



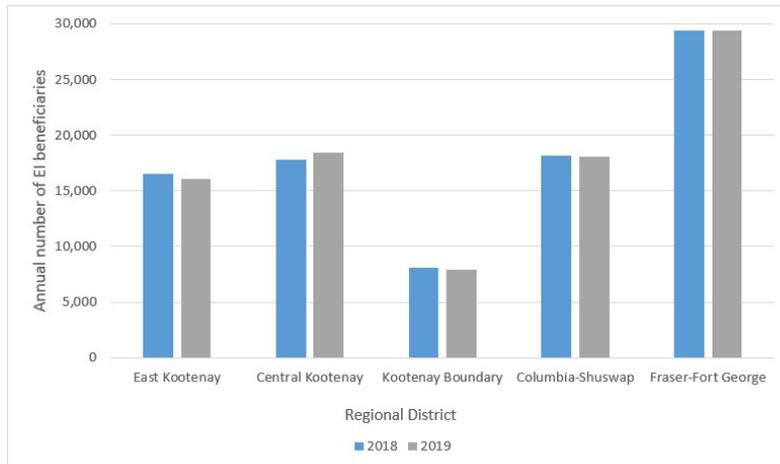
Employment Income and COVID-19

The outbreak of a novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, is affecting Canadians in unprecedented ways. With the Government of BC declaring both a public health emergency and a [provincial state of emergency](#), our society and economy are experiencing dramatic shifts. As [businesses are reducing their services and closing their doors](#) to help reduce the spread of the virus, many worker's livelihoods are at risk. [Employment Insurance \(EI\)](#) is one of the tools the federal government is using to [support workers affected by COVID-19](#).

Employment Insurance is an indicator tracked through the State of the Basin initiative to monitor well-being. When individuals lose their jobs through no fault of their own, such as a shortage of work or lay-offs, EI is one of the benefits available. The number of EI beneficiaries in a community or region can indicate differing economic opportunities and challenges. As there are a number of reasons a person may access income assistance programs, this indicator should not be viewed in isolation, but rather in consideration of other

labour, economic, and social circumstances. [EI data](#) is available from Statistics Canada at the regional district level on a monthly basis. The following analysis includes data over one year, from 2018 to 2019.

The general trend in the number of EI beneficiaries across the Columbia Basin-Boundary region is an overall decrease of 0.1% from 2018 to 2019. As illustrated in the graph below, the Regional Districts of East Kootenay, Kootenay Boundary, Columbia-Shuswap, and Fraser-Fort George all experienced decreases in EI beneficiaries during this time, with some of these decreases being very minor. Central Kootenay is the only Regional District to experience an increase in EI beneficiaries from 2018 to 2019 of 3.6%, or 640 people. The relative stability in the number of EI recipients in Kootenay regional districts between 2018 and 2019 reflects [the same stability seen in other labour market indicators](#) such as total employment and the unemployment rate. Economists have observed that while certain industries have experienced sizeable shifts over the past two years, the overall Kootenay labour market held steady due to [the re-distribution of jobs among sectors](#).



On Wednesday, March 18, 2020, Prime Minister Trudeau declared a [federal economic response plan](#) to support Canadians impacted by COVID-19, including measures to streamline EI claim processes and increase availability of funds. This has been passed through parliament as the [new Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#) that expands the eligibility of EI and will be available to Canadians in the coming days.

An unprecedented number of Canadians applied for EI last week. Examining local EI data again after the influence of COVID-19 will be one way to measure the pandemic's impact on the Columbia Basin-Boundary region.

See the [State of the Basin website](#) for more information on other indicators of regional well-being.

The team at the RDI wishes everyone good health during these unprecedented times.



Selkirk College RDI Focus is a monthly e-blast highlighting stories of well-being in our region. You are receiving this email because you have attended an RDI event or have subscribed to receive updates on the RDI.

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