

Third Quarter 2026

Labour Market Advance Release



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LABOUR MARKET ADVANCE RELEASE THIRD QUARTER 2026

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MISSION

To provide timely and reliable national statistical information on the labour market to facilitate informed decision-making within the government and community-at-large.

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Statistics compiled and disseminated by the MRSD adhere to international standards on official statistics set by the International Labour Organisation and International Monetary Fund.

For insights on the labour market, visit us at stats.mom.gov.sg.

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Notations

-	: Nil or Negligible
P	: Preliminary
Q	: Quarter
M	: March
J	: June
S	: September
D	: December

Abbreviations

MDW	: Migrant Domestic Workers
MOM	: Ministry of Manpower
SSIC	: Singapore Standard Industrial Classification
excl	: Excluding

Highlights

Advance estimates indicated that Singapore's labour market continued to expand in 3Q 2026, with both resident and non-resident employment growth at a faster pace than in the previous quarter. Retrenchments edged up and remained elevated mainly in selected outward-oriented sectors. While hiring and wage expectations improved in September, employers remained cautious amid the economic uncertainty.

- Total employment grew by 27,700 in 3Q 2026, higher than the 11,400 in 2Q 2026 and 25,100 in 3Q 2025.
- Both resident and non-resident employment grew faster than the previous quarter. Resident employment growth continued to be mainly supported by essential and public services, while non-resident employment accounted for the majority of employment growth, mainly in *Construction* and *Manufacturing*.
- The overall unemployment rate remained unchanged at 2.0% in September 2026, while resident and citizen unemployment rates edged up slightly to 3.0% and 3.1% respectively, from 2.9% and 3.0% in August 2026.
- In 3Q 2026, retrenchments (4,800 or 2.0 per 1,000 employees) increased from the previous quarter (4,620), though the incidence of retrenchment was unchanged. Retrenchments remained elevated in selected outward-oriented sectors, while business reorganisation continued to be the main driver of retrenchments.
- Forward-looking indicators were mixed in September, with the share of firms expecting to hire in the next three months rising from 30.5% in August 2026 to 42.3% in September 2026. Over the same period, the share of firms expecting to raise wages increased from 16.9% to 19.9%, while the share expecting to retrench edged up from 2.8% to 3.1%.
- Overall, hiring and wage expectations improved in September 2026 but remained below July's levels, suggesting that firms remained selective in their hiring and wage plans amid continued uncertainty. While the labour market continued to expand, retrenchments remained elevated and, together with higher intentions to retrench, point to emerging weaknesses in parts of the labour market that warrant close monitoring.

The *Labour Market Report Third Quarter 2026*, to be released in mid-December 2026, will provide more details, such as resident and non-resident employment breakdowns, sectoral data, number of job vacancies, labour turnover, and re-entry rates among retrenched residents.

For data requests and queries pertaining to the report, please reach out to MOM's Research and Statistics Department at mom_rsd@mom.gov.sg.

Overview

Advance estimates showed that Singapore's labour market continued to expand in 3Q 2026, with stronger employment growth, although conditions remained uneven across sectors. Both resident and non-resident employment grew faster than the previous quarter. Retrenchments increased and remained elevated in selected outward-oriented sectors. Hiring and wage expectations improved in September, although employers remained cautious amid economic uncertainty.

Employment^{P,1,2}

Total employment grew by 27,700 in 3Q 2026, higher than the 11,400 in 2Q 2026 and 25,100 in 3Q 2025. Both resident³ and non-resident employment grew faster than the previous quarter.

