

# BC CHECK-UP 2025 WORK



# INDICATORS

CPABC's *BC Check-Up* uses the selected economic indicators to evaluate BC as a place to **WORK**.



## Overall Employment

How much did BC's labour market expand?



## Unemployment and Job Vacancy Rate

What percentage of BC's labour force is unemployed, and how many unfilled jobs exist?



## Type of Employment

How has full-time and part-time work changed?



## Labour Compensation

What is the average wage of a BC worker?  
Have wages kept up with inflation?



## Employment by Industry

How has employment changed in the goods and services sectors?

# PROVINCIAL SUMMARY

## Employment hovered near decade low

BC residents faced a challenging job market through the first nine months of 2025, as trade tensions with the United States emerged as one of the greatest issues facing the economy. As of September, there were 2.94 million people working in BC, up 1.7% from one year earlier, and in line with population growth of 1.6% over the same time frame. The employment rate was 60.7%, unchanged from September 2024, and near the decade low - excluding the COVID-19 downturn - of 60.6% recorded one month earlier.

## Self-employment fell sharply since July 2025

Employment growth in BC's private sector grew in line with overall employment, as private businesses hired 55,900 more employees (+3.0%), but there were 18,700 (-4.2%) fewer self-employed people compared with September 2024. The decline in self-employment was particularly recent, as the number of people working for themselves fell by 37,200 (-8.0%) between July and September 2025. Meanwhile, BC's public sector, which has expanded rapidly over the past five years, added 37,200 employees (+1.9%) between September 2024 and September 2025.

## Job vacancy rate approaches all-time low as hiring slows

Hiring continued to slow, and job search times increased in 2025 as the job vacancy rate—the number of unfilled positions as a proportion of total labour demand—was 3.0% in July, just 0.1 percentage point above the lowest rate recorded since data collection began in 2015. BC's unemployment rate increased 0.4 percentage points year-over-year to 6.4% in September.

## Employment gains split between goods and services sectors

Goods sector employment trended higher between September 2024 and September 2025, led by gains in construction which added 17,300 workers (+6.9%). Meanwhile, employment in utilities (-5,400 workers; -28.6%) and natural resources (-10,900 workers; -20.6%) contracted, with the latter facing significant exposure to U.S. trade action, particularly in forestry.

The service sector added 38,400 workers (+1.6%) over the past 12 months, as employment increased in hospitality (+17,400 workers; +9.6%), financial services (+16,900 workers; +9.5%) and professional services (+13,400 workers; +4.5%).

## Wage growth tops inflation as labour unrest persists

Labour compensation grew faster than headline inflation over the past year, a trend that has persisted since early-2023. Average wages for BC employees rose 3.0% year-over-year in September 2025, compared with a 1.9% increase in consumer prices.

Since 2022, labour disruptions due to job action have become more common, as workers press for higher wages to compensate for the rising cost of living. This trend continued through 2025, as notable strikes by the BCGEU and Canada Post highlighted collective bargaining challenges between unions and their employers. Over the year, unionized workers have seen their average wages grow 4.1%, compared with 2.6% growth for non-unionized employees. Cumulative average wage growth between September 2022 and September 2025 has been more balanced (+15.7% for unionized, +14.2% for non-unionized), while non-unionized workers have seen greater wage gains over the longer term.

## BC Check-Up Survey: Housing, trade and AI are top of mind for BC CPAs

As professionals on the frontline of business in BC, CPAs provide valuable insights beyond the headline indicators. Compared to last year, CPAs' perceptions about the current performance of the provincial economy worsened amid trade tensions and soft labour market conditions. CPAs were more than twice as likely to report that the provincial economy was underperforming (37% of respondents) than say it was performing well (15% of respondents). CPAs cited unaffordable housing, and tariffs and trade restrictions as the biggest challenges facing BC businesses. They were also asked about the impact that AI is having on the accounting profession. Nearly half of senior CPAs believed that AI was extremely (12%) or very likely (34%) to change the type of work done by accountants over the next five years. Those percentages increased to 30% and 40%, respectively, when considering junior roles only. In terms of medium-term hiring expectations, 45% of respondents thought that AI would not change the number of finance and accounting staff needed over the next five years, while an equal proportion (44%) thought slightly fewer staff would be needed.

# PROVINCIAL SUMMARY



### OVERALL EMPLOYMENT

As of September 2025, there were 2.94 million people employed in BC, up 1.7% (+48,600) from one year earlier. Employment gains during the year were in line with working-age population growth of 1.6%, as the employment rate hovered near a decade low (excluding the COVID-19 pandemic).

