

## Introduction

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The state of the Aboriginal economy, as well as the Canadian economy in 2020, was severely and negatively impacted by the coronavirus. However, it should be noted that the value of education was confirmed. As levels of education increased, wage rates and employment measures continued to show improvements. This is the case for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals.

National economies are often measured in terms of their gross domestic product (GDP). The Canadian GDP in 2020 was down 5.4%. This was the steepest decline in Canadian GDP since 1961, when the data was first recorded. To measure the Aboriginal economy, unemployment, employment, and participation rates may be used. All three of these measures were very negative for 2020. In the following article, these three rates are examined for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Rates are also examined for Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals by gender, age, province, and education level.

Indigenous and Non-Indigenous  
2021 Unemployment, Employment, and  
Participation Rates:  
Improved from 2020 — Education is Critical

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**ABSTRACT**

Unemployment rates were lower, and participation and employment rates were higher for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada in 2021. The meaningful improvements in 2021 are in comparison with the COVID-19-induced negative rates of 2020. The employment and unemployment rates have not fully recovered from their 2019 pre-COVID rates. This is the case for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Employment, unemployment, participation, and wage rates are and have been more favourable for non-Indigenous individuals than for Indigenous individuals. When educational levels increase, employment, unemployment, and participation rates improve. Employment measures are examined by gender, age, and education, and Métis and First Nations employment measures are compared.

**Key Words:** Indigenous education, Indigenous wages, Indigenous employment, Indigenous unemployment, Indigenous participation

## INTRODUCTION

Employment data for Indigenous individuals 15 years and older living off Reserves and for non-Indigenous people is presented for 2017 through 2021 to enable the reader to assess the changes over time. The focus of the discussion provided is based on the changes between 2021 and 2020 as well as between 2021 and pre-COVID 2019.

## EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND PARTICIPATION RATES

The employment rate is the percentage of those working in the total population who are over the age of 15. The participation rate is the percentage of those employed and those seeking to be employed over the same total population of those over 15 years old. The higher these rates, in general, the better the economy is thought to be doing. In contrast, the lower the unemployment rate, the better the economy is considered to be doing. The unemployment rate is the percentage of those seeking employment divided by those employed and those seeking employment. The combination of those employed and those unemployed (that is, those seeking employment) is considered the labour force. Therefore, another way of defining the unemployment rate is the percentage of those unemployed in the labour force. It may be helpful to note that employment and unemployment rates are not directly related as they are measured in different ways.

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

The unemployment rate for Indigenous peoples in 2021 was 11.6, compared to 14.2 in 2020. This is a decrease, or improvement of 18.3%. The non-Indigenous unemployment rate in 2021 was 7.4, compared to 9.4 in 2020, a decrease of 21.3%. Thus, the percentage decrease in the unemployment rate was greater for non-Indigenous than Indigenous peoples in 2021.

The unemployment rates for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples had not recovered from their 2019, pre-COVID, rates. In 2021, they were 13.7% higher for Indigenous peoples and 32.1% higher for non-Indigenous peoples than they were in 2019. Unemployment rates continue to be significantly higher for Indigenous peoples than non-Indigenous peoples, although the difference between these rates narrowed somewhat from 2019 to 2021.

## EMPLOYMENT RATES

The employment rate in 2021 for Indigenous peoples was 56.4. This was an increase of 8.5% from the 52.0 rate in 2020. For non-Indigenous people, the employment rate in 2021 was 60.2, an increase from 58.1 in 2020, which was a 3.6% increase. The employment rate for Indigenous people in 2021 recovered to almost the same level that it was in 2019, which was 56.8. This is a difference of only 0.7%. Non-Indigenous employment rates were 2.9% lower in 2021 than they were in 2019. There is a wide gap in the employment rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous, but it is narrower in 2021 than it was in 2019.

## PARTICIPATION RATES

The participation rate increased for Indigenous peoples by 5.3% in 2021, growing from 60.6 in 2020 to 63.8 in 2021. This was larger than the 1.4% increase for non-Indigenous people in 2021, which had participation rates of 65.0 in 2021 and 64.1 in 2020. The participation rate for Indigenous people also increased in 2021 from its pre-COVID rate of 63.3 in 2019. This contrasts with the decrease for non-Indigenous, when in 2019 their rate was 65.6, compared to 65.0 in 2021. The difference in the participation rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous narrowed in 2021 and is also smaller than it was in 2019.

