2016 Census of Canada

Labour Release

Treasury Board and Finance
Office of Statistics and Information - Economic Statistics

Alberta

Introduction

Alberta has a diverse and engaged labour force. In 2016, Alberta had the highest employment rate of all Canadian provinces. However, Alberta's unemployment rate has increased in recent years due to the downturn in the energy sector. This publication provides a summary of highlights from the 2016 Canadian census concerning the labour market in Alberta.

Labour Force Status

Alberta's employment rate was 63.7%, the highest of all of the Canadian provinces and 4.7 percentage points above the overall Canadian employment rate (Figure 1). Additionally, Alberta had the highest participation rate of all Canadian provinces. In spite of this, Alberta had the highest unemployment rate (8.9%) outside the Atlantic Provinces.

Labour market conditions varied notably across urban centres (refers to Census Agglomerations and Census Metropolitan Areas). Surprisingly, in spite of their close ties to the struggling oil and gas industry at the time of the census, Wood Buffalo and Cold Lake had employment rates of 71.9% and 71.7% respectively, the highest rates among Alberta communities. In addition, Wood Buffalo had the third lowest unemployment rate in Alberta at 7.1%. This could be partially due to the labour market's significant lag in response to lower oil prices.

Figure 1: Employment Across Provinces

People employed as a percent of the population of 15 and older in 2016
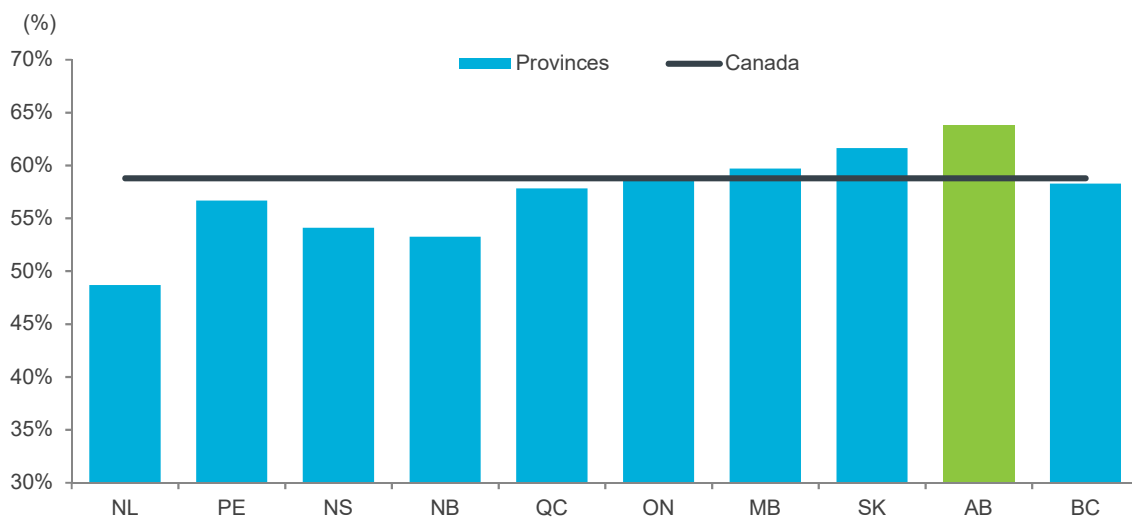
Top Industries

Health care and social assistance and retail trade were the largest employing industries in Alberta, as well as in Canada. Construction, which is closely tied to the oil and gas industry, was the third largest employer in Alberta. By comparison, manufacturing was the third largest employer in Canada (Table 1). The mining, oil and gas industry was the seventh largest employer in Alberta, but it also had the highest unemployment rate at 15%.

