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Labour market report, March 2021

Employment in Ontario increased by 182,300 in March. Get the details in this report.

Quick facts

In March 2021:

- There were 12.3 million people in Ontario aged 15 years or older
 - 8.0 million (64.7%) were in the labour force, including those who had worked, were unemployed or did not work at their job, which includes people on temporary layoff because of ongoing COVID-19-related business closures. The labour force increased in March compared to February (52,200 or 0.7%).
 - 7.4 million (59.9%) were employed, up by 182,300 (2.5%) from February.
- Ontario's unemployment rate decreased to 7.5% in March from 9.2% in February and 596,400 people were unemployed, down 17.9% (-130,100) from February.

Important note:

This report is based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS), a household survey carried out by Statistics Canada. March's LFS results covers labour market conditions as of the week of March 14 to 20.

Ontario's mandatory closure of non-essential businesses and other measures aimed at addressing the impact of COVID-19 took effect on March 24, 2020.

Stay-at-home orders had been lifted for all regions of Ontario by March 8. Personal care services, recreation and fitness facilities, and in-person dining remained closed in Toronto and some other areas during the March LFS reporting period. The next LFS release will capture the province-wide Stay-at-Home order requiring everyone to remain at home except for essential purposes, which took effect on April 8, 2021.

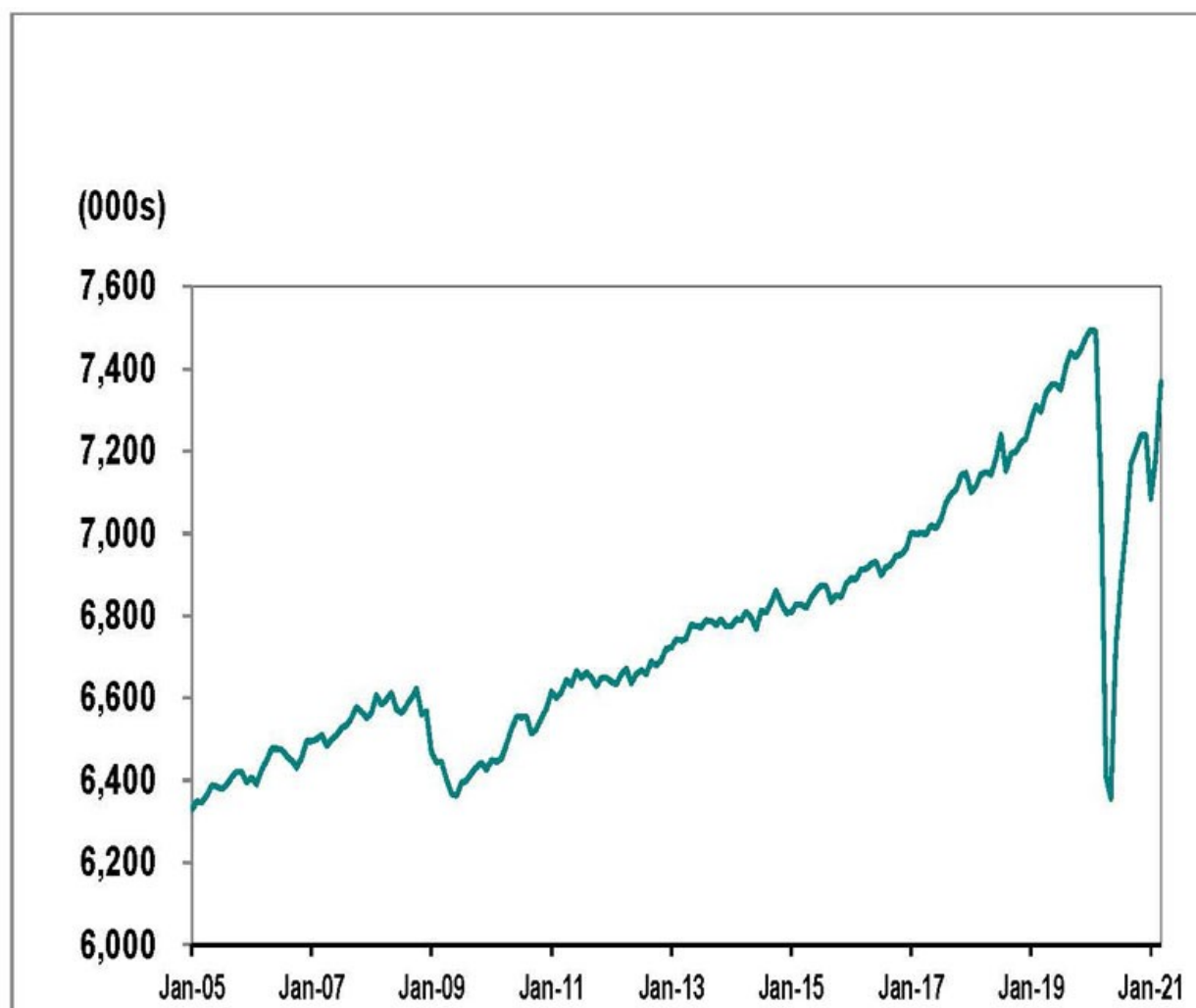
The types of businesses that were deemed essential and remained open during the COVID-19 economic shutdown and the types of businesses that reopened at the different stages of the Ontario government's plan for reopening the economy should be considered in the context of information provided in this report.