## SUMMARY

Unemployment, employment, and participation rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in 2021 improved from 2020. However, the Indigenous unemployment rate in 2021 was higher than in 2019, prior to COVID-19. Their participation rate increased, and their employment rate was marginally lower. For non-Indigenous people, unemployment, employment, and participation rates were better in 2021 than in 2020 but worse than in 2019. These three rates have been worse for Indigenous peoples than for non-Indigenous people every year since the data has been available. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1  
Unemployment, Employment, and Participation Rates, Canada  
Indigenous Peoples Living Off of the Reserves and Non-Indigenous People

	Indigenouss					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	2021 % vs Non-Indigenous
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
Unemployment rate	11.3	10.1	10.2	14.2	11.6	-18.3	13.7	36.2
Employment rate	57.1	57.6	56.8	52.0	56.4	8.5	-0.7	-6.7
Participation rate	64.4	64.1	63.3	60.6	63.8	5.3	0.8	-1.9
	Non-Indigenous					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
Unemployment rate	6.2	5.7	5.6	9.4	7.4	-21.3	32.1	
Employment rate	61.7	61.7	62.0	58.1	60.2	3.6	-2.9	
Participation rate	65.8	65.4	65.6	64.1	65.0	1.4	-0.9	

**Unemployment Rate:** % seeking employment divided by those employed and seeking employment (also defined as the % seeking employment divided by the Labour Force)

**Employment Rate:** % employed of total population over age 15

**Participation Rate:** % employed and seeking employment of total population over 15

**Labour Force:** those employed and seeking employment

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table: 14-10-0365-01

## COMPARING RATES FOR FIRST NATIONS AND MÉTIS

### Unemployment Rates

In 2021, the unemployment rate for First Nations was 14.4, which is 63.8% higher than the 8.8 rate for Métis. The First Nations unemployment rate decreased by 4.4% in 2021 from 2020, versus a 33.8% decrease for Métis. Despite the improvement in the unemployment rate in 2021 for First Nations and Métis, they are both still higher than their 2019 pre-COVID rates.

### Employment Rates

The employment rate for Métis was 59.6 in 2021, compared to 54.3 in 2020, an increase of 9.8%. For First Nations, it was 53.2 in 2021 and 50.0 in 2020, an increase of 6.4%. The Métis employment rate was 60.3 in 2019; for First Nations, it was 53.3. These rates are lower in 2021 than they were in pre-COVID 2019 by 1.2% for Métis and 0.2% for First Nations.

### Participation Rates

The participation rate was 65.4 for Métis and 62.2 for First Nations in 2021. Thus, the participation rate was 4.9% lower for First Nations than for Métis in 2021. In 2020, participation rates were 62.6 for Métis and 58.9 for First Nations. The Métis participation rate increased by 4.5% in 2021 from 2020, while for First Nations it increased by 5.6%.

The First Nations participation rate increased to 62.2 in 2021 from 60.5 in 2019, an improvement of 2.8% from 2021. In contrast, the participation rate for Métis in 2019 was 65.8, a decrease of 0.6% compared to 65.4 in 2021.

### Summary

Unemployment, employment, and participation rates improved for First Nations and Métis in 2021. When compared to 2019, pre-COVID, First Nations' participation rate improved, their employment rate decreased marginally, and their unemployment rate was higher in 2021. Métis unemployment, employment, and participation rates were worse in 2021 than they were in 2019. Métis have consistently had more favourable unemployment, employment, and participation rates than First Nations. (See Table 2.)

## EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE AND GENDER

In 2021, employment rates increased for Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women in each of the three age groups of 15–25, 24–54, and 55 and over, except for Indigenous men over 55. Their employment rate decreased by 4.6% from 36.8 in 2020 to 35.1 in 2021. The largest percentage increase was for Indigenous women 15–24, which was 13.7%. The next largest percentage increase was for Indigenous men, 15–24, which was 13.4%. The highest employment rate was 85.9 for non-Indigenous men 25–54, followed by 76.1 for non-Indigenous women 25–54.

Indigenous men in each of the three age categories and Indigenous women in the 15–24 and the 25–54 groups have had consistently lower employment rates than non-Indigenous men and women. The exception is the employment rate for Indigenous women 55 and over.

