

Manitoba Labour Force Survey – February 2021

Manitoba's unemployment rate the lowest in Canada

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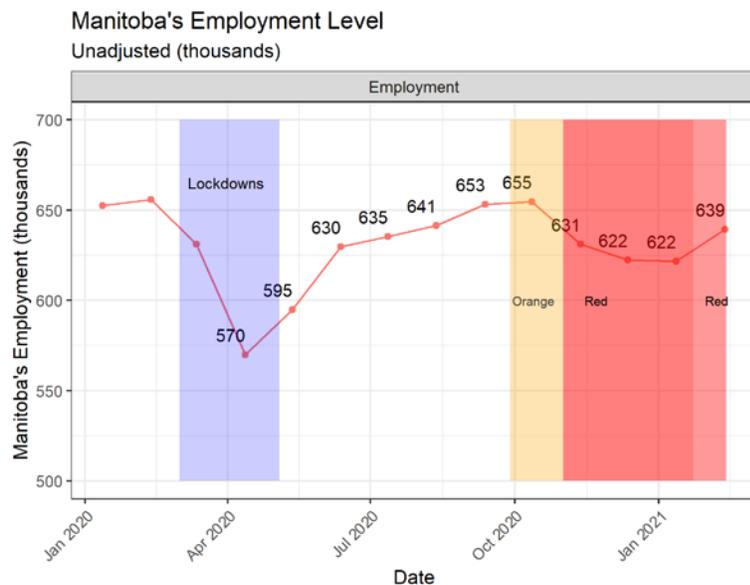
Bottom Line

Statistics Canada released the February 2021 Labour Force Survey on Friday, March 12, 2021. Both Canada and Manitoba saw employment levels rise month-over-month, following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in February 2021. This is positive news.

Until we reach widespread vaccination there remains a risk to maintaining these employment gains. Caution with respect to COVID-19 protocols as well as a focus on our vaccination program will be important in the coming months. At the same time, targeted support for high-contact industries is critical, so that these firms are prepared to respond to market demand when it returns. The air passenger value-chain and tourism sectors are particularly at risk, while wholesale trade shows continuing strength.

Analysis

Figure 1: Manitoba's Employment by Month (thousands)

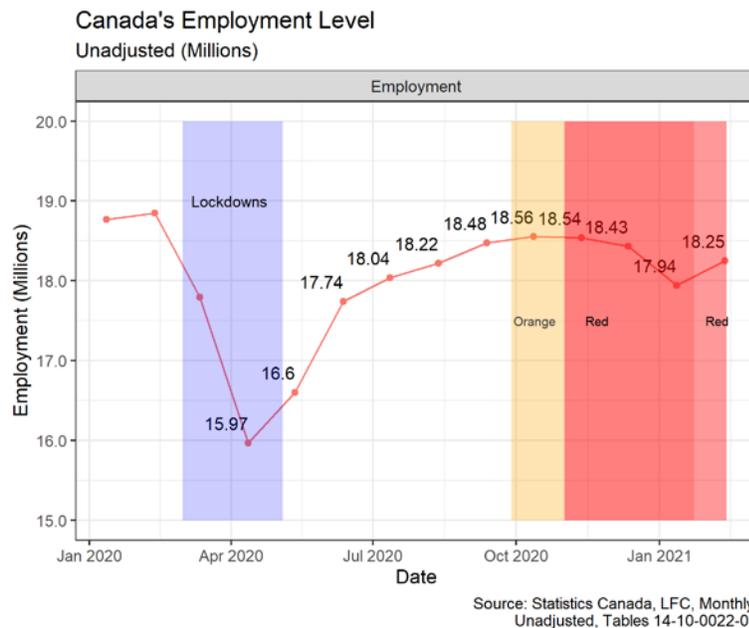


Source: Statistics Canada, LFC, Monthly, Unadjusted, Tables 14-10-0022-01

Manitoba's unadjusted employment level in February rose by 17 thousand to reach 639 thousand (**Figure 1**). This is roughly 3 per cent below its February 2020 level.

