

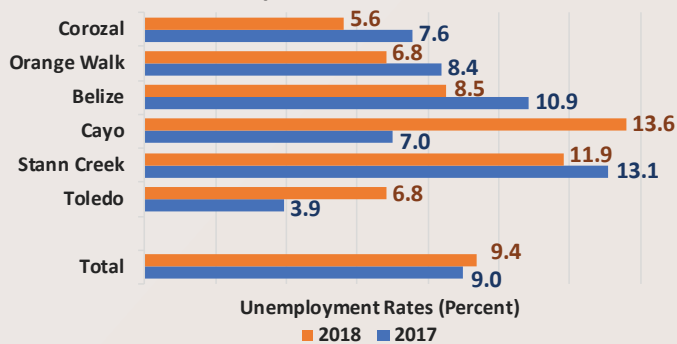


## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCHES UP TO 9.4 PERCENT IN APRIL 2018

Preliminary findings from the Statistical Institute of Belize's April 2018 Labour Force Survey showed that the country's unemployment rate rose slightly to 9.4 percent from 9 percent in April 2017, despite a net increase of over 5,800 jobs in April 2018. The SIB attributes this marginal growth in the overall unemployment rate to a sharp rise in the level of unemployment in the Cayo and Toledo districts, where data indicates that persons were joining the labour force at a faster pace than that at which jobs were being created.

**Labour Force:** As at April 2018, the number of persons in Belize's labour force was estimated to be 172,086, a net increase of 7,151 persons since last April. Approximately 4 out of every 5 persons entering the labour force during this period were females, most of whom were from the rural areas. This trend is a stark contrast to what was seen in April 2017 when the overwhelming majority of new entrants into the labour force were males. Nonetheless, it should be noted that despite this uptick in female labour force participation, males still account for about 60 percent of the Belize's labour force.

Figure 1: Unemployment Rates by District;  
April 2017 and 2018



**Employed:** The total number of employed persons in April 2018 was estimated at 155,950, representing a net increase of 5,838 persons since April 2017. Females experienced the largest gains in employment during this period, especially in the 'Professionals' and 'Technicians and Associate Professionals' categories, while more males found jobs in the 'Plant and Machinery Operators and Assemblers' category. Noteworthy, however, is that there was a net loss of jobs among males in the 'Skilled Agriculture and Forestry' and 'Elementary' occupations.

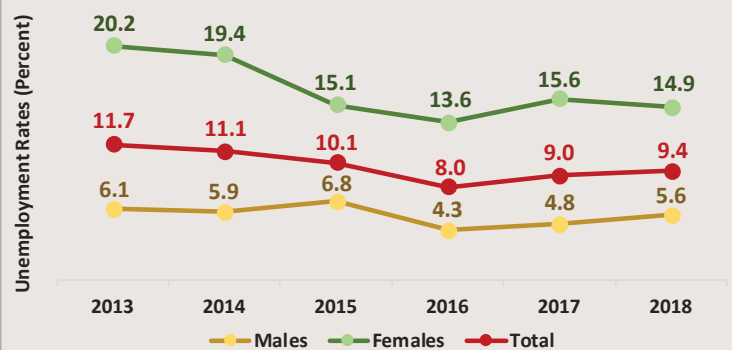
Among the districts all, except Belize, showed increases in the number of persons employed in April 2018 compared to the previous year. The Cayo district in particular registered the largest increase in employment with 2,455 more persons employed during this period. In contrast, the Belize district showed a net loss of 773 jobs. The median monthly income for April 2018 was \$1,217, increasing just over \$100 since last April.

**Underemployed:** The total number of underemployed persons, those who work less than 35 hours per week, was estimated at 21,971 for

April 2018, down from 25,032 in April 2017. These persons comprised just over 14 percent of employed persons and earned considerably less than the rest of the employed population, with a median income of just \$695. Females were twice as likely to be underemployed, with about 20 percent falling within this category, compared to 10 percent of their male counterparts. Underemployment was also more prevalent in the rural areas, where 16.5 percent of employed persons worked less than 35 hours per week compared to 11.4 percent in the urban areas. Among the districts, Toledo had the highest level of underemployment at 29.3 percent, while Belize had the lowest at 10.2 percent.

**Unemployment:** The rise in unemployment between April 2017 and April 2018 was more evident in the country's urban areas, where the rate went up from 8.7 percent to 9.5 percent while rural unemployment remained unchanged at 9.3 percent. The results also showed a growth in the rate of unemployment among males, from 4.8 percent in April 2017 to 5.6 percent one year later. The female unemployment rate, on the other hand, declined from 15.6 percent to 14.9 percent over the same period.

Figure 2: April Unemployment Rates; 2013-2018



Cayo and Toledo were the only two districts to experience an increase in unemployment rates, despite net gains in the number of persons working. Unemployment was highest in the Cayo district, with the rate almost doubling since April 2017, from 7 percent to 13.6 percent. Similarly, unemployment in the Toledo district went up from 3.9 percent to 6.8 percent over the year. Survey findings suggest that the rise in unemployment in these two districts was because the demand for jobs grew faster than did the supply of jobs during the period.

In all other districts, unemployment was down in comparison to April of last year. Corozal registered the lowest unemployment rate in the country at 5.6 percent, a decline of two percentage points since April 2017. The Orange Walk and Toledo districts both recorded the second lowest unemployment rates at 6.8 percent, while the Stann Creek district had the second highest rate at 11.9 percent. The Belize district experienced that largest drop in unemployment, with the rate declining from 10.9 percent in April 2017 to 8.5 percent in April 2018, largely due to persons exiting the labour force.

Figure 3: Employed and Underemployed Persons  
by Sex and Urban/Rural; April 2018

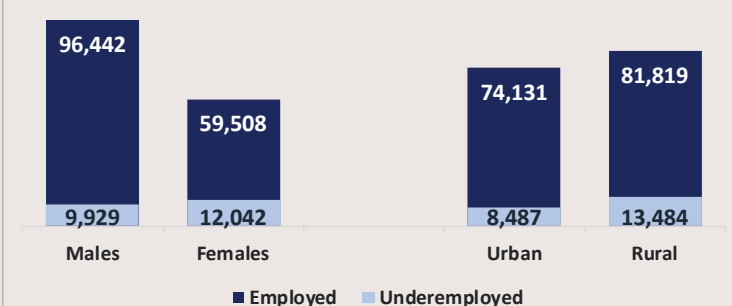


Table 1: Number of Employed Persons by District;  
April 2017 and April 2018

District	April 2017	April 2018	Net Change
Corozal	18,810	20,545	1,736
Orange Walk	19,556	19,677	122
Belize	51,589	50,816	-773
Cayo	33,183	35,638	2,455
Stann Creek	14,663	16,298	1,635
Toledo	12,312	12,976	664
Total	150,112	155,950	5,838