**TABLE 2**  
**Unemployment, Employment, and Participation Rates, Canada**  
**First Nations and Métis**  
 In thousands, except for rates

	First Nations					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	First Nations vs Métis
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
Population	496.3	515.8	535.4	554.7	579.1	4.4	8.2	-1.2
Unemployment rate	13.5	11.7	11.9	15.1	14.4	-4.6	21.0	63.6
Employment rate	53.3	54.1	53.3	50.0	53.2	6.4	-0.2	-10.7
Participation rate	61.6	61.2	60.5	58.9	62.2	5.6	2.8	-4.9
	Métis					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
Population	515.8	532.9	550.4	566.9	586.4	3.4	6.5	
Unemployment rate	9.4	9.0	8.4	13.3	8.8	-33.8	4.8	
Employment rate	59.7	59.9	60.3	54.3	59.6	9.8	-1.2	
Participation rate	65.9	65.8	65.8	62.6	65.4	4.5	-0.6	

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table: 14-10-0365-01

It has been higher than for non-Indigenous, except in 2020. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women 55 and over have the lowest employment rates.

Employment rates were higher in 2021 than in 2019 for Indigenous men 25–54 and for Indigenous women 15–24 and 25–54. They were lower for all others, including all non-Indigenous age groups for both men and women. Overall, employment rates have declined since pre-COVID 2019. (See Table 3.)

### Unemployment Rates by Age and Gender

Unemployment rates decreased significantly in 2021 for men and women in all three age categories, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The largest Indigenous decreases were 23% for Indigenous women 15–24, Indigenous men 15–24, and Indigenous women 55 years and older. Despite these improvements, the rates of unemployment are still very high, at 18.7 for Indigenous men 15–24 and at 15.4 for Indigenous women 15–24.

The improvements in unemployment rates were better for non-Indigenous people. Their largest decrease was 36.6% for women 15–24, moving from 19.4 in 2020 to 12.3 in 2021. Their next largest improvement was a decrease of 30.1% for men 15–24, which was a change from 20.6 in 2020 to 14.4 in 2021.

Unemployment rates have not recovered from their pre-COVID levels of 2019, with the exception of Indigenous women aged 15–24. Their unemployment rate marginally decreased by 0.6%, from 15.5 in 2019 to 15.4 in 2021. This rate decreased from 20.0 in 2020. However, it has the second highest unemployment rate. Indigenous men, 15–24, had the highest rate of employment at 18.7 in 2021. It was also the highest at 24.3 in 2020. Non-indigenous

**TABLE 3**  
**Employment Rates by Age and Gender, Canada**  
**Indigenous Peoples Living Off of the Reserves and Non-Indigenous People**

	Indigenous Peoples					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	2021 % vs. Non-Indigenous
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
<b>Both Sexes</b>								
15 years and over	56.4	56.8	56.8	52.0	56.4	8.5	-0.7	-6.7
15-24 years	49.9	48.9	51.0	44.6	50.7	13.7	-0.6	-9.3
25-54 years	69.9	70.4	72.2	68.3	75.8	11.0	5.0	-8.8
55 years and over	34.0	36.0	34.4	31.7	32.3	1.9	-6.1	-6.8
<b>Men</b>								
15 years and over	58.0	59.0	59.0	54.7	59.0	7.9	0.0	-9.0
15-24 years	50.1	48.6	52.8	44.9	50.9	13.4	-3.6	-7.5
25-54 years	72.6	73.4	74.9	70.7	75.6	6.9	0.9	-13.6
55 years and over	35.4	39.4	36.2	36.8	35.1	-4.6	-3.0	-14.8
<b>Women</b>								
15 years and over	54.9	54.8	54.7	49.5	53.9	8.9	-1.5	-4.3
15-24 years	49.7	49.3	49.1	44.4	50.5	13.7	2.9	-11.1
25-54 years	67.4	67.6	69.8	66.1	70.2	6.2	0.6	-12.7
55 years and over	32.8	32.9	32.8	26.8	29.9	11.6	-8.8	2.3
	Non-Indigenous People					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
<b>Both Sexes</b>								
15 years and over	61.5	61.5	62.0	58.1	60.2	3.6	-2.9	
15-24 years	56.8	56.6	58.1	49.7	55.4	11.5	-4.6	
25-54 years	82.4	82.8	83.5	79.8	82.5	3.4	-1.2	
55 years and over	35.4	35.4	35.9	33.9	34.5	1.8	-3.9	
<b>Men</b>								
15 years and over	65.6	65.6	65.9	62.2	64.3	3.4	-2.4	
15-24 years	55.6	55.7	56.8	49.5	54.7	10.5	-3.7	
25-54 years	86.2	86.6	86.9	83.4	85.9	3.0	-1.2	
55 years and over	41.0	40.8	41.6	39.5	40.3	2.0	-3.1	
<b>Women</b>								
15 years and over	57.6	57.6	58.1	54.0	56.2	4.1	-3.3	
15-24 years	58.0	57.6	59.6	49.9	56.1	12.4	-5.9	
25-54 years	78.6	79.1	80.0	76.1	79.1	3.9	-1.1	
55 years and over	30.4	30.5	30.7	28.7	29.2	1.7	-4.9	