**2.94M** EMPLOYED PEOPLE    **60.7%** EMPLOYMENT RATE

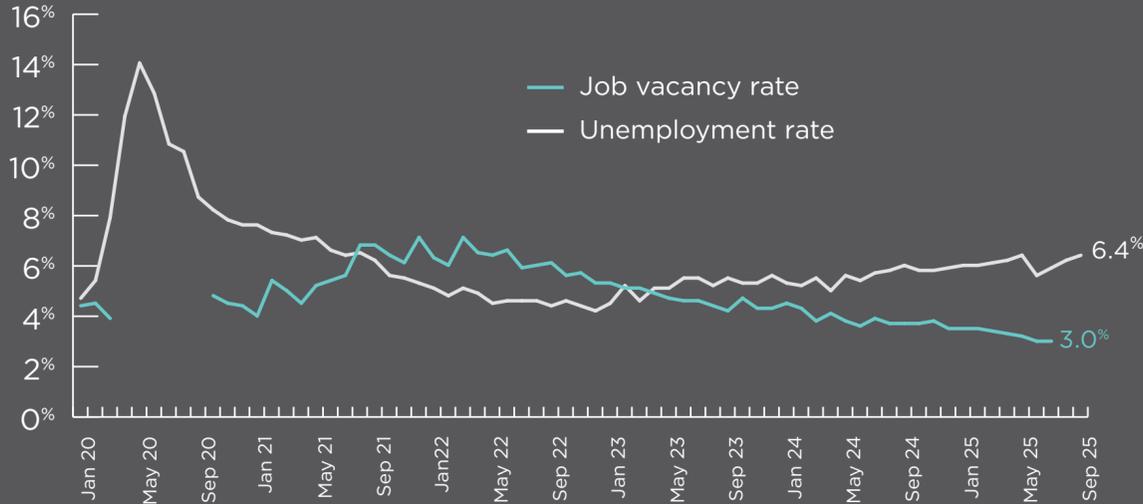
64.9% ♂ | 56.7% ♀

WERE WORKING IN SEPTEMBER 2025



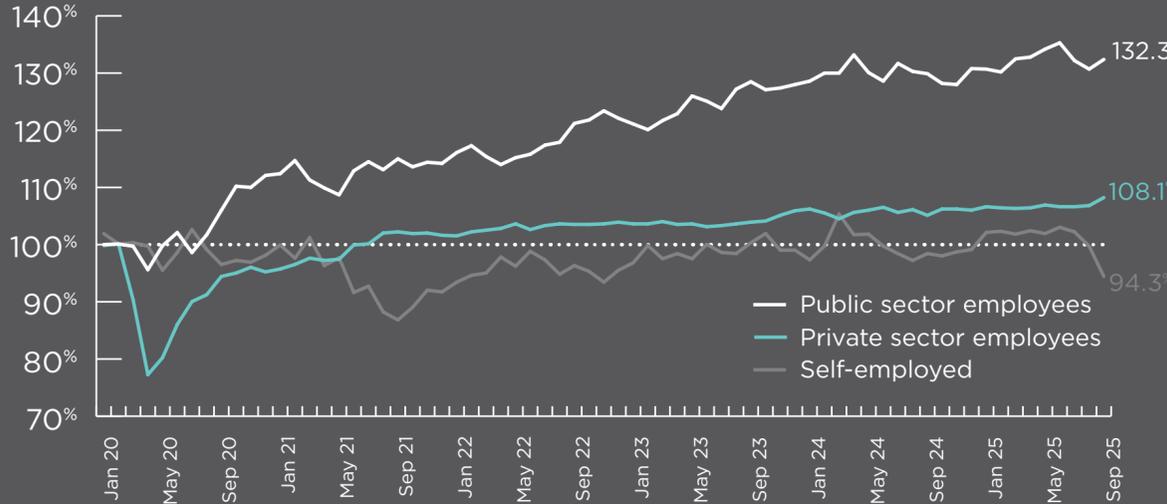
### UNEMPLOYMENT AND JOB VACANCANCIES

BC's unemployment rate was 6.4% in September 2025, 0.4 ppts higher than in September 2024. Job vacancies continued to fall as businesses exercised caution and hiring slowed. The job vacancy rate approached its lowest value on record, as of July 2025.



### TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT

BC's private sector employment increased by 1.6% over the past year, as a decline in self-employment (-18,700 workers) partially offset a 55,900 increase in employees. Public sector employment also trended up and has accounted for the lion's share of employment growth since February 2020.



\*All figures are based on September 2025 data, and changes are relative to September 2024 unless otherwise stated.  
 \*\* changes marked with a "-" denotes no statistical difference in the current estimate from the reference period