Employment increased in March

Employment increased in March (182,300 or 2.5%) following an increase of 100,300 (1.4%) in February. This was the largest increase since last September 2020. In March, employment in Ontario was 7,368,100 and 123,000 (1.6%) below its pre-COVID-19 February 2020 level.

The total number of hours worked in Ontario in March 2021 (at all jobs) was down by 8.6% compared to February 2020 (data are not seasonally adjusted).

Chart 1 shows employment in Ontario from January 2005 to March 2021.



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0287-01, (seasonally adjusted data).

[Download data, chart 1 \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mar2021-labour-market-report-chart-1-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mar2021-labour-market-report-chart-1-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)

Full-time vs. part-time

Full-time jobs increased by 106,300 (1.8%), while part-time jobs grew by 76,000 (6.4%).

Employment change by sex and age

March's employment gain was 2.4% (91,800) for men compared to 2.7% for women (90,500).

Employment among women was further behind its pre-COVID-19 February 2020 level (–2.4% or –84,000) than employment among men (–1.0% or –39,000).

Youth (those aged 15 to 24) employment increased by 59,000 (6.7%) in March, after increasing by 23,100 (2.7%) in February. Employment for people aged 25 to 54 rose by 61,700 (1.3%) in March following an increase of 66,700 (1.4%) in February. Employment for those aged 55 and older increased by 61,600 (3.8%) in March, following an increase of 10,500 (0.6%) in February.

In March, youth employment remained further from pre-COVID-19 February 2020 levels than for those aged 25-54, at –8.5% (–86,600) and –1.1% (–151,000) respectively. Employment among those aged 55 and over surpassed the February 2020 level (0.9% or 14,600).

Employment in Canada increased by 303,100 (1.6%) after rising by 259,200 (1.4%) in February and was 296,000 (–1.5%) below its pre-pre-COVID-19 February 2020 level. March's increase was the largest increase since September 2020.

