

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT

Continuing to Improve in 2012

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ABSTRACT

The employment rate for Aboriginals living off-reserve in Canada continued to improve in 2012. It increased to 56.9%, a rate of two percent (2%) over 2011. This is impressive when compared to the zero growth rate for non-Aboriginals. The participation rate for Aboriginals living off-reserve in Canada also increased. It grew from 64.1% to 65.2%. In addition, the gap between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals for employment rates and participation rates continued to narrow in 2012. When employment is examined by educational level, there is no meaningful difference between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. There is also a clear relationship that increased levels of education are associated with higher employment rates and participation rates. Aboriginal employment in 2012 increased the most in Ontario. It is also the province with the largest Aboriginal as well as non-Aboriginal populations. The sectors in which the largest increases in Aboriginal employment in 2012 occurred were in construction, manufacturing, health care and social assistance and information, culture and recreation.

INTRODUCTION

Unemployment rates are commonly referred to as an economic indicator. The lower the unemployment rate, the better things supposedly are. However, alternative measures that may provide better indicators of both the economy and the employment picture are the employment rates (those working divided by the working age population) and the participation rates (those employed and those seeking work, divided by the working age population). The working age population is considered 15 years of age and older. These measures provide a clearer picture that employment has improved for Aboriginals living off-reserve in Canada. Table 1 shows that the unemployment rate for Aboriginals declined from 12.9% to 12.8% in 2012. This marginal improvement does not reveal the increases in the number of people employed and those seeking employment, both of which show meaningful gains. These increases are even more meaningful when compared to those for non-Aboriginals, who experienced a lack of growth in their employment rate and a decline in their participa-

tion rate. The participation rate is an important measure. When it increases, a greater percent of the working age population is either working or seeking to work. The more people working and seeking to work, the greater the potential number of people who may be employed. Larger numbers of people employed implies greater income and the economic benefits associated with it. The employment rate is the percent of the working age population that is employed. In this article we further examine these rates by age, gender, educational level, province and territory and industrial sector in order to obtain a clearer understanding of Aboriginal off-reserve employment in Canada. The data available is limited to those living off-reserve.

EMPLOYMENT BY AGE AND GENDER

The gain in Aboriginal employment was obtained by an increase in employment by men. Aboriginal women experienced a decline in their employment rate. The critical 25 to 54 years of age group, consisting of 55% of the population

TABLE 1
Labour Force Estimates for Canada
2010, 2011, and 2012 Annual Averages, in Thousands (Except the Rates)

	<i>Non-Aboriginal</i>			<i>Aboriginal</i>		
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>
Population	26997.5	27316.6	27635.1	660.6	670.5	679.4
Labour Force	18110.3	18268.7	18436.0	413.8	430.1	443.0
Employment	16684.5	16931.9	17124.9	354.8	374.5	386.4
Full-time Employment*	13452.0	13696.2	13906.0	283.8	297.6	310.1
Part-time Employment	3232.5	3235.7	3218.9	71.0	76.9	76.3
Unemployment	1425.8	1336.8	1311.1	59.0	55.7	56.6
Not in Labour Force	8887.2	9047.9	9199.1	246.8	240.4	236.4
Employment Rate	61.8	62.0	62.0	53.7	55.8	56.9
Unemployment Rate	7.9	7.3	7.1	14.3	12.9	12.8
Participation Rate	67.1	66.9	66.7	62.6	64.1	65.2

Note: Data based on 10 provinces, 15 years and older, and living-off reserve.

Employment rate is Employment/Population
 Labour force (age 15 plus) is Employment + Unemployment
 Unemployment rate is Unemployment/Labour Force
 Participation rate is Labour Force/Population

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

TABLE 2
Labour Force Estimates for Canada
Employment Rates by Age and Gender

	Percent Unemployed					
	Non-Aboriginal			Aboriginal		
	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012
<i>Both Sexes</i>						
15 Years and Over	61.8	62.0	62.0	53.7	55.8	56.9
15–24 Years	55.3	55.8	54.8	45.0	47.3	45.9
25–54 Years	80.9	81.3	81.7	65.8	67.8	69.5
55 Years and Over	33.7	34.1	34.7	30.3	33.3	35.2
<i>Men</i>						
15 Years and Over	65.6	66.0	66.0	56.0	59.1	61.6
15–24 Years	53.7	54.7	53.6	45.3	48.4	48.3
25–54 Years	84.3	85.1	85.0	69.8	71.7	74.6
55 Years and Over	39.5	39.7	40.2	30.4	37.7	41.9
<i>Women</i>						
15 Years and Over	58.1	58.0	58.1	51.6	52.8	52.5
15–24 Years	57.0	56.9	56.1	44.7	46.3	43.4
25–54 Years	77.4	77.6	78.0	62.1	64.2	64.7
55 Years and Over	28.6	29.1	29.8	30.3	29.3	29.3