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table: 14-10-0365-01

women 15–24 had an unemployment rate of 14.4 in 2021 and a rate of 20.6 in 2020. Non-indigenous men 15–24 had an unemployment rate of 13.4 in 2021 and a rate of 20.0 in 2020. The lowest unemployment rate in 2021 was for non-Indigenous women 25–54 at 5.9. The next lowest was for non-Indigenous men 25–54 at 6.3.

Unemployment rates are highest for 15–24-year-olds, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women. The unemployment rates for Indigenous men and women in each of the three age groups have been significantly higher, and this has been the case since the data has been available. (See Table 4.)

**TABLE 4**  
Unemployment Rates by Age and Gender, Canada  
Indigenous Peoples Living Off of the Reserves and Non-Indigenous People

	Indigenous Peoples					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	2021 % vs. Non-Indigenous
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
<b>Both Sexes</b>								
15 years and over	11.4	10.4	10.2	14.2	11.6	-18.3	13.7	36.2
15–24 years	17.0	16.8	16.6	22.2	17.1	-23.0	3.0	21.6
25–54 years	9.8	8.8	8.5	11.7	9.8	-16.2	15.3	37.8
55 years and over	10.9	8.3	8.7	13.8	11.9	-13.8	36.8	38.7
<b>Men</b>								
15 years and over	13.4	11.9	12.0	15.6	12.7	-18.6	5.8	40.2
15–24 years	19.8	19.1	17.5	24.3	18.7	-23.0	6.9	23.0
25–54 years	11.0	10.2	10.0	13.0	10.5	-19.2	5.0	40.0
55 years and over	14.4	9.5	11.6	15	14.2	-5.3	22.4	49.3
<b>Women</b>								
15 years and over	9.5	8.7	8.4	12.7	10.4	-18.1	23.8	31.7
15–24 years	14.0	14.4	15.5	20.0	15.4	-23.0	-0.6	20.1
25–54 years	8.6	7.4	6.9	10.5	9.1	-13.3	31.9	35.2
55 years and over	7.1	6.9	5.8	12.2	9.4	-23.0	62.1	20.2
	Non-Indigenous					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
<b>Both Sexes</b>								
15 years and over	6.2	5.8	5.6	9.4	7.4	-21.3	32.1	
15–24 years	11.2	10.6	10.7	20	13.4	-33.0	25.2	
25–54 years	5.4	4.9	4.7	7.7	6.1	-20.8	29.8	
55 years and over	5.6	5.2	5.0	7.8	7.3	-6.4	46.0	
<b>Men</b>								
15 years and over	6.6	6.0	5.9	9.5	7.6	-20.0	28.8	
15–24 years	12.8	11.9	12.0	20.6	14.4	-30.1	20.0	
25–54 years	5.5	4.9	4.8	7.7	6.3	-18.2	31.3	
55 years and over	5.9	5.5	5.3	7.9	7.2	-8.9	35.8	
<b>Women</b>								
15 years and over	5.8	5.5	5.2	9.4	7.1	-24.5	36.5	
15–24 years	9.5	9.2	9.4	19.4	12.3	-36.6	30.9	
25–54 years	5.2	4.9	4.5	7.8	5.9	-24.4	31.1	
55 years and over	5.3	4.8	4.7	7.7	7.5	-2.6	59.6	

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Table: 14-10-0365-01

## EMPLOYMENT RATES BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Education is a critical aspect of employment. The higher the level of education, the higher the employment rate. This is the case for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

The employment rate is lower for Indigenous peoples, and this has been the case historically. However, when examined by the level of education, the rates are higher for Indigenous high school graduates or those with some post-secondary education than for non-Indigenous people with similar levels of education. For Indigenous peoples, the employment rate was only marginally lower for those with less than high school graduation and for those who had completed post-secondary education.

