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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BNSI Preliminary Labour Force Survey Results for the First Quarter of 2026

Nassau, The Bahamas – October 2, 2026 – The Bahamas National Statistical Institute (BNSI) announces the release of the First Quarter (January – March) 2026 Labour Force Survey, providing updated information on employment, unemployment, labour force participation, and other key labour market indicators across The Bahamas.

The findings provide policymakers, researchers, service providers, and the public with valuable data to better understand the characteristics of the labour market throughout The Bahamas.

Key Findings

- The unemployment rate declined in the first quarter to (8.1%) of 2026.
- The unemployment rate for women was higher (nationally and regionally) when compared to men in the first quarter of 2026. Abaco was the only island where female (8.0%) unemployment rates was lower than their male (9.3%) counterparts.
- Youth unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2026 was (14.2%) a decrease when compared to the fourth quarter of 2025 (18.2%).
- Employment increased by 2,760 persons between the fourth quarter 2025 and first quarter 2026.
- The labour force grew by 1,535 persons in the first quarter of 2026.
- Private employees accounted for 58 percent (133,490) of the employment status, followed by Government/Quasi-Government Employee 21 percent (48,170).
- The number of discouraged workers¹ declined compared with the fourth quarter of 2025.
- Community, Social and Personal Services (86,305) was the largest industry in the first quarter of 2026.
- In the first quarter of 2026, the Hotel and Restaurant industry was the fastest-growing industry, with employment increasing by 2,020 persons to 43,765. The second-fastest-growing industry was Mining, Quarrying, Electricity, Gas and Water, which recorded an increase of 1,365 employed persons compared with the fourth quarter of 2025.

The labour force totaled 249,025 persons in the first quarter of 2026, an increase of 1,535 compared with the fourth quarter of 2025. The number of unemployed persons was estimated at 20,240, down from 21,465 in the previous quarter. The unemployment rate declined by 0.6 percentage points, from 8.7% to 8.1%.

¹ Discouraged workers are defined as persons without work who were available for employment but were not actively seeking work because they believed no suitable jobs were available.

Labour Force Participation

In the first quarter of 2026, the labour force comprised 249,025 persons, an increase of 1,535 compared with the fourth quarter of 2025. The female labour force increased by 970 persons (0.78%), accounting for 63.0 percent of the overall increase. Males accounted for 125,040 persons (50.2%) in the labour force, while females accounted for 123,985 persons.

The overall labour force participation rate was 79.4%. The participation rate was higher among males, at 81.2%, compared with 74.9% among females.

Prime Working Age and Youth Employment

During the first quarter of 2026, 228,785 persons were employed, an increase of 2,760 persons (1.2%) compared with the fourth quarter of 2025. The number of employed males increased by 1,185 (1.04%) to 115,280, while the number of employed females increased by 1,575 (1.4%) to 113,505. Persons in the prime working-age group (25–54 years) accounted for 66.4% of total employment.

The first quarter of 2026 recorded 28,850 employed youth aged 15–24 years, an increase of 895 persons (3.2%) compared with 27,955 in the fourth quarter of 2025. The youth unemployment rate declined to 14.2%, from 18.2% in the previous quarter.

Underemployed Persons

During the first quarter of 2026, there were 29,085 underemployed persons, an increase of 2,890 (11.0%) compared with the fourth quarter of 2025. Underemployed persons are employed individuals whose work does not meet their desired level of compensation, working hours, or use of skills and experience, and who are seeking or available for additional work during the reference period.

Fewer Persons Unemployed in the First Quarter of 2026

The number of unemployed persons was 20,240, a decrease of 5.7% compared with the fourth quarter of 2025. The decline was largely driven by the prime working-age group (25–54 years), in which unemployment fell by 760 persons to 10,450.

The overall unemployment rate declined to 8.1%, from 8.7% in the previous quarter. Rates declined for both sexes. The male unemployment rate fell to 7.8%, from 8.3%, while the female rate fell to 8.8%, from 9.0%.

Women Continue to Lead in Degrees and Professional Certifications

Educational attainment data showed that 58% of the labour force had completed secondary school, 22% had completed university and 7% had completed another tertiary institution. In terms of qualifications, 22% of the labour force held a degree.

