

Key findings:

- ◆ **Employment in the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) has experienced a crushing blow, with a net drop of 48,300 persons employed between February and July of 2020.**
- ◆ **The unemployment rate is higher than it has been in at least the last 20 years, at over 12% of the workforce.**
- ◆ **The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with the largest impacts on younger workers, women, and part-time workers. Racialization status is not included in labour force data, but other data sources indicate racialized workers are also facing the harshest effects of the employment impacts of COVID-19.**
- ◆ **Recovery from COVID-19 should prioritize groups that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, workers are facing an exceptionally difficult labour market in the Hamilton area and across Canada. This bulletin presents an overview of local employment and unemployment including impacts on various demographic groups.

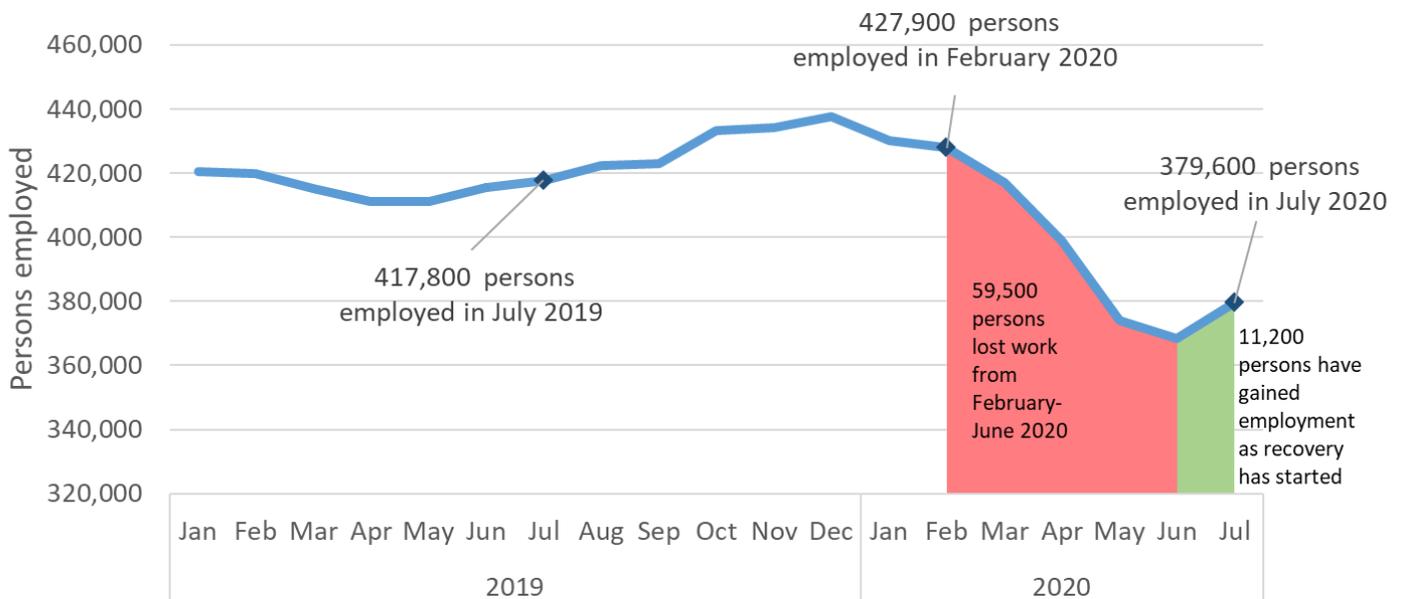
Chart 1 shows that between February and June of 2020, almost 60,000 residents in the Hamilton CMA (includes Burlington and Grimsby) lost employment, a loss of roughly 1 job in 7. In the June-July period, the first signs of employment recovery were recorded, with 11,200 persons gaining employment in that month.

The unemployment rate remains high at 12.1% in July 2020. This rate is highest in the Hamilton CMA since at least 1996, and higher than the 2009-2010 recession, where the Hamilton CMA unemployment rate rose to 9.4%.

For more impacts of COVID-19 on the labour market, *Workforce Planning Hamilton's* report on the 2020 Labour Force Survey discusses job loss by industry in Hamilton during COVID-19 as well as other demographic data:

<http://workforceplanninghamilton.ca/publications/432>

Chart 1, Total employment (persons employed) in the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), January 2019-July 2020 (Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey)



This series of bulletins focussing on issues highlighted in the *Hamilton's Social Landscape* report and bringing attention to more recent trends. These bulletins are published by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and funded in part by the United Way Halton Hamilton and the City of Hamilton Enrichment Fund.

