

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BULLETIN



Business Council of
British Columbia
Est. 1966

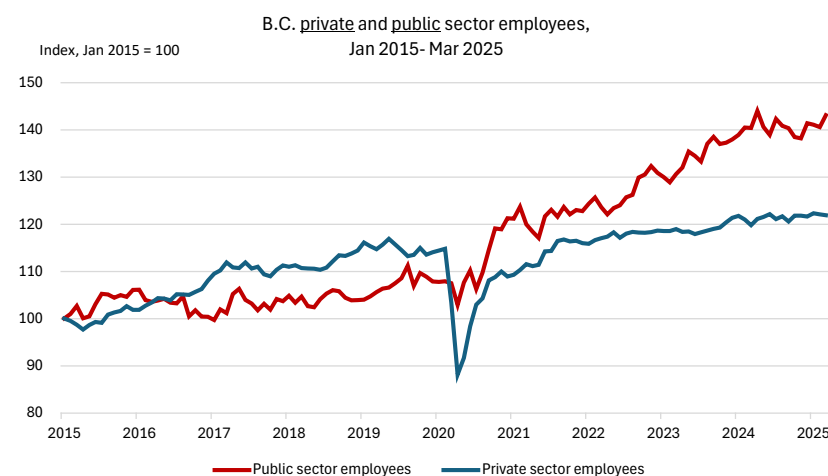
Volume 57, Issue 1, Feb/Mar 2025

LABOUR MARKET UPDATE – Q1 2025

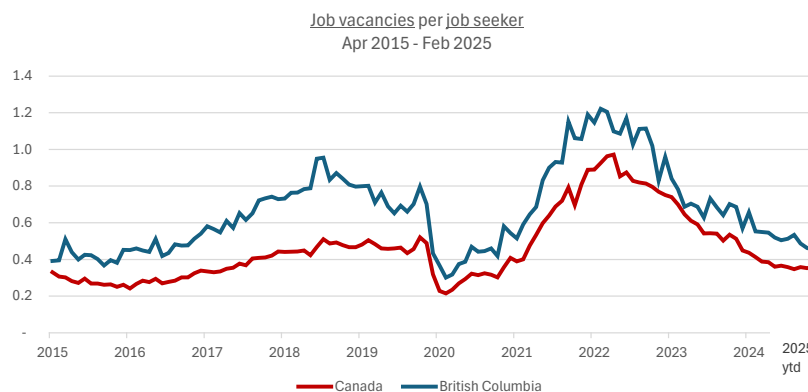
Employment grew through the first quarter of 2025, with a net gain of 24,000 jobs (+0.8%) since December. We saw a modest gain of 5,700 jobs in March, which offset the losses in February—but overall, the labour market remains softer than usual. We are still recovering from the job losses that occurred in the period between May 2024 – September 2024, which saw one of the weakest job markets in years.

Meanwhile, the province's working-age population grew by 22,400 people (+0.5%) in the first quarter of the year. That means job creation kept pace with population growth, but only just, highlighting the continued pressure on the labour market to absorb new entrants. For reference, population growth in 2024 (+44,700) outpaced new job creation (+16,700) in the province.

The private sector continues to struggle. In March, it shed another 2,700 jobs, almost wiping out the modest gains made earlier in the year. Year-to-date, private sector employment is up by just 4,200 jobs (+0.2%), highlighting ongoing stagnation. By contrast, the public sector is still expanding rapidly, adding more than 10,000 jobs in March alone and posting a net gain of 7,300 jobs (+1.2%) so far this year, growing at six times the pace of private sector employment in the first quarter of 2025. This continues a longer-term trend where employment growth in B.C. is increasingly being driven by public sector hiring rather than private sector investment.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0288-01 Employment by class of worker, monthly, seasonally adjusted



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0287-01 Labour force characteristics, monthly, seasonally adjusted and Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0432-01 Job vacancies, payroll employees, and job vacancy rate by provinces and territories, monthly, adjusted for seasonality

Against the backdrop of weak private sector job creation, B.C.'s unemployment rate has been trending upward since mid-2024 and continues to climb in 2025. It now sits at 6.1% (March 2025), up from 5.5% a year ago (March 2024) and up a full percentage point from the low in April 2024.

At the same time, we're seeing a steady decline in the number of job vacancies per job seeker. This ratio (which was about 0.70 at the start of 2024) has dropped to just 0.45 (a 36 % decline) as of February 2025. That means there are now fewer job openings for every person looking for work, a clear sign that employer demand is slowing.