

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for August – October 2021

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for August – October 2021) released today (November 16) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 4.5% in July – September 2021 to 4.3% in August – October 2021. The underemployment rate also decreased from 2.1% in July – September 2021 to 1.9% in August – October 2021.

Comparing August – October 2021 with July – September 2021, most major economic sectors saw a drop in both the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate. For unemployment rate, more distinct decreases were observed in the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector; food and beverage service activities sector; and arts, entertainment and recreation sector. As to the underemployment rate, decreases were mainly seen in the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector; and food and beverage service activities sector.

Total employment increased by around 8 500 from 3 658 000 in July – September 2021 to 3 666 500 in August – October 2021. The labour force in August – October 2021 was 3 838 200, about the same as that in July – September 2021 (3 838 600).

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 8 800 from 180 600 in July – September 2021 to 171 800 in August – October 2021. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also decreased by around 6 300 from 79 000 to 72 700.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "The labour market continued to improve amid the sustained economic recovery. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased by 0.2 percentage point from July – September 2021 to 4.3% in August – October 2021 and the underemployment rate also decreased by 0.2 percentage point to 1.9%. Over the same period, total employment went up by 8 500 to 3 666 500, and the number of unemployed persons fell by 8 800 to 171 800."

Among the consumption- and tourism-related sectors, the unemployment rate of food and beverage service activities declined notably by 0.8 percentage point from the preceding three-month period to 7.7% in August – October 2021. Other sectors that showed more visible declines in the unemployment rate include the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector and the arts, entertainment and recreation sector.

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market should continue to

improve, but the extent of improvement would depend on the pace of economic recovery. The stable local epidemic situation and the Consumption Voucher Scheme should continue to render support to the consumption-related activities in the near term. Yet, the virtually frozen inbound tourism remains a constraint. To lay a more solid foundation for further improvement of the economy and labour market, the community should stay vigilant against the COVID-19 epidemic, strive towards more widespread vaccination and abide by the anti-epidemic measures. The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely."

He noted that in August – October 2021, the Labour Department (LD) recorded a monthly average of 104 915 vacancies from the private sector, representing an increase of 2.1% over the average figure in July – September 2021 and a year-on-year increase of 64.7%. Job-seekers may make use of the LD's online platforms such as the Interactive Employment Service website for obtaining such vacancy information. The LD's job centres also provide personalised employment advisory services. Employment officers will provide job-seekers with job search advice, information on the job market and training/retraining courses, and conduct career aptitude assessment, etc., in accordance with their individual needs and preferences, and match them with suitable jobs.

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will organise the Job Fair for Middle-aged and Elderly Employment on November 25 and 26, 2021 at the MacPherson Stadium. Around 50 employers will participate, offering a large amount of job vacancies from various industries.

Further information

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

The survey for August – October 2021 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 August to October 2021.

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

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=D5250021&scode=200). 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 publication contains statistics for the

quarter April – June 2021 while the next issue covering the quarter July – September 2021 will be available by end November 2021. Users can also 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 Household Statistics Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).