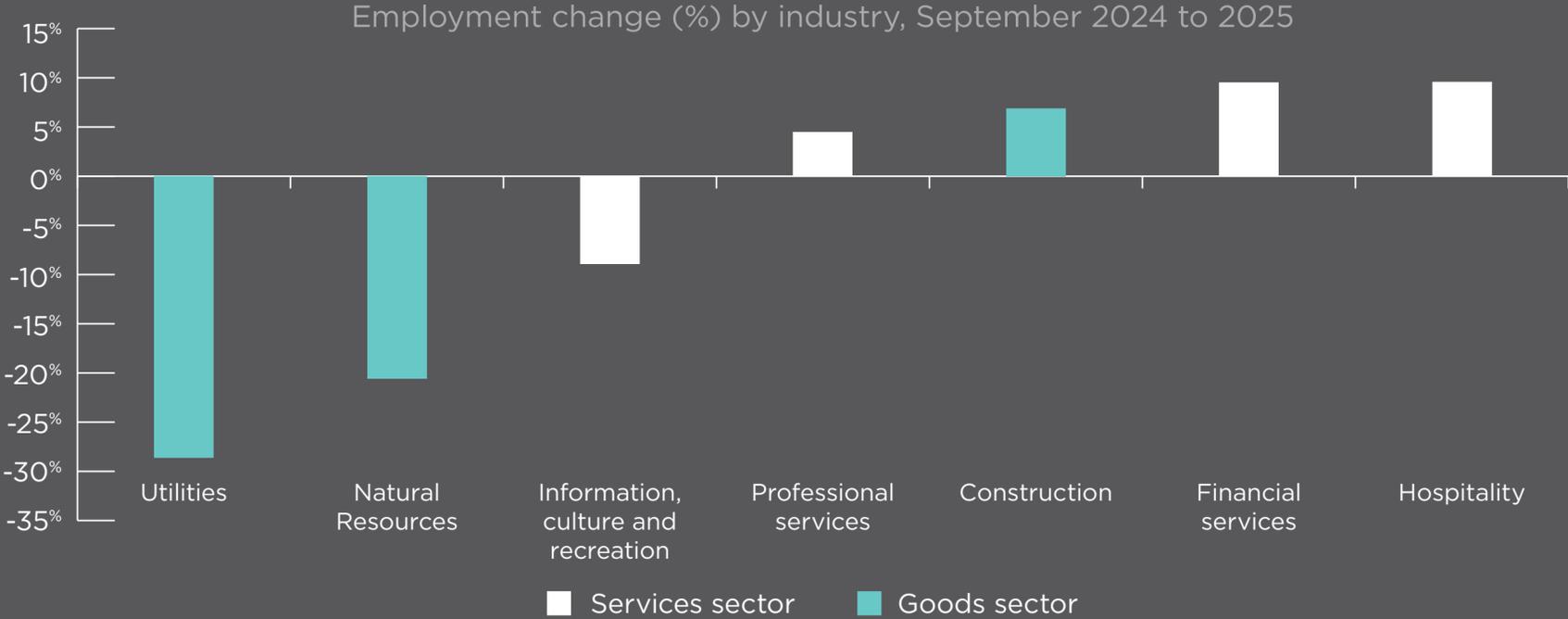
# PROVINCIAL SUMMARY



## INDUSTRY CHANGES

Goods sector employment edged up 1.9%, driven by gains in the construction industry. This was enough to offset losses in natural resources, which has faced trade related challenges, particularly in the forestry sector. Utilities employment also fell 28.6% year-over-year.

Employment in the services sector rose 1.6%, as hospitality, financial services, and professional services all posted gains during the year.



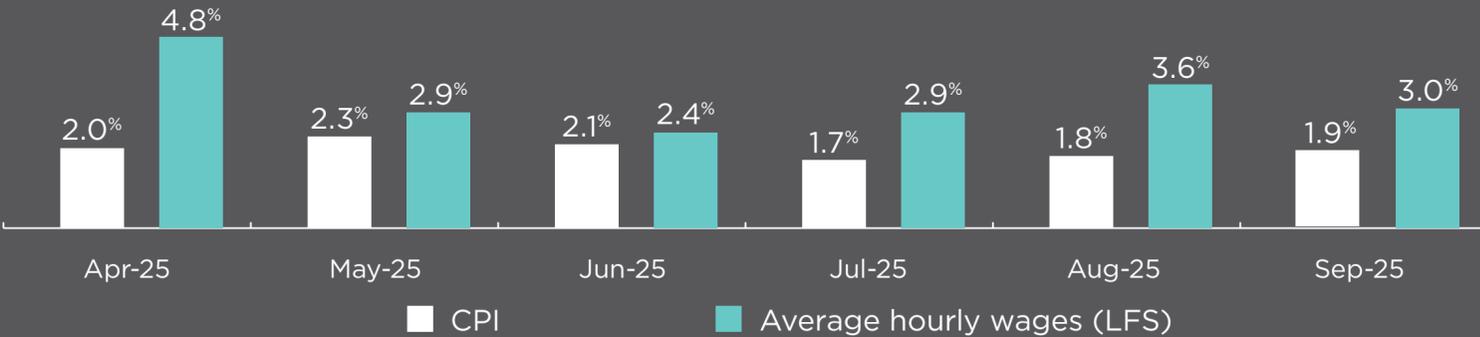
## LABOUR COMPENSATION

Average wage growth has routinely exceeded headline inflation since early 2023, and both wage and price pressures continue to ease.

### AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE

**MEN** \$40.22 (↑2.0%)  
**WOMEN** \$35.49 (↑4.0%)

## Year-over-year change in CPI and average wages, April to September 2025



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# CARIBOO



## EMPLOYMENT

Cariboo employment fell sharply (-8,500 workers; -10.0%) year-over-year, resulting in the region's lowest employment rate for the month of September since data first became available in 2001.