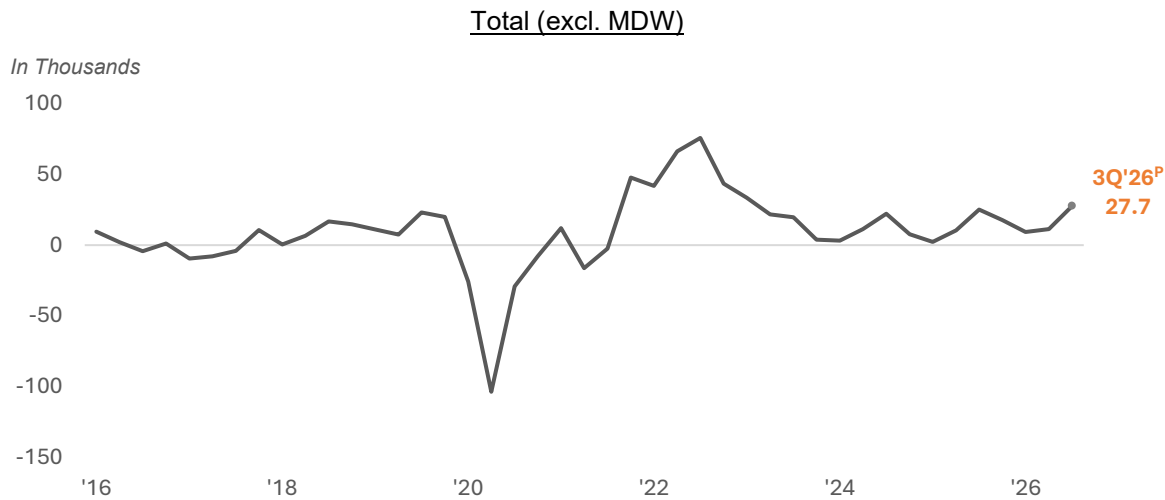
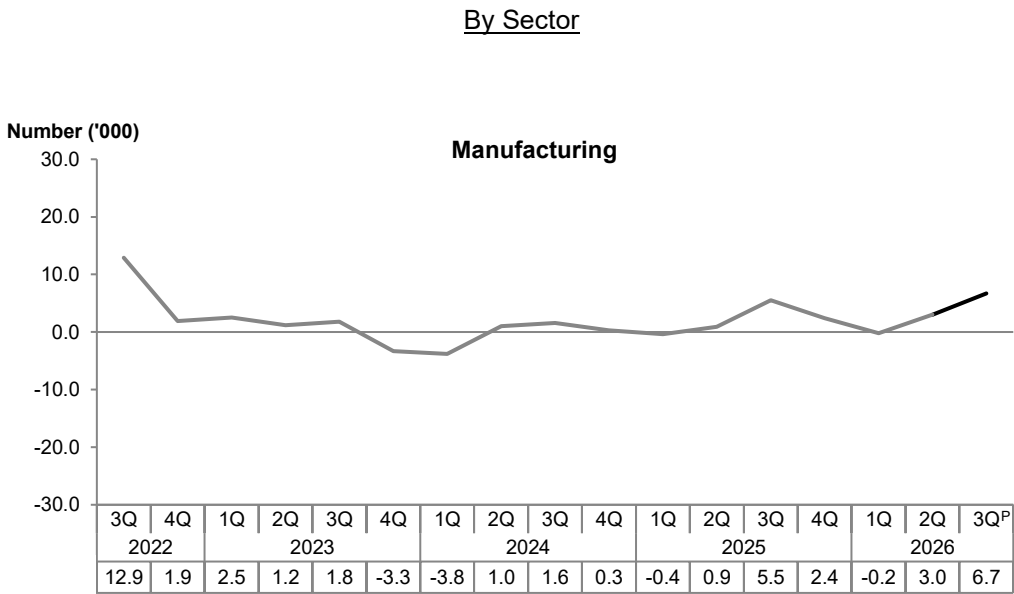
Resident employment growth continued to be mainly supported by essential and public services, namely *Public Administration & Education*, *Transportation & Storage* and *Health & Social Services*. In contrast, resident employment growth in outward-oriented sectors such as *Information & Communications*, *Financial Services* and *Professional Services* was subdued amid global economic uncertainty. Non-resident employment continued to account for the majority of employment growth in 3Q 2026, mainly in *Construction* and *Manufacturing* sectors.

