



RURAL ONTARIO FACTS

Jobs by Industry 2021



HIGHLIGHTS

- Overall employment levels in 2021 were still slightly lower than pre-pandemic levels from 2019.
- In 2021, the same 3 industries employed the most workers in both rural and urban areas: health care, retail, and manufacturing.
- The average wage in rural areas is \$49,164, which is lower than the urban average of \$54,100.

Overview - What do economic statistics tell us?

Employment data helps us to understand how many people are working in different industries and how much employees are paid for their work. This factsheet presents jobs data for 2016-2021 by NAICS 2-digit industries. Average wages are presented for 2021. Summary statistics for census divisions and economic regions are presented in the appendices.

For interactive maps and data visualizations, please see the [Economics Dashboard](#).



Data source

Data were obtained from Analyst, an online tool of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Analyst sources jobs and earnings data from the Survey of Employment, Payroll, and Hours, and the Census.

Table 1. Overview of statistics for rural and urban areas.

Geography	2016 Jobs	2017 Jobs	2018 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2021 Jobs	% Jobs change 2019-21	Average wage (2021)
Rural	873,255	869,712	890,080	913,241	835,657	874,598	-4.4%	\$49,164
Urban	5,436,813	5,586,29	5,712,299	5,821,145	5,315,975	5,584,647	-4.2%	\$54,100
Ontario	6,310,068	6,456,003	6,602,380	6,734,386	6,151,632	6,459,245	-4.3%	\$50,694

Rural – any municipality outside of census metropolitan areas.

Urban – any municipality within a census metropolitan area.

For details about ROI's rural classification, please see our [website](#).



Definitions

Job: Any position in which a worker provides labour in exchange for monetary compensation. This includes those who work as employees for businesses. Both full-time and part-time jobs are included. Please note these figures do not include self-employment jobs.

Industry: A group of businesses that produce similar goods and services, and share similar production processes for creating the goods and services they sell. Industries are classified using the [North American Industry Classification System \(NAICS\)](#).

Municipality: Census subdivisions, municipalities, and areas treated as municipal for statistical purposes, including unorganized territories and Indigenous reserves and settlements

Employment

Overall employment levels in 2021 were still slightly lower than pre-pandemic levels from 2019 (Table 1). There are approximately 4% fewer jobs across all industries in both rural and urban areas. While the number of jobs generally increased in 2021, some industries most affected by COVID-19 job losses have not recovered. There are still 47% fewer jobs in the arts, entertainment and recreation industry. Similarly, employment in the accommodation and food services industry is still down by 35%. These trends are consistent across rural and urban areas.



In rural areas, there are 40% fewer jobs in the arts, entertainment and recreation industry (Table 2). Employment in the accommodation and food services industry is still down 30% compared to 2019. In contrast, some industries have better employment numbers than before the pandemic. There are 25% more jobs in the management of companies and enterprises industry. And employment is up by 5% in the professional, scientific and technical services industry.

Table 2. Number of jobs by industry in rural areas between 2019-2021.

Industry name	2019	2020	2021	% Change from 2019-2021
Health care and social assistance	134,049	127,328	134,860	1%
Retail trade	109,826	103,460	108,899	-1%
Manufacturing	111,376	102,061	106,380	-5%
Public administration	80,339	73,693	75,337	-7%
Construction	62,994	58,902	65,019	3%
Accommodation and food services	71,419	51,612	55,063	-30%
Educational services	56,808	53,445	54,814	-4%
Administrative support	37,379	34,462	36,302	-3%
Transportation and warehousing	36,005	33,518	34,814	-3%
Wholesale trade	32,312	30,992	31,927	-1%
Other services (except public administration)	31,798	27,673	28,152	-13%
Professional, scientific and technical services	26,460	25,604	27,868	5%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	24,033	23,518	23,583	-2%
Finance and insurance	17,647	17,711	18,344	4%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	14,308	14,438	14,927	4%
Unclassified	15,092	13,621	14,486	-4%
Utilities	15,416	14,374	14,319	-8%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	16,820	12,396	12,021	-40%
Information and cultural industries	8,837	8,040	8,247	-7%
Real estate and rental and leasing	9,573	7,929	8,235	-16%
Management of companies and enterprises	748	880	999	25%

Top employers

In 2021, the same 3 industries employed the most workers in both rural and urban areas: health care, retail, and manufacturing (Table 3). In rural areas, public administration and construction industries also made it into the top 5. In urban areas, educational services, and professional services were ranked the 4th and 5th industries, respectively. The top 5 employers accounted for around 55% of all jobs in rural areas.

