

A collage of construction-related images. On the left, a worker in an orange hard hat and safety vest is seen from the side. In the center, a yellow excavator is working on a construction site. On the right, a worker in a yellow safety vest and orange hard hat is climbing a wooden structure. The background shows various construction elements like steel beams and cranes.

2016–2025 Key Highlights

Newfoundland and Labrador:

The 2016–2025 construction labour profile for Newfoundland and Labrador stands out among the provinces, along with Alberta, as the remarkable construction expansion that began more than 10 years ago ends with a sharp decline from 2016 to 2019.

Lower resource prices are prompting cancellations of current plans and delays in new investments. Many major resource projects are being completed from 2016 to 2019 and, as work winds down, employment declines.

Employment losses across the 2016–2020 period are roughly equal to gains from 2010 to 2015. At that time, resource development drew workers to new projects – swelling the engineering workforce and more than doubling the entire Newfoundland and Labrador construction labour force.

The employment decline over the medium term may prompt workers to seek opportunities in other sectors, industries or provinces. Employment on large-scale engineering projects is expected to recover in 2020 as resource prices rise and projects, now delayed, are started. By the end of the scenario in 2025, losses exceed gains and leave overall provincial construction industry employment near 15,000 jobs – below 2015, but well above longer-term historical levels. .

There is a distinctly different cycle in housing and commercial and institutional building construction, where activity began a downward cycle in 2012, with the largest part of the decline completed by 2015. A modest loss of jobs in these markets from 2016 to 2019 will be followed by renewed growth that will add to employment in commercial and institutional building construction, renovation and maintenance in the final years of the scenario.

Labour markets in Newfoundland and Labrador are notably more volatile than in other provinces, with job gains and losses exceeding long-term local retirement demands. But the older age profile of the provincial population also complicates market conditions. A shrinking youth population will limit new entrants into the workforce, which limits unemployment as a source of recruiting. An estimated 6,300 workers are expected to retire over the next decade, equal to 24 percent of the current workforce.