

Labour Market Review

August 2025

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Highlights

August 2025

Total Employment **August 2025** from July 2025 from August 2024
 Calgary Economic Region (Seasonally unadjusted 3-month-moving-average) **1,065,100** ▼4,100 ▲41,600

Unemployment Rates

	Aug 2025	Aug 2024
Canada	7.1%	6.7%
Alberta	8.4%	7.6%
Calgary Census Metropolitan Area*	7.7%	7.6%
Calgary Economic Region*	7.5%	7.4%

*3-month-moving-average

Average Wage Rates

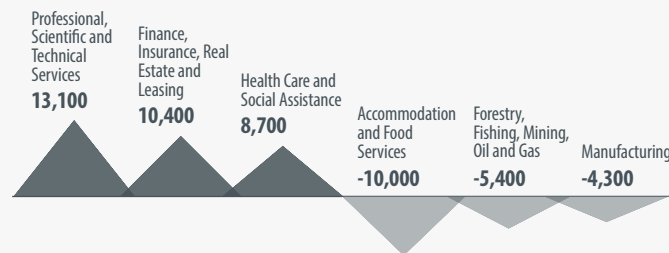
Calgary Census Metropolitan Area August 2025, year-over-year change
 Hourly ▲3.8% Weekly ▲3.8%

Employment Insurance

Calgary Census Metropolitan Area
 June 2025 **20,480** recipients

Most Job Gains and Job Losses by Industry

August 2025, year-over-year change



The Calgary Economic Region (CER) recorded a 7.5 per cent unemployment rate in August 2025.

The Calgary Economic Region's (CER) three-month-moving-average unemployment rate rose slightly from 7.4 per cent in August 2024 to 7.5 per cent in August 2025. The CER's labour force grew by 4.2 per cent in August 2025 year-over-year (y-o-y), while employment grew by 4.1 per cent, causing the unemployment rate to edge up slightly. For August 2025, the CER labour force participation rate dropped by 0.3 percentage points y-o-y to 70.9 per cent.

The CER goods-producing industry lost 10,500 jobs in August 2025.

In the period from August 2024 to August 2025, the CER saw an increase of 41,600 jobs, with full-time positions rising by 42,400 while part-time roles dropped by 700 from the previous year. Analyzing the data by sector, the goods-producing industry lost 10,500 jobs y-o-y (-4.6 per cent). Job losses in the goods-producing industry could be traced to Manufacturing (-4,300), Oil and Gas (-3,600) and Construction (-3,400).

Meanwhile, the services sector expanded by 52,100 jobs, with notable growth in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, which added 13,100 jobs, and Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing, which saw an increase of 10,400 jobs.

High unemployment among Calgary's young workers reflects economic pressures, competition from older workers, and longer searches for better-fit jobs.

Calgary continues to face the problem of expanding enough to absorb the number of young people searching for work. The youth unemployment rate in CER increased to 19.1 per cent in August 2025, up from August 2024 (15.4 per cent). While this issue has not been peculiar to Calgary, there are a few reasons leading to the labour market challenges confronting young people.

When the pandemic thinned Canada's workforce, employers were left scrambling to fill vacancies. In response, the federal government turned to higher immigration, swelling the ranks of Gen Z and millennial workers. Nowhere has this shift been more visible than in Calgary, which has posted one of the fastest working-age population growth rates among Canadian cities. But the surge in young talent has collided with daunting economic headwinds. Inflation that followed the pandemic continues to squeeze household budgets, while job creation has failed to keep pace with rapid population growth. And with trade policy uncertainty suppressing Canada's economic growth, the youngest workers are finding it increasingly difficult to gain a secure foothold in the economy.