In 2019, the accommodation and food services industry were the 5th highest employer in both rural and urban areas. However, this industry dropped out of the top 5 due to COVID-19 related impacts. Health care and social assistance was already the top employer in rural areas before the pandemic. In urban areas, retail was the top employer in 2019.

Table 3. Rank of top 10 industries by number of jobs in 2021.

Industry rank	Rural		Urban	
	Industry name	Jobs	Industry name	Jobs
1	Health care and social assistance	134,860	Health care and social assistance	617,502
2	Retail trade	108,899	Retail trade	593,848
3	Manufacturing	106,380	Manufacturing	551,127
4	Public administration	75,337	Educational services	443,977
5	Construction	65,019	Professional, scientific and technical services	424,747
6	Accommodation and food services	55,063	Public administration	394,066
7	Educational services	54,814	Finance and insurance	336,540
8	Administrative support	36,302	Administrative support	327,435
9	Transportation and warehousing	34,814	Accommodation and food services	314,923
10	Wholesale trade	31,927	Wholesale trade	311,800

Wages

Rural workers earn less than urban workers. The average wage in rural areas is \$49,164, which is lower than the urban average of \$54,100 (Table 1). In rural areas, the average wage ranges from a low of \$21,139 to a high of \$69,796. In urban areas, the lowest wage is \$33,343 and the highest is \$76,329. The average wage of workers in Indigenous communities is \$47,637, which is lower than the rural average.

There are differences between the ranks of the top employers (Table 3) and the ranks of the highest paying industries (Table 4). In rural areas, only 2 of the industries that pay a higher wage also employ the most people. The utilities and mining industries pay the highest wages but employ fewer than 4% of rural workers. Together, the top 5 highest paying industries represent just 24% of rural jobs.

The industry that employs the highest number of workers in Ontario does not rank in the top 10 for wages. The average wage for workers in the health care industry is around \$47,000. The second ranked industry for jobs is also near the bottom in terms of wages. The retail industry pays an average wage of \$27,283 in rural areas and \$31,407 in urban areas. The former top employer, accommodation and food services, pays the lowest wage of all industries at around \$20,000.

Table 4. Rank of industries from highest to lowest average wage in 2021.

Industry Rank	Rural		Urban	
	Industry name	Average wage	Industry name	Average wage
1	Utilities	\$85,537	Utilities	\$86,570
2	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	\$77,307	Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	\$86,323
3	Educational services	\$62,258	Public administration	\$70,431
4	Unclassified	\$60,671	Information and cultural industries	\$67,293
5	Public administration	\$59,989	Professional, scientific and technical services	\$66,334
6	Wholesale trade	\$58,741	Construction	\$65,898
7	Construction	\$56,878	Educational services	\$64,678
8	Professional, scientific and technical services	\$56,545	Wholesale trade	\$64,119
9	Management of companies and enterprises	\$54,057	Unclassified	\$60,671
10	Manufacturing	\$53,787	Manufacturing	\$59,045
11	Information and cultural industries	\$53,204	Management of companies and enterprises	\$56,512
12	Transportation and warehousing	\$50,228	Finance and insurance	\$55,561
13	Finance and insurance	\$47,900	Transportation and warehousing	\$53,480
14	Health care and social assistance	\$47,543	Real estate and rental and leasing	\$48,653
15	Administrative support	\$43,380	Health care and social assistance	\$48,568
16	Other services (except public administration)	\$41,134	Administrative support	\$46,453
17	Real estate and rental and leasing	\$39,637	Other services (except public administration)	\$42,096
18	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$34,817	Arts, entertainment and recreation	\$32,643
19	Arts, entertainment and recreation	\$30,480	Retail trade	\$31,407
20	Retail trade	\$27,283	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	\$30,683
21	Accommodation and food services	\$20,115	Accommodation and food services	\$20,628

Summary

Understanding which industries employ the most people and which industries pay the highest wage can provide insights into employment trends. Looking at these facts, it is not difficult to understand why some industries are struggling to find workers in the aftermath of the pandemic. For example, workers may not be motivated to return to low paying jobs, especially if these jobs were stressful or did not make them happy. The statistics presented in this factsheet help to highlight possible areas of action for policy makers, such as the need for strategies to attract and retain employees, or research into living wage thresholds for rural areas and Indigenous communities.



This factsheet was prepared by Danielle Letang, Data Analyst for the Rural Ontario Institute. Questions about data sources and any comments or feedback can be directed to facts@ruralontarioinstitute.ca.

This factsheet is part of the [Rural Ontario Facts](#) series. Each factsheet provides insight and analysis of rural facts and trends featured in the dashboards.

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Appendix 1. Summary of 2019-2021 employment statistics for Census Divisions.

