



Highlights

- Payroll sizes flat in September
- Full-time employment and part-time employment up in B.C. in November; employment gains in goods sector
- Both short- and long-term business confidence index in B.C. dropped in November following last month's decline

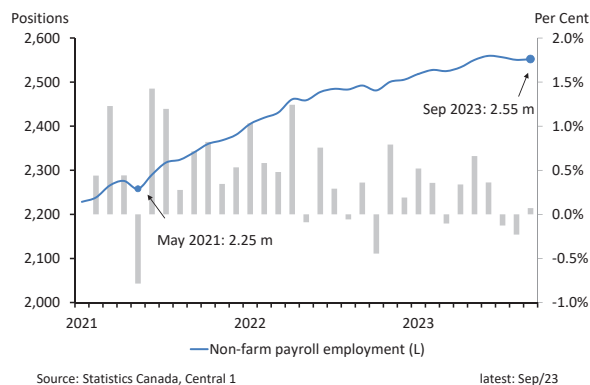
Vacancy rates fall to below pre-pandemic levels, wages up

Alan Chow, Business Economist

B.C. employers added little to payrolls in September. From the latest Survey of Employers, Payroll and Hours (SEPH), September reported a seasonally adjusted increase of less than 0.1 per cent (1,822 positions), keeping the total job counts in B.C. at the August revised number of 2.55 million positions. The seasonally adjusted job vacancy rate continues to fall in August and came in at 4.1 per cent, which is the fifth month in a row that it declined and below the 4.3 per cent seen in February 2020. The vacancy rate represents 99,235 positions, the first time the number of vacant positions was under 100,000 since January 2021.

Small increases in employment positions were seen in both goods producing industries and service producing industries. The service industry saw 0.2 per cent more positions (4,601 positions). Leading the way was the health care and social assistance industries which were up 0.6 per cent (2,141 positions), educational services were up 1.0 per cent (1,931 positions), and public administration was up 0.8 per cent (1,266 positions). Offsetting these, information and cultural industries declined 2.2 per cent (1,342 positions). Goods producing industries was essentially flat with an increase of less than 0.1 per cent (148 positions). Positions in construction were up 0.4 per cent (709 positions), utilities were up 1.9 per cent (232 positions), and manufacturing was up 0.2 per cent (297 positions), offset by fewer positions in mining down 3.1 per cent (786 positions) and forestry down 1.9 per cent (303 positions).

B.C. little change in non-farm payrolls



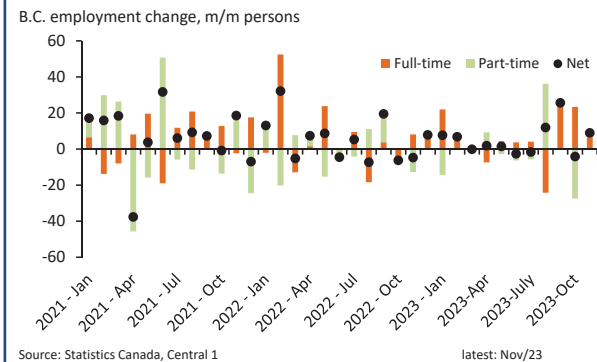
On the wage front, seasonally adjusted average weekly earnings jumped 5.8 per cent to \$1,239.84 on a year-over-year basis, which is higher than last month's revised 4.6 per cent increase. Month-over-month the average weekly earnings were up 1.2 per cent.

Employment in B.C. increases in November

Eloho Ennah, Economic Analyst

B.C.'s labour market reported gains in November, following the decline in the prior month. On a seasonally adjusted basis, the number of people employed increased by 0.3 per cent (9,000 people), while year-over-year growth was up 2.3 per cent. November's increase re-established the upward trend in provincial employment since mid-2023, while employment growth had been range-bound earlier in the year. Relative to pre-pandemic February 2020 levels, B.C. employment was still up by 5.7 per cent. The labour participation rate remained unchanged at 65.2 per cent, while the provincial unemployment rate reduced slightly from 5.4 per cent in October to 5.3 per cent. B.C.'s labour force expanded by 0.2 per cent during the month to counter last month's equal magnitude decline, while the province's population grew by another 0.2 per cent.

