



NEWS RELEASE

B.C. has second-highest growth rate of government jobs nationwide since the onset of COVID; Alberta has among the lowest

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—British Columbia experienced the second-highest rate of government-sector job growth among the provinces since the onset of COVID in 2020, while Alberta experienced among the lowest growth rate of government jobs, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

B.C. also had the lowest rate of private-sector job growth among Canada’s four largest provinces, during the same period, Alberta had the highest.

“B.C. and Alberta are neighbouring provinces but the performance of their labour markets over the past few years have been very different: one has relied disproportionately on the government sector, and the other had among the fastest private-sector job growth nationwide,” said Ben Eisen, senior fellow at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Public and Private Sector Job Growth in the Provinces during the COVID-19 Era*.

The study finds that from February 2020 to June 2023, in all ten provinces, the rate of job growth was faster in the government sector (including federal, provincial and municipal) than in the private sector (including the self-employed).

Among Canada’s four largest provinces, Alberta had the slowest rate of government-sector job growth at 8.9 per cent, compared to B.C.’s rate of 22.6 per cent—the second-highest nationwide after Prince Edward Island.

Conversely, Alberta’s rate of private-sector job growth (6.2 per cent) was the highest among the four biggest provinces, while B.C.’s rate of private-sector job growth (0.3 per cent) was the lowest.

In fact, 93.6 per cent of all jobs created in B.C. during the period were government jobs.

“When governments talk about the employment recovery following COVID-19, it is important to understand where additional jobs have been created, in the government sector or the private sector,” Eisen said.

“In B.C.’s case, job growth has been driven almost entirely by government hiring, whereas in Alberta, much more of the net job creation has occurred in the private sector.”

Job creation by sector, percentage change, February 2020 to June 2023

Province	Government sector	Private sector	Province	Government sector	Private Sector
B.C.	22.6	0.3	Quebec	7.6	2.0
Alberta	8.9	6.2	New Brunswick	18.4	-0.6
Saskatchewan	13.5	-1.5	Nova Scotia	6.8	5.4
Manitoba	8.1	2.8	P.E.I.	27.6	-0.7
Ontario	11.7	4.7	Newfoundland and Labrador	17.8	-0.9

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