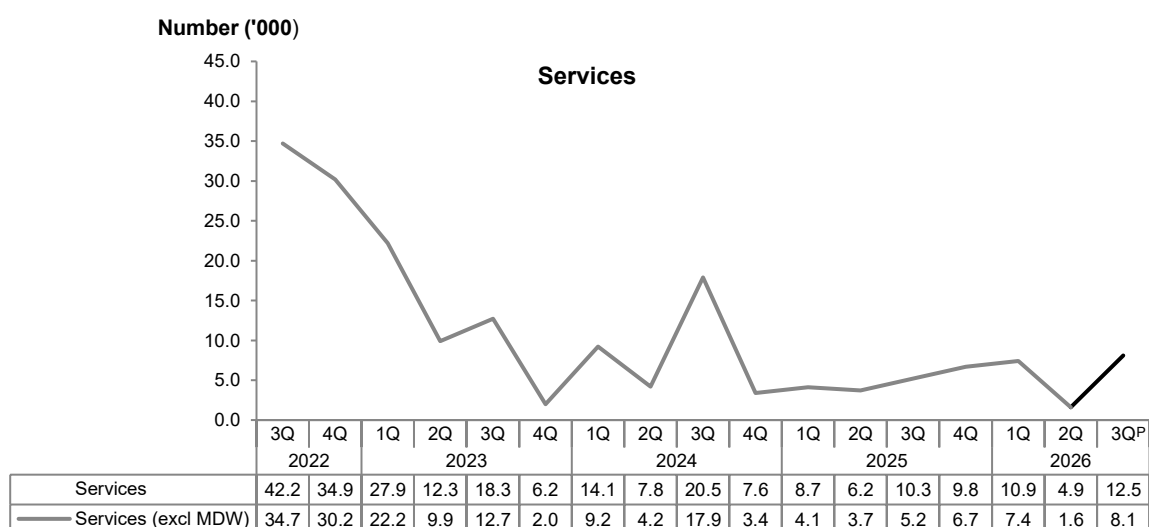
¹ Employment figures cited in this report exclude Migrant Domestic Workers (MDW).

² Based on preliminary estimates, 507,700 persons were employed in *Manufacturing*, 590,100 in *Construction*, and 3,052,600 (2,724,500 excl. MDW) in *Services* in September 2026. Employment totalled 4,176,700 (3,848,600 excl. MDW) in September 2026 (total includes other sectors like agriculture, fishing etc.).

³ Refers to Singapore citizens and permanent residents.

Chart 1 Quarterly Employment Change





Source: Administrative Records and Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

P: Preliminary

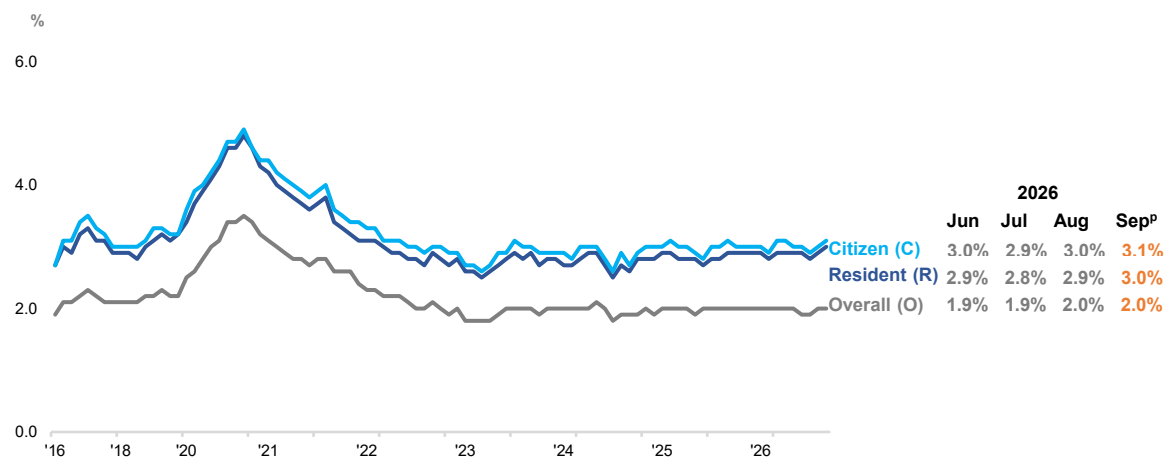
Notes:

- (1) Data are primarily from administrative records, with the self-employed component estimated from the Labour Force Survey.
- (2) Data for the three major sectors do not add up to the total as the latter includes *Agriculture, Fishing, Quarrying, Utilities and Sewerage & Waste Management*.
- (3) The industries are classified based on SSIC 2020.
- (4) Employment change refers to the difference between employment level at the end of the reference period and that at the end of the preceding period.