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

over 15 years of age, increased their employment rate from 67.8% in 2011 to 69.5% in 2012, an increase of 2.5%. Most of this increase, however, was achieved by the men, increasing from 71.7% to 74.6%, a gain of 4.0%, while the women moved from 64.2% to 64.7%, a gain of 0.8%. Employment rates for those 15 to 24 years of age, who make up 25% of the population over 15 years of age, declined from 54.8% to 45.9%, with the decline being experienced almost entirely by the women. Those over 55, which constitute 20% of the population over 15 years of age, increased their employment rate from 33.3% to 35.2%. This was achieved by the men, as the women's employment rate held steady at 29.3%.

UNEMPLOYMENT BY AGE AND GENDER

When we examine the data in terms of unemployment rates we are better able to see the negative aspects of the employment picture for

Aboriginals in general and for the youth in particular. Unemployment declined marginally from 12.9% to 12.8% in 2012 for Aboriginals. However, the picture is more encouraging for the men and more discouraging for the women. The unemployment rate for men declined from 2010 to 2011 to 2012, from 15.8% to 14.7% to 12.8%. For these three years the unemployment rate for women went from 12.7% to 11.0%, but then back up to 12.7%. Women in the 15 to 24 year old age group, suffered the worst increase in their unemployment rate, rising in 2011 from 16.1% to 21.9% in 2012, an astonishing 36% increase. This compares with a decline in the unemployment rate for men in this 15 to 24 year old age group from 22.2% to 20.0% from 2011 to 2012, which was a 10% improvement. Decreases in unemployment rates occurred in all of the three age groups for the men. However, the 20% unemployment rate for the men in the 15–24 year age group and the 21.9% for the women in this group are unacceptable. Specific action should be taken to address this.

TABLE 3
Labour Force Estimates for Canada
Unemployment Rates by Age and Gender

	Percent Unemployed					
	Non-Aboriginal			Aboriginal		
	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012
<i>Both Sexes</i>						
15 Years and Over	7.9	7.3	7.1	14.3	12.9	12.8
15–24 Years	14.6	14.0	14.1	21.1	19.2	20.9
25–54 Years	6.8	6.1	5.9	12.3	11.0	10.7
55 Years and Over	6.3	6.3	5.9	12.4	11.4	9.1
<i>Men</i>						
15 Years And Over	8.6	7.7	7.3	15.8	14.7	12.8
15–24 Years	16.9	15.6	15.8	23.8	22.2	20.0
25–54 Years	7.2	6.2	6.1	13.3	12.5	10.9
55 Years and Over	7.0	6.6	6.2	14.9	12.7	10.5
<i>Women</i>						
15 Years and Over	7.1	6.9	6.6	12.7	11.0	12.7
15–24 Years	12.2	12.2	12.3	18.3	16.1	21.9
25–54 Years	6.3	5.9	5.6	11.3	9.5	10.6
55 Years and Over	5.4	5.8	5.6	9.9	9.8	7.4

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

The higher the level of education the higher are the employment rates and the participation rates. The only exception applies to those who achieved some level of post-secondary education, but did not obtain a post-secondary certificate, when compared with those who graduated high school. This applies to both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. Further, when we compare the employment levels as well as the participation levels of Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals by educational level, there is almost no difference. This finding makes a strong case for the argument that education is the great equalizer. The old adage of “stay in school, graduate” appears to be some of the best advice we can give to our youth.

The contrast between those who did not graduate from high school and those who have graduated from high school (or have higher levels of education) is extraordinary. Aboriginals who did not graduate from high school had an

employment rate of 35.3% in 2012, while those who graduated high school or who have a higher level of education had an employment rate of 66.9%. The corresponding employment rates for non-Aboriginals are similar, with rates of 33.3% and 68.6%.

