

Unemployment Rate (Updated July 2016)

The ICET Region's unemployment rate declined to 5.2% in the 2nd quarter of 2016, reaching its lowest level in more than seven years, since it was 5.1% in the 4th quarter of 2008.

The regional unemployment rate has been gradually trending down over the last five years, largely due to a gradual shrinking of the regional labour force at the same time that employment has been relatively steady. It is normal for the unemployment rate to drop in the 2nd quarter of the year relative to the 1st quarter as seasonal industries pick up (in fact, only once in the last 21 years has the regional unemployment rate increased in the 2nd quarter compared to the 1st quarter – in 2014). But the drop of 3.0 percentage points from the 1st quarter of this year is the largest decline in 11 years, since 2005. This may be due in part to random fluctuation in the survey estimates, but also reflects a solid increase in regional employment at the same time that the regional labour force declined. The estimated number of unemployed members of the labour force dipped under 10,000 in the region for the first time since the summer of 2008.



Compared to the same period last year, the ICET Region's unemployment rate is lower by 1.0 percentage points, which is the largest decline of any BC region. Unemployment rates have increased in Northern BC and the Southern Interior, perhaps due to continuing challenges in oil and gas and mining in both BC and Alberta (many Interior and Northern BC companies are suppliers to the Alberta oil sector, while the Southern Interior is significantly affected through tourism and recreation by the health of the Alberta economy). All told, the ICET region now has significantly lower unemployment rates than the rest of rural BC and has a lower unemployment rate than the entire province for the first time in nearly three years.

Unemployment Rate by BC Region, 2011-Q2 to 2016-Q2

Region	Unemployment Rate						Change in Last Year	Change in Last 5 Years
	2011-Q2	2012-Q2	2013-Q2	2014-Q2	2015-Q2	2016-Q2		
ICET Region	9.0%	6.9%	7.4%	7.9%	6.2%	5.2%	-1.0 pp	-3.8 pp
Southern Interior	7.3%	7.4%	6.7%	6.1%	5.7%	6.6%	0.9 pp	-0.7 pp
Northern BC	7.1%	8.1%	5.7%	7.4%	7.4%	8.2%	0.9 pp	1.1 pp
Major Metros	7.3%	6.5%	6.3%	5.7%	6.0%	5.3%	-0.7 pp	-2.0 pp
BC Total	7.4%	6.8%	6.4%	6.1%	6.1%	5.7%	-0.3 pp	-1.7 pp

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Cansim 282-0122 and 282-0128. Quarterly figures are the average of the 3 months in the quarter.

Appendix: Geographic Areas

The four BC regions shown in this report are calculated based on Labour Force Survey releases for Economic Regions (also called Development Regions) and Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and do not exactly match the boundaries of the ICET Region or any other regional trust.

ICET Region

Vancouver Island/Coast Economic Region LESS Victoria CMA

Note: This definition of the ICET region does not include the Sunshine Coast Regional District (RD) because it is part of the Mainland/Southwest Economic Region.

Southern Interior

Thompson-Okanagan and Kootenay Economic Regions, PLUS the non-metro portion of the Mainland/Southwest Economic Region (including the Sunshine Coast RD, the Squamish-Lillooet RD, and the eastern portion of the Fraser Valley RD, including Chilliwack)

Northern BC

Cariboo, North Coast, Nechako and Northeast Economic Regions

Major Metros

Victoria, Vancouver and Abbotsford-Mission CMAs (not shown on the map below)