Unemployment^P

The overall unemployment rate remained unchanged at 2.0% in September 2026. Resident and citizen unemployment rates edged up slightly to 3.0% and 3.1% respectively, from 2.9% and 3.0% in August 2026.

Chart 2 Unemployment Rates (Seasonally Adjusted)



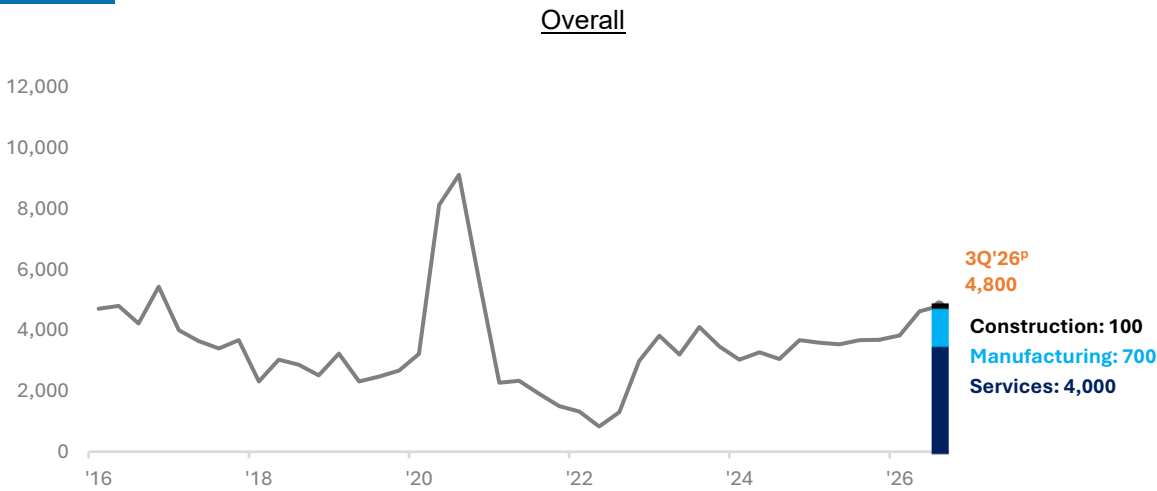
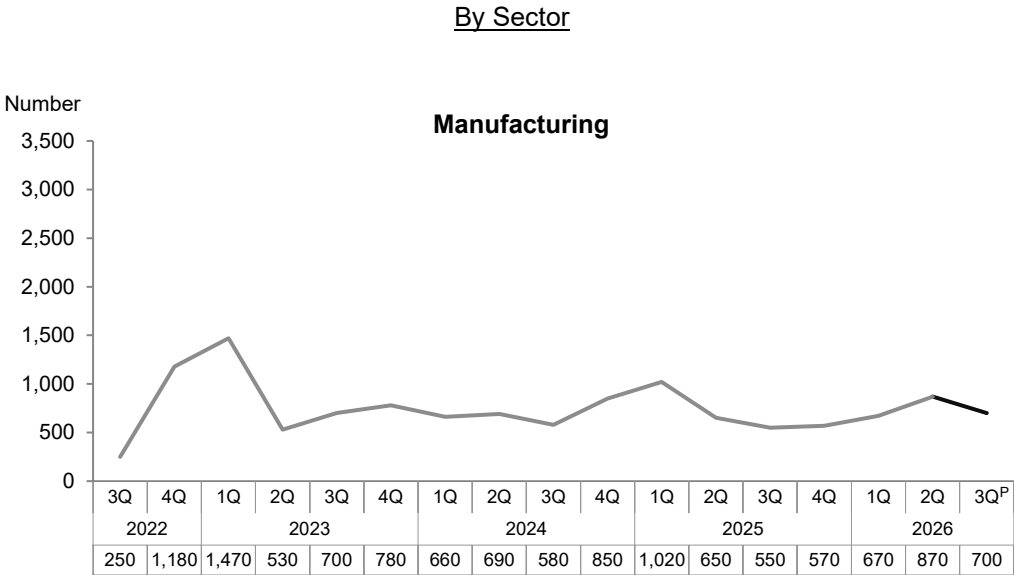
Source: Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