Table 1: Top Employing Industries in Alberta, 2016

Top Employing Industries in Alberta						
Industries	**Alberta**			**Canada**		
	Number	**Rank**	**%**	**Number**	**Rank**	**%**
Health care and social assistance	238,130	1	11.4%	2,076,920	1	12.1%
Retail trade	232,650	2	11.1%	1,989,890	2	11.5%
Construction	206,935	3	9.9%	1,218,780	6	7.1%
Professional, scientific and technical services	153,065	4	7.3%	1,268,530	5	7.4%
Educational services	141,690	5	6.8%	1,293,930	4	7.5%
Accommodation and food services	141,340	6	6.7%	1,183,595	7	6.9%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	121,155	7	5.8%	234,330	18	1.4%
Public administration	118,665	8	5.7%	1,088,855	8	6.3%
Manufacturing	116,760	9	5.6%	1,508,870	3	8.8%
Transportation and warehousing	107,485	10	5.1%	830,950	9	4.8%

Occupations

Retail salespersons and retail and wholesale managers were the top two occupations in Canada and Alberta (Table 2). However, transportation truck drivers, registered nurses/psychiatric nurses, administrative officers, and managers in agriculture ranked higher in Alberta than they did in Canada.

Table 2: Top Occupations in Alberta, 2016

| Top Occupations in Alberta						
Occupations	**Alberta**			**Canada**		
	Number	**Rank**	**%**	**Number**	**Rank**	**%**
Retail salespersons	76,780	1	3.7%	626,775	1	3.7%
Retail and wholesale trade managers	48,500	2	2.2%	387,320	2	2.3%
Transport truck drivers	42,025	3	2.1%	288,465	5	2.0%
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations	41,870	4	2.0%	358,135	3	2.0%
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	36,910	5	1.7%	286,225	6	1.8%
Administrative officers	33,055	6	1.6%	260,530	8	1.6%
Cashiers	32,790	7	1.6%	316,755	4	1.6%
Managers in agriculture	30,675	8	1.4%	152,275	24	1.5%
Elementary school and kindergarten teachers	30,260	9	1.4%	283,530	7	1.4%
General office support workers	29,555	10	1.4%	225,685	12	1.4%

Gender

Like Canada as a whole, males in Alberta had a higher participation rate than females. However, men had a much higher unemployment rate at 8.6% than women at 5.8% in 2016. This is consistent with the fact that more women are employed in less cyclical industries like health and social assistance, and educational services.

Different industries had considerable differences in the gender composition of their workers. For instance, 39.1% of employed males worked in goods-producing industries, compared with only 12.5% of employed females (Figure 2). Top employers of females included healthcare and social assistance (17.8%), followed by retail trade (11.3%), and educational services (8.9%). By comparison, the top employers of males included construction (17.9%), retail trade (10.9%), and mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction (9.4%). Nearly 86.3% of employed males were working in full-time positions, while 69% of women were in full-time positions.

There were also notable differences in the gender makeup of different occupations. Only 36.6% of all managers and 26.3% of senior managers were women. Additionally, women only held 22.5% of natural and applied sciences and related occupations, and 7.6% of trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations. However, women held 82.3% of health occupations and 68% of occupations in education, law and social, community and government services.

Figure 2: Gender Composition of Industries
Employees in Goods and Services Industries, Alberta, 2016
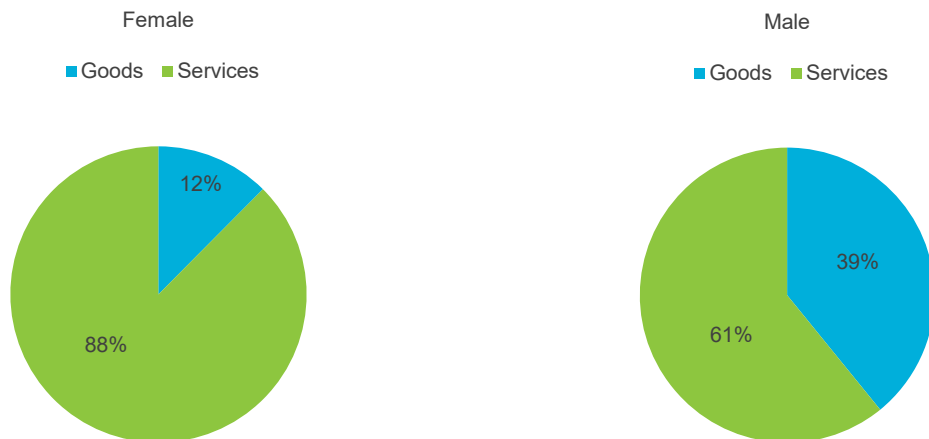
Visible Minorities and Immigrants

Visible minorities in Alberta generally had poorer labour market outcomes than those who did not identify themselves as a visible minority (Table 3). Overall, visible minorities had an unemployment rate of 9.8%, a whole percentage point higher than non-visible minorities. There is notable heterogeneity in labour market outcomes among visible minorities. For instance, Filipino and Japanese persons had notably lower unemployment rates at 6.1% and 6.3%, respectively. However, Black and West Asian persons had considerably higher unemployment rates at 13.6% and 14.6%, respectively.

