

April 2023

**S U R R E Y
L A B O U R
M A R K E T
REPORT**

The only Surrey-focused labour market report

SURREY BOARD OF TRADE



businessinsurrey.com

FOLLOW US



Surrey Board of Trade Surrey Labour Market Intelligence Report

April 2023 (including results of Statistics Canada's March 2023 Labour Force Survey)

The Surrey Board of Trade (SBOT) continues to provide the only Surrey-specific labour market data on a regular basis! This summary report compares employment changes in Surrey from during the COVID-19 pandemic (January 2021) and through to March 2023 to show the local employment impacts of the pandemic and other factors. This report is prepared by Human Capital Strategies in conjunction with the Surrey Board of Trade.

This is the second of six SBOT Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) Reports in 2023. Note that in these bi-monthly reports, "COVID-19" has been removed from headings as we are no longer comparing current employment with a pre-COVID baseline in February 2020. Surrey employment levels in January 2021 are now a new benchmark or baseline with which we are comparing current levels (see Footnote 5 at the end for Methodology).

In previous reports until the end of 2022, the Labour Force Data provided by Statistics Canada was based on population counts from the 2016 Census of Population. As of the February 2023 report, the estimates have been adjusted to reflect the population counts from the 2021 Census. As a result, you will see some minor changes in numbers from Labour Market Intelligence Reports published in 2023. All of the numbers for 2021 and beyond provided in this report have been updated based on the revised labour force data from Statistics Canada.

Highlights

Over the last 12 months, Surrey employment grew by an estimated nearly 4,400 jobs or 1.4% since March 2022. While still significant, this growth was much smaller than the growth in the previous 12 months (March 2021-March 2022) which was almost 11,500 jobs or 3.6% as part of the COVID recovery since 2020.

Surrey's recent labour market growth has been significant when compared to the broader Metro Vancouver Region (Regional District, which includes Surrey). Between 2016 and 2021, the Metro Vancouver area saw a labour force growth of 112,700 or 8.3% over this 5-year period.

The sectors with the most negative employment change in Surrey over the last 12 months are estimated to be manufacturing (-14.3% or -4,200 jobs), health care and social assistance (-4.6% or -1,900 jobs) and transportation and warehousing (-5.3% or almost -1,700 jobs).

Some sectors had strong job growth in Surrey over the last 12 months. After an extended, delayed recovery during the pandemic, Surrey's construction sector increased by over 5,800 jobs or a significant 22.2% since March 2022. With more children and youth back at school, the Surrey education sector grew by almost 10.0% or almost 1,800 jobs since March 2022; other services (personal services, high touch positions) employment continues to recover with it growing by almost 14.0% or 1,600 jobs over this period.

Driven by major growth in Surrey's service-producing sectors, management jobs grew by almost 39% or almost 6,000 over the last 12 months; sales and service jobs grew by almost 4.0% or almost 2,900 positions in Surrey. Art, culture, recreation and sport employment surged by 35.1% over the last 12 months, creating over 2,200 jobs.

Many other types of positions in Surrey lost employment since March 2023 to present. For example: health positions (-14.0% or almost -3,500 positions); and manufacturing and utilities (almost -20.0% or over -3,100 jobs).

However, the biggest percentage decrease in employment in Surrey since March 2022 has been in natural resources and agriculture, falling almost -29.0% or by almost -1,200 jobs.

The most significant changes (increases and decreases) in employment over the last two years (since March 2021) were:

- Art, culture, recreation and sport employment increased by a huge 58.0% or over 3,100 jobs;
- Management positions increased by 28.0% or over 4,600 jobs;
- Education, law and social, community and government Services employment was up by 7.8% or over 2,000 jobs; and,
- Business, finance and administrative positions grew by 7.6% or almost 3,300 jobs.

While Surrey industries and occupational categories have mostly rebounded in employment levels to varying degrees, over the last 3 years, some like health care, tech, manufacturing and natural resources are struggling to maintain peak levels of employment; and some job 'powerhouses' like these ones have lost jobs over the last year or two.

Factors such as interest rates, housing costs and availability, talents shortages, supply chain issues, government regulation and other trends continue to combine to prevent a more robust recovery since the worst of the pandemic.

COVID-19 Employer, Labour Force and Workforce Impacts in March 2023

Surrey Employer Employment Impacts: Estimates extrapolated from Statistics Canada's 2016 Census and 2023 Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey (April 2023).

Surrey and Metro Vancouver Changes: Labour Force Per Census 2016 and 2021¹²

Over the last 12 months, Surrey employment grew by an estimated 4,400 jobs or 1.4% since March 2022. While still significant, this growth was much smaller than the growth in the previous 12 months (March 2021-March 2022) which was almost 11,500 jobs or 3.6% as part of the COVID-19 recovery since 2020.

Surrey's recent labour market growth has been significant when compared to the broader Metro Vancouver Region (Regional District, which includes Surrey). Between 2016 and 2021, the Metro Vancouver area saw a labour force growth of 112,700 or 8.3% over this 5-year period.