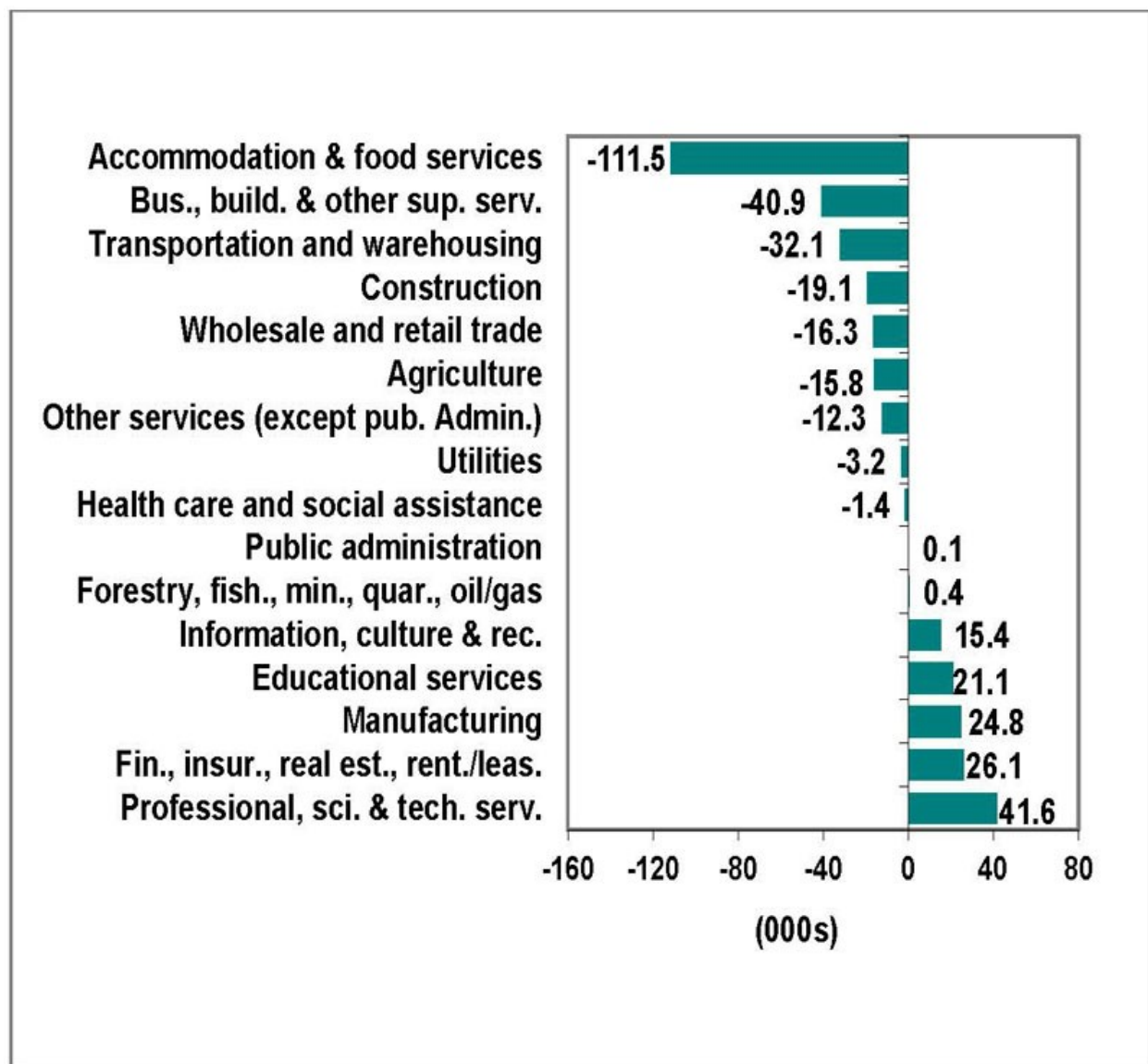
Employment change by industry

The government's restrictions on the types of businesses that were deemed essential and other measures aimed at addressing the impact of COVID-19 should be considered in the context of employment change by sector.

In March, employment in accommodation and food services (–111,500 or –25.2%) was furthest below its pre-COVID February 2020 level, followed by employment in business, building and other support services (–40,900 or –12.6%), transportation and warehousing (–32,100 or –8.1%), construction (–19,100 or –3.4%) and wholesale and retail trade (–16,300 or –1.5%).