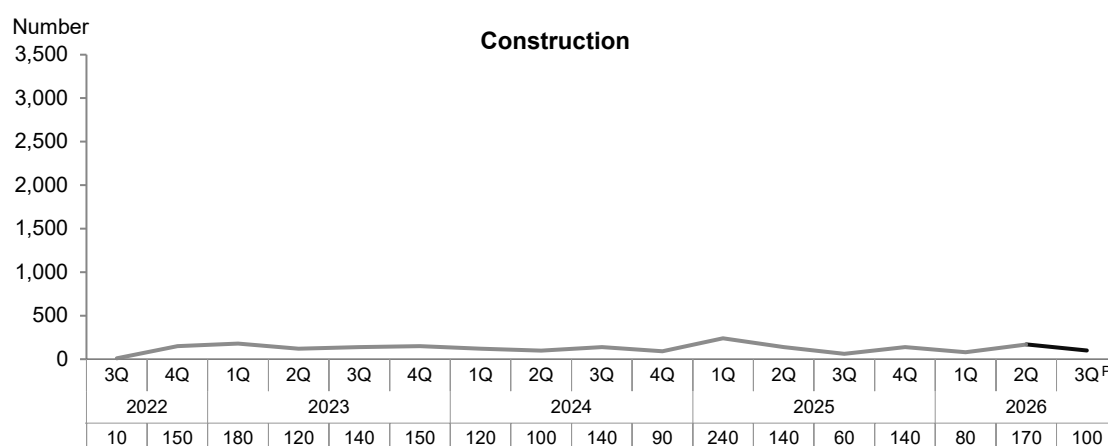
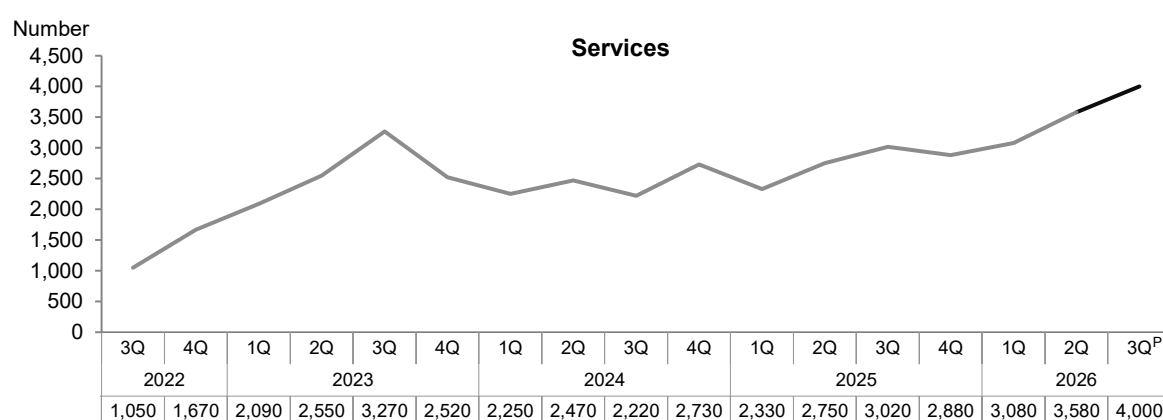
P: Preliminary

Retrenchments^P

The number of retrenchments increased from 4,620 in 2Q 2026 to 4,800 in 3Q 2026, while the incidence of retrenchment was unchanged at 2.0 per 1,000 employees. Retrenchments remained elevated in selected outward-oriented sectors such as *Information & Communications*, *Financial Services* and *Manufacturing*, while business reorganisation continued to be the main driver of retrenchments.

Chart 3 Quarterly Retrenchments





Source: Labour Market Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

^P: Preliminary

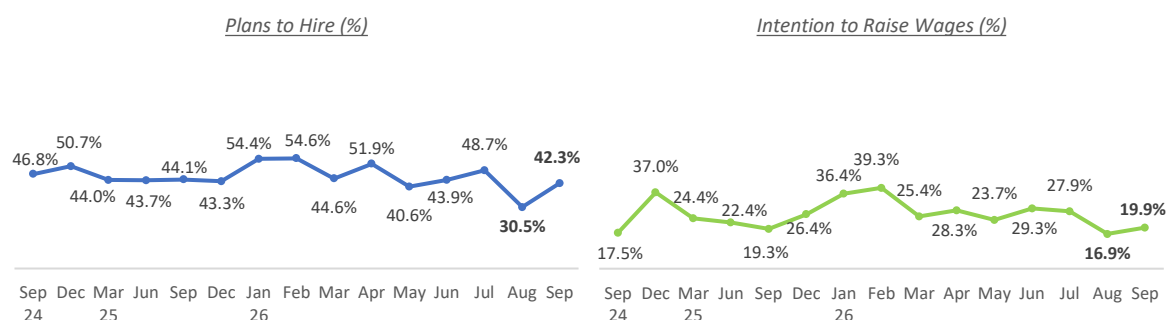
Notes:

- (1) Data pertain to private sector establishments (each with at least 25 employees) and the public sector.
- (2) The industries are classified based on SSIC 2020.
- (3) Data for the three major sectors may not add up to the total as the latter includes *Agriculture, Fishing, Quarrying, Utilities and Sewerage & Waste Management*.

Forward-looking indicators were mixed in September, with MOM's business expectation polls showing that the share of firms expecting to hire over the next three months increased from 30.5% in August 2026 to 42.3% in September 2026. Over the same period, the share of firms expecting to raise wages improved slightly from 16.9% to 19.9%. However, both remained below July's levels, suggesting that employers remained cautious about hiring and wage increases amid continued uncertainty.

The share of firms expecting to retrench also edged up from 2.8% in August to 3.1% in September 2026. This increase, alongside higher actual retrenchments, points to emerging weaknesses in parts of the labour market that warrant close monitoring, even as the overall market continued to expand.

Chart 4 Hiring and Wage Expectations for the Next Three Months



Source: Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note:

Data reflect the proportion of companies that indicated 'yes' or 'maybe' to having plans to hire or to raising wages in the next three months.

Explanatory Notes

Employment

Source

Primarily from administrative records. The self-employed component is estimated from the Labour Force Survey.

Coverage

Employment data comprise all persons in employment i.e. employees and the self-employed. However, it excludes men who are serving their 2-year full-time national service liability in the Singapore Armed Forces, Police and Civil Defence Forces.

Data on the number of resident employees are compiled from the Central Provident Fund (CPF) Board's administrative records of active contributors, defined as resident employees who have at least one CPF contribution paid for him/her. A resident employee is a Singapore citizen or Permanent Resident who is employed by an employer under a contract of service or other agreement entered into in Singapore. Every resident employee and his/her employer are required to make monthly contributions to the CPF. The CPF is a compulsory savings scheme that provides workers financial security in old age and helps meet the needs of healthcare, home-ownership, family protection and asset enhancement.

Data on non-residents working in Singapore are compiled from administrative records of non-residents on valid work passes issued by the Ministry of Manpower. Non-residents can work in Singapore only if they have valid work passes issued by the Ministry of Manpower.

The number of self-employed residents is estimated from the Labour Force Survey. The self-employed comprises persons aged 15 years and over who are own account workers, employers or contributing family workers.

Concepts and Definitions

Employment change refers to the change in the number of persons who are in employment, derived by taking the difference in the employment level (i.e. number of employed persons) at the end of the reference period compared with the end of the preceding period. A positive change refers to the additional number of persons who are in employment, while a negative change refers to the decline in number of persons in employment.

Uses and Limitations

Analysis of employment change over time helps in understanding the impact of cyclical and structural changes in the economy on the demand for workers. In particular, the breakdown of employment by industry helps identify sectors where employment is growing or falling.

Conceptually, the change in employment over the reference period is the difference between people entering and exiting employment during the period. Users should not mistake an increase in employment as gross job creation i.e. the increase in employment in expanding establishments only.

Unemployment

Source

Labour Force Survey

Coverage

The survey covers private households in Singapore. It excludes workers living in construction worksites, dormitories and workers' quarters at the workplace and persons commuting from abroad to work in Singapore. Estimates of the total labour force are derived by combining data on residents obtained from the survey with non-resident employment data compiled from administrative records.¹

Concepts and Definitions

Unemployed persons refer to persons aged 15 years and over who did not work but were actively looking and available for work during the reference period. They include persons who were not working but were taking steps to start their own business or taking up a new job after the reference period.

Unemployment rate is defined as the percentage of unemployed persons to the labour force (i.e. employed and unemployed persons) aged 15 years and over.