### TOTAL EMPLOYMENT

76,600 people (↓10.0%)

### EMPLOYMENT TYPE

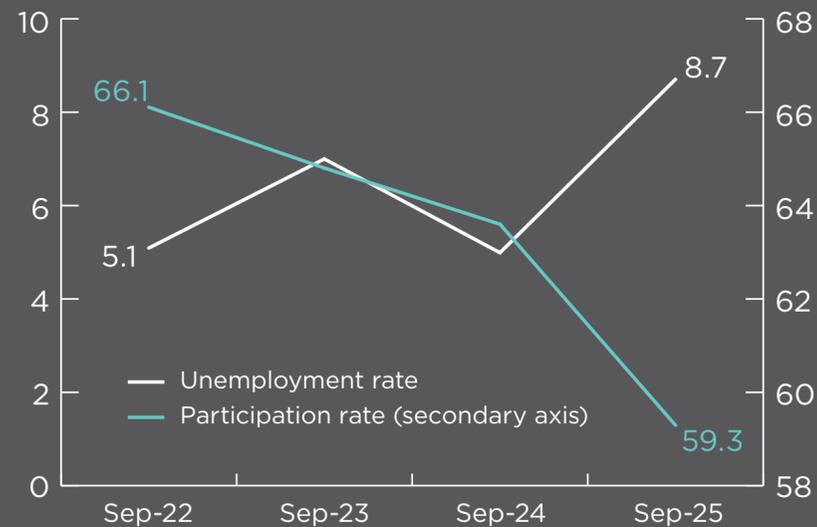
62,300 Full-time (↓12.3%)

14,200 Part-time (—)



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The region's unemployment rate increased 3.7 pts year-over-year to 8.7% in September 2025. The increase in unemployment coincided with a shrinking labour force, as the participation rate fell 4.3 pts.



## SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT\*

**Services sector** employment fell by 8,600 workers with declines spread across multiple industries.

SERVICE SECTOR	55,700	(↓13.4%)
HEALTH CARE	13,300	(—)
TRADE	11,900	(↓22.7%)
TRANSPORTATION AND WAREHOUSING	6,100	(↑52.5%)



**Goods sector** employment held steady despite the ongoing challenges in forestry, which is a critical industry for the region. The broader natural resources industry added 1,000 workers during the year.

GOODS SECTOR	20,900	(—)
CONSTRUCTION	8,200	(—)
MANUFACTURING	6,600	(↓22.4%)
NATURAL RESOURCES	5,200	(↑23.8%)



Note: Unless indicated otherwise, numbers are based on September 2025 data, which reflects a three-month moving average (July-September), not seasonally adjusted. Changes marked with a hyphen indicate no significant change from the previous year.



# KOOTENAY



## EMPLOYMENT

The Kootenay labour market held steady in 2025, with most headline metrics posting small improvements, including full-time and part-time employment.

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT  
89,100 people

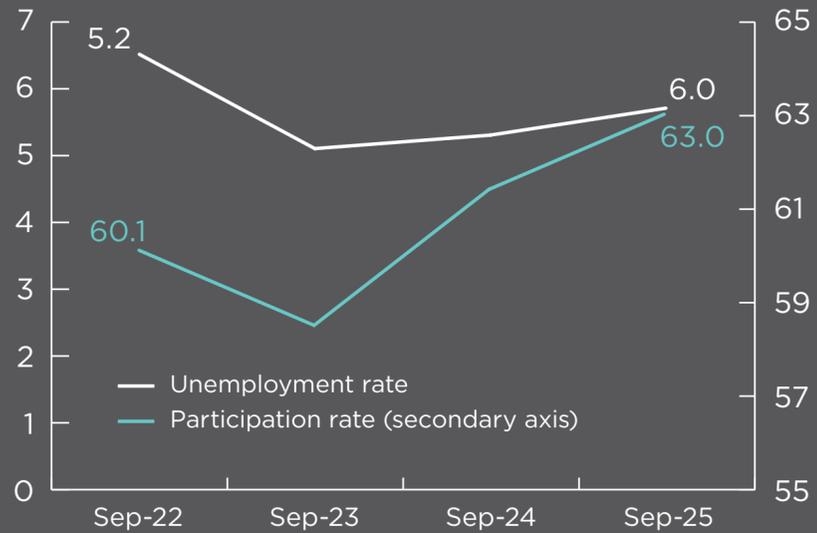
### EMPLOYMENT TYPE

68,900 Full-time (—)  
20,200 Part-time (—)



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The region's unemployment and participation rates in September 2025 were both similar to the previous year.



## SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT

**Services sector** employment edged higher as hospitality employment nearly doubled during the year, while the workforce in health care also increased.



SERVICE SECTOR	65,000	(—)
HEALTH CARE	15,800	(↑29.5%)
TRADE	14,200	(—)
HOSPITALITY	10,800	(↑89.5%)

**Goods sector** employment fell slightly as gains in construction were offset by marginal declines in natural resources and manufacturing.



GOODS SECTOR	24,200	(—)
CONSTRUCTION	11,600	(↑39.8%)
NATURAL RESOURCES	5,400	(—)
MANUFACTURING	5,300	(—)



# NORTHEAST BC



## EMPLOYMENT

Northeast BC's workforce grew by 3,100 workers during the past year, with most of the increase coming from an increase in part-time work. The region boasted the highest employment rate in the province at 67.3%.