As COVID-19 restrictions were eased in early March, we expect to see further improvement in Manitoba's March employment figures when they are released next month.

Figure 2: Canada's Employment by Month (Millions)



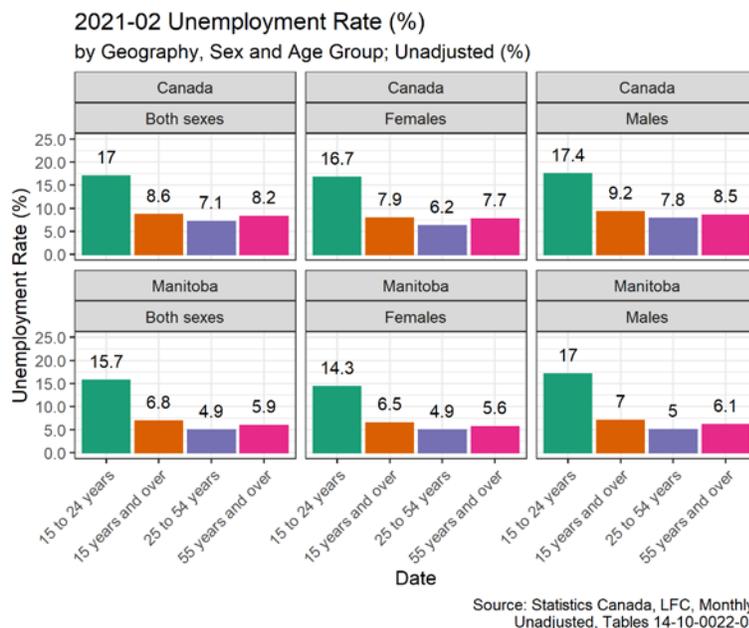
Canada's unadjusted employment levels in February 2021 – 18.25 million – rose from 17.94 million in January 2021 (Figure 2).

Canada's unemployment rate dropped to 8.6 per cent in February, down 1.2 points from January's unemployment level of 9.8 per cent. This related to a reduction in the unemployment in Quebec, Manitoba, Ontario and British Columbia.

Manitoba's unemployment rate in February 2021 became the lowest out of all the provinces at 6.8 per cent. This was lower than BC's 7.5 per cent unemployment rate (the next lowest province).

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Figure 3: February 2021 Unemployment Rate (%)

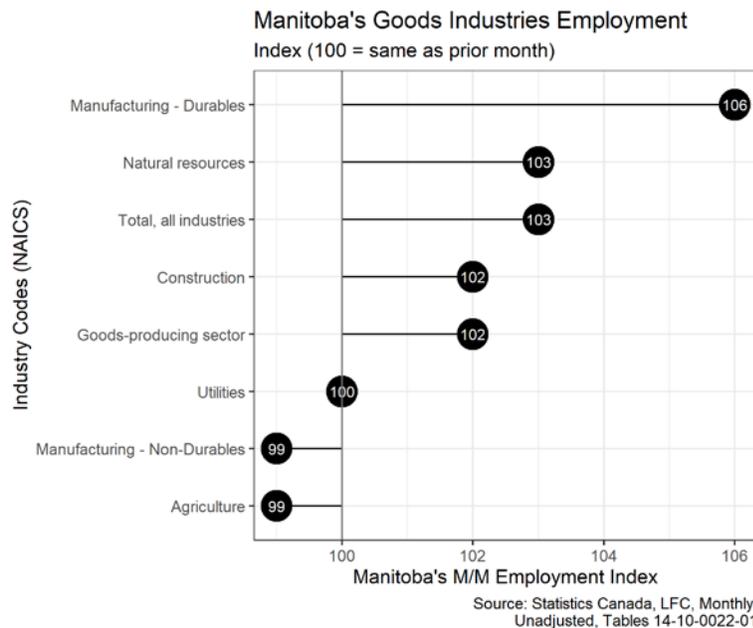


When we compare February 2021 to January 2021, we see that unemployment in Canada and Manitoba fell by every combination of gender and age group (Figure 3). The largest month-over-month decline was for those aged 15 to 24.