Outside of the macroeconomic landscape, younger workers are more selective in their job search, weighing factors like pay and flexibility more heavily, though this selectiveness plays a smaller role compared with broader economic pressures. With real wages lagging behind living costs, younger workers may be more inclined to hold out for jobs that align with their preferences, whether that means better pay, flexibility, or stronger career development prospects. Unlike past generations, the opportunity cost of settling quickly for a low-wage or unstable role is higher. This gap becomes clear when comparing wage growth to housing costs. In Calgary, average home prices rose roughly 47 per cent between 2011 and 2024, while wages increased at a much slower rate of 38 per cent. The disparity is even more pronounced for industries that employ large numbers of young workers. For example, Retail Trade, a sector with many youth employees, saw wages grow by only 20.6 per cent over the same period. As a result, young workers remain in the labor force while actively seeking roles that better match their pay expectations, career goals, and work-life preferences, which is also a contributor to higher frictional unemployment among the youth.

Labour market unrest grows as wage frustration and return-to-office mandates increase workplace friction.

It is not only the unemployed facing challenges today; even those with jobs are grappling with volatile work conditions and unfair compensation, fueling frustration. Labour market unrest is manifesting itself in two ways: forced return to office mandates and wage disputes.

Across Canada, some employers have increased in-office requirements, a move facing strong pushback from workers and unions. Critics cite lost hours to commuting, workplace distractions, rising transportation costs, and unaffordable housing near offices. Ontario recently announced public workers will return to the office in 2026, while major banks such as RBC, TD, and Scotiabank now require four days in office.

The decision to enforce full-time office mandates has drawn mixed reactions. Mississauga Mayor Carolyn Parrish said the city will keep its hybrid model, with three office days and two remote. Employees worry a full return could heighten financial and physical demands, particularly amid stagnant real wages.

Strike threats loom across multiple sectors. In August, more than 10,000 Air Canada flight attendants voted to strike, demanding higher pay and compensation for time on grounded planes. Their union defied a back to work order, forcing Air Canada to cancel hundreds of flights. Negotiations between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers also stalled, while Alberta teachers faced difficult bargaining with the government over salaries and classroom conditions.

Canada's labour market faces mounting pressure as workers confront office mandates, stagnant wages, and rising living costs. These strains are fueling dissatisfaction, strikes, and unrest, highlighting the need for employers, employees and policymakers to weigh both the economic and personal impacts of workplace policies.

Chart 1: CER Aggregate Labour Market Summary

Year-over-year Comparisons (000's)

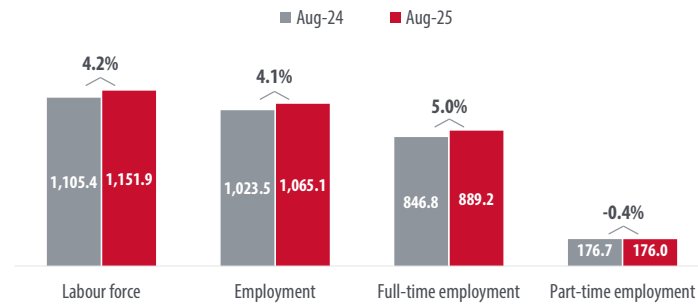


Chart 6: Calgary CMA wages edged up in August 2025

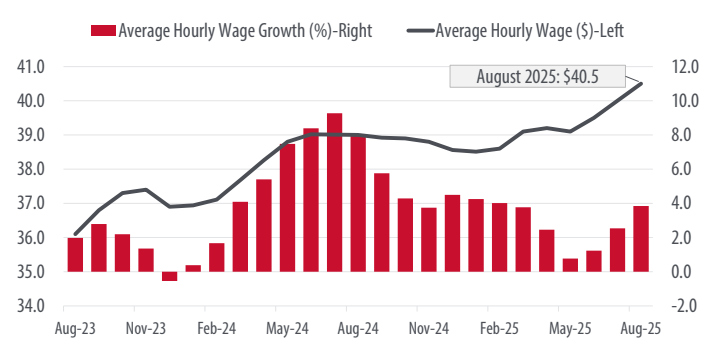


Chart 2: Calgary's unemployment rate remains elevated

Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate Comparison between Major CMAs in Canada (%)