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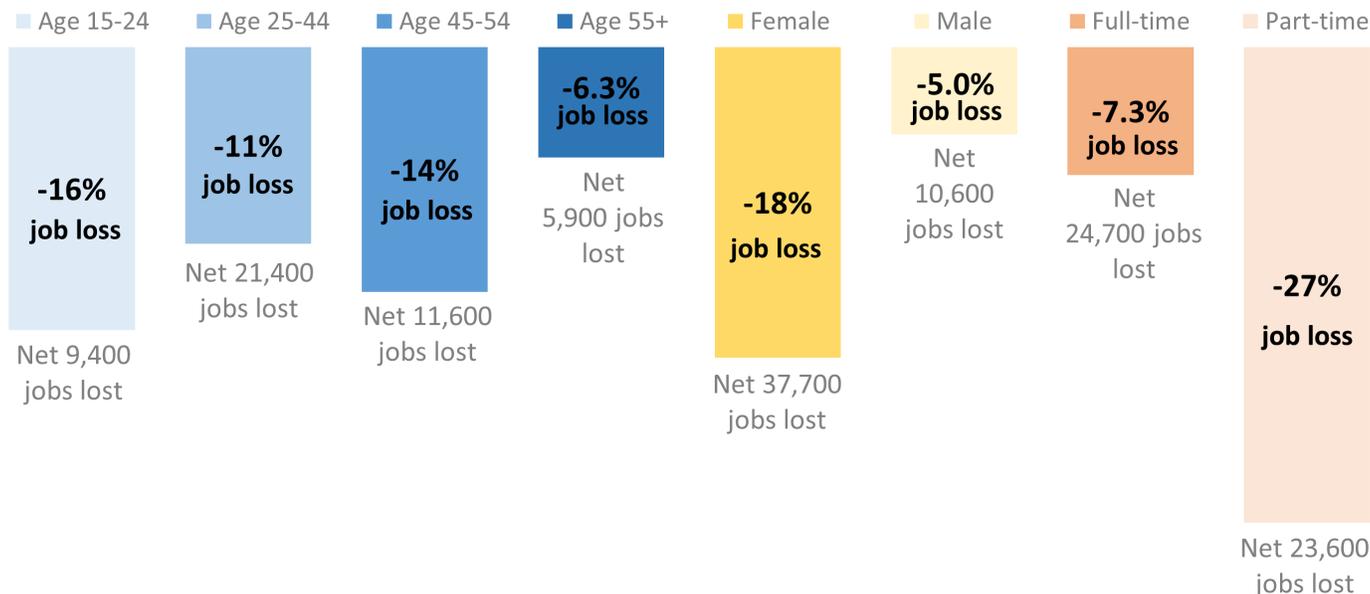


Hamilton

Disparate Impacts

In the Hamilton CMA between February and July 2020, workers aged 15-24, women, and part-time workers have been hardest hit by job loss (see Chart 2). Workers age 15-24 saw a 16% decrease in employment, while part-time workers experienced a 27% decrease and women experienced a 17.6% decrease in work in the February-July period. Compared to other demographic/employment categories, these decreases are significant and demonstrate the precarious employment of these groups.

Chart 2, Percent change in employment and total jobs lost by age group, gender, and full/part-time status, Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), February-July 2020 (Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey)



Strengthening the economy by focussing on residents and workers who have been hardest hit by impacts of COVID-19

The local data on employment impacts presented in this report reflects provincial and national trends. In communities across Canada, COVID-19 has disproportionately affected certain groups and has magnified inequalities in the labour market. As the Canadian Labour Congress states in a recent [report](#), “low-wage service workers—particularly women, young workers, workers of colour, and vulnerable workers in precarious forms of employment—disproportionately suffered layoffs and loss of hours of work.” The Ontario Nonprofit Network has also released findings that economic losses have fallen heavily on women, particularly women experiencing other intersecting inequalities, such as racialization, poverty, newcomer status, and more and called for [building gender equality into recovery strategies](#).

Intersectional understandings of COVID-19 impacts demonstrate that different social factors work together to “compound inequalities and mediate experiences of marginalization,” explains the YWCA Toronto report [An Intersectional Approach to COVID She-covery](#). As the 2015 SPRC and Hamilton Community Foundation Vital Signs report [Hamilton’s Economic Renaissance: A prosperity unevenly shared](#) noted, insecure jobs, poverty, racialization, and discrimination are closely linked. That report showed that 31% of jobs in Hamilton were precarious, higher than the GTHA average, which makes it all the more urgent to incorporate the needs and perspectives of people precariously employed into Hamilton’s recovery strategies.

Instead of a broad focus traditional public works projects as a strategy to rebuild the economy, which would largely help workers least impacted by COVID-19, these projects could include targeted measures to remove barriers to the labour market for the groups most affected by the COVID-19 employment impacts. For example: child care supports, job training for under presented groups and youth, eliminating discrimination in hiring, and community benefits agreements that improve outcomes for specific neighbourhoods and communities that have been hardest hit. Hamilton can also take inspiration from the US [Brookings Institute’s six Principles of Action](#) to ensure racial equity and racial justice are at the centre of efforts to rebuild a better, stronger economy.

Bulletin 19 in this series delves further into what an equitable recovery from COVID-19 and its impacts in Hamilton might look like.