Women continued to outpace men in degrees and professional certifications (29% and 15%, respectively), while men had a slightly higher proportion of technical or vocational certifications. Overall, 27% of the labour force had no qualifications, with a higher proportion among men (34%).

Fewer Discouraged Workers in the First Quarter of 2026

The number of discouraged workers declined to 2,135, a decrease of 505 persons (19.2%) compared with the fourth quarter of 2025. Discouraged workers are persons outside the labour force who are available for work but are not actively seeking employment because they believe they are unlikely to find work.

Elementary Occupations Record the Largest Employment Increase

During the first quarter of 2026, employment in 'Elementary Occupations' rose by 32.5% to 36,170 persons, representing approximately one-sixth of total employment. Employment among 'Skilled Agricultural Workers' increased by 455 persons to 6,605.

Employment among 'Service Workers and Shop and Market Sales Workers' declined by 4.4% to 60,855 persons. Employment also fell in the combined group 'Craft and Related Workers, Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers', to 39,175 persons.

Hotels and Restaurants Lead Employment Growth by Industry

Employment in the 'Hotel and Restaurant' industry increased by 2,020 persons to 43,765 in the first quarter of 2026, compared with 41,745 in the fourth quarter of 2025. The second-largest increase occurred in 'Mining, Quarrying, Electricity, Gas and Water', where employment rose by 1,365 persons to 5,130.

The 'Hotel and Restaurant' industry recorded the largest increase in female employment, at 2,750 persons. The 'Wholesale and Retail' industry recorded the largest increase in male employment, at 2,145 persons, rising from 14,520 to 16,665.

About the Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey is BNSI's official quarterly household survey measuring labour force participation, employment, unemployment, underemployment, discouraged workers, and other labour market characteristics across The Bahamas. The survey provides nationally representative statistics that support government planning, business decision-making, academic research, and informed public discussion.

The full report and accompanying tables are available online through the Institute's website: www.bnsi.stats.gov.bs

About the Bahamas National Statistical Institute (BNSI)

The Bahamas National Statistical Institute (BNSI), formerly the Department of Statistics, is the official national statistics agency responsible for producing and disseminating reliable, timely, and relevant data to support evidence-based decision-making across all sectors of Bahamian society. Established under the Statistics Act 2021, BNSI operates with legal authority to independently

manage national data operations, including censuses, surveys, and the publication of key economic and social indicators.

Guided by a multidisciplinary Board of Directors and aligned with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the Institute plays a critical role in supporting policy development, private sector growth, and public understanding. BNSI is committed to statistical excellence, data privacy, and transparency, and actively collaborates with regional and global partners to strengthen The Bahamas' National Statistical System. To access BNSI data and reports, visit www.bnsi.stats.gov.bs.

Table 1. THE LABOUR FORCE AND ITS COMPONENTS 2026: First Quarter

Island	Sex	Labour Force	Employed Labour Force	Unemployed Labour Force	Labour Force Participation Rate	Unemployment Rate
THE BAHAMAS	TOTAL	249,025	228,785	20,240	79.4%	8.1%
	Women	123,985	113,505	10,480	74.9%	8.5%
	Men	125,040	115,280	9,760	81.2%	7.8%
NEW PROVIDENCE	TOTAL	185,995	171,405	14,590	79.2%	7.8%
	Women	94,040	86,400	7,640	75.1%	8.1%
	Men	91,955	85,005	6,950	83.1%	7.6%
GRAND BAHAMA	TOTAL	32,165	29,520	2,645	74.5%	8.2%
	Women	15,660	14,215	1,445	69.2%	9.2%
	Men	16,505	15,305	1,200	80.4%	7.3%
ABACO	TOTAL	12,765	11,660	1,105	80.2%	8.7%
	Women	6,185	5,690	495	74.3%	8.0%
	Men	6,580	5,970	610	85.2%	9.3%

Source: Bahamas National Statistical Institute, Labour Force Survey, First Quarter 2026.

Note: Estimates are rounded. Consequently, component figures may not sum to the published totals.