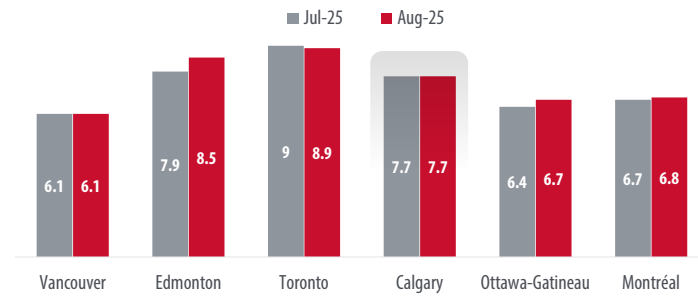


Chart 7: Inflation and average hourly wage growth for the Calgary CMA (%)

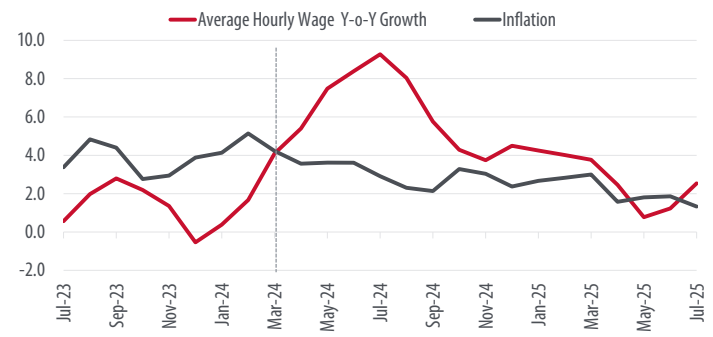


Chart 3: Job growth in Calgary's goods-producing sector has been low

CER Employment indexed to August 2024

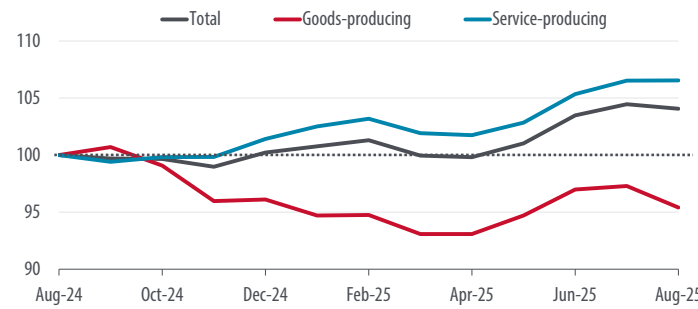


Chart 8: Employment among younger cohorts edged up slightly last month

CER Employment by Age Cohort Indexed to August 2024

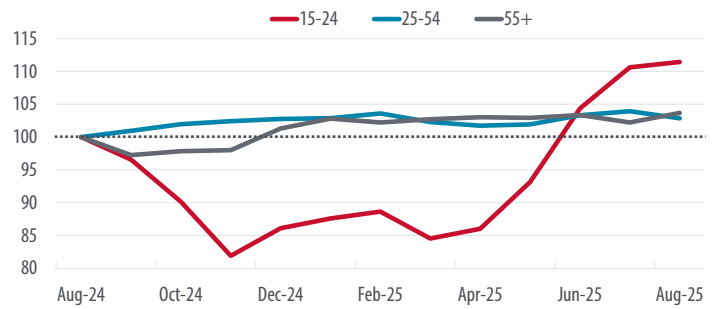


Chart 4: Accommodation and Food Services sees a big dip in employment

Year-over-year changes in CER Employment by Industry August 2025 (000's)

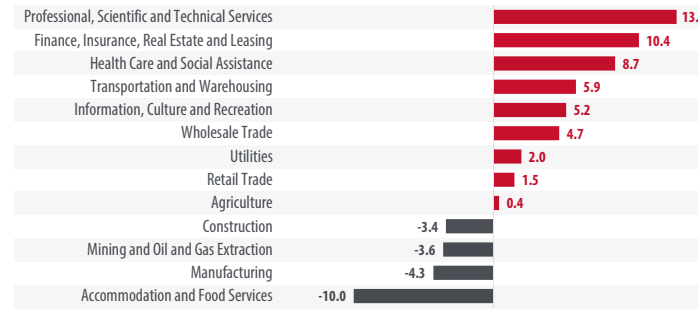


Chart 9: Layoffs and Discouraged Workers are on the rise

Layoffs and Those Not In The Labour Force But Want to Work in Alberta (000's)