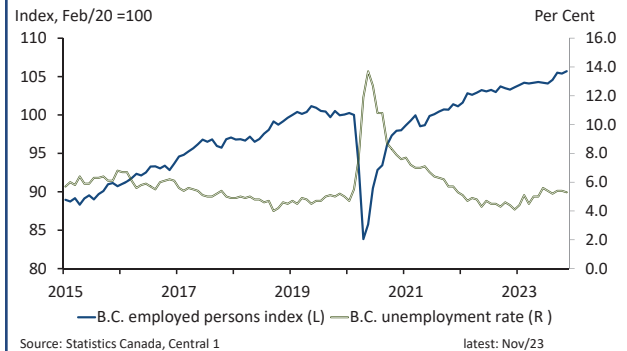
Both full-time and part-time employment increase in B.C. in November



Full-time employment in the province rose by 0.3 per cent (6,500 people) during the month, and part-time employment increased 0.4 per cent (2,500 people). Vancouver census metropolitan area recorded a 0.1 per cent decrease in employment from the prior month, while the unemployment rate was unchanged at 5.8 per cent.

By sector, the goods producing industries saw employment grow 2.8 per cent during the month, with the highest sub-sector gains observed in manufacturing, up by 11.5 per cent (18,800 people). All other sectors posted declines during the month. Employment declines were noted in the natural resources industry which were down 6.9 per cent (3,700 people), construction was down 0.1 per cent (300 people), agriculture was down 3.4 per cent (900 persons) and utilities was down 2.5 per cent (400 people). Total employment in the services industries pulled back yet again, down by 0.2 per cent, with declines mainly in professional, scientific, and technical services which were down 4.2 per cent (12,600 people), accommodation and food services down 2.1 per cent (4,000 people) and educational services down 1.1 per cent (2,400 people). In contrast, increases were reported in health care and social assistance which were up 3.1 per cent (11,700 people), information, culture, and recreation was up 2.7 per cent (3,500 people), and public administration was up 1.5 per cent (2,100 people).

Total employment in B.C. edged up in November, unemployment rate falls slightly



Employment gains were sparse on the national level as Canadian employment crept up by a 0.1 per cent in November for the second consecutive month. The trend has remained slightly positive over the past four months but is slowing sharply. Employment increases were primarily in the goods sectors while services sector employment declined. Canada's unemployment rate was slightly higher at 5.8 per cent compared to 5.7 per cent in October. Current results in the labour market are in line with slowing economic activity as business investment and consumer spending remain subdued. In addition, job vacancies are normalizing and receding, while the unemployment rate is expected to nudge higher.

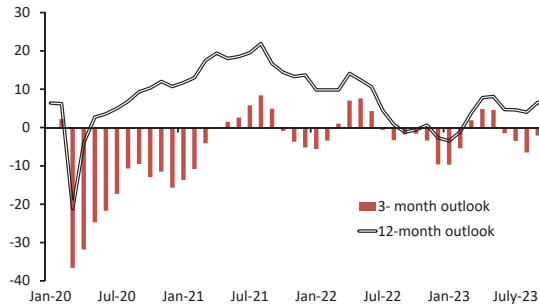
B.C. small business confidence declined further in November

Ivy Ruan, Economic Analyst

The Business Barometer survey released this week by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business declined amongst B.C. small and medium scale enterprises (SME) following the decreases last month. The November long-term index dropped to 51.3 points from the 54.6 points recorded in October, almost reaching the index's neutral benchmark of 50 points. The short-term three-month index was down to 41.7 points from 46.6 points in the previous month. That said, levels are consistent with a weak economic growth environment. Given the monthly decline, B.C. continues to report one of the weakest short-term optimism readings among all provinces. On a national basis, long-term optimism dropped to 45.6 points following the modest decline last month. Meanwhile, the short-term outlook saw a large decline of 3.4 points to 37.7 points.

Both the short- and long-term business confidence index dropped in November

B.C. Small and medium sized business confidence – Deviation from 50



Source: CFIB, Central 1
Latest: Nov/23

Regarding general business indicators, small businesses in B.C. reported their major cost constraints to be tax/regulatory costs and wage costs amongst other expenses. Insufficient domestic demand surpassed a shortage of skilled labour and topped the list of limitations on sales or production growth for B.C. small businesses. Meanwhile, only 25 per cent of B.C. small businesses regarded themselves to be in good business health, a large proportional decline from last month. Moving into the holiday season, only 18 per cent of respondents reported plans to expand the full-time staff yet 15 per cent of the businesses expected to see lower employment levels in the next three to four months.

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