



LFS

LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF BELIZE

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT 1.9 % IN SEPTEMBER 2025

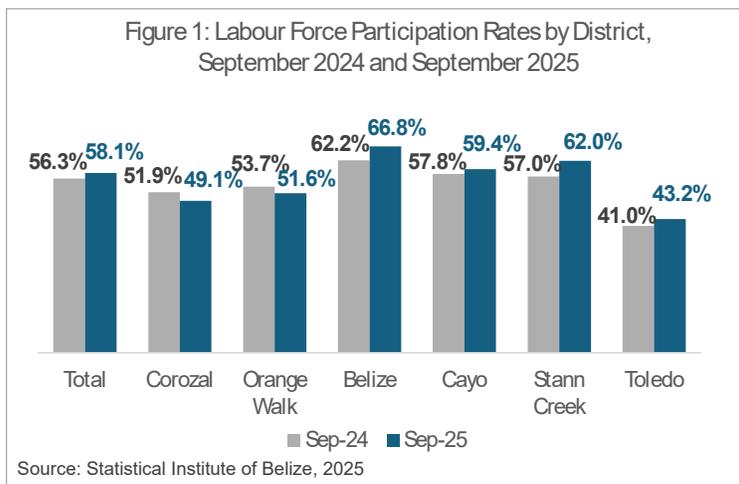
Preliminary results from the Statistical Institute of Belize’s most recent Labour Force Survey (LFS) indicate that the unemployment rate in September 2025 was 1.9 percent, down from 2.1 percent in September 2024.

Labour Force and Labour Force Participation:

In September 2025, the total labour force was estimated at 181,863 persons, with males making up nearly three-fifths of this total. The labour force participation rate¹ stood at 58.1 percent, an increase of 1.8 percentage points from 56.3 percent in September 2024 (see Figure 1). Gender disparities with respect to participation remained pronounced, with only 47.2 percent of working aged females being a part of the work force, compared to 69.9 percent of working aged males. This gap highlights the significant barriers to female participation, with domestic duties or family care cited as the most common reasons for not being available for work.

Youth (ages 14 to 24) participation in the labour force stood at 41.3 percent in September 2025. Gender differences were also evident within this age group, as just over one-third (34.3 percent) of young females participated in the work force compared to 48.6 percent of young males. Among adults (ages 25 and older), participation rates were considerably higher for males, with almost eight out of every ten males (78.1 percent) participating compared to only about a half of females (51.8 percent).

As has been the case in previous rounds, labour force participation rates also varied widely across districts. In September 2025, the Toledo district recorded the lowest rate at 43.2 percent, while the Belize district had the highest at 66.8 percent (see Figure 1). Additionally, participation varied by educational attainment. Persons who had attained tertiary level education experienced the highest participation levels at 74.9 percent, contrasting sharply with those having only a primary level education, who recorded participation levels of 49.8 percent.



Employed:

In September 2025, there were 178,442 employed persons, with males representing almost three-fifths of this total. Almost half of all employed persons were between the ages of 25 to 44 years. As depicted in Figure 2 , the largest share of employed persons was working in the ‘Wholesale and Retail Trade’ industry (15.6 percent) , followed by ‘Tourism’ (15.2 percent), ‘Community, Social & Personal Services’ (14.3 percent) and ‘Government Services; Compulsory Social Security’ (10.6 percent). Compared to September 2024, the ‘Tourism’ industry had the largest gains in the share of employed persons, with an increase of 2.7 percentage points. The share of employed persons working in the ‘Wholesale & Retail Trade’ industry was up by 0.5 percentage points, while the ‘Community, Social & Personal Services’ rose by 0.4 percentage points. On the other hand, the share accounted for by the ‘Government Services, Compulsory Social Security’ industry shrank by 0.3 percentage points.