Surrey's labour force grew by 308,190 or a healthy 12.2%, an almost 2.5% average annual growth. As a result, Surrey's labour force in 2021 as a percentage of Metro Vancouver's grew to 21.0% from just above 20.0% in 2016. Interestingly, Surrey's labour force as a proportion of Metro Vancouver's in 2021 was relatively higher in blue collar occupations such as 30.1% in trades, transport and equipment operators, 26.9% in natural resource occupations, and 34.2% in occupations in manufacturing and utilities. The Surrey labour force was proportionately lower than Metro Vancouver's in occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport (9.9%), in senior management positions (12.0%), in natural and applied sciences (13.9%), and in education, law, social, community and government services (16.8%).

Surrey Employment Impacts BY INDUSTRY – March 2021 to March 2023

Employment in Surrey in March 2023 was an estimated 1.4% or almost 4,400 more jobs above employment in March 2022; and almost 16,000 or 4.9% more than in March 2021. The largest employment sectors in Surrey in March 2023 were:

1. Wholesale & Retail Trade (56,484 or 17.4% of total jobs in Surrey);
2. Health Care & Social Assistance (39,213 or 12.0% of total jobs in Surrey);

¹ Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). *Census Profile*. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released February 8, 2023.

² Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0379-01.

3. Construction (32,106 or 9.9% of total jobs in Surrey);
4. Transportation & Warehousing (30,223 or 9.3% of total jobs in Surrey); and,
5. Professional, Scientific and Technical (24,209 or 7.4% of total jobs in Surrey).

Table 1 shows employment for March 2021, March 2022 and March 2023 in Surrey, by industry.

**Table 1: Estimated Employment by Industry in Surrey³ – March 2021 through March 2023
Adapted from Table 14-10-0379-01, Statistics Canada⁴**

North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)	Employment March 2021	Employment March 2022	Employment March 2023	Change March 2022 to March 2023	
				Jobs	%
Total Employed (all industries)	309,624	321,111	325,479	4,368	1.4%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Mining, Quarrying, Oil & Gas	4,300	4,790	4,415	-375	-7.8%
Utilities	1,858	1,564	1,711	147	9.4%
Construction	28,781	26,281	32,106	5,825	22.2%
Manufacturing	25,696	29,319	25,130	-4,188	-14.3%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	49,038	57,114	56,484	-630	-1.1%
Transportation & Warehousing	29,386	31,899	30,223	-1,675	-5.3%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	15,952	14,467	15,952	1,485	10.3%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	23,436	24,995	24,209	-786	-3.1%
Business, Building & Other Support Services	15,650	11,569	13,155	1,586	13.7%
Educational Services	16,833	17,918	19,685	1,767	9.9%
Health Care & Social Assistance	39,064	41,109	39,213	-1,896	-4.6%
Information, Culture & Recreation	11,716	12,986	12,696	-290	-2.2%
Accommodation & Food Services	20,377	19,824	20,152	328	1.7%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	12,894	11,550	13,146	1,596	13.8%
Public Administration	11,564	12,667	13,022	355	2.8%

Reference: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0379-01

The sectors with the most negative employment change in Surrey over the last 12 months are estimated to be:

- Manufacturing employment in Surrey dropped by 14.3% over the last 12 months (almost -4,200 jobs);
- The same thing occurred with health care and social assistance in Surrey, which declined by 4.6% or almost -1,900 jobs after a peak in 2022;
- Surrey's transportation and warehousing sector lost 5.3% of employment or almost -1,700 jobs; and,
- A smaller decline was seen in professional, scientific and technical services – a loss of 3.1% of employment or -786 jobs.

Sectors with the greatest job growth in Surrey over the last 12-months to March 2023 are estimated to be:

- After an extended, delayed recovery during the pandemic, Surrey's construction sector increased by over 5,800 jobs or a significant 22.2% since March 2022;

³ Estimates based on Surrey share of Metro Vancouver (Census Metropolitan Area) by Industry in 2021.

⁴ Employment by Industry, three month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality.

- With more children and youth back at school, the Surrey education sector grew by almost 10.0% or almost 1,800 jobs since March 2022;
- Other services (personal services, high touch positions) employment continues to recover with it growing by almost 14.0% or 1,600 jobs over this period;
- Business, building and other support services also saw growth of almost 14.0% or 1,600 jobs in Surrey by March 2023; and,
- Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing employment grew by more than 10.0% or almost 1,500 jobs over the last 12 months.

Surrey Employment Impacts BY OCCUPATION – March 2021 to March 2023

Table 2 shows employment trends by occupation in Surrey over the last 12 months. The biggest employment sectors by occupation in Surrey in March 2023 were sales and service (over 80,000 jobs or 25% of total Surrey jobs); trades, transport and equipment operators (over 59,000 jobs or over 18% of total Surrey jobs); business, finance and administration (over 46,000 jobs or 14.3% of total Surrey jobs); and education, law and social, community and government services (over 28,500 jobs or 8.8% of total Surrey jobs).