Census Division	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2021 Jobs	% Jobs change 2019-21	Average wage (2021)
Algoma	44,724	40,740	42,975	-4%	\$50,718
Brant	63,987	56,647	59,623	-7%	\$51,830
Bruce	24,746	24,500	25,414	3%	\$45,749
Chatham-Kent	41,556	38,033	39,671	-5%	\$47,204
Cochrane	37,474	35,190	36,612	-2%	\$54,069
Dufferin	21,172	18,838	19,775	-7%	\$51,348
Durham	215,768	198,344	207,567	-4%	\$55,413
Elgin	29,187	26,861	28,148	-4%	\$46,456
Essex	178,927	161,378	169,145	-6%	\$52,844
Frontenac	84,336	76,905	81,012	-4%	\$51,704
Greater Sudbury	83,101	77,359	81,221	-2%	\$56,574
Grey	40,596	35,246	36,841	-10%	\$47,023
Haldimand-Norfolk	34,635	32,301	33,967	-2%	\$48,418
Haliburton	5,299	4,774	5,068	-5%	\$41,093
Halton	271,539	247,501	259,371	-5%	\$64,249
Hamilton	230,666	211,301	222,789	-4%	\$54,382
Hastings	61,626	57,110	59,910	-3%	\$46,737
Huron	25,217	21,975	22,901	-10%	\$50,965
Kawartha Lakes	22,798	20,500	21,542	-6%	\$48,414
Kenora	30,929	28,950	30,018	-3%	\$47,169
Lambton	55,988	50,871	53,250	-5%	\$56,726
Lanark	22,845	20,602	21,582	-6%	\$48,830
Leeds and Grenville	34,553	31,824	33,407	-3%	\$50,098
Lennox and Addington	13,147	12,769	13,343	1%	\$47,128
Manitoulin	4,424	4,092	4,321	-2%	\$37,139
Middlesex	233,377	211,529	222,389	-5%	\$53,315
Muskoka	24,747	22,528	23,808	-4%	\$47,306
Niagara	189,732	166,663	174,681	-9%	\$51,447

Census Division	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2021 Jobs	% Jobs change 2019-21	Average wage (2021)
Nipissing	37,709	34,055	35,754	-5%	\$51,968
Northumberland	28,714	25,704	27,011	-6%	\$49,415
Ottawa	584,093	544,831	575,914	-1%	\$63,616
Oxford	58,263	52,239	54,562	-7%	\$51,255
Parry Sound	11,734	10,270	10,825	-8%	\$40,418
Peel	749,394	684,240	714,588	-5%	\$62,853
Perth	41,198	38,783	40,510	-2%	\$48,783
Peterborough	60,523	55,235	57,772	-5%	\$48,507
Prescott and Russell	27,427	24,662	25,952	-6%	\$46,090
Prince Edward	6,402	5,609	5,881	-9%	\$48,072
Rainy River	9,145	8,455	8,823	-4%	\$50,356
Renfrew	42,180	39,116	40,742	-4%	\$46,182
Simcoe	186,142	169,206	176,898	-5%	\$51,926
Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry	41,869	38,503	40,505	-3%	\$47,871
Sudbury	7,738	6,574	6,821	-13%	\$47,603
Thunder Bay	67,741	61,473	63,999	-6%	\$55,346
Timiskaming	13,418	12,358	12,898	-4%	\$48,893
Toronto	1,663,042	1,516,014	1,593,316	-4%	\$76,329
Waterloo	286,838	265,517	279,894	-2%	\$57,780
Wellington	125,288	114,878	120,702	-4%	\$54,413
York	558,434	508,575	535,528	-4%	\$59,034

Appendix 2. Summary of 2019-2021 employment statistics for Economic Regions.

Economic Region	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2021 Jobs	% Jobs change 2019-21	Average wage (2021)
Hamilton--Niagara Peninsula	621,186	559,717	588,297	-6%	\$52,043
Kingston--Pembroke	207,691	191,510	200,888	-3%	\$47,194
Kitchener--Waterloo--Barrie	619,440	568,440	597,269	-4%	\$53,413
London	320,826	290,629	305,099	-5%	\$50,394
Muskoka--Kawarthas	142,081	128,742	135,202	-5%	\$47,558
Northeast / Nord-est	240,322	220,639	231,427	-4%	\$48,174
Northwest / Nord-ouest	107,815	98,878	102,839	-5%	\$50,542
Ottawa	710,787	660,421	697,360	-2%	\$48,916
Stratford--Bruce Peninsula	131,756	120,504	125,666	-5%	\$48,075
Toronto	3,356,011	3,061,870	3,213,131	-4%	\$59,729
Windsor--Sarnia	276,471	250,282	262,066	-5%	\$54,505