For women in the province, this month saw a sharp increase in employment. Manitoba women's increase in employment was evenly split between those women not in the labour force returning to work, and unemployed women

finding employment.

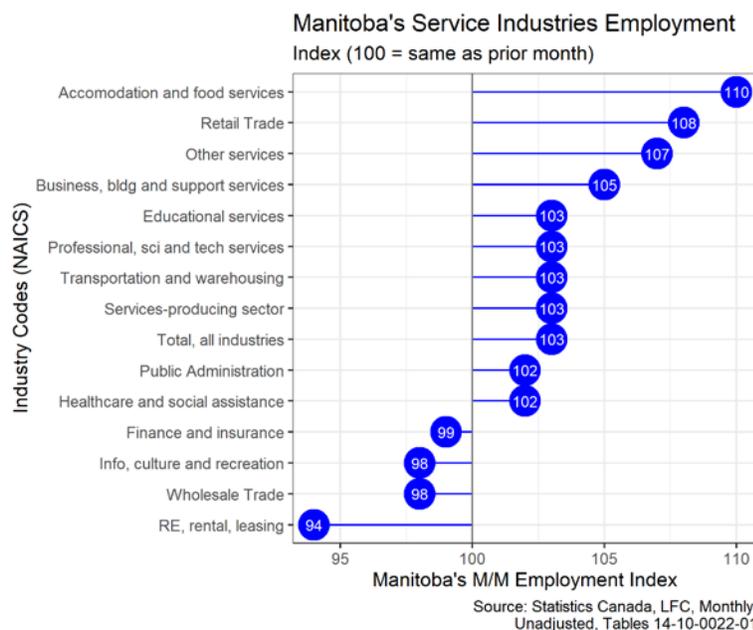
Figure 4: Month-over-month: Manitoba's **Goods** Industries Employment Index (100 = same as last month)



Manufacturing durables (+6 per cent) had the strongest employment gains month-over-month (m/m) for Manitoba's goods producing industries (**Figure 4**).

Employment in the **natural resources** sector gained 3 per cent m/m.

Figure 5: Month-over-month: Manitoba's **Services** Industries Employment Index (100 = same as last month)



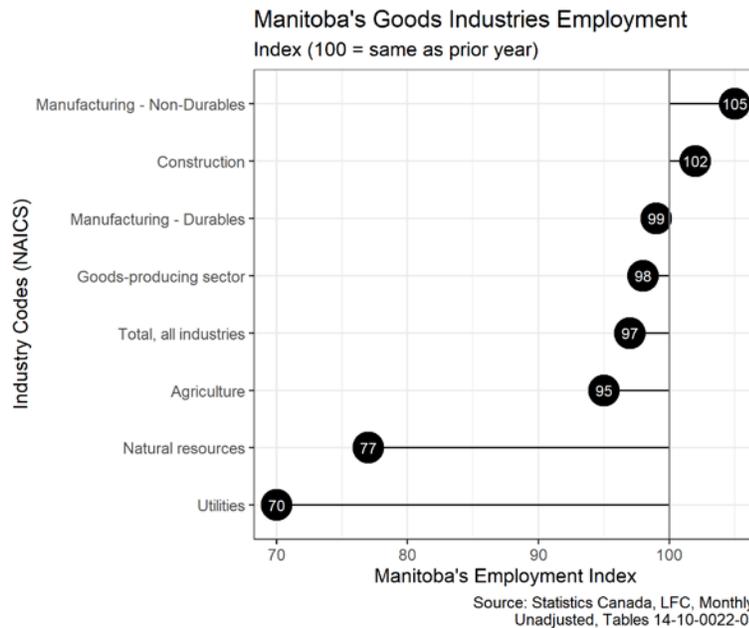
The easing of COVID-19 restrictions had a positive effect on employment levels in several industry sectors.

