

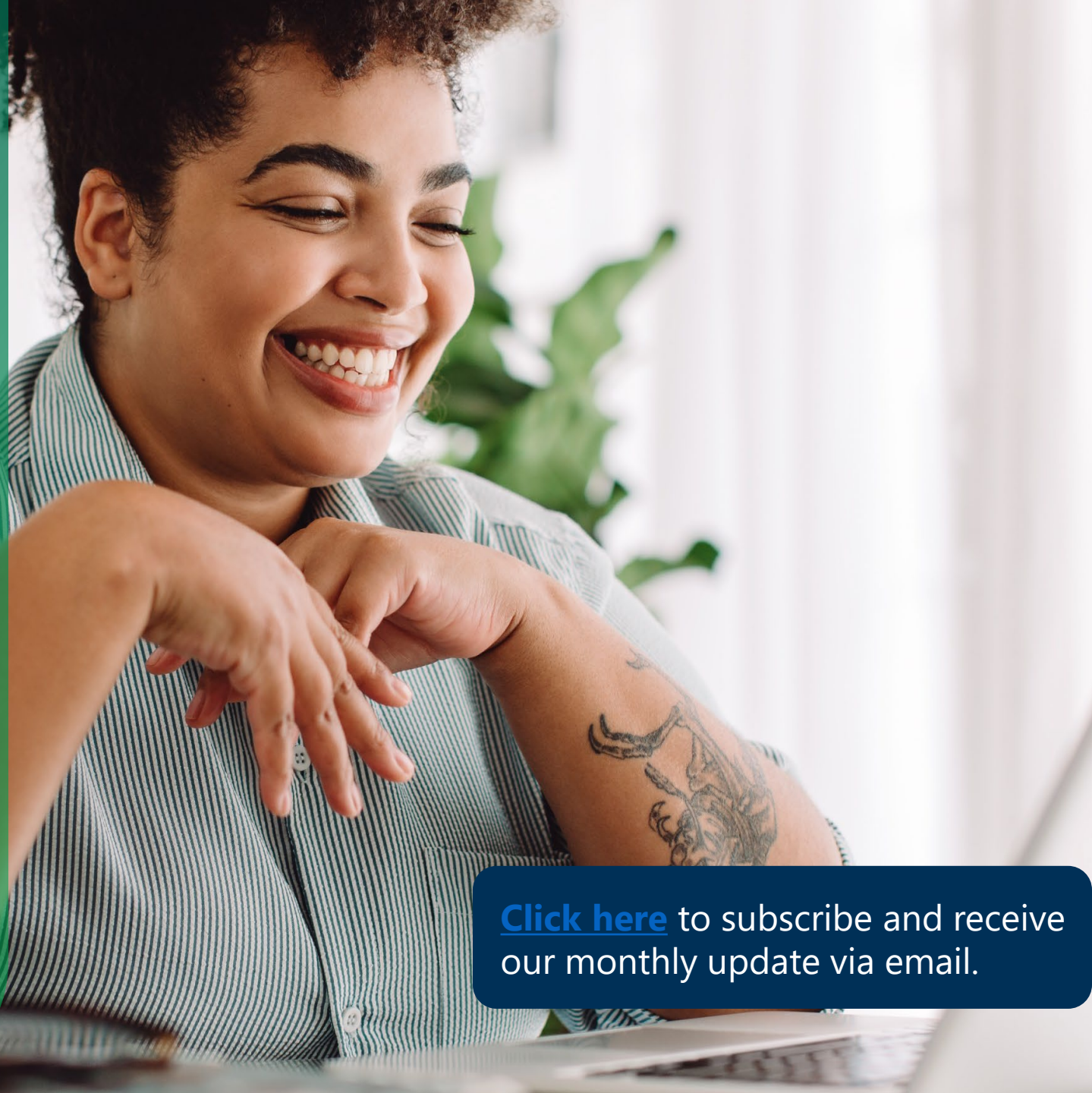


February 2024

# Canadian Employment Landscape Overview

Broadleaf's monthly overview  
of the employment landscape,  
staffing updates, and  
industry trends

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# Overview

**0.1%** 

## Employment fell slightly

Employment rose by 41,000 in February. The employment rate fell by 0.1 percentage points to 61.5%, as population growth (+0.3%) continued to outpace employment growth (+0.2%).