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Table II: Labour Force by Age Group and Sex, 2026 Quarter 1

ALL BAHAMAS																		
AGE GROUP	SEX AND LABOUR FORCE																	
	TOTAL LABOUR FORCE						EMPLOYED LABOUR FORCE						UNEMPLOYED LABOUR FORCE					
	TOTAL		WOMEN		MEN		TOTAL		WOMEN		MEN		TOTAL		WOMEN		MEN	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
15 - 19	11,070	4	4,455	4	6,615	5	8,505	4	3,290	3	5,215	5	2,565	13	1,165	11	1,400	14
20 - 24	22,545	9	10,580	9	11,965	10	20,345	9	9,400	8	10,945	9	2,200	11	1,180	11	1,020	10
25 - 34	55,355	22	28,965	23	26,390	21	50,715	22	26,225	23	24,490	21	4,640	23	2,740	26	1,900	19
35 - 44	58,645	24	29,080	23	29,565	24	56,255	25	27,800	24	28,455	25	2,390	12	1,280	12	1,110	11
45 - 54	48,445	19	23,820	19	24,625	20	45,025	20	22,285	20	22,740	20	3,420	17	1,535	15	1,885	19
55 - 64	38,285	15	20,005	16	18,280	15	35,695	16	18,625	16	17,070	15	2,590	13	1,380	13	1,210	12
65 AND OVER	13,265	5	6,600	5	6,665	5	11,195	5	5,625	5	5,570	5	2,070	10	975	9	1,095	11
NOT STATED	1,415	1	480	0	935	1	1,050	0	255	0	795	1	365	2	225	2	140	1
TOTAL	249,025	100	123,985	100	125,040	100	228,785	100	113,505	100	115,280	100	20,240	100	10,480	100	9,760	100

Table III: Labour Force by Educational Attainment and Sex, 2026 Quarter 1

ALL BAHAMAS																		
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	TOTAL						EMPLOYED						UNEMPLOYED					
	TOTAL	%	WOMEN	%	MEN	%	TOTAL	%	WOMEN	%	MEN	%	TOTAL	%	WOMEN	%	MEN	%
NO SCHOOLING/INCOMPLETE PRIMARY	5,235	2	1,865	2	3,370	3	4,925	2	1,795	2	3,130	3	310	2	70	1	240	2
COMPLETE PRIMARY	9,455	4	3,795	3	5,660	5	6,760	3	2,530	2	4,230	4	2,695	13	1,265	12	1,430	15
INCOMPLETE SECONDARY	17,295	7	5,815	5	11,480	9	15,145	7	4,820	4	10,325	9	2,150	11	995	9	1,155	12
COMPLETE SECONDARY	143,470	58	67,915	55	75,555	60	131,495	57	61,905	55	69,590	60	11,975	59	6,010	57	5,965	61
UNIVERSITY	55,325	22	36,405	29	18,920	15	53,100	23	34,770	31	18,330	16	2,225	11	1,635	16	590	6
OTHER TERTIARY INSTITUTION	18,245	7	8,190	7	10,055	8	17,360	8	7,685	7	9,675	8	885	4	505	5	380	4
TOTAL	249,025	100	123,985	100	125,040	100	228,785	100	113,505	100	115,280	100	20,240	100	10,480	100	9,760	100

Table IV: Labour Force by Highest Examination and Sex, 2026 Quarter 1

ALL BAHAMAS																		
EXAMINATION PASSED	SEX AND LABOUR FORCE																	
	TOTAL LABOUR FORCE						EMPLOYED LABOUR FORCE						UNEMPLOYED LABOUR FORCE					
	TOTAL		WOMEN		MEN		TOTAL		WOMEN		MEN		TOTAL		WOMEN		MEN	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
NONE	67,870	27	25,295	20	42,575	34	57,570	25	20,810	18	36,760	32	10,300	51	4,485	43	5,815	60
BJC/PITMAN/RSA, ETC	28,115	11	13,855	11	14,260	11	26,340	12	12,885	11	13,455	12	1,775	9	970	9	805	8
GCE O LEVEL/BGCSE	68,905	28	34,900	28	34,005	27	64,735	28	32,590	29	32,145	28	4,170	21	2,310	22	1,860	19
GCE 'A' LEVEL	11,895	5	6,180	5	5,715	5	11,010	5	5,605	5	5,405	5	885	4	575	5	310	3
DEGREED PERSONS/PROFESSIONALS	53,805	22	35,375	29	18,430	15	51,585	23	33,745	30	17,840	15	2,220	11	1,630	16	590	6
OTHER TRADE CERTIFICATE	18,435	7	8,380	7	10,055	8	17,545	8	7,870	7	9,675	8	890	4	510	5	380	4
TOTAL	249,025	100	123,985	100	125,040	100	228,785	100	113,505	100	115,280	100	20,240	100	10,480	100	9,760	100