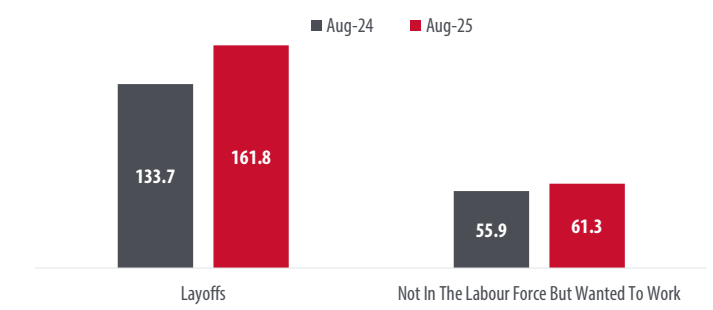


Chart 5: Average hourly wage growth in Calgary is up compared to last year

Average Hourly Wages by Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) Indexed to August 2024

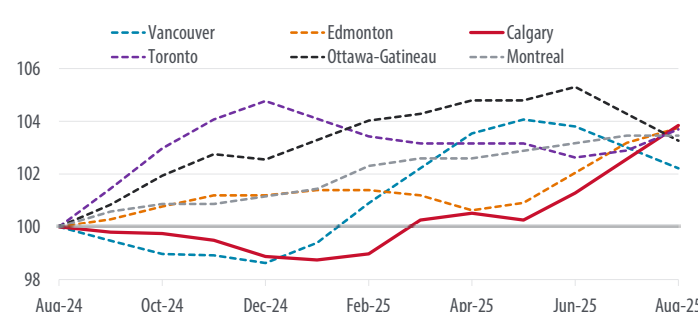


Chart 10: Calgary Economic Region Youth Unemployment Rate (%)

Unemployment Rate Among Persons Age 15 to 24 in the CER

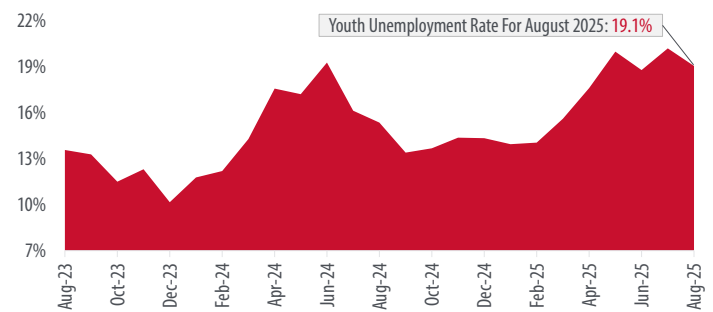


Table 1. Labour Force Statistics
(Seasonally unadjusted 3-month-moving-average)

CALGARY ECONOMIC REGION	Description	Aug-25	Jul-25	Aug-24	Annual Change
	Working Age Population ('000)	1,624.6	1,619.6	1,552.5	72.1
Labour Force ('000)	1,151.9	1,155.5	1,105.4	46.5	
Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	70.9	71.3	71.2	(0.3)	
Employment ('000)	1,065.1	1,069.2	1,023.5	41.6	
Employment Rate (%)	65.6	66.0	65.9	(0.3)	
Unemployment ('000)	86.8	86.3	81.9	4.9	
Unemployment Rate (%)	7.5	7.5	7.4	0.1	

