



Retrenchment In Singapore Hit A Five-Year High Last Quarter: Here Is Where The Help Actually Is

Description

Two things happened to the Singapore job market last quarter, and they point in opposite directions. Retrenchment in Singapore 2026 climbed to 4,500 in the second quarter, up from 3,830 in the first. That is the highest quarterly figure since the fourth quarter of 2020, when 5,640 people lost their jobs.

At the same time, total employment grew by 10,700. That is the 19th consecutive quarter of growth since late 2021. Unemployment held at 2% in June.

So the market is not collapsing. It is churning, and if you happen to be in the churn, the headline unemployment rate is cold comfort.

What the retrenchment Singapore 2026 numbers really say

MOM's read is that the increase was concentrated in selected outward-oriented sectors, and driven mainly by business restructuring rather than broad economic weakness. Translation: firms exposed to global demand are reshaping themselves, not shutting down.

The forward-looking indicators are actually reasonable. The share of employers expecting to hire over the next three months rose from 40.6% in May to 43.9% in June. The share expecting to raise wages went from 23.7% to 29.3%. The share expecting to retrench fell from 3.2% to 2.7%.



Source: NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i)

Put plainly, more employers plan to hire than to cut, and the gap widened over the quarter. That does not undo a retrenchment letter, but it does mean the market you are re-entering is not frozen.

SkillsFuture Jobseeker Support: the scheme most people forget

This is the one worth checking first, because it pays cash while you look. The scheme offers temporary financial support of up to \$6,000 over six months for people who are involuntarily unemployed.

You need to tick every one of these:

- Singapore Citizen or PR, aged 21 and above
- Average gross monthly income of \$5,000 or less over the past 12 months, excluding employer CPF
- Employed in Singapore for at least six months in the past 12 months
- Unemployment was involuntary, so retrenchment, business closure, dismissal, or termination due to illness, injury or accident
- Living in a property with an Annual Value of \$31,000 or less
- Have not received a payout from the scheme in the past three years

The payouts are points-based rather than automatic. You earn points across six months by doing supported job search activities such as career coaching sessions and job applications, and each month's payout depends on hitting the minimum points. Applications go through go.gov.sg/jobseekersupport.

Career coaching, and why it beats mass applying

e2i and Workforce Singapore both run free career coaching for jobseekers. It is not a formality that you sit through to tick a box.

The single most common mistake after a retrenchment is firing off eighty near-identical applications in a fortnight, then concluding the market is dead. A coach will tell you bluntly that your CV is written for the job you just lost, not the one you want next.



Source: NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i)

Career fairs are the other underused route. Walking up to a hiring manager gets you past the applicant tracking system that has been quietly binning your CV.

A practical order of operations

1. Confirm your retrenchment benefits and final pay in writing before you leave
2. Check your eligibility for SkillsFuture Jobseeker Support in the first week, not the third month
3. Book a career coaching session, then rewrite your CV afterwards rather than before
4. Pick two or three target sectors and tailor properly, instead of applying everywhere
5. Use SkillsFuture credits for a short, specific course that closes a named gap on your CV

6. Tell your network you are looking, because referrals still beat cold applications



Source: NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i)

The uncomfortable honest bit

Retrenchment in Singapore still carries a stigma that the numbers do not justify. Four and a half thousand people in three months is a lot of capable workers, most of them let go for reasons that had nothing to do with their performance.

If you are three weeks in and the silence is starting to get to you, that is normal and it is not evidence about your worth. Talk to a coach, talk to people who have been through it, and treat the search as a

job with working hours rather than something you do at midnight.

Scheme details and eligibility checks sit on the official government portals, and both e2i and Workforce Singapore list their coaching and career fair schedules publicly.

Date Created

26/08/2026

Author

rachelng

default watermark