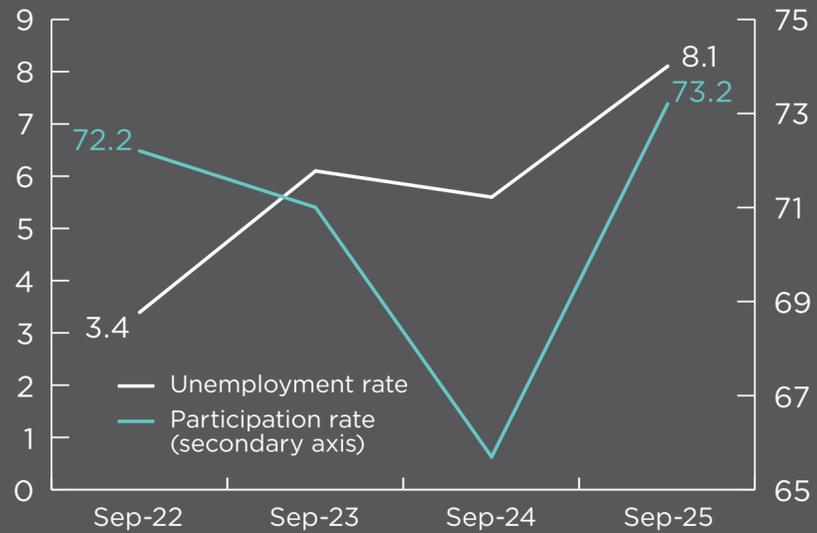
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT  
36,500 people (↑9.3%)

EMPLOYMENT TYPE  
29,500 Full-time (—)  
7,000 Part-time (↑45.8%)



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The unemployment rate in Northeast BC increased 2.5 percentage points to 8.1%. Coupled with an increase in employment, the participation rate to jumped 7.5 ppts to 73.2% in September 2025.



## SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT

**Services sector** employment increased by 3,700 workers in Northeast BC, as trade and healthcare both added workers during the year.



SERVICE SECTOR	25,200	(↑17.2%)
TRADE	5,600	(↑27.3%)
HEALTH CARE	4,400	(↑33.3%)
HOSPITALITY	2,600	—

**Goods sector** employment trended lower year-over-year as the natural resources industry lost 2,600 positions from September 2024 levels.



GOODS SECTOR	11,300	(—)
CONSTRUCTION	4,800	(—)
NATURAL RESOURCES	3,800	(↓40.6%)
MANUFACTURING	1,800	(—)



# NORTHWEST BC



## EMPLOYMENT

There were 45,500 people working in Northwest BC in September 2025, 5,300 fewer than were one year earlier. As a result, the employment rate fell 7.6 percentage points to 58.1%.

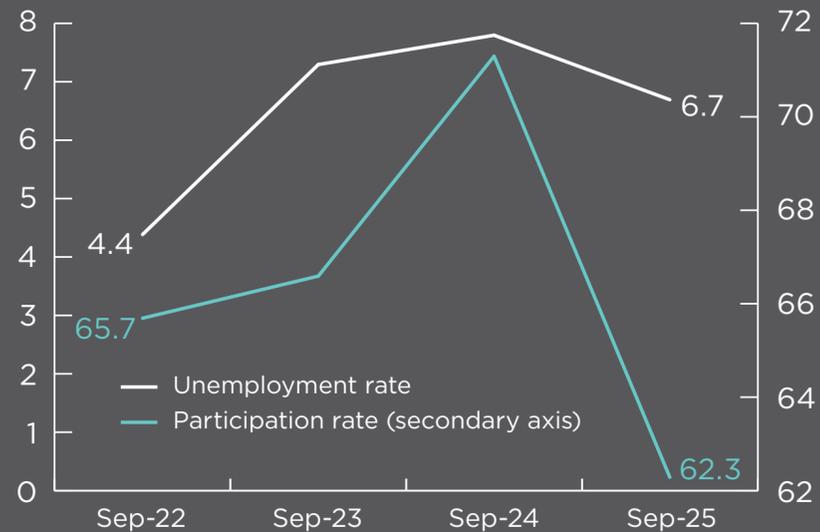
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT  
40,500 people (↓11.6%)

EMPLOYMENT TYPE  
32,800 Full-time (↓13.9%)  
7,700 Part-time (—)



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

A shrinking labour force in Northwest BC resulted in a 9.0 ppt drop in the participation rate year-over-year. The region's unemployment rate also trended lower to 6.7%.



## SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT

**Services sector** employment fell 13.1% in Northwest BC over the course of the year, as losses were spread across multiple industries.

SERVICE SECTOR	28,600	(↓13.1%)
HEALTH CARE	5,700	(—)
TRADE	4,800	(—)
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	3,100	(↓18.4%)



**Goods sector** employment also contracted, as manufacturing was the lone industry to add workers .

GOODS SECTOR	11,900	(—)
CONSTRUCTION	4,200	(—)
MANUFACTURING	3,900	(↑30.0%)
NATURAL RESOURCES	3,100	(—)





# SOUTHWEST BC



## EMPLOYMENT

Employment in Southwest BC edged up due to an increase in part-time work. Working-age population growth slowed, but still outpaced job creation for the 12 months ending in September 2025.