**5.0%** 

## Average hourly wages increased

Average hourly wages among employees rose 5.0% on a year-over-year basis in February (+\$1.66 to \$34.82), following an increase of 5.3% in January (not seasonally adjusted).

**5.8%** 


## Unemployment rate increased

The unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage points to 5.8%, offsetting a decline in January.

**0.7%** 

## Employment increased in Alberta

Employment increased in Alberta (+17,000; +0.7%) and Nova Scotia (+6,300; +1.2%), while it declined in Manitoba (-5,300; -0.7%). There was little change in the other provinces.

**2.4%** 

## Employment increased in accommodation and food services

Employment gains were spread across several industries in the services-producing sector, led by accommodation and food services (+26,000; +2.4%) and professional, scientific, and technical services (+18,000; +0.9%).



# Overview

## Employment rate increases for core-aged women, holds steady for core-aged men

In February, employment rose among core-aged (25 to 54 years old) women (+45,000; +0.7%) and men (+23,000; +0.3%), following little change for both groups the previous month.

For core-aged women, this was the first increase in employment since September 2023.

The employment rate among core-aged women increased by 0.3 percentage points to 81.4% in February 2024, as employment growth outpaced population growth. The employment rate for core-aged men held steady at 87.2%.

## Employment and employment rates were little changed for young women and men

On a year-over-year basis, the labour force participation rate has fallen more steeply among youth aged 15 to 24. In January 2024, the youth labour force participation rate was down 3.0 percentage points to 62.7% compared with January 2023. In comparison, the participation rate was down 0.3 percentage points to 88.6% for the population aged 25 to 54, and was little changed at 36.8% for the population aged 55 and older.

The participation rate of young women has followed a strong downward trend since February 2023, with a cumulative decline of 4.2 percentage points over that period.

## Employment declines in education services, manufacturing, and agriculture

The number of people working in education services fell by 17,000 (-1.1%), partially offsetting an increase of 28,000 (+1.8%) in January. Employment also declined in manufacturing (-14,000; -0.8%), business, building, and other support services (-13,000; -1.9%) and agriculture (-6,000; -2.6%) in February.



# Industry Trends – Return to Office (RTO)



- StatCan data from the end of 2023 [shows](#) that just 12.6% of the workforce aged 15 to 69 years old still exclusively work from home.
- In November 2023, one in three parents with at least one child under age 5 were working exclusively from home or had hybrid arrangements.
- CTV [reports](#) that the shift to more remote work opened up more opportunities for people with disabilities. Now, some experts are concerned that the shift away from remote work will strip away some of those opportunities.
- [Under Ontario law](#), employees can refuse an employer's RTO mandate if:
  - The workplace is unsafe, per the Ontario Health and Safety Act
  - They have a medical condition that requires accommodation, supported by a doctor's note
  - They have childcare or caregiving obligations
- A recently released study from the University of Pittsburgh [found](#) that return to office mandates don't improve employee or company performance.





# Industry Trends – Women in the Canadian Labour Market



- March 8 is International Women's Day, a global day to recognize the achievements of women and girls and reflect on the progress made towards gender equality, while acknowledging the challenges and barriers that still exist.
- In February, women accounted for 47.3% of the Canadian labour force, with 9.7 million women employed.
- In February 2024, the employment rate for core-aged women was highest in Quebec (85.0%), 2.5 percentage points above New Brunswick (82.5%) and Nova Scotia (82.5%), and 3.6 percentage points above the national average of 81.4%. The employment rate of core-aged women was lowest in Ontario at 79.8%.
- [The gender wage gap in Canada](#) has declined over time but remains persistent. In February 2024, women aged 25 to 54 earned \$0.87 for every dollar earned by men of the same age group, little changed from 12 months earlier (\$0.86), and on par with the pre-pandemic average from 2017 to 2019 (\$0.87) (not seasonally adjusted).
- Women accounted for 35.3% of all those employed in management occupations in 2023, the same share as in 2022, and little changed from the average from 2017 to 2019 (34.9%). Under one in three (30.1%) of those employed in legislative and senior management occupations were women in 2023.