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Ontario hospitality employment fell 8.4% in October to 414,500 jobs

The province accounted for most of Canada’s monthly industry decline despite a slight national annual gain

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Employment in Ontario’s accommodation and food services industry fell 8.4% in October from a year earlier, a sharp pullback in a sector that includes lodging and food service businesses. Statistics Canada said on Friday, November 6, that Ontario had 414,500 people employed in the industry in October on a seasonally adjusted basis, down 37,900 from October 2025.

The sector also weakened from the previous month. Employment fell by 14,600 from 429,100 in September, a 3.4% monthly decline. That left Ontario with the largest accommodation and food services workforce in Canada, but also with the biggest drop in absolute terms among the provinces.

The decline was steeper than the movement in Ontario’s labor market overall. Total employment in the province slipped by 8,600 from September to 8.28 million in October, but it was still up 25,400 from a year earlier, a 0.3% increase. Employment in goods-producing industries rose 1.1% from October 2025, while services-producing industries were nearly flat, up 0.1%.

Within Ontario’s services sector, accommodation and food services was one of the weaker areas. Wholesale and retail trade fell by 78,900 from a year earlier, or 6.8%, and information, culture and recreation was little changed, up 0.1%. By contrast, health

care and social assistance added 61,200 jobs from a year earlier, transportation and warehousing gained 25,600, and finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing added 17,400.

The Statistics Canada table shows that Ontario’s hospitality downturn did not reflect the whole country. Based on the provincial data, Canada’s accommodation and food services industry employed about 1.19 million people in October, up roughly 0.2% from October 2025. From September, national employment in the industry fell by about 7,700, or 0.6%, which means Ontario accounted for most of the monthly decline.

Regional results were uneven. Quebec posted the largest annual gain in the industry, with employment rising by 53,100 to 286,000, a 22.8% increase from October 2025. Saskatchewan rose by 4,000 to 37,400, up 12.0%, and Nova Scotia gained 1,500 to 32,300, up 4.9%. Newfoundland and Labrador edged up to 14,300, a 2.9% increase, while Prince Edward Island rose 6.0% from a year earlier to 7,100 despite a monthly drop.

Other large provinces were weaker. Alberta’s accommodation and food services employment fell by 12,900 from a year earlier to 142,700, an 8.3% decline. British Columbia fell by 3,900 to 188,800, down 2.0%, and Manitoba was essentially flat at 41,900, down 0.2%. New Brunswick fell 6.3% to 22,200.

Ontario remained the single biggest provincial labor market for the industry, but its share of national accommodation and food services employment narrowed over the year as Quebec expanded and other provinces were more stable. The figures suggest that the weakness in Ontario was specific enough to pull down the national monthly total even though Canada as a whole still posted a slight annual increase.

Statistics Canada did not provide a separate explanation for the Ontario decline in the industry table release. The data show only that the sector contracted both month to month and year to year after seasonal adjustment, and that the decrease was larger than the change in the province’s total employment.

The broader North American picture was mixed. On Friday, November 6, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics said leisure and hospitality employment in the United States changed little in October, with payrolls down by 13,000, while total nonfarm payroll employment rose by 165,000 and the unemployment rate held at 4.1%. Those U.S. figures come from a separate establishment survey and are not directly comparable with Canada’s provincial Labour Force Survey estimates.

The U.S. report showed stronger hiring in professional and business services, health care, and transportation and warehousing. Ontario’s October data pointed in a similar direction outside hospitality, with gains in health care, transportation, professional services, and education even as accommodation and food services moved lower. Statistics Canada identified the Ontario figures as seasonally adjusted estimates in its employment by province and industry table released on Friday, November 6.