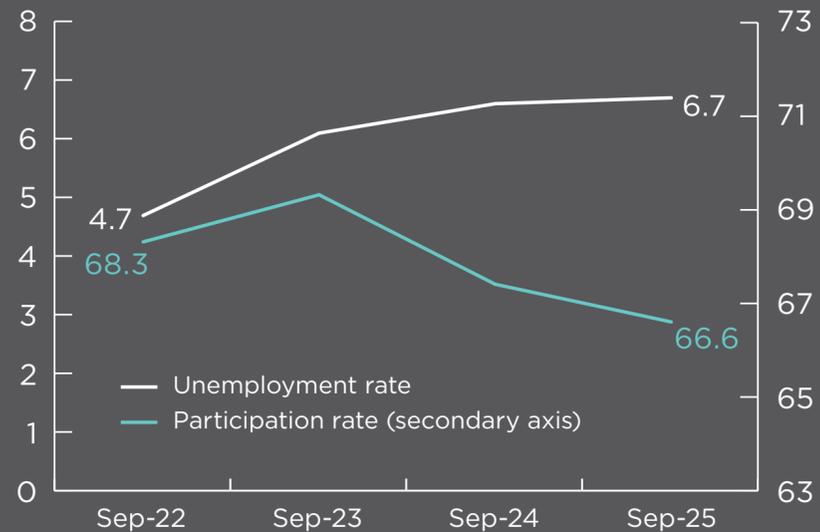
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT  
1.91 million people

EMPLOYMENT TYPE  
1.56 million Full-time (→)  
351,700 Part-time (↑7.2%)



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Southwest BC's unemployment rate was little changed year-over-year at 6.7%. At the same time, the region's labour force participation rate fell 0.8 percentage points to 66.6%.



## SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT

**Services sector** employment held steady year-over-year. Southwest BC's largest industries posted employment gains, while the largest decline occurred in the information, culture and recreation industry.

SERVICE SECTOR	1,587,000	(→)
TRADE	287,800	(→)
HEALTH CARE	248,900	(→)
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	230,800	(↑5.7%)



**Goods sector** employment expanded for the second straight year, with manufacturing and construction both adding workers during the year.

GOODS SECTOR	320,900	(→)
CONSTRUCTION	164,600	(→)
MANUFACTURING	129,300	(↑9.1%)
NATURAL RESOURCES	10,700	(→)





# THOMPSON-OKANAGAN



## EMPLOYMENT

Employment increased in the Thompson-Okanagan, as the region added 20,400 full-time workers between September 2024 and September 2025. The employment rate increased 2.9 pts to 59.0%.

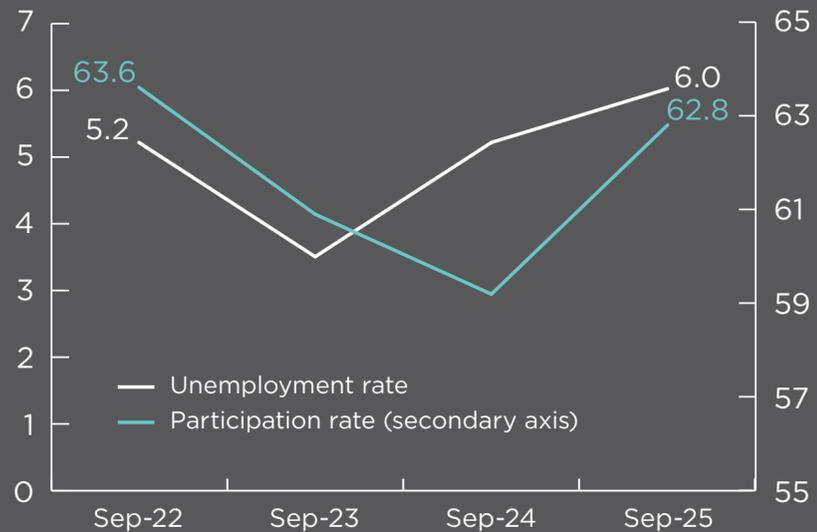
TOTAL EMPLOYMENT  
325,900 people (↑16.4%)

EMPLOYMENT TYPE  
255,400 Full-time (↑18.7%)  
70,500 Part-time (—)



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The Thompson-Okanagan's unemployment rate edged up to 6.0%, while the region's participation rate rebounded following a steady decline since September 2022.



## SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT

**Services sector** employment gains were widespread across the sector, with health care posting the only worker decline during the year.

SERVICE SECTOR	259,300	(↑11.3%)
TRADE	52,900	(—)
HEALTH CARE	41,500	(↓17.2%)
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	30,400	(↑27.7%)



**Goods sector** employment fell by 6,900 workers as natural resources employment retreated to September 2023 levels. Agriculture employment trended lower following a challenging 2024 and has lost nearly half its workforce over the past two years.

GOODS SECTOR	66,600	(—)
CONSTRUCTION	31,300	(—)
MANUFACTURING	21,000	(—)
NATURAL RESOURCES	8,500	(↓38.0%)



Note: Unless indicated otherwise, numbers are based on September 2025 data, which reflects a three-month moving average (July-September), not seasonally adjusted. Changes marked with a hyphen indicate no significant change from the previous year.