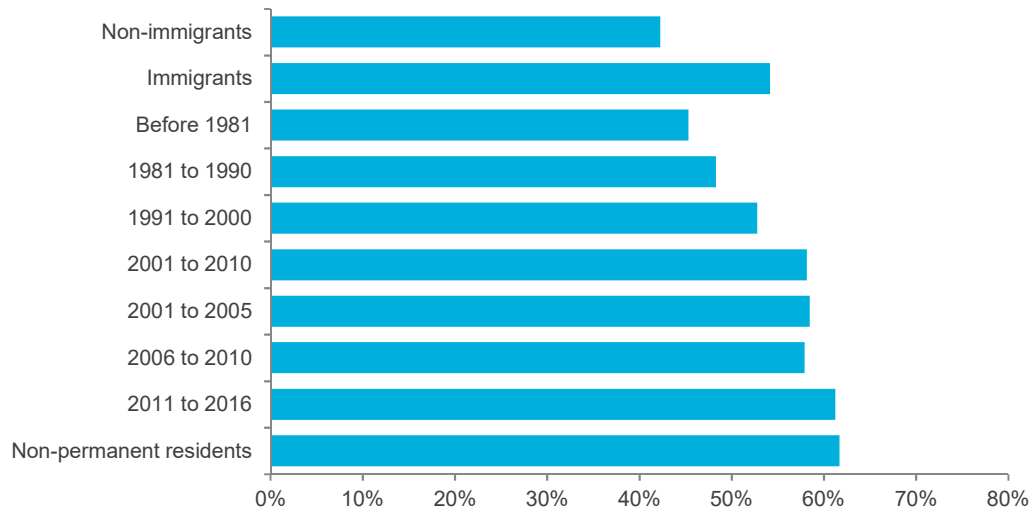Table 3: Labour Market Outcomes by Visible Minority Status, Alberta, 2016

Ethnicity	Participation %	Employment %	Unemployment %
South Asian	72.1	65	9.8
Chinese	66.5	60.3	9.3
Black	76.3	65.9	13.6
Filipino	81.6	76.6	6.1
Latin American	76.8	68.7	10.6
Arab	64.3	55.6	13.5
Southeast Asian	72.2	65.4	9.4
West Asian	71.4	61	14.6
Korean	69.5	63.2	9.1
Japanese	68.8	64.3	6.3
Visible minority, n.i.e.	70.6	61.9	12.4
Multiple visible minorities	73.5	65.6	10.8
Not a visible minority	71.5	65.2	8.8

Overall, immigrants had a slightly higher rate of unemployment than non-immigrants (Table 4). Immigrants from the period of 2001-2016 had significantly higher unemployment rates than both less recent immigrants and non-immigrants in spite of this group having a higher percentage of persons with university and college education (Figure 3). This indicates that newer immigrants may face more barriers to participating in the labour market.

Table 4: Labour Market Outcomes for Immigrants by Period of Arrival, Alberta, 2016

Immigrant Status	Participation %	Employment %	Unemployment %
Non-immigrants	72.5	66	8.9
Immigrants	69.9	63.5	9.2
Before 1981	45.9	42.7	6.9
1981 to 1990	73.3	68.1	7
1991 to 2000	77.2	70.6	8.4
2001 to 2010	77.4	69.3	10.4
2001 to 2005	76.4	68	10.9
2006 to 2010	78.2	70.4	10
2011 to 2016	75.4	67.5	10.4
Non-permanent residents	71.2	65.4	8.2

Figure 3: University Certificate, Diploma or Degree by Immigration Status, Alberta

People employed as a percent of the population of 15 and older 2016