If we look at this data from a somewhat different perspective we see that the 2012 employment rate for Aboriginals who graduated from high school was 61.8%, but those with only grade 9 or 10 had an employment rate of 34.6%. Therefore those who graduated from high school were close to twice as likely to be employed as those who dropped out in the 9th or 10th grade. The data for non-Aboriginals is similar. Clearly, more needs to be done to facilitate the retention and graduation of our youth.

The difference between the 2012 employment rates for Aboriginals of 56.9% and the rate for non-Aboriginals of 62% may be mostly accounted for by the level of education obtained. This difference may be better understood by recognizing that the percent of Aboriginals with less than high school was 31.7% in 2012, compared

TABLE 4
Labour Force Estimates for Canada by Highest Level of Educational Attainment
2010, 2011, and 2012 Annual Averages — Population in Thousands

	<i>Non-Aboriginal</i>			<i>Aboriginal</i>		
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>
<i>Total, All Education Levels</i>						
Employment Rate	61.8	62.0	62.0	53.7	55.8	56.9
Participation Rate	67.1	66.9	66.7	62.6	64.1	65.2
Population	26997.5	27316.6	27635.1	660.6	670.5	679.4
Percent of Total Population	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>0–8 Years</i>						
Employment Rate	19.8	19.7	20.0	17.5	15.9	20.2
Participation Rate	23.3	23.3	23.1	24.8	21.3	26.7
Population	1763.9	1715.2	1641.1	46.1	46.6	46.3
Percent of Total Population	6.5	6.3	5.9	7.0	7.0	6.8
<i>9 to 10 Years</i>						
Employment Rate	35.7	35.8	34.8	31.5	34.2	34.6
Participation Rate	43.0	42.6	41.1	41.9	44.7	45.1
Population	2219.6	2161.7	2184.5	103	103.5	100.5
Percent of Total Population	8.2	7.9	7.9	15.6	15.4	14.8
<i>11 to 13 Years Non-graduate</i>						
Employment Rate	48.1	47.4	47.2	42.8	44.7	46.6
Participation Rate	56.2	55.2	54.7	54.7	56.1	58.2
Population	1379.7	1359.3	1351.1	70.4	63.1	68.6
Percent of Total Population	5.1	5.0	4.9	10.7	9.4	10.1
<i>High School Graduate</i>						
Employment Rate	61.7	61.7	61.1	59.9	62.7	61.8
Participation Rate	67.4	66.9	66.1	70.0	72.2	71.1
Population	5321	5412.3	5505.8	126.1	132.6	138.5
Percent of Total Population	19.7	19.8	19.9	19.1	19.8	20.4
<i>Some Post-secondary</i>						
Employment Rate	60.8	60.5	60.7	58.4	54.9	56.2
Participation Rate	67.5	66.9	66.9	66.9	64.3	65.6
Population	2222.6	2166.3	2042.4	69.9	71.0	60.1
Percent of Total Population	8.2	7.9	7.4	10.6	10.6	8.8
<i>Post-secondary Certificate</i>						
Employment Rate	70.9	71.0	70.6	66.2	69.1	70.3
Participation Rate	75.5	75.4	74.9	74.3	76.0	76.8
Population	8350.7	8541.3	8684.6	195.2	200.4	205.3
Percent of Total Population	30.9	31.3	31.4	29.5	29.9	30.2
<i>University Degree Bachelor and Above</i>						
Employment Rate	75.3	74.8	75	77.0	80.3	77.8
Participation Rate	79.7	78.6	78.9	81.3	84.0	82.8
Population	5739.9	5960.4	6225.2	49.9	53.3	60
Percent of Total Population	21.3	21.8	22.5	7.6	7.9	8.8
<i>Less than high school</i>						
Employment Rate	33.7	33.6	33.3	32.2	33.3	35.3
Participation Rate	39.9	39.5	38.9	42.4	42.9	45.3
Population	5363.2	5236.3	5177	219.5	213.3	215.4
Percent of Total Population	19.9	19.2	18.7	33.2	31.8	31.7
<i>High School and Above</i>						
Employment Rate	68.8	68.7	68.6	64.4	66.4	66.9
Participation Rate	73.8	73.4	73.1	72.7	74.0	74.4
Population	21634.3	22080.3	22458.1	441.1	457.2	464
Percent of Total Population	80.1	80.8	81.3	66.8	68.2	68.3

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

with 18.7% for non-Aboriginals. The data contained in Table 4, reinforces the message that we should be doing all that we can to ensure our youth graduate from high school and obtain the highest level of education that would be appropriate for them.