Employment was notably above pre-COVID February 2020 levels in professional, scientific and technical services (41,600 or 6.2%), finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing (26,100 or 4.3%), manufacturing (24,800 or 3.3%), educational services (21,100 or 3.9%) and information, culture and recreation (15,400 or 5.1%).

Chart 2 shows industries by employment change in Ontario, February 2020 to March 2021.

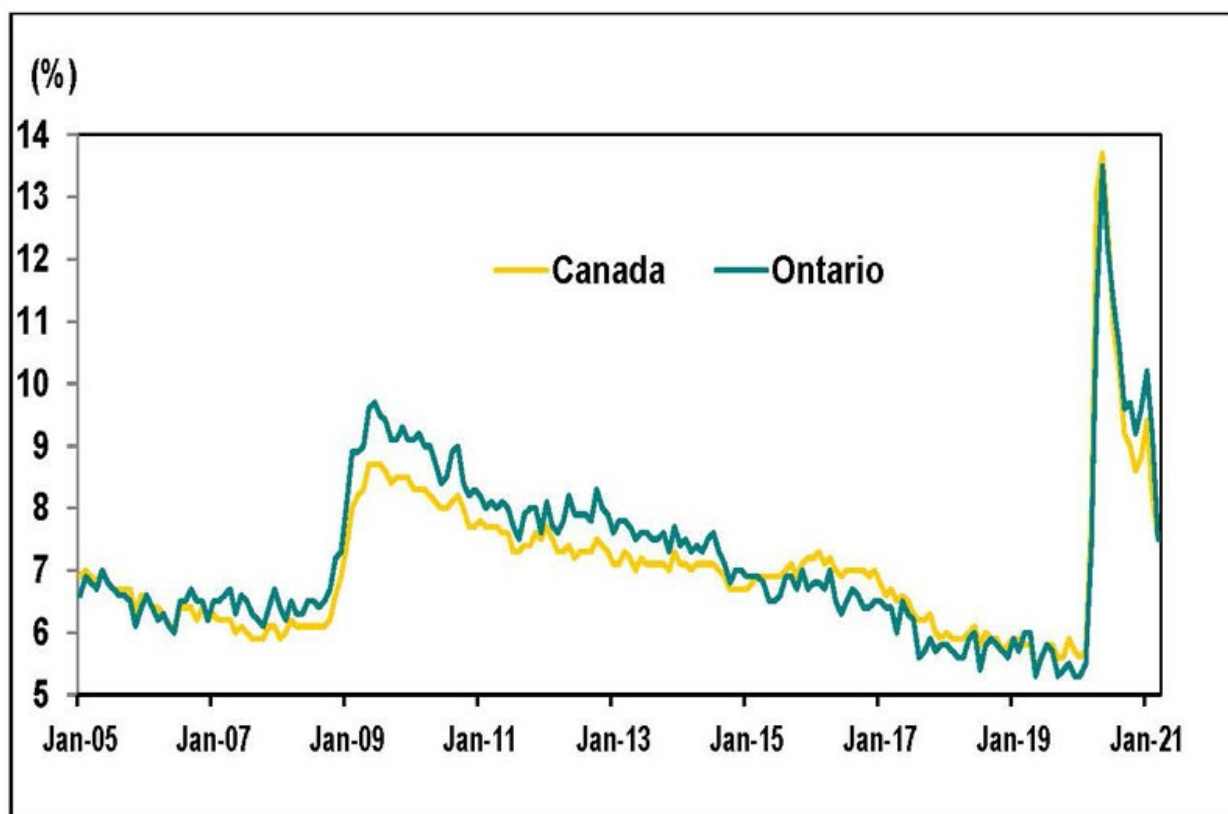


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0355-02, (seasonally adjusted data).

[Download data, chart 2 \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-2-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-2-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)

Unemployment rate decreased to 7.5%

Chart 3 shows unemployment rates, Ontario and Canada, January 2005 to March 2021.