Table 2: Estimated Employment by Occupation in Surrey – March 2021 through March 2023
Adapted from Table 14-10-0430-01, Statistics Canada

National Occupational Classification	Employment March 2021	Employment March 2022	Employment March 2023	Change March 2022 to March 2023	
				Jobs	%
Total Employed (all occupations)	309,624	321,111	325,479	4,368	1.4%
Management	16,644	15,324	21,264	5,940	38.8%
Business, Finance & Administration	43,128	49,500	46,422	-3,078	-6.2%
Natural & Applied Sciences	24,881	23,477	21,740	-1,738	-7.4%
Health	23,936	25,419	21,931	-3,488	-13.7%
Education, Law & Social, Community & Government Services	26,527	28,325	28,594	269	0.9%
Art, Culture, Recreation & Sport	5,405	6,316	8,534	2,218	35.1%
Sales & Services	76,998	77,541	80,388	2,848	3.7%
Trades, Transport & Equipment Operators	60,621	61,223	59,387	-1,836	-3.0%
Natural Resources Agriculture & Related Production	3,874	4,143	2,959	-1,184	-28.6%
Manufacturing & Utilities	13,064	15,937	12,791	-3,146	-19.7%

Reference: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0430-01

As of March 2023, the biggest growth in employment by broad occupational category in Surrey since March 2022 has been:

- Driven by major growth in Surrey’s service-producing sectors, management jobs grew by almost 39% or almost 6,000 over the last 12 months;
- Sales and service jobs grew by almost 4.0% or almost 2,900 positions in Surrey; and,
- Art, culture, recreation and sport employment surged by 35.1% over the last 12 months, creating over 2,200 jobs.

Most other types of positions in Surrey lost employment since March 2022:

- The number of health jobs in Surrey dropped by almost 14.0% or almost -3,500 positions in the last 12 months;
- Manufacturing and utilities saw a large decrease in employment over this period, shedding almost 20.0% or over 3,100 jobs;
- Business, finance and administration positions declined by 6.2% or over -3,000 jobs;
- While construction and industrial employment in Surrey continues to grow, against this trend was a drop of jobs in trades, transport and equipment operator positions of 3.0% or over -1,800 jobs in the last 12 months; and,
- Natural and applied sciences employment experienced a 7.4% decrease or loss of over -1,700 jobs.

However, the biggest percentage decrease in employment in Surrey since March 2022 has been in natural resources and agriculture, falling almost 29.0% or by almost -1,200 jobs.

The most significant changes (increases and decreases) in employment over the last 2 years (since March 2021) were:

- Art, culture, recreation and sport employment increased by a huge 58.0% or over 3,100 jobs;
- Management positions increased by 28.0% or over 4,600 jobs;
- Education, law and social, community and government services employment was up by 7.8% or over 2,000 jobs; and,
- Business, finance and administrative positions grew by 7.6% or almost 3,300 jobs.

However, a few tech-related and resource-related occupational categories experienced employment declines over the last 24 months in Surrey:

- Natural resources and agriculture jobs in Surrey decreased by 23.6% or -915 jobs;
- Natural and applied sciences positions dropped by 12.6% or over -3,100 jobs; and,
- Health care employment declined by 8.3% or over -2,000 jobs.

While Surrey industries and occupational categories have mostly rebounded in employment levels to varying degrees, over the last 3 years, some like health care, tech, manufacturing and natural resources are struggling to maintain peak levels of employment; and some job 'powerhouses' like these ones have lost jobs over the last year or two.

Factors such as interest rates, housing costs and availability, talents shortages, supply chain issues, government regulation and other trends continue to combine to prevent a more robust recovery since the worst of the pandemic.

Sources:⁵

Statistics Canada. [Table 14-10-0379-01 Employment by industry, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality \(x 1,000\)](#)

Statistics Canada. [Table 14-10-0381-01 Employment by occupation, three-month moving average, unadjusted for seasonality \(x 1,000\)](#)

More Information:

BC Labour Force Survey Data, Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, March 2023 (Released April 6, 2023)

Source: BC Stats – Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, March 2023. Released April 6, 2023. Retrieved from https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/data/statistics/employment-labour-market/lfs_data_tables.pdf

Composed by:

Kerry Jothen, B.A., M.A.
CEO + Principal, Human Capital Strategies
kjothen@humancapitalstrategies.ca

Anita Huberman
President and CEO, Surrey Board of Trade
anita@businessinsurrey.com

⁵ Methodology: Census Profile data, using 2021 Census data, for both Surrey (Census Subdivision) and Vancouver (Census Metropolitan Area). The Census Profile for each geographic area, provides a count of the population for the labour force aged 15 years and over, by occupation (broad category) and by industry sectors. Then we take that data and calculate the percentage of the total Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area that Surrey (as Census subdivision) accounted for. In some cases, the Labour Force Survey data combines multiple industries when providing employment data (for example, counts for the Wholesale Trade industry and the Retail Trade industry in the Census Profile are separate, but employment is reported for "Wholesale and Retail Trade". In those cases, we calculate the count for the industries that were combined by geography and then compare the two to get the proportion for Surrey of the total of Vancouver.