Employment rates improved in 2021, and they did so more for Indigenous people with high school completion or higher levels of education than non-Indigenous people. They improved by the same percent for those with less than a high school graduate level of education. The rates were below the 2019 pre-COVID levels, except for Indigenous peoples who had not completed high school. They improved from the low level of 30.6 in 2019 to 31.1 in 2021. (See Table 5.)

TABLE 5  
Employment Rates by Highest Level of Educational Attainment, Canada  
Indigenous Peoples Living Off of the Reserves and Non-Indigenous

	Indigenous Peoples					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	2021 % vs. Non-Indigenous
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
Total, all educational levels	56.4	56.8	56.8	52.0	56.4	8.5	-0.7	-6.7
Less than high school <sup>1</sup>	31.9	32.0	30.6	29.5	31.1	5.4	1.6	-0.3
High school graduate or some post-secondary <sup>2</sup>	59.8	57.9	59.4	52.9	56.5	6.8	-4.9	4.4
Completed post-secondary education <sup>3</sup>	69.8	70.5	70.3	63.5	69.1	8.8	-1.7	-0.3
	Non-Indigenous					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
Total, all educational levels	61.5	61.5	62	58.1	60.2	3.6	-2.9	
Less than high school <sup>1</sup>	32.9	33.1	33.1	29.6	31.2	5.4	-5.7	
High school graduate or some post-secondary <sup>2</sup>	58.3	57.5	57.4	52.1	54.0	3.6	-5.9	
Completed post-secondary education <sup>3</sup>	71.0	70.9	71.2	67.3	69.3	3.0	-2.7	

### Notes

1. Highest level obtained is some high school.
2. Highest level obtained is a high school degree or some post-secondary (in other words, worked toward, but did not complete, a degree, certificate [including a trade certificate] or diploma from an educational institution, including a university, beyond the secondary level).
3. Completed a certificate (including a trade certificate) or diploma from an educational institution beyond the secondary level. Also included are certificates below a Bachelor's degree obtained at a university and university degrees at the bachelor level or higher.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Characteristics by Indigenous Group and Educational Attainment, Table 14-10-0359-01, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tb11/en/tv.action?pid=1410035901>

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

As previously reported, unemployment rates decreased for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in 2021. This was the case for every educational level examined. Significantly, the higher the educational level, the lower the rate of unemployment. This applied to both Indigenous peoples and the overall Canadian population in 2021 and every year preceding it. Education is highly correlated with reduced unemployment.

The highest rates of unemployment are for those with less than a high school graduate level of education. For Indigenous people with less than a high school graduation, their unemployment rate was 21.1 in 2021, while for the Canadian population it was 13.9. The lowest rates of unemployment in 2021 were for university graduates, with Indigenous graduates having a rate of 6.2 and the Canadian population having a rate of 5.1. In 2021, Indigenous people who are high school graduates and have some post-secondary education had a rate of unemployment of 12.8, while for the Canadian population it was 9.8. The unemployment rate is higher for Indigenous peoples than for the Canadian population in all four of the education categories reported, and this is the case in each of the years recorded.

Unemployment rates in 2021 did not recover from their 2019 rates. This was the case for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, regardless of educational level. (See Table 6.)