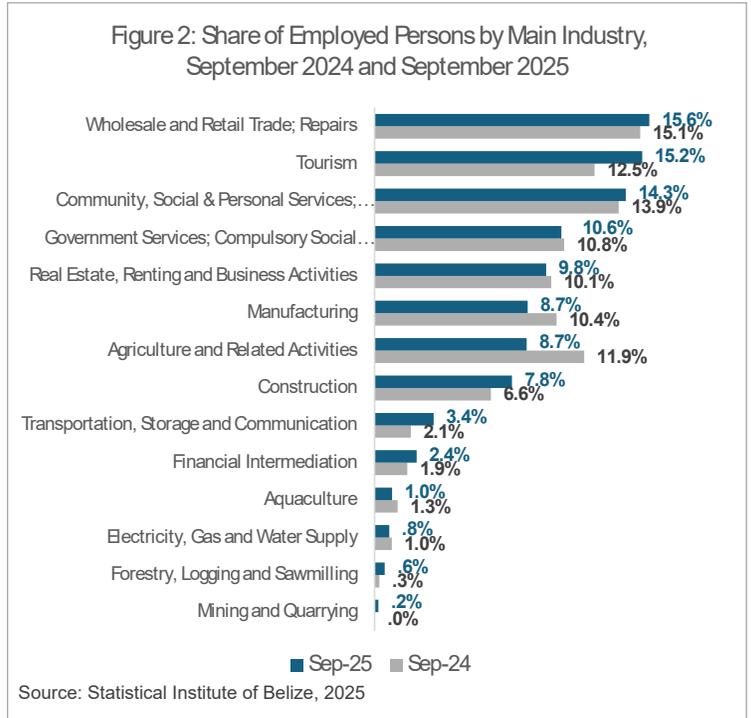
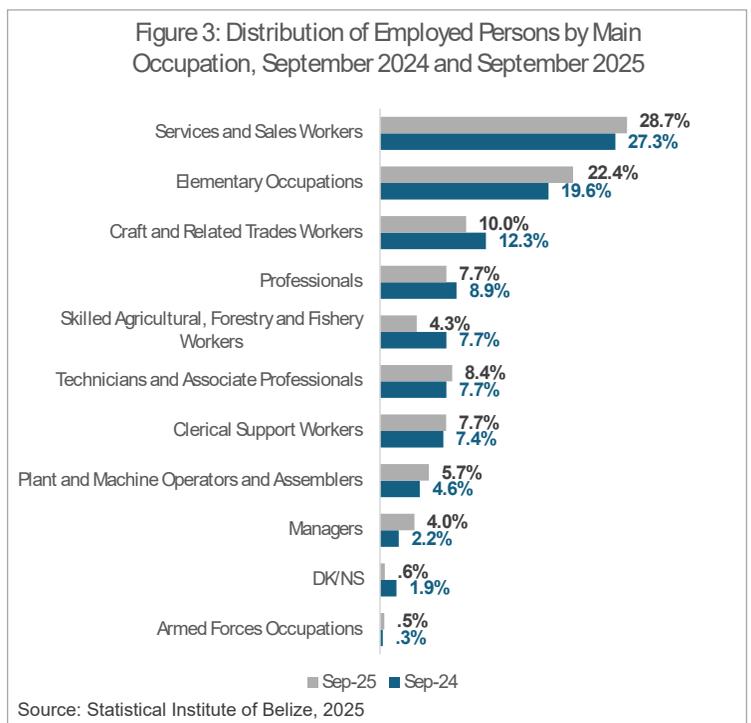


Figure 3 illustrates that, in September 2025, nearly one half of all employed persons were concentrated in two major occupations, namely ‘Services and Sales’ (28.7 percent) and ‘Elementary Occupations’ (22.4 percent). The most notable increase was seen in ‘Elementary Occupations’, which was up from 19.6 percent in the previous year. In contrast, the category which saw the greatest decrease in percentage share of employed persons in September 2025, was ‘Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers’, which fell from 7.7 percent to 4.3 percent.



More than half of all employed persons (56.4 percent) were classified as ‘Employees’, working for someone else, while 28.3 percent were ‘Self-employed’ persons. Another 2.1 percent were classified as ‘Contributing family workers.’

¹ The labour force participation rate is the percentage of the working-age population that is active in the labor market, calculated by dividing the total labor force by the working-age population.

The average monthly income for employed persons in September 2025 was \$1,551, an increase of \$21 from September 2024. Among the various occupations, the highest income earners were 'Professionals' (\$2,257), who made up 7.7 percent of all employed persons, and 'Managers' (\$2,238), who represented 4.0 percent of the workforce. On average, employed persons worked an estimated 42.7 hours per week, up from 39.8 hours per week in September 2024.

Informally Employed²:

A total of 64,129 persons, or 35.9 percent of the employed population, were in informal employment in September 2025. The largest shares of informal employment were found in 'Wholesale and Retail Trade' (19.3 percent) and 'Community, Social and Personal Services; Extra Territorial Organisations & Bodies' (18.7 percent). Among the informally employed, 61.8 percent were 'Self-employed', while 32.3 percent were 'Employees'.

Underemployed³:

The underemployed population in September 2025 was estimated at 2,465 persons, representing 1.4 percent of all employed persons. Men accounted for 55.5 percent of the underemployed population; however, underemployment rates were higher among females (1.5 percent) compared to males (1.3 percent). The average monthly income for underemployed persons was \$1,234, well below that of the wider employed population. Additionally, underemployed persons worked on average 17.4 hours per week, up from 15.6 hours per week in September 2024.