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0287-01, (seasonally adjusted data).

[Download data, chart 3 \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-3-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-3-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)

Ontario's unemployment rate in March was 7.5%, down from 9.2% in February. The unemployment rate in February 2020 was 5.5%.

Canada's unemployment rate decreased to 7.5% in March from 8.2% in February. Canada's unemployment rate in February 2020 was 5.7%.

Unemployment rate by sex and age

The unemployment rate for women was 7.8% in March, down from 9.9% in February, while the rate for men decreased to 7.2% from 8.5% during the same period.

In Ontario, the unemployment rate among population groups designated as visible minorities was estimated at 9.7% in February in comparison to a 7.2% rate for non-visible minorities and those that did not identify as Indigenous (data are for the population aged 15 to 69 and are not adjusted for seasonality).

For individuals aged 15 to 24, the unemployment rate decreased to 15.1% in March from 20.9% in February. The youth unemployment rate reached a record high of 30.0% in May 2020.

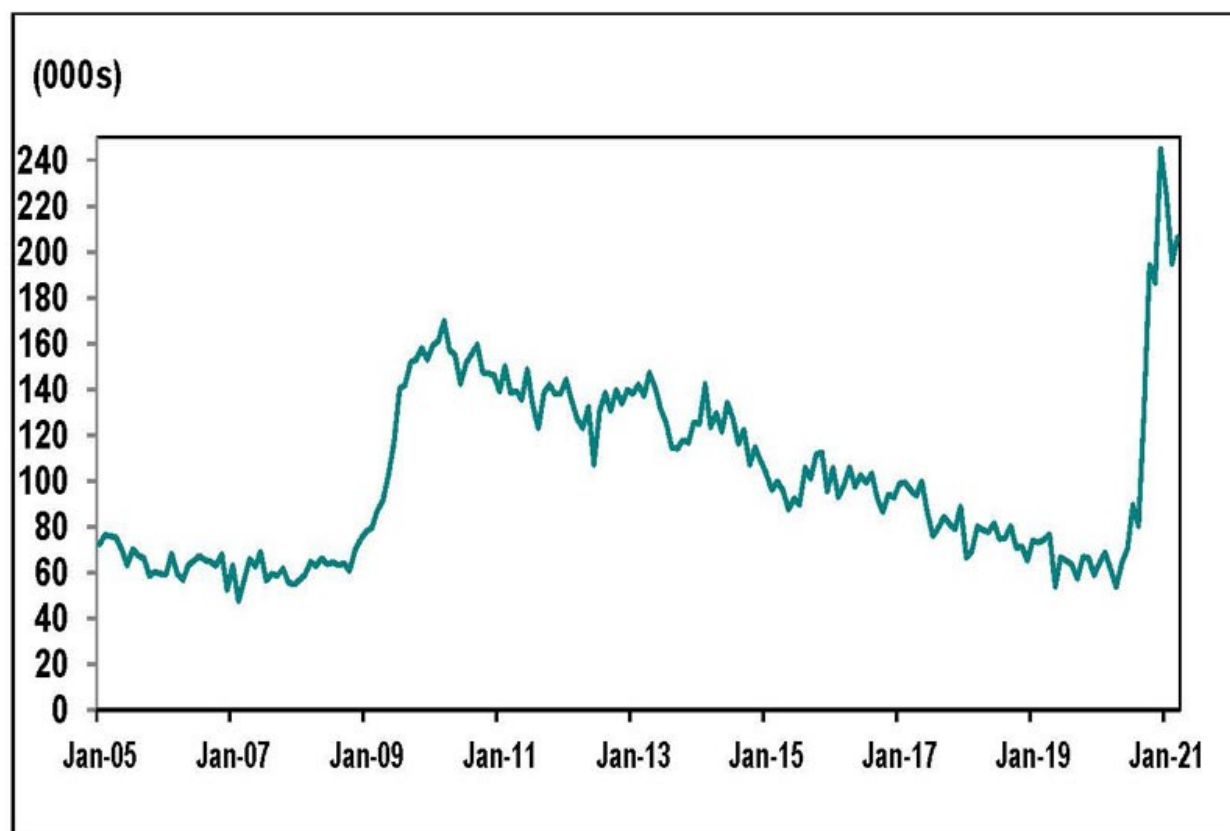
The unemployment rate for individuals aged 25 to 54 was 6.7% in March, down from 7.3% in February, while the rate for those aged 55 and older was 5.0%, down from 7.1%.