EMPLOYMENT BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY

The examination of employment by each province and the three territories identifies some major differences. Ontario is the province with the largest Aboriginal as well as non-Aboriginal

population. It experienced the greatest increase in the employment rate for Aboriginals. Ontario also had the largest increase in the percentages and numbers of Aboriginals employed in 2012 compared with 2011 and with 2010. The employment rate increased from 49.9% in 2010 to 54.7% in 2011 and to 57.1% in 2012 (increases of 9.6% in 2011 over 2010 and 4.4% in 2012 over 2011) and employment increased from 81,300 to 90,100 to 94,800 from 2010 to 2011 to 2012. British Columbia had the next largest percentage increase in its employment rate, going from 54.3% in 2011 to 56.1% in 2012, an increase of 3.3%. Alberta, which has the highest employment rate of any province for

TABLE 5
Labour Force Estimates for Canada, by Province and Territory
2010, 2011, and 2012 Annual Averages — Aboriginals Living Off-reserves
Population in Thousands

	<i>Non-Aboriginal</i>			<i>Aboriginal</i>		
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>
<i>Canada (Ten Provinces)</i>						
Employment Rate	61.8	62.0	62.0	53.7	55.8	56.9
Population	26997.5	27316.6	27635.1	660.6	670.5	679.4
Employed	16684.5	16931.9	17124.9	354.8	374.5	386.4
<i>Newfoundland and Labrador</i>						
Employment Rate	51.8	52.8	54.4	46.6	53.1	52.4
Population	408.9	409.1	407.6	19.2	19.9	20.1
Employed	211.8	216.1	221.6	9.0	10.4	10.5
<i>Prince Edward Island</i>						
Employment Rate	60.4	60.5	60.4	49.7	48.3	61.7
Population	116.1	118.3	119.5	0.9	0.9	1.0
Employed	70.1	71.5	72.1	0.5	0.5	0.6
<i>Nova Scotia</i>						
Employment Rate	58.3	58.2	58.4	56.5	58.0	58.4
Population	762.9	764.7	765.6	14.1	14.4	14.7
Employed	444.9	444.9	447.3	8.0	8.4	8.6
<i>New Brunswick</i>						
Employment Rate	57.8	56.9	56.7	49.2	52.6	54.1
Population	607.8	610.3	611.3	9.0	9.1	9.1
Employed	351.5	347.2	346.4	4.4	4.8	4.9
<i>Four Atlantic Provinces</i>						
Employment Rate	56.9	56.8	57.1	50.7	54.4	54.9
Population	1895.7	1902.4	1904	43.2	44.3	44.8
Employed	1078.3	1079.7	1087.3	21.9	24.1	24.6

Continued...

TABLE 5 (continued)