Unemployed⁴:

In September 2025, the estimated number of unemployed persons was 3,421, representing 1.9 percent of the total labour force. The unemployment rate for females was 3.0 percent, which was more than double that of males at 1.1 percent, while unemployment among individuals aged 14 to 24 stood at 4.8 percent in September 2025.

An estimated 38.0 percent of all unemployed persons had been without a job for twelve months or more, while 30.9 percent of all unemployed persons had been without a job for less than three months. About three-quarters of unemployed persons (75.0 percent) reported that their primary source of financial support was a parent, spouse or child, while 21.4 percent of unemployed persons supported themselves through means such as savings or pensions.

At the district level, Stann Creek had the highest unemployment rate at 2.9 percent, while Corozal and Cayo had the lowest, at 0.9 and 0.8 percent, respectively (see Figure 4).

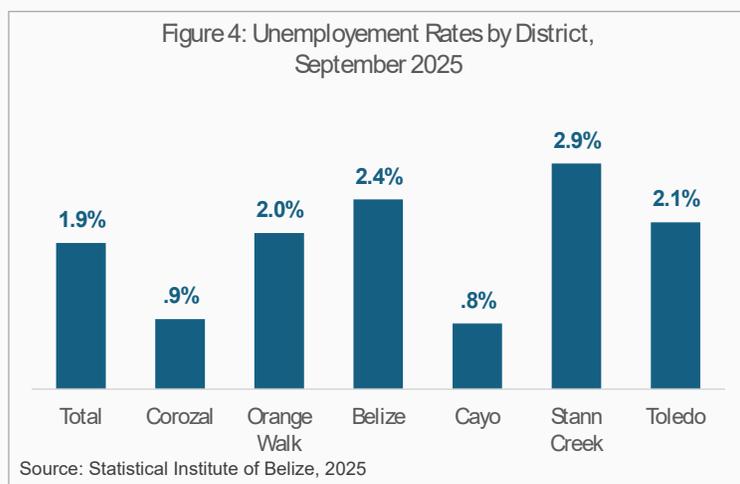
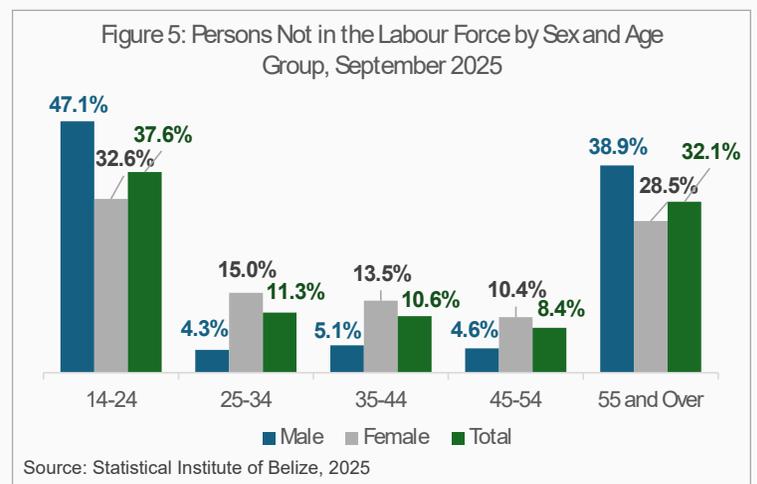
Persons Outside the Labour Force:

Persons who are not employed and are not actively seeking or available for work fall outside of the labour force. This group includes people of various ages who are not active in the labour force for various reasons such as attending an educational institution, performing unpaid household work, being retired, being sick or disabled, or being discouraged from seeking employment.

In September 2025, an estimated 130,167, or 41.9 percent of the working-age population were outside of the labour force, with females representing almost two-thirds of this group. Notably, 37.6 percent of persons outside of the labour force were aged 14 to 24, while 32.1 percent were 55 years and older.

35.5 percent of persons outside the labour force cited personal or family responsibilities as their main reason for not participating, with females accounting for 89.5 percent of this group. Additionally, 10.1 percent reported not seeking employment because they were attending school or training, with males and females almost equally represented in this category.

An estimated 55.2 percent of persons outside of the labour force had never worked before. Additionally, 78.2 percent relied on a parent, spouse or child as their main source of financial support.



² Informally employed persons are those not registered with the Belize Companies and Corporate Affairs Registry or the Belize Social Security Board. This includes persons in paid employment at private entities that do not make Social Security contributions.
³ Underemployed persons are a subset of the employed population who work fewer than 35 hours per week, want to work additional hours, and are available to do so, either in their current job or another, within the next two weeks.
⁴ Unemployed persons are those aged 14 or older who are without work, have actively looked for work in the past four weeks, and are available to start work within the next two weeks.