

Employment Impacts of COVID-19

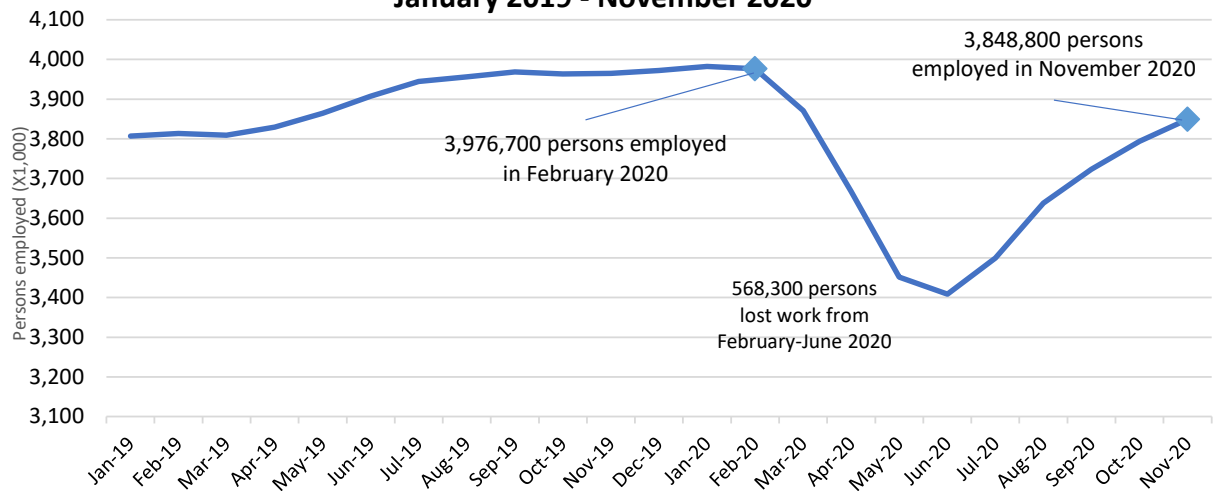
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, workers have been facing an exceptionally difficult labour market in the Halton area and across Canada. This *Community Lens* presents an overview of employment and unemployment including impacts on various demographic groups.

A data challenge is that the Labour Force Survey carried out by Statistics Canada does not provide data specific to Halton and the municipal level. Data is only provided to the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) level. For Halton, that means looking at data from both the Toronto CMA and the Hamilton CMA.¹ For this *Community Lens*, the analysis will look at the combined area of these two CMAs.

Across Canada, Covid-19 impacted employment as public health measures impacted economic activity. The greatest impact was felt in the first months of these measures and while there was growth as measures were relaxed in the summer months, the onset of a second wave of Covid-19 cases in the fall slowed growth.

The first chart shows that between February and June of 2020, 568,000 residents in the Toronto and Hamilton CMA lost employment, a loss of roughly 1 job in 7. In the July-November period, recovery showed a steady climb, with 349,300 persons gaining employment in that period.

Total Employment (persons employed) in Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area, January 2019 - November 2020



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0097-01 Employment by industry, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, census metropolitan areas (x 1,000)

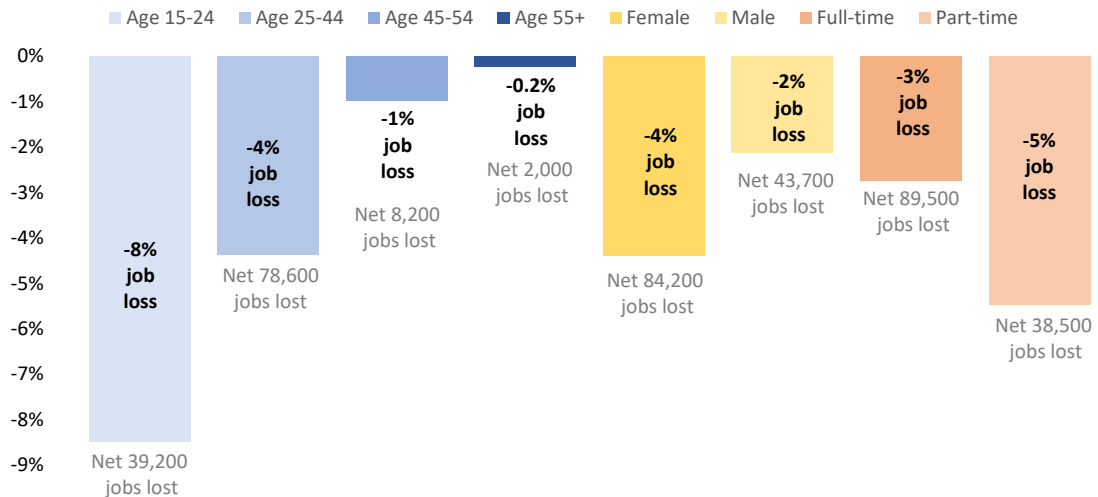
The unemployment rate remained high in November 2020, at 10.3% for the Toronto CMA and 7.6% for the Hamilton CMA, although these are improvements from the highs of 15% for the Toronto CMA in July 2020 and 12.3% for the Hamilton CMA in June 2020.

¹ Geographically, Halton Region is part of the Toronto CMA and Hamilton CMA. As such, data for the Toronto CMA applies to Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills, and data for the Hamilton CMA applies to Burlington.

Disparate Impacts

In the Toronto and Hamilton CMAs between February and November 2020, workers aged 15-24, women, and part-time workers were hardest hit by job loss. Workers aged 15-24 saw an 8% decrease in employment, while women experienced a 4% decrease and part-time workers experienced a 5% decrease in work in the February - November period. Compared to other demographic/employment categories, these decreases are significant and continue to demonstrate the precarious employment of these groups, even as employment has recovered since July 2020.

Percent change in Employment and Total Jobs Lost by Age group, Gender, and Full/part-time Status, GTHA, February - November 2020



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0097-01 Employment by industry, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality, census metropolitan areas (x 1,000)

Halton Impacts

In survey results² released in September 2020, Halton Region Economic Development Division found that 59% of businesses responding were deemed non-essential during the March closure orders with 8% of businesses closing temporarily and 1% closed permanently. Two in three businesses that were open in September experienced major or moderate impacts and non-essential businesses were more negatively impacted. Most businesses reported a decrease in revenue, sales, and customers. COVID-19 restrictions also resulted in reduced hours, employee layoffs, and problems with financial liquidity. Nearly half of businesses laid off employees due to COVID 19, with a third of businesses rehiring employees or bringing on new staff since reopening. When asked impact on revenues or sales, 42% of businesses reported a greater than 50% decline over 2019.

² Halton COVID-19 Business Impact Survey Results, September 2020 <https://www.halton.ca/Repository/COVID-19-Business-Impact-Survey-Results>



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