ALBERTA	Description	Aug-25	Jul-25	Aug-24	Annual Change
	Working Age Population ('000)	4,059.8	4,051.0	3,924.5	135.3
Labour Force ('000)	2,829.4	2,816.2	2,745.1	84.3	
Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	69.7	69.5	69.9	(0.2)	
Employment ('000)	2,611.0	2,609.8	2,543.7	67.3	
Employment Rate (%)	64.3	64.4	64.8	(0.5)	
Unemployment ('000)	218.4	206.4	201.4	17.0	
Unemployment Rate (%)	7.7	7.3	7.3	0.4	

Sources: Statistics Canada, Corporate Economics, September 5, 2025

Table 2. Calgary CMA Wage by Industry

Industry	Total employees*** ('000 people)			Average weekly earning (\$)			Total weekly wage bill (\$million)			Total hours worked (hours)		
	Aug-25	Aug-24	Change (y/y)	Aug-25	Aug-24	Change (y/y)	Aug-25	Aug-24	Change (y/y)	Aug-25	Aug-24	Change (y/y)
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	43.7	49.6	(5.9)	2,871.8	3,040.4	(168.6)	125.5	150.8	(25.3)	40.3	41.4	(1.1)
Utilities	10.3	8.3	2.0	2,570.6	2,219.6	351.0	26.5	18.4	8.1	39.2	37.1	2.1
Construction	74.8	76.1	(1.3)	1,649.4	1,611.5	37.9	123.4	122.6	0.7	41.3	41.5	(0.2)
Manufacturing	48.7	50.4	(1.7)	1,407.6	1,367.0	40.6	68.6	68.9	(0.3)	39.5	39.6	(0.1)
Wholesale Trade	33.6	30.3	3.3	1,913.2	1,553.6	359.6	64.3	47.1	17.2	39.4	39.9	(0.6)
Retail Trade	84.7	88.4	(3.7)	896.8	831.3	65.5	76.0	73.5	2.5	33.8	33.8	0.0
Transportation and Warehousing	58.0	52.8	5.2	1,504.3	1,509.1	(4.8)	87.2	79.7	7.6	36.8	37.4	(0.6)
Information and Cultural Industries	14.2	11.4	2.8	1,629.6	1,466.6	163.0	23.1	16.7	6.4	37.0	39.5	(2.5)
Finance and Insurance	35.2	29.8	5.4	1,912.2	1,964.4	(52.2)	67.3	58.5	8.8	39.8	38.3	1.5
Real Estate Rental and Leasing	20.6	15.4	5.2	1,366.7	1,760.2	(393.5)	28.2	27.1	1.0	39.6	36.0	3.6
Professional Scientific and Technical Services	104.3	100.9	3.4	2,097.2	1,950.7	146.5	218.7	196.8	21.9	39.1	39.2	(0.2)
Administrative and Support	30.5	26.5	4.0	1,162.0	1,185.0	(23.0)	35.4	31.4	4.0	38.1	38.5	(0.4)
Educational Services	55.5	52.5	3.0	1,506.2	1,373.0	133.2	83.6	72.1	11.5	35.7	35.7	0.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	104.3	101.9	2.4	1,277.6	1,316.5	(38.9)	133.3	134.2	(0.9)	34.8	35.1	(0.3)
Arts Entertainment and Recreation	27.5	26.3	1.2	718.7	649.5	69.2	19.8	17.1	2.7	31.1	29.8	1.3
Accommodation and Food Services	48.7	60.1	(11.4)	580.5	630.0	(49.5)	28.3	37.9	(9.6)	30.6	29.2	1.4
Other Services (except Public Admin)	24.5	22.9	1.6	1,133.8	958.3	175.5	27.8	21.9	5.8	36.1	35.1	1.0
Public Administration	37.8	27.9	9.9	1,844.4	1,719.7	124.7	69.7	48.0	21.7	37.1	36.1	1.0
All Industries	858.7	835.2	23.5	1,523.1	1,467.0	56.1	1,307.9	1,225.2	82.6	37.6	37.6	(0.0)

*** Excluding self-employed *Note: Lack of data for Agriculture and Management of Companies and Enterprises*
Sources: Statistics Canada, Corporate Economics, September 5, 2025

Next update: October 10, 2025

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