



Highlights

- Payroll counts back on the rise in January
- International arrivals through B.C. rise in January

B.C. payroll counts were back up in January

Eloho Ennah, Economic Analyst

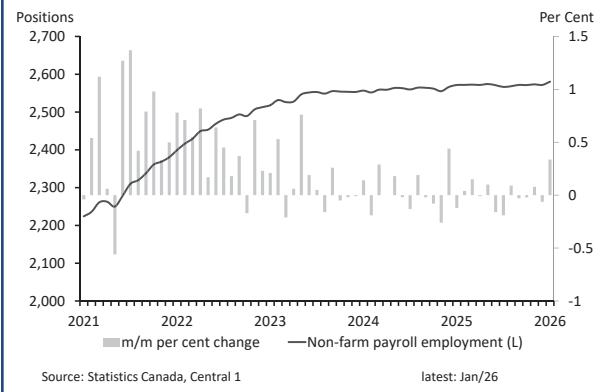
The Survey of Employment, Payroll and Hours (SEPH) indicated that payroll counts in B.C. rebounded in January after a slight decline in the previous month. B.C. payroll counts increased by 0.3 per cent (+8.6k positions) during the month to 2.6 million positions. Despite this increase, growth in payroll counts has remained largely flat since 2023. Firms are still grappling with persistent economic slack, heightened geopolitical tensions and trade uncertainty, which have weighed on hiring intentions.

Excluding unclassified businesses, payroll counts in the goods-producing sector grew by 0.4 per cent in January, owing to higher positions in all subcategories. Positions in the construction sector increased by 0.6 per cent (+1.1k positions) while manufacturing posted a modest gain of 0.1 per cent (+159 positions). Forestry, logging and support, which had seen a sustained reduction in positions since early 2025, also saw positions grow for a second month, up by 0.8 per cent (+104 positions) in January.

Payroll counts in the services sector increased by 0.4 per cent, largely driven by more positions in health care and social assistance (+0.8 per cent or +2.8k positions), accommodation and food services (+0.8 per cent or +1.8k positions) and educational services (+0.8 per cent or +1.8k positions). On the contrary, payroll counts declined in the trade sector (-0.4 per cent or -1.6k positions), while also down in administrative and support, waste management and remediation services (-1.1 per cent or -1.3k positions).

Average weekly earnings increased by 1.3 per cent month-over-month to \$1,332.84 and were up by 2.6 per cent year-over-year, above the national increase of 2.0 per cent. B.C.'s job vacancy rate fell from 3.3 per cent in December to 3.1 per cent.

B.C. payrolls rise in January



SEPH estimates should be considered alongside with the Labour Force Survey (LFS) figures, which is more widely watched and timely but based on a household survey rather than administrative data like SEPH. That said, these surveys may differ in coverage of multiple job holders, self-employed individuals and farm workers but employment trends from both surveys have generally aligned historically. Recently, results from the two surveys have pointed to continued softness in labour market trends.

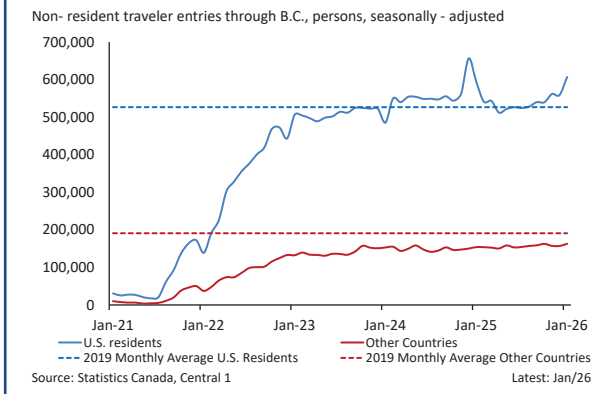
Fewer Canadians return via B.C., but international arrivals increase

Alan Chow, Business Economist

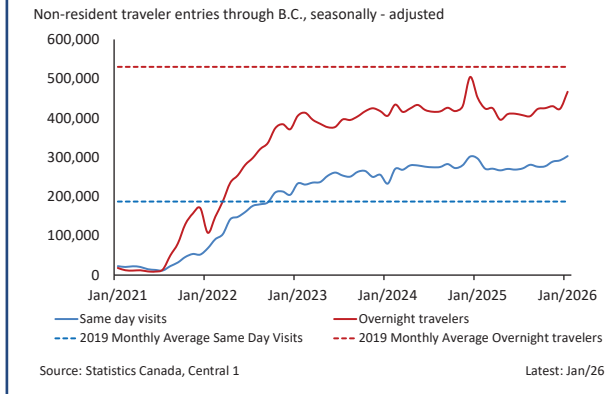
The number of visitors entering Canada via B.C. rose significantly in January 2026. On a seasonally-adjusted basis, arrivals grew by 7.6 per cent to 769,697. This was the highest number of visitors since December 2024. The number of overnight tourists rose 10.2 per cent to 466,704, which was also the highest since December 2024. Same day excursions also rose 3.7 per cent to 302,993. This is the largest number on record and surpassed the previous high of 301,840 in December 2024. When looking at place of origin, the growth was led by U.S. residents entering Canada via B.C., which grew by 8.6 per cent to a seasonally-adjusted 606,751. Residents from other countries also rose by 3.8 per cent to 162,945.

Canadian residents returning to Canada via B.C. declined marginally, down 0.2 per cent monthly to 675,531. The travellers returning from the U.S. were down 0.1 per cent for the month to 484,507 while those returning from countries other than the U.S. declined by 0.2 per cent 191,023. Canadians are still

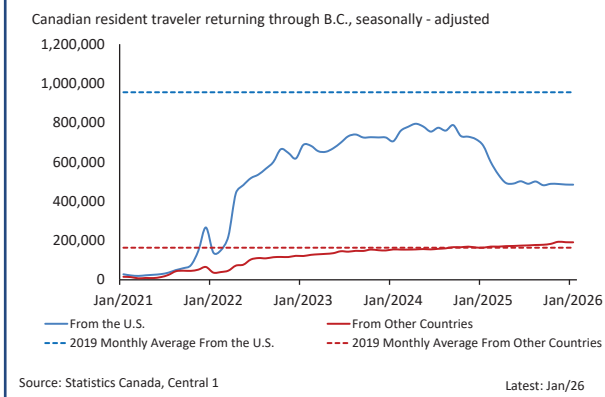
Sharp rise in U.S. resident visitors



Sharp rise in overnight tourist



Fall in Canadians returning via U.S. resumes



Overall international travel is down owing mostly to a pivot from the U.S. with local destinations picking up the slack. Fuel price spikes caused by the conflict in the middle east could further reduce travel if airline ticket prices rise further with fuel surcharges.

shunning travel to the U.S. as those figures have fallen 33.3 per cent compared 2024. On the other hand, Canadians returning from other countries are up 19.9 per cent from 2024.

On an unadjusted basis, the number of U.S. residents entering Canada via B.C. was 341,868 in December, up 3.2 per cent from a year ago, while residents of other countries fell to 98,130, down 6.9 per cent from a year ago. Canadian residents returning to Canada via B.C. from the U.S. was 435,765, a decline of 26.9 per cent from a year ago. Conversely, the number of Canadian residents returning from other countries via B.C. was 229,120, up 15.5 per cent from a year ago.

For more information, contact economics@central1.com.