TABLE 6  
Unemployment Rates by Highest Level of Educational Attainment, Canada  
Indigenous Peoples Living Off of the Reserves and Canadian Population

	Indigenous Peoples					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	2021 % vs. Canadian Population
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
All levels of education	11.4	10.4	10.2	14.2	11.6	-18.3	13.7	35.3
Less than high school <sup>1</sup>	19.8	19.3	19.1	22.0	21.1	-4.1	10.5	34.1
High school plus some post-secondary <sup>2</sup>	12.3	11.6	11.4	16.0	12.8	-20.0	12.3	23.4
College or trade <sup>3</sup>	8.9	8.0	7.4	11.8	9.3	-21.2	25.7	28.0
University <sup>4</sup>	5.6	3.4	5.5	8.4	6.2	-26.2	12.7	17.7
	Canadian Population					% Change 2021/2020	% Change 2021/2019	
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021			
All levels of education	6.4	5.9	5.7	9.5	7.5	-21.1	31.6	
Less than high school <sup>1</sup>	12.6	11.7	11.3	16.3	13.9	-14.7	23.0	
High school plus some post-secondary <sup>2</sup>	7.5	7.0	7.2	12.9	9.8	-24.0	36.1	
College or trade <sup>3</sup>	5.6	5.0	4.7	8.3	6.7	-19.3	42.6	
University <sup>4</sup>	4.5	4.4	4.2	6.7	5.1	-23.9	21.4	

### Notes

1. Includes no education or education below high school graduation.
2. Includes high school graduation or some postsecondary education (not completed). diploma from an educational institution, including a university, beyond the secondary level).
3. Includes trade certificate or diploma from a vocational school or apprenticeship training; non-university certificate or diploma from a community college, CEGEP, school of nursing and similar programs at this level; and university certificate below bachelor's level.
4. Includes bachelor's degree and university degree or certificate above bachelor's degree.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Unemployment rates of population aged 15 and over, total and with Indigenous identity, by educational attainment, Canada, Table 14-10-0361-01, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410036101>

**TABLE 7**  
Average Hourly and Weekly Wages and Average Usual Weekly Hours  
Indigenous Peoples Living Off of the Reserves and Non-Indigenous People

	Indigenous Peoples					% Change 2021/2020	2021 % vs. Non- Indigenous
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
Average hourly wage rate (\$)	23.86	24.36	25.35	26.81	27.17	1.3	-10.9
Average weekly wage rate (\$)	872.35	897.52	936.56	993.68	1,016.46	2.3	-8.4
Average usual weekly hours	34.9	35.4	35.5	35.7	36.0	0.8	1.7
	Non-Indigenous					% Change 2021/2020	
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		
Average hourly wage rate (\$)	26.15	26.9	27.83	29.59	30.12	1.8	
Average weekly wage rate (\$)	955.26	982.92	1,014.74	1,083.60	1,101.72	1.7	
Average usual weekly hours	35.2	35.3	35.2	35.5	35.4	-0.3	

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Average hourly and weekly wages and average usual weekly hours by Indigenous group, Table 14-10-0370-01, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tb11/en/tv.action?pid=1410037001>

## AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES

Average hourly wages increased by 1.3% for Indigenous peoples and by 1.8% for non-Indigenous people in 2021. This is lower than usual. The average annual increase from 2008–2020 was 3.2% for Indigenous people and 2.9% for non-Indigenous people.

Wage rates on average have been consistently lower for Indigenous peoples than for non-Indigenous people. Hourly wages were 10.9% lower for Indigenous people than for non-Indigenous people in 2021. Indigenous average weekly hours worked were 36, compared to 35.4 for non-Indigenous. (See Table 7.)

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The employment, participation, and unemployment rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples improved in 2021. However, they were worse than they were in pre-COVID 2019, except for the participation rate of Indigenous people, which improved. All three rates have been consistently worse for Indigenous people.

Métis unemployment rates have been consistently lower, and their employment and participation rates have been consistently higher than for First Nations. These three rates were improved in 2021 for both Métis and First Nations. They still have not recovered from their 2019 levels, except for the participation rate of First Nations, which improved.

In 2021, employment rates increased for Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women in the three age groups, except for Indigenous men 55 years and older. The unemployment rate decreased for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, both men and women, in each of the three age groups. Unemployment rates were higher in 2021 than in 2019, except for Indigenous women 15–24 years old.

The higher the level of education, the higher the employment rate and the lower the unemployment rate for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This is highly signifi-

cant. It means that education is an important aspect in determining employment and unemployment rates for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Employment rates for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are similar when examined by educational level. This is the case for every year for which data is available.

Wage rates on average have been consistently lower for Indigenous peoples than for non-Indigenous people. Wage rates increased in 2021, but at a lower rate than in recent years.

## REFERENCES

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