# VANCOUVER ISLAND/COAST



## EMPLOYMENT

Despite adding 9,400 working age residents, employment was stagnant year-over-year within Vancouver Island/Coast. Marginal changes in part-time and full-time employment netted out to a gain/loss of zero workers.

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT  
472,500 people

EMPLOYMENT TYPE  
365,400 Full-time (—)  
107,100 Part-time (—)



## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

The Vancouver Island/Coast's unemployment rate increased 1.1 percentage points to 5.6% in September 2025. Meanwhile, the labour force participation rate was unchanged from a year earlier.



## SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT

**Services sector** employment held steady compared to September 2024. Trade and business services added 6,400 and 4,300 workers, respectively, while hospitality and information, culture and recreation posted the biggest losses.

SERVICE SECTOR	397,500	(—)
HEALTH CARE	81,300	(—)
TRADE	64,900	(↑10.9%)
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION	46,000	(—)



**Goods sector** employment in Vancouver Island/Coast shifted at the industry level, as a decline in manufacturing was mostly offset by increases in construction and agriculture.

GOODS SECTOR	75,100	(—)
CONSTRUCTION	43,300	(—)
MANUFACTURING	16,700	(↓22.3%)
NATURAL RESOURCES	8,200	(—)



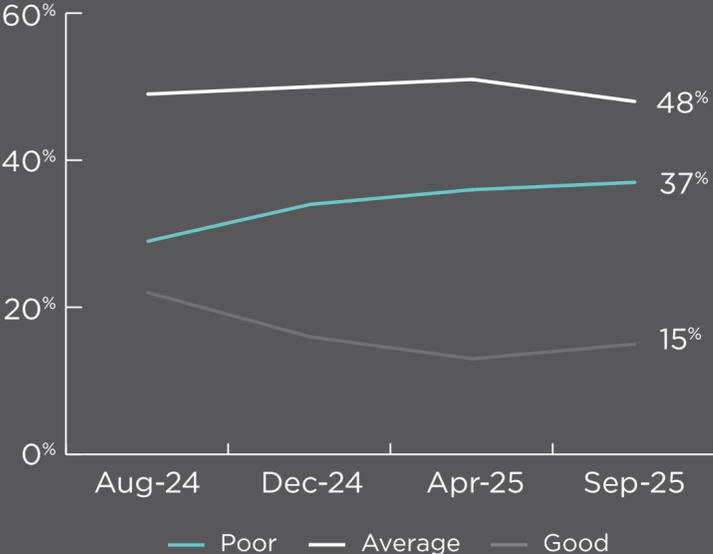
# SURVEY RESULTS

## Outlook on the Economy

Based on results from the *BC Check-Up: Work survey\**, BC CPAs indicated that...



**BC CPAs continued to hold a relatively negative opinion on the current state of the province's economy.** While nearly half thought the BC economy was average, members who thought the BC economy was underperforming outnumbered those who thought it was performing well five to two.



**Half of CPA respondents**, believed their organization's prospects had worsened during the past 12 months, an increase from the proportion who held that view in 2024.



**Housing prices regained the top spot of challenges facing BC businesses** as worries about tariffs moderated since April 2025.

	December 2024	April 2025	September 2025
1	Housing prices	Tariffs and trade restrictions	Housing prices
2	Labour compensation	Housing prices	Tariffs and trade restrictions
3	Access to skilled labour	Access to skilled labour	Labour compensation

\* September 2025 results, n=533, Apr 2025 results, n=457, December 2024 results, n = 548, August 2024 results, n = 537. Survey results may not sum to 100% due to exclusion of Don't Know / No Opinion responses and/or rounding.