	<i>Non-Aboriginal</i>			<i>Aboriginal</i>		
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>
<i>Quebec</i>						
Employment Rate	60.3	60.2	60.1	45.0	48.7	48.5
Population	6449.5	6515.1	6576.5	60.8	60.8	61.0
Employed	3884.1	3921.7	3952.5	27.4	29.7	29.6
<i>Ontario</i>						
Employment Rate	61.4	61.7	61.4	49.9	54.7	57.1
Population	10627.4	10761.4	10903.4	162.8	164.7	166.2
Employed	6530.3	6642.0	6692.0	81.3	90.1	94.8
<i>Manitoba</i>						
Employment Rate	66.6	66.2	66.2	58.5	58.9	58.0
Population	848.4	858.6	866.5	92.6	94.7	96.5
Employed	564.9	568.7	573.8	36.6	39.2	56.0
<i>Saskatchewan</i>						
Employment Rate	67.2	66.5	67.2	53.6	56.2	55.8
Population	722.5	730.2	739.8	68.4	69.8	71.2
Employed	485.6	485.9	497.0	36.6	39.2	39.7
<i>Alberta</i>						
Employment Rate	68.4	70.0	70.4	60.9	60.2	61.8
Population	2839.9	2882.6	2943.1	120.9	124.0	126.8
Employed	1942.9	2018.7	2070.7	73.6	74.6	78.4
<i>British Columbia</i>						
Employment Rate	60.8	60.4	60.8	53.6	54.3	56.1
Population	3617.2	3666.3	3701.7	111.9	112.4	112.9
Employed	2198.5	2215.3	2251.6	60.0	61.0	63.6
<i>Yukon</i>						
Employment Rate	72.9	76.6	75.0	46.2	51.1	54.1
Population	20.7	21.8	20.8	5.2	4.7	6.1
Employed	15.1	16.7	15.6	2.4	2.4	3.3
<i>Northwest</i>						
Employment Rate	83.1	84.1	83.6	50.6	54.1	54.5
Population	16.0	17.6	17.7	16.2	14.6	14.3
Employed	13.3	14.8	14.8	8.2	7.9	7.8
<i>Nunavut</i>						
		<i>Non-Inuit</i>			<i>Inuit</i>	
Employment Rate	89.5	89.2	89.7	46	46.2	46.2
Population	4.6	4.7	4.7	16.3	16.4	16.4
Employed	4.2	4.2	4.2	7.5	7.6	7.6
<i>Yukon, Northwest, Nunavut</i>						
		<i>Non-First Peoples</i>			<i>First Peoples</i>	
Employment Rate	78.9	81.0	80.1	48.0	50.1	50.1
Population	41.31	44.1	43.2	37.7	35.7	36.8
Employed	32.6	35.7	34.6	18.1	17.9	18.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, was the province with the third largest employment rate percentage increase for Aboriginals in 2012. It went from 60.2% in 2011 to 61.7% in 2012, an increase of 2.7%.

Quebec had the lowest Aboriginal employment rate of any province at 48.5% in 2012. In Quebec non-Aboriginals had an employment rate of 60.1% in 2012, making Quebec the province with the largest employment rate gap between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. The data is shown for each of the four Atlantic Provinces and the three territories; however, they have also been summarized together because of the relatively small population in each of those areas. In each of the three territories the 2012 employment rates for non-First Nations Peoples is the highest in Canada at 80.1%, ranging from 75% in the Yukon to 89.7% in Nunavit. In contrast Nunavit has the lowest employment rate for the Inuit, with a rate of 46.2%.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Industrial sectors are divided between goods-producing and services-producing sectors. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employment has been gaining in both sectors. However, the percent of Aboriginals employed has increased from 2010 to 2011 to 2012 in the goods-producing sector (23.3, 24.1 and 25.4%) and decreased in the services-producing sections (76.7, 75.9 and 74.6%). They have been relatively stable for non-Aboriginals. The largest increases for Aboriginals have occurred in construction and manufacturing in the goods-producing sector. In the services-producing sectors the increases have been in health care and social assistance and in information, culture and recreation. The largest decreases for Aboriginals have occurred in retail trade, accommodation and food services and other services.

TABLE 6
Employment for Canada by Industry
2010, 2011, and 2012 Annual Averages, in Thousands

	<i>Non-Aboriginal</i>			<i>Aboriginal</i>		
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>
TOTAL EMPLOYED	16684.5	16931.9	17124.9	354.8	374.5	386.4
<i>Goods-producing Sector</i>	3657.2	3713.7	3774.4	82.6	90.3	98.0
• Agriculture	296.9	300.8	305.2	3.4	4.4	4.1
• Forestry, Fishing, mining, Oil and Gas	312.0	319.0	350.8	17.6	18.5	18.5
• Utilities	144.8	135.6	137.1	3.6	4.2	3.6
• Construction	1183.1	1225.6	1225.3	34.7	36.4	41.8
• Manufacturing	1720.5	1732.7	1756.0	23.2	26.8	29.9
<i>Services-producing Sector</i>	13027.4	13218.2	13350.5	272.1	284.1	288.5
• Educational Services	1196.8	1197.5	1264.2	21.7	22.0	23.8
• Health Care and Social Assistance	1983.4	2043.6	2075.7	46.6	48.1	53.0
• Public Administration	925.9	942.3	925.8	31.1	29.5	30.3
• Wholesale Trade	618.7	623.8	601.3	9.8	8.7	10.9
• Retail Trade	2007.3	1988.8	1988.2	41.0	48.6	43.9
• Transportation and Warehousing	786.6	823.9	830.3	18.9	19.3	19.0
• Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing	1080.2	1070.2	1078.7	15.3	13.4	14.9
• Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	1255.3	1297.0	1287.2	11.2	12.3	12.5
• Management of companies and Other Support Services	655.8	660.5	672.5	16.5	16.8	17.9
• Information, Culture and Recreation	752.2	769.2	773.1	13.6	15.6	18.0
• Accommodation and Food Services	1028.1	1060.7	1071.7	30.4	32.2	30.7
• Other Services	737.3	740.7	781.8	16.1	17.6	13.6

