

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for May – July 2022

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for May – July 2022) released today (August 17) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 4.7% in April – June 2022 to 4.3% in May – July 2022. The underemployment rate also decreased from 3.0% in April – June 2022 to 2.2% in May – July 2022.

Comparing May – July 2022 with April – June 2022, the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) decreased across almost all the major economic sectors, with more distinct decreases observed in the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector; retail, accommodation and food services sector; transportation 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; retail, accommodation and food services sector; and arts, entertainment and recreation sector.

Total employment increased by around 21 500 from 3 571 600 in April – June 2022 to 3 593 100 in May – July 2022. Over the same period, the labour force also increased by around 11 100 from 3 750 200 to 3 761 300.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 10 400 from 178 600 in April – June 2022 to 168 200 in May – July 2022. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also decreased by around 27 300 from 111 600 to 84 300.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "The labour market improved further in May – July 2022 as domestic economic activities continued to revive. The 2022 Employment Support Scheme has also helped. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell by 0.4 percentage point from April – June 2022 to 4.3% in May – July 2022. The underemployment rate declined by 0.8 percentage point to 2.2%. Total employment showed a faster increase of 21 500 to 3 593 100. The number of unemployed persons fell further by 10 400 to 168 200."

Analysed by sector, the unemployment rate of the consumption- and tourism-related sectors (viz. retail, accommodation and food services sectors) combined fell by 0.9 percentage point from the preceding three-month period to 6.5% in May – July 2022. Among these sectors, the unemployment rate for food and beverage service activities fell by 1.6 percentage points to 7.0%, and that of the retail sector declined by 0.3 percentage point to 6.3%. The unemployment rates of most other sectors also declined, more notably the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector; the transportation sector; and the arts, entertainment and recreation sector.

Looking ahead, Mr Sun said, "Provided that the local epidemic situation remains under control, with the support from Phase II of the Consumption Voucher Scheme, domestic economic activities are expected to revive further in the coming months. The labour market should continue to improve, although the extent of improvement will be dependent on the pace of economic revival amid the tightened financial conditions. It remains vital for the community to work in unison with the Government to keep the epidemic under control."

On large-scale job fairs, the Labour Department (LD) will organise the Job Fair for Middle-aged and Elderly Employment at the MacPherson Stadium on September 22 and 23, 2022. Over 50 employers will participate, offering lots of vacancies from various industries. In May – July 2022, LD recorded a monthly average of 100 717 vacancies from the private sector, representing a year-on-year increase of 14.2%, and an increase of 11.1% over the average figure in April – June 2022. 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 May – July 2022 covered a sample of some 25 000 households or 70 000 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 May to July 2022.

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/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 January – March 2022 while the next issue covering the quarter April – June 2022 will be available by end August 2022. 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 General Household Survey Section (3) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).