

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for September – November 2024

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for September – November 2024) released today (December 17) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 3.1% in September – November 2024, same as that in August – October 2024. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.1% in the two periods.

Comparing September – November 2024 with August – October 2024, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate in different industry sectors varied, but the magnitudes were generally not large.

Total employment increased by around 4 700 from 3 707 100 in August – October 2024 to 3 711 800 in September – November 2024. Over the same period, the labour force also increased by around 3 600 from 3 827 900 to 3 831 500.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) decreased by around 1 000 from 120 700 in August – October 2024 to 119 700 in September – November 2024. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also decreased by around 600 from 42 300 to 41 700.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stayed low at 3.1% in September – November 2024, same as August – October 2024. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.1%. The labour force and total employment bounced back by 3 600 and 4 700 to 3 831 500 and 3 711 800 respectively. The number of unemployed persons decreased by 1 000 to 119 700."

The unemployment rates of various sectors showed diverse movements in September – November 2024 compared with the preceding three-month period. More notable increases in the unemployment rates were seen in the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector; the insurance sector; and the postal and courier activities sector. More visible declines in the unemployment rates were observed in the warehousing and support activities for transportation sector and the arts, entertainment and recreation sector.

Looking ahead, Mr Sun said, "The labour market should remain largely stable in the near term, though the situation in some sectors might be more affected by increased uncertainties in the global economy and escalation in trade tension."

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 September – November 2024 covered a sample of some 26 000 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 September to November 2024.

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 July – September 2024 while the next issue covering the quarter October – December 2024 will be available by end February 2025. 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).