subject to revision.