Accommodation and food services employment posted m/m gains of 10 per cent. This after two months of unchanged employment levels (**Figure 5**).

Retail saw a m/m gain of 8 per cent, and **business, building and support services** saw a 5 per cent gain on the month.

Employment in **real estate, rental and leasing** slipped 6 per cent lower on the month.

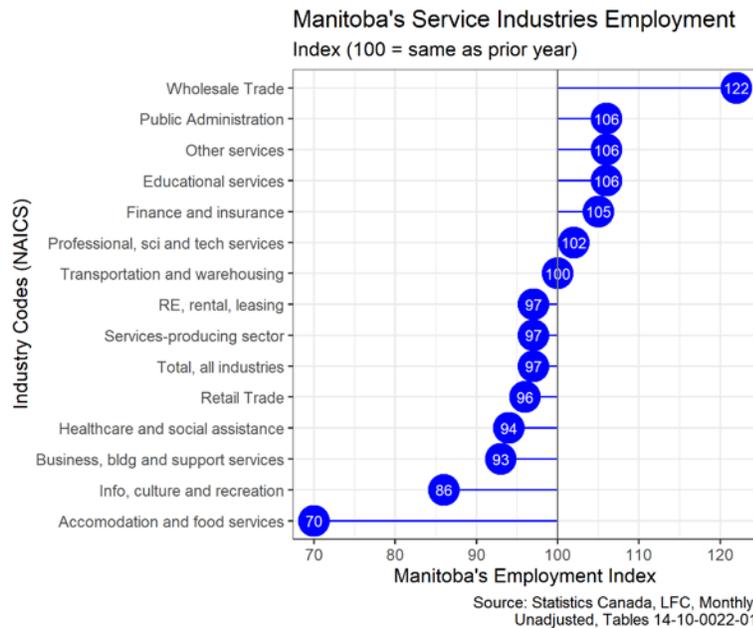
Figure 6: Year-over-year: Manitoba's **Goods** Industries Employment Index (100 = same as last month)



On a year-over-year (y/y) basis, employment is up 5 per cent for **non-durable manufacturing**. This is supported by the food-manufacturing subsector, which is benefiting from a large harvest in the fall.

Employment is still down y/y in the **natural resources** (-23 per cent), and **utilities** (-30 per cent) sectors.

Figure 7: Year-over-year: Manitoba's **Goods** Industries Employment Index (100 = same as last month)



On a y/y basis, the **wholesale trade** continues to do well during the pandemic, up 22 per cent.

The **information, culture and recreation** sector remains 14 per cent below its level one year ago.

While **accommodation and food services** posted gains on the month, it continues to have a long way to go on a y/y basis. The sector's employment is still 30 per cent below where it was a year ago.

Looking Forward

With Manitoba's COVID-19 vaccination program ramping up, we are on a good path to make continued employment gains. Risks remain until we have reached widespread vaccination status. In this interim period, there is still some risk of a third wave from the new variants, so reasonable precautions as outlined in public health guidelines will continue to be important.

At the same time, some high-contact industries are still significantly sidelined by the pandemic. Companies in some of these struggling industries have received targeted government support: (i.e. [restaurants](#), [hospitality sector](#), and [regional air carriers](#)). Possible federal support for [major air carriers](#) was discussed in the media earlier this month. The [Canadian Airports Council](#) is also calling for federal supports due to ongoing low level of passengers (due to COVID-19).

EDW Contacts for Assistance or Inquiries:

For Winnipeg looking for help accessing government programs, please reach out to our Yes! Winnipeg Team through our [Help us help you form](#) if you are not sure whom to contact on the YW team. For general inquires please email wpginfo@edwinnipeg.com. For Marketing & Communications Inquiries, please email: marketingandbranding@edwinnipeg.com.