

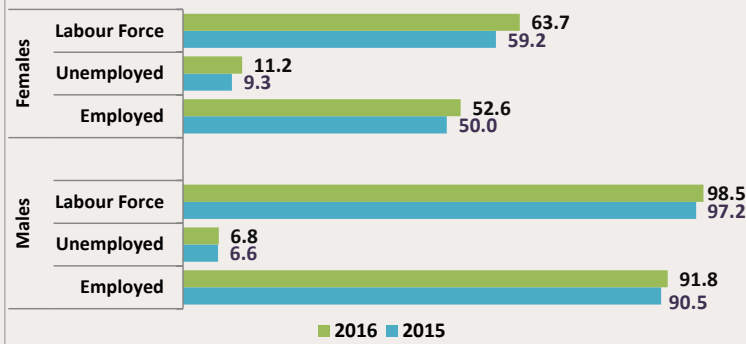
**UNEMPLOYMENT RISES TO 11.1% IN SEPTEMBER 2016: 2,000 ADDITIONAL UNEMPLOYED**

Preliminary results of the Statistical Institute of Belize’s most recent Labour Force Survey show that, in September 2016 there were a total of 17,952 unemployed persons in Belize. This represented an increase of 2,045 in the number of unemployed persons since September of 2015, despite the addition of over 3,800 new jobs during the period, and was the result of an influx of persons into the labour force at a faster rate than that at which new jobs were created. As a result, the national unemployment rate rose by almost 1 percentage point from 10.2 percent in September 2015 to 11.1 percent in September of 2016.

Notwithstanding the gains in total employment, the number of underemployed persons also saw an increase of more than 3 percent. The underemployed, which totaled more than 24,000 persons in September 2016, worked an average of 18.3 hours per week, well below a full work week. The median monthly income of employed persons fell by more than \$100 to \$1,041, likely due to the increase in underemployment among working people.

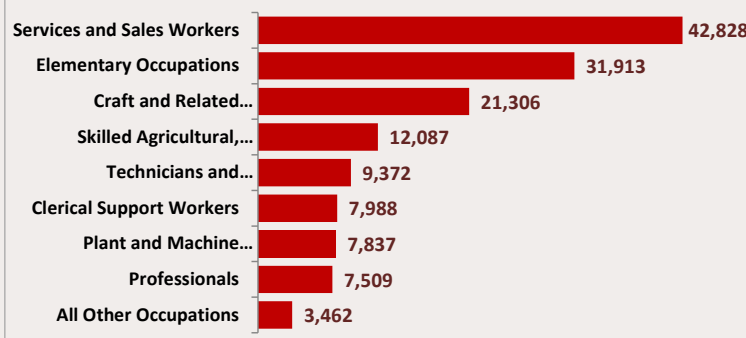
With more new entrants into the Labour Force than new jobs, the unemployed population recorded a sizable increase of 2,045 more jobless persons compared to September of the previous year. The vast majority of these, more than 1,900, were women. Females continue to be disproportionately affected by joblessness, and were more than twice as likely as their male counterparts to be unemployed. The female unemployment rate rose by 1.9 percentage points, from 15.7 in September 2015 to 17.6 percent in September 2016. On the other hand, almost all males who entered the Labour Force were able to find jobs, and the male unemployment rate remained virtually unchanged at 6.9 percent.

**Figure 1: Labour Force, Unemployed and Employed by Sex (Thousands of Persons); September 2015 and 2016**



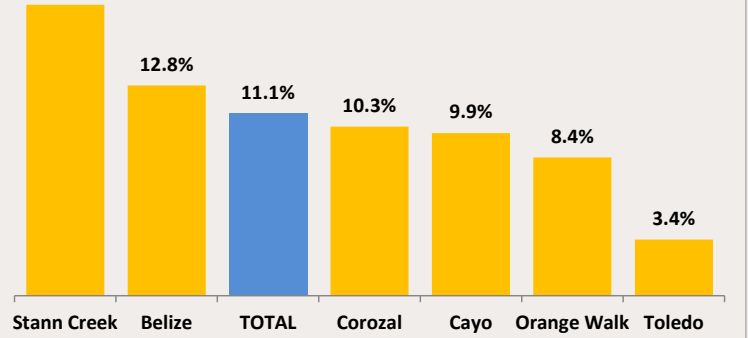
As of September 2016, the country’s Labour Force stood at 162,254, up significantly from 156,383 in September of 2015, with over 5,800 additional persons joining the workforce. While both males and females contributed to this rise in the national Labour Force, about three times as many females as males entered the workforce between September 2015 and September 2016. The female Labour Force rose by more than 4,500, with most of this increase occurring in urban areas, while the male workforce grew by just over 1,300, much of which took place in rural parts of the country.

**Figure 2: Number of Persons Employed by Occupation; September 2016**



The number of employed persons was also up, rising from 140,475 in September of last year to 144,302 in September 2016, as approximately 3,800 more persons were found to be working. All districts saw increases in the number of persons with jobs, except for the Belize and Stann Creek districts, which both experienced net losses of more than 1,000 jobs since last September. The Cayo district recorded the most gains in employment over the period, adding over 2,200 more jobs, a considerable portion of which was attributable to an increase in employment among persons from rural areas. Of all new jobs added during the period, almost 2,600 or two thirds went to females.

**Figure 3: Unemployment Rates by District; September 2016**



Across the districts, Stann Creek once again had the highest rate of unemployment, at 17.7 percent. This was up by more than 2 percentage points from the unemployment rate of 15.2 percent recorded in September 2015. The Belize district, which also lost over 1,000 jobs during the period, saw unemployment rise from just under 8 percent to 12.8 percent. The Corozal district, despite having a net gain of over 1,000 jobs, also experienced an increase in its unemployment rate, as there were more people joining the Labour Force and looking for jobs than there were new jobs during the period.

**Figure 4: Employed and Underemployed Persons by Sex and Urban/Rural; September 2016**