Long-term unemployment

In February, an average of 206,200 Ontarians or 34.6% of all unemployed people were unemployed for 27 weeks or longer (long-term unemployed). This was up from 195,100 in the previous month and three times the pre- February 2020 level of 68,800.

The average time in unemployment increased to 23.8 weeks in March 2021 from 15.9 weeks in February 2020.

Chart 4 shows the number of people unemployed for 27 week or more in Ontario, January 2005 to March 2021.



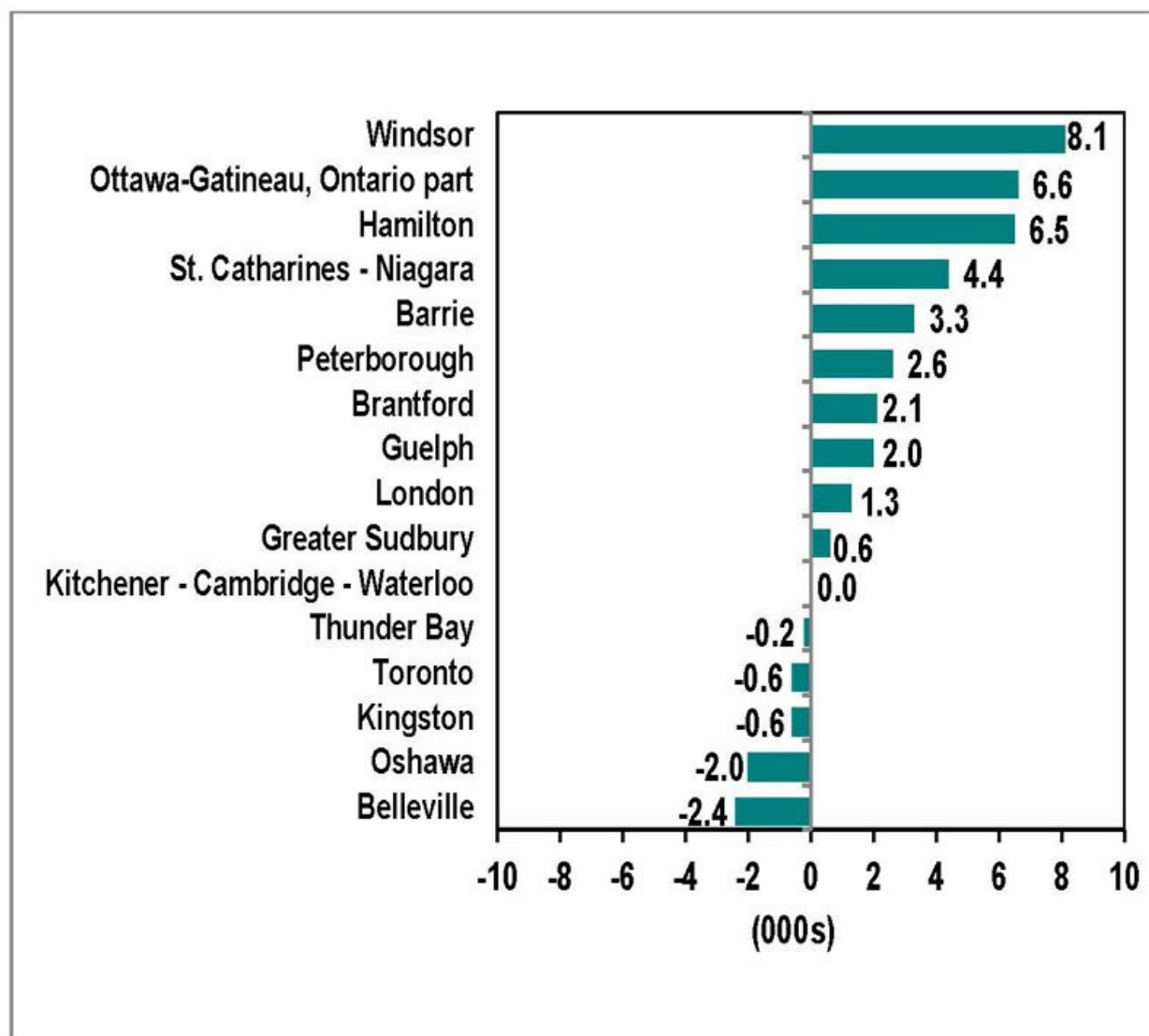
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0342-01, (seasonally adjusted data).

