

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for April – June 2023

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for April – June 2023) released today (July 18) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 3.0% in March – May 2023 to 2.9% in April – June 2023. The underemployment rate also decreased from 1.2% in March – May 2023 to 1.1% in April – June 2023.

Comparing April – June 2023 with March – May 2023, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in different industry sectors varied, with relatively notable decreases observed in the retail sector and arts, entertainment and recreation sector. As to the underemployment rate, decreases were mainly seen in the foundation and superstructure sector and retail sector.

Total employment increased by around 15 000 from 3 673 800 in March – May 2023 to 3 688 800 in April – June 2023. Over the same period, the labour force also increased by around 15 400 from 3 787 000 to 3 802 400.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) in April – June 2023 was 113 600, about the same as that in March – May 2023 (113 100). The number of underemployed persons decreased by around 2 900 from 44 400 in March – May 2023 to 41 500 in April – June 2023.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Acting Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Ho Kai-ming, said, "The labour market continued to improve alongside the local economic recovery. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged down by 0.1 percentage point from March – May 2023 to 2.9% in April – June 2023. The underemployment rate likewise declined slightly by 0.1 percentage point to 1.1%. Both the labour force and total employment increased further, by 15 400 and 15 000 to 3 802 400 and 3 688 800 respectively. The number of unemployed persons stayed low at 113 600."

Analysed by sector, the combined unemployment rate of the consumption- and tourism-related sectors (viz. retail, accommodation and food services sectors) declined by 0.2 percentage point from March – May 2023 to 4.0% in April – June 2023. Among these sectors, the unemployment rates of the retail sector and the accommodation services sector declined by 0.3 and 0.5 percentage point to 3.5% and 3.0% respectively, while that of the food and beverage service activities sector held steady at 4.8%. Some sectors also saw declines in unemployment rates, notably the arts, entertainment and recreation sector. The unemployment rates of the remaining sectors either held steady or increased, but stayed low in general.

Looking ahead, Mr Ho said, "The labour market should improve further in the coming months as the economic recovery gathers further strength."

On large-scale job fairs, the Labour Department (LD) will organise the Job Fair for Catering, Retail and Hotel Industry & Middle-aged and Elderly Employment at the MacPherson Stadium in Mong Kok on July 20 and 21, 2023. Over 60 employers will participate, offering a large number of vacancies. In April – June 2023, LD recorded a monthly average of 101 364 vacancies from the private sector, representing a year-on-year increase of 11.9% and a decrease of 4.4% over the average figure in March – May 2023. Job-seekers may make use of the LD's online platforms, such as the Interactive Employment Service website, for obtaining such vacancy information.

Further information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization. The employed population covers all employers, self-employed persons, employees (including full-time, part-time, casual workers, etc.) and unpaid family workers. Unemployed persons by industry (or occupation) are classified according to their previous industry (or occupation).

The survey for April – June 2023 covered a sample of some 25 000 households or 69 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong. Labour force statistics compiled from this sample represented the situation in the moving three-month period of April to June 2023.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode200.html). More detailed analysis of the labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the report contains statistics for the quarter January – March 2023 while the next issue covering the quarter April – June 2023 will be available by end August 2023. Users can also browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050001&scode=200).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the General Household Survey Section (3) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).