Table V: Employed Persons by Sex and Employment Status, 2026 Quarter 1

ALL BAHAMAS						
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	TOTAL		WOMEN		MEN	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
GOVERNMENT/QUASI/GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE	48,170	21	27,210	24	20,960	18
PRIVATE EMPLOYEE	133,490	58	66,360	58	67,130	58
APPRENTICE	150	0	0	-	150	0
SELF EMPLOYED WITH EMPLOYEES	10,720	5	2,735	2	7985	7
SELF EMPLOYED WITHOUT EMPLOYEES	27,445	12	10,800	10	16,645	14
UNPAID FAMILY WORKER	950	0	310	0	640	1
OTHER	7,860	3	6,090	5	1770	2
TOTAL	228,785	100	113,505	100	115,280	100

TABLE VI: Employed Persons by Industrial Group and Sex, 2026 Quarter 1

INDUSTRIAL GROUP	ALL BAHAMAS					
	TOTAL		WOMEN		MEN	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
AGRICULTURE, HUNTING, FORESTRY & FISHING	3,300	1	500	0	2,800	2
MINING, QUARRYING, ELECTRICITY, GAS & WATER	5,130	2	1,300	1	3,830	3
MANUFACTURING	6,310	3	2,205	2	4,105	4
CONSTRUCTION	21,220	9	1,080	1	20,140	17
WHOLESALE & RETAIL	30,455	13	13,790	12	16,665	14
HOTELS & RESTAURANTS	43,765	19	26,280	23	17,485	15
TRANSPORT, STORAGE & COMMUNICATION	16,260	7	7,225	6	9,035	8
FINANCING, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE & OTHER	14,135	6	8,655	8	5,480	5
COMMUNITY, SOCIAL & PERSONAL SERVICES	86,305	38	51,100	45	35,205	31
NOT STATED	1,905	1	1,370	1	535	0
TOTAL	228,785	100	113,505	100	115,280	100

Table VII: Employed Persons by Occupational Group and Sex, 2026 Quarter 1

Occupational Group	TOTAL		WOMEN		MEN	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Legislators & Senior Officials	18,995	8	10,885	10	8,110	7
Professional, Science & Engineering Professionals	46,910	21	27,975	25	18,935	16
Clerks	18,145	8	14,255	13	3,890	3
Service Workers & Shop Market Sales Workers	60,855	27	38,180	34	22,675	20
Skilled Agriculture & Fishery Workers	6,605	3	665	1	5,940	5
Craft and Related Workers, Plant & Machine Operators & Assemblers	39,175	17	3,635	3	35,540	31
Elementary Occupations	36,170	16	16,920	15	19,250	17
Not Stated	1,930	1	990	1	940	1
TOTAL	228,785	100	113,505	100	115,280	100

Table VIII: Discouraged Workers by Sex and Work Experience, 2026 Quarter 1

ALL BAHAMAS			
REASONS	TOTAL DISCOURAGED WORKERS	MEN	WOMEN
WAITING FOR RESULTS OF A PREVIOUS SEARCH	*	*	*
AWAITING RECALL FROM A PREVIOUS JOB	*	*	*
WAITING FOR THE SEASON TO START	*	*	*
WAITING TO START NEW JOB OR BUSINESS	*	*	*
TIRED OF LOOKING FOR JOBS, NO JOB IN AREA	1,390	560	830
NO JOBS MATCHING SKILLS, LACKS EXPERIENCES	490	240	250
CONSIDERED TOO YOUNG/OLD BY EMPLOYERS	255	0	255
IN STUDIES, TRAINING	*	*	*
HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES	*	*	*
IN ARGICULTURE/FISHING FOR HOUSEHOLD USE	*	*	*
OWN DISABILITY, INJURY, ILLNESS	*	*	*
RETIRED, PENSIONER	*	*	*
OTHER SOURCES OF INCOME	*	*	*
OLD AGE	*	*	*
OTHER (SPECIFY)	*	*	*
TOTAL	2,135	800	1,335