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

TABLE 7
Percent of Employment for Canada by Industry
2010 and 2011 Annual Averages

	<i>Non-Aboriginal</i>			<i>Aboriginal</i>		
	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>
TOTAL EMPLOYED	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Goods-producing Sector</i>	21.9	21.9	22.0	23.3	24.1	25.4
• Agriculture	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.0	1.2	1.1
• Forestry, Fishing, Mining, Oil and Gas	1.9	1.9	2.0	5.0	4.9	4.8
• Utilities	0.9	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.1	0.9
• Construction	7.1	7.2	7.2	9.8	9.7	10.8
• Manufacturing	10.3	10.2	10.3	6.5	7.2	7.7
<i>Services-producing Sector</i>	78.1	78.1	78.0	76.7	75.9	74.6
• Educational Services	7.2	7.1	7.4	6.1	5.9	6.2
• Health Care and Social Assistance	11.9	12.1	12.1	13.1	12.8	13.7
• Public Administration	5.5	5.6	5.4	8.8	7.9	7.8
• Wholesale Trade	3.7	3.7	3.5	2.8	2.3	2.8
• Retail Trade	12.0	11.7	11.6	11.6	13.0	11.4
• Transportation and Warehousing	4.7	4.9	4.8	5.3	5.2	4.9
• Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing	6.5	6.3	6.3	4.3	3.6	3.9
• Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	7.5	7.7	7.5	3.2	3.3	3.2
• Management of Companies and Other Support Services	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.7	4.5	4.6
• Information, Culture and Recreation	4.5	4.5	4.5	3.8	4.2	4.7
• Accommodation and Food Services	6.2	6.3	6.3	8.6	8.6	7.9
• Other Services	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.7	3.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

CONCLUSION

The employment picture for Aboriginals living off-reserve has continued to improve in 2012. Employment rates and participation rates have increased, unemployment rates have decreased and the gaps in these rates with non-Aboriginals narrowed in 2012 over 2011, as they did in 2011 over 2010. These improvements could justify a positive outlook, seeing the glass as half-full. Yet, on closer examination more needs to be done. The gaps are narrowing, but they are still significant. The youth unemployment rate for Aboriginals aged 15 to 24 is at an unacceptable rate of close to 21% and non-Aboriginal unemployment, although considerably better at just over 14%, is also problematic. Identifying the reasons why unemployment for Aboriginal men decreased, but for women increased in this age group, may provide insights as to what actions could be taken to increase employment.

The data for 2012 reconfirms that as educational levels increased, employment rates and participation rates increased for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. Further when we compare Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals by the level of education obtained, we see that there is very little difference in their employment or participation rates. A reasonable conclusion is that as individuals' educational levels increase their probability of employment increase. Achieving high school graduation is the most critical demarcation for employment purposes. This holds for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals.

Where one looks for work makes a difference. The province with the highest employment rate for Aboriginals as well as for non-Aboriginals in 2012 was Alberta. This was also the case in 2010 and 2011. Ontario, which has the largest population of both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, experienced the greatest growth

in Aboriginal employment in 2012 as well as 2011. Quebec is the province with the lowest Aboriginal employment rate. It is also the province that has the greatest gap in employment rates between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. The largest increases in Aboriginal employment from 2011 to 2012 occurred in construction, manufacturing, health care and social services and information, culture and recreation. The industries experiencing the greatest declines in Aboriginal employment in 2012 were retail trade, accommodation and food services and other services.

Identifying employment trends gives us a better picture of what is happening and where.

It also points out opportunities and needs. These would include increasing student retention and graduation in high schools, promoting higher education and providing the competencies and opportunities to succeed in post-secondary studies and creating programs that facilitate the employment of youth. The challenge is building upon our knowledge and taking the actions needed.

REFERENCE

Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey. 2013, personal correspondence.