[Download data, chart 4 \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-4-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-4-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)

Employment and unemployment in urban centres

Employment change in urban centres

Chart 5 shows the rate of employment change for Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) from February 2021 to March 2021.



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0294-01, (seasonally adjusted data three-month moving average to reduce volatility caused by small sample size).

[Download data, chart 5 \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-5-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-5-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)

Employment levels increased in ten of the sixteen Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) between February and March, led by Windsor (8,100 or 5.2%), Ottawa-Gatineau (6,600 or 1.1%), Hamilton (6,500 or 1.6%), St. Catharines-Niagara (4,400 or 2.4%) and Barrie (3,300 or 3.1%).

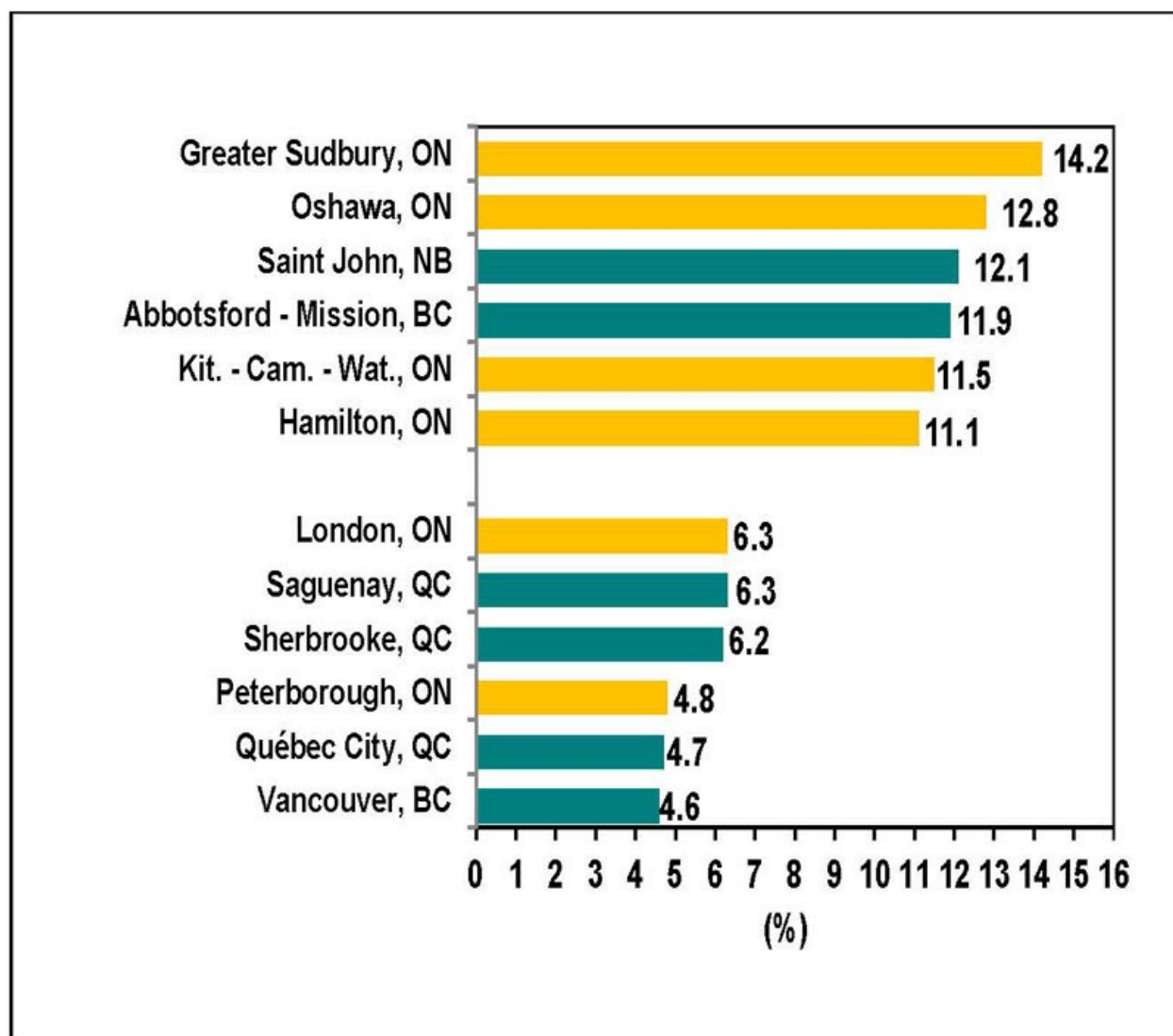
Belleville (-2,400 or -4.4%) and Oshawa (-2,000 or -1.0%) recorded notable declines in employment, while employment in Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo was unchanged.

