

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT 10.2% IN SEPTEMBER 2015: EMPLOYED PERSONS UP BY 5,900

Preliminary findings of the Statistical Institute of Belize's September 2015 Labour Force Survey show that, for this month, the total number of employed persons stood at an estimated 140,475. This represented an increase of 5,954 from 134,521 recorded in September 2014. The national unemployment rate for this period declined by almost two percentage points, from 12.1 percent in September of last year to 10.2 percent in September 2015.

Of the more than 5,900 additional employed persons, males accounted for the majority, gaining more than 4,000 jobs. The unemployment rate among males, however, remained almost unchanged at 6.8 percent, as the number of men in the labour force grew as quickly as did the number of jobs held by men. The number of females with jobs also grew, albeit by a lesser 1,800 when compared to September of last year. Nonetheless, the unemployment rate among women dropped significantly to 15.7 percent from 20.4 percent in September of last year. This reflected both the growth in the number of jobs held by women as well as the fact that a large number of females, most likely from among those without jobs, exited the labour force between September 2014 and September 2015.

The Belize district saw the greatest increase in the number of employed persons, with this number increasing by almost 4,000 to about 49,600. The Stann Creek district also experienced significant gains in employment, with more than 3,200 additional persons having jobs. All other districts saw increases in employment except for Corozal and Cayo, both of which lost about 1,000 jobs compared to September 2014.

The Cayo and Stann Creek districts had the highest rates of joblessness, at 14 percent and 15.2 percent, respectively. All districts except for Cayo recorded lower unemployment rates than in last September, with the most pronounced difference being seen in the Belize district, where the rate of joblessness fell from 13.1 percent to 7.9 percent. The total number of unemployed persons was estimated at 15,907 in September 2015, down by more than 2,800 from 18,749 in the same month last year. Over 60 percent of all unemployed persons reported that they had been without jobs for 6 months or more.

There were about 18,730 persons, representing about 13 percent of all employed persons, who worked less than 35 hours per week during this period and are therefore considered underemployed. On average, these persons worked for about 20.7 hours per week. Females were twice as likely to be underemployed, with one fifth of all employed women falling into this category, compared to about 10 percent of their male counterparts.

The median monthly income in September 2015 was \$1,153 with males earning about \$80 more, on average, than females. Only one third of all persons in the labour force had completed a secondary level of schooling or higher.

Table 1: Number of Employed Persons by District; September 2014 and September 2015

District	September 2014	September 2015	Change
Corozal	17,366	16,406	-959
Orange Walk	18,068	18,629	561
Belize	45,575	49,568	3,993
Cayo	30,905	29,829	-1,075
Stann Creek	12,357	15,610	3,253
Toledo	10,251	10,433	182
Country	134,521	140,475	5,954

Table 2: Number of Unemployed Persons by District; September 2014 and September 2015

District	September 2014	September 2015	Change
Corozal	2,206	1,382	-824
Orange Walk	2,083	1,953	-130
Belize	6,880	4,278	-2,602
Cayo	3,828	4,854	1,026
Stann Creek	2,771	2,805	34
Toledo	712	637	-75
Country	18,479	15,907	-2,572

Figure 1: Unemployment Rates by District (Percent); September 2014 and September 2015

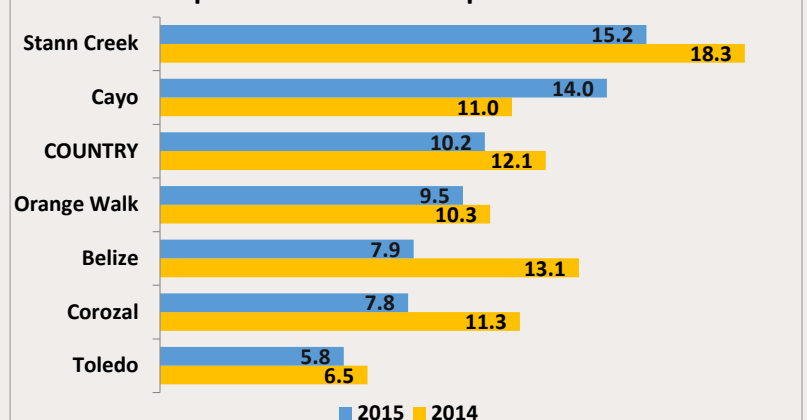


Figure 2: Employed and Underemployed Persons by Sex; September 2015