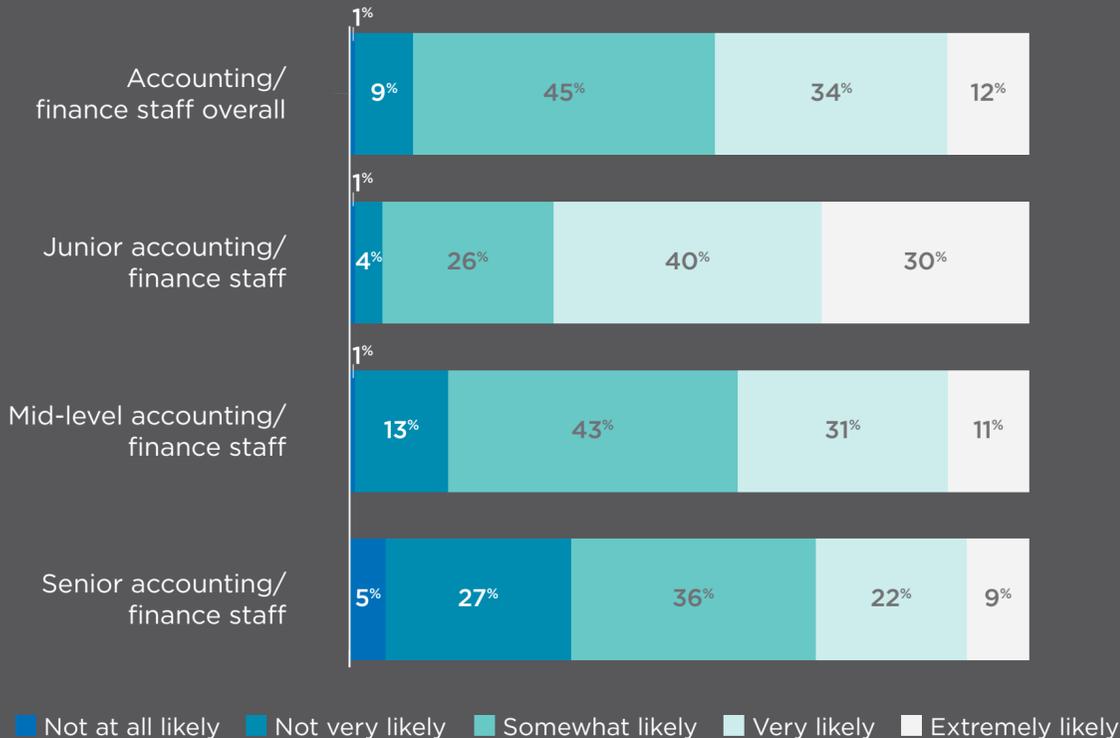
# SURVEY RESULTS

## On Hiring Trends and AI

Based on results from the BC Check-Up: Work survey\*, BC CPAs indicate that...



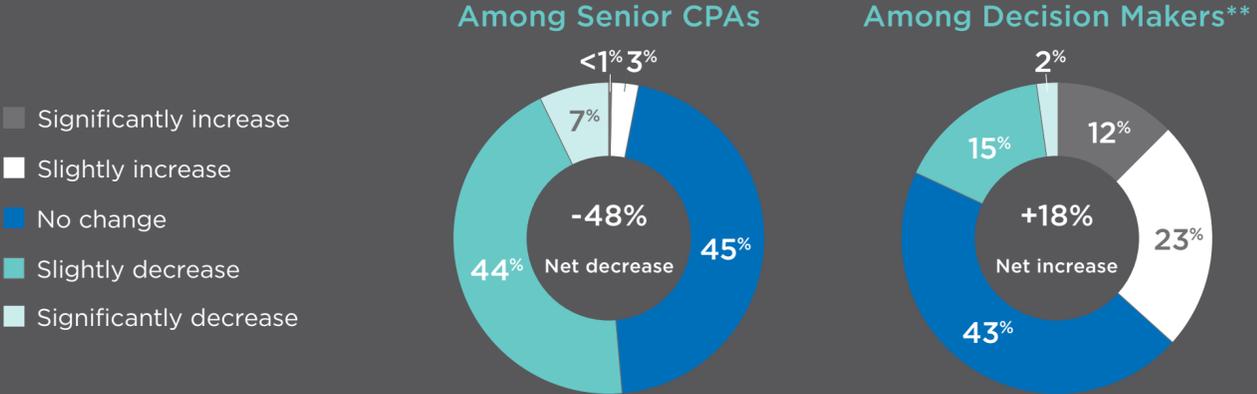
Senior CPAs thought AI was most likely to change the type of work done by junior finance and accounting staff over the next five years, with people in senior roles being less affected.



More than half of senior CPAs expected their organization's workforce will remain the same over the next year, while nearly a quarter expected an increase in headcount, down from one third in August 2024.



Most CPAs expect the use of AI in finance and accounting will either slightly reduce or not change the number of staff needed in these roles over the next five years, while people who hire accountants hold a more optimistic view.



\* September 2025 results, n=533, Apr 2025 results, n=457, December 2024 results, n = 548, August 2024 results, n = 537. Survey results may not sum to 100% due to exclusion of Don't Know / No Opinion responses and/or rounding.

\*\* From CPABC's second annual "Decision-Makers Survey" conducted in Spring 2025, in partnership with Leger. The survey was targeted towards people responsible for hiring CPA's.

# BC CHECK-UP 2025 **WORK**

As leaders in analyzing and validating information, CPAs are often called upon to provide independent, fair, and objective information to assist in decision-making. It is our hope that *BC Check-Up* will make a positive public policy contribution to the province by stimulating discussion about how to make BC a better place in which to **WORK**, **INVEST**, and **LIVE**.

*BC Check-Up* is available online at [bccheckup.com](http://bccheckup.com).

## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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The report is prepared by the Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia. Opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect those of individual chartered professional accountants.

Data is derived from Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey and Job Vacancy and Wage Survey, and CPABC calculations.

Sectoral definitions: Natural resources include forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas. Health includes health care and social assistance. Professional services include professional, scientific and technical services. Hospitality includes accommodation and food services. Financial services include finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing.

## **SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS Who are they?** 533 CPABC members

**Where are they from?** Mainland/Southwest BC 64% Vancouver Island/Coast 19% Thompson-Okanagan 8% Rest of BC 9%

CPABC conducted a web-based survey of CPA members regarding their impressions on the economic and employment outlook. A total of 533 surveys were completed between August 27<sup>th</sup> and September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, representing an overall response rate of 8%.