

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for May – July 2023

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for May – July 2023) released today (August 17) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 2.9% in April – June 2023 to 2.8% in May – July 2023. The underemployment rate remained unchanged at 1.1% in the two periods.

Comparing May – July 2023 with April – June 2023, the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) decreased across most major economic sectors, with more distinct decreases observed in the food and beverage service activities sector, transportation sector, information and communications sector and real estate sector.

Total employment increased by around 19 200 from 3 688 800 in April – June 2023 to 3 708 000 in May – July 2023. Over the same period, the labour force also increased by around 17 300 from 3 802 400 to 3 819 700.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 1 900 from 113 600 in April – June 2023 to 111 700 in May – July 2023. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also decreased by around 1 000 from 41 500 to 40 500.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "The labour market continued to improve. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged down by 0.1 percentage point from April – June 2023 to 2.8% in May – July 2023. The underemployment rate remained unchanged at 1.1%. Both the labour force and total employment increased further, by 17 300 and 19 200 to 3 819 700 and 3 708 000 respectively. The number of unemployed persons decreased by 1 900 to 111 700."

Analysed by sector, the combined unemployment rate of the consumption- and tourism-related sectors (viz. retail, accommodation and food services sectors) declined by 0.3 percentage point from April – June 2023 to 3.7% in May – July 2023. Among these sectors, the unemployment rates of the retail sector and the accommodation services sector both declined by 0.2 percentage point to 3.3% and 2.8% respectively, and that of the food and beverage service activities sector fell by 0.5 percentage point to 4.3%. Most other sectors also saw declines in unemployment rates, notably the transportation sector, the information and communications sector, and the real estate sector.

Looking ahead, Mr Sun said, "With the economic recovery, the labour market should improve further in the coming months."

On large-scale job fairs, the Labour Department (LD) will organise the "Building a Multicultural Workplace Job Fair" at the MacPherson Stadium in Mong Kok on August 22 and 23, 2023. Over 45 employers will participate, offering a large number of vacancies. In May – July 2023, LD recorded a monthly average of 103 859 vacancies from the private sector, representing a year-on-year increase of 3.1% and an increase of 2.5% over the average figure in April – June 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 May – July 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 May to July 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).