In March, employment in 11 of the 16 Ontario urban centres remained below pre- February 2020 levels, led by Toronto (-185,000 or -5.4%), St. Catharines-Niagara (-21,200 or -10.2%), Kitchener- Cambridge-Waterloo (-18,400 or -5.5%), Barrie (-17,200 or -13.6%) and Hamilton (-7,600 or -1.8%).

London (3,300 or 1.2%), Peterborough (1,900 or 3.3%), Brantford (1,600 or 2.2%) and Guelph (1,200 or 1.4%) reported employment that was above pre- February 2020 levels.

Lowest and highest unemployment rates in urban centres

Chart 6 shows Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) with highest and lowest unemployment rates in Canada, March 2021.



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table 14-10-0294-01, (seasonally adjusted data three-month moving average to reduce volatility caused by small sample size).

[Download data, chart 6 \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-6-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-6-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)

Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) recorded three of the five highest unemployment rates in Canada in March, led by St. Catharines-Niagara (12.2%), which recorded the highest unemployment rate in Canada.

Ottawa-Gatineau recorded the lowest unemployment rate in Ontario in March (6.3%), while Québec City had the lowest unemployment rate in Canada (4.9%).

Download data

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

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- [CSV, Chart 2, industries with highest and lowest employment change in Ontario, February 2020 to March 2021, 2 Kb \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-2-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-2-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)
- [CSV, Chart 3, unemployment rates, Ontario and Canada, January 2005 to March 2021, 2 Kb \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-3-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-3-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)
- [CSV, Chart 4, number of people unemployed for 27 week or more in Ontario, January 2005 to March 2021, 2 Kb \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-4-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-4-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)
- [CSV, Chart 5, the rate of employment change for Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas \(CMAs\) from January 2021 to March 2021, 12 Kb \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-5-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-5-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)
- [CSV, Chart 6, Census Metropolitan Areas \(CMAs\) highest and lowest unemployment rates, March 2021, 2 Kb \(https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-6-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv\)](https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-1_3/mltsd-mars2021-labour-market-report-chart-6-en-utf8-2021-04-19.csv)

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