Long-term unemployed persons refer to persons aged 15 years and over who have been unemployed for 25 weeks or more.

Long-term unemployment rate is defined as the percentage of long-term unemployed persons to the labour force.

Uses and Limitations

The unemployment rate is probably the best-known measure of the labour market. It measures unutilised labour supply and is useful in the study of the economic cycle as it is closely related to economic fluctuations.

Unemployment can have frictional, cyclical and structural elements. As it takes time for job seekers and employers to find a match, there is always a certain level of frictional unemployment due to people changing jobs and from new entrants looking for work for the first time. Unemployment can also be structural e.g. arising from a mismatch between the job seekers and the job openings available. With structural unemployment, even if job vacancies and job seekers coexist in the labour market, they may not be matched over a long period of time. Finally, unemployment can be cyclical. This occurs when there is a general decline in demand for manpower as aggregate demand for goods and services falls in the event of a cyclical downturn. Unlike structural and frictional unemployment where the problem is in matching job openings with job seekers, cyclical unemployment occurs when there are not enough jobs to go around.

Unemployment can vary due to changes in demand or supply of manpower. It can decline if more people succeed in securing employment or when the unemployed persons stop looking for a job and leave the labour force either temporarily (e.g. to take up training) or permanently (e.g. to retire). Conversely, unemployment may rise due to increase in labour supply from new entrants or re-entrants to the labour market. It will also rise if more people quit their jobs to look for alternative employment or if there is an increase in layoffs.

¹ Population figures for each quarter will be finalised in the next quarter. Unemployment data are therefore subject to the latest available population estimates.

Unemployment rates by specific groups, defined e.g. by age and educational attainment are useful in identifying groups of workers most vulnerable to unemployment.

Release Schedule

From July 2020, top-line unemployment rates for overall, residents and citizens for the month will be released on a monthly basis by the first week of the month after next. This availability of top-line unemployment rates on a monthly basis will enable us to detect shifts in the unemployment situation in a more timely manner. The information will be made available on the Ministry of Manpower's statistical portal <https://stats.mom.gov.sg>.

Additional breakdown on unemployment by profile e.g. age, education, will continue to be made available in the Labour Market Reports released at the end of every quarter. This is because variations in the profile of the unemployed are unlikely in the short term.

Data Quality

To ensure data quality, the Department analyses each survey response to identify and resolve inconsistencies that may suggest an inaccurate response. A response rate of at least 85% is achieved for the monthly labour force survey so as to ensure the sample retains its representativeness.

Seasonal Adjustment

The unemployment time series are influenced by seasonality – periodic fluctuations due to recurring calendar-related events such as holidays, and the beginning and end of school terms. Seasonal adjustment removes the influences of these fluctuations and allows users to derive a more meaningful analysis of the trends in a data series, especially for those with strong seasonal patterns.

The seasonally adjusted figures are derived using X-12 ARIMA program which removes seasonal influences in the data series. To ensure a more accurate reflection of seasonally adjusted figures, concurrent seasonal adjustment is also being done and the latest information available will be incorporated.

Revisions

In order to present timely data at the highest frequency, the monthly unemployment figures are subjected to revisions when the latest population figure becomes available or when the seasonal factors are updated with the latest data.

OTHER RELEASES



Date of Release

UPCOMING ...

Labour Force in Singapore Advance Release 2026	26 Nov - 2 Dec 2026*
Labour Market Report Third Quarter 2026	10-16 Dec 2026*
Labour Force in Singapore 2026	25-29 Jan 2027*
Labour Market Advance Release Fourth Quarter 2026	28-29 Jan 2027*

PAST ...

Wage Adjustments and Adoption of NWC Guidelines for Lower-Wage Employees 2025	26 Oct 2026
Labour Market Second Quarter 2026	21 Sep 2026
Labour Market First Quarter 2026	15 Jun 2026
List of Top Entry-Level PMET Job Opportunities for Fresh Graduates	15 Jun 2026
Report on Employees' Working Condition 2024	28 May 2026
Report on Wage Practices 2025	28 May 2026
Adoption of Artificial Intelligence Among Firms	30 Apr 2026
Overqualification in Singapore 2025	14 Apr 2026

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**The actual date of release will be indicated at least a week before the scheduled publication date.*