



**EMBARGOED until  
Friday, March 23, 2012**

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	<u>Feb 12</u>	<u>Jan 12</u>	<u>Feb 11</u>
RI Unemployment Rate	11.0%	10.9%	11.3%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	8.3%	8.3%	9.0%
RI Job Count ( <i>in thousands</i> )	458.4	457.9	459.4

**Highlights:**

- The RI unemployment rate increased one-tenth of a percentage point over the month, the first monthly increase in eight months.
- The number of employed RI residents dropped to 497,300, its lowest level since January 1997.
- RI-based jobs grew 500 over the month, with the greatest gain reported in the Accommodation & Food Services sector.

### Unemployment Rate Rises to 11.0 Percent

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that the state’s **seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** for February 2012 was 11.0 percent, up one-tenth of a percentage point from the January 2012 rate. This marks the first monthly increase in the unemployment rate since June 2011.

The February 2012 rate was down three-tenths of a percentage point from the previous February, representing the 16<sup>th</sup> consecutive month of year-over-year decreases in the state’s unemployment rate.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 8.3 percent in

February, unchanged from the previous month and down seven-tenths of a percentage point over the year.

The number of **unemployed RI residents**—those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment—increased by 400 over the revised January figure, increasing to 61,700 in February. Over the year, the number of unemployed RI residents dropped by 2,000.

Due to numerous eligibility requirements, the number of unemployed RI residents differs from the number of **RI Unemployment Insurance recipients**. The average weekly claim load for RI Unemployment Insurance benefits in February was 35,635, down 103 (-0.3%) from the January average of 35,738 and down 5,340 (-13.0%) from the February 2011 average of 40,975.

The number of **employed RI residents** was down 1,500 over the revised January figures, dropping to 497,300 in February, the lowest employment level since January 1997. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents was down 4,000 from February 2011.

The RI labor force totaled 559,000 in February 2012, down 1,100 from January and down 5,900 from February 2011 estimates. The labor force decrease was attributed to losses in employed residents outweighing the gains in unemployed residents. This is the 22<sup>nd</sup> consecutive month that the RI labor force has decreased.

**JOBS BASED IN RHODE ISLAND:** Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 458,400 in February, reflecting a gain of 500 jobs from the revised January employment estimate of 457,900. The job gain reported in February ends six consecutive months of job losses.

The Accommodation & Food Services sector added 1,000 jobs in February with nearly all of the increases reported in the special food services and restaurant industry groups. Employment in the Professional & Business Services sector increased by 700 as job gains were noted in temporary help and placement agencies (employment services) as well as professional services. Payrolls in private Educational Services rose by 400 as private colleges and universities returned from the winter break.

Also in February, smaller gains were reported in Retail Trade (+100) and Information (+100), while employment in the Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Mining and Government remained level.

(continued)

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Five sectors lost jobs in February, including Construction (-700), Other Services (-600), Health Care & Social Services (-200), Financial Activities (-200) and Transportation & Utilities (-100). The employment loss in Construction can be attributed to cutbacks among specialty trade contractors, while losses in the Other Services sector were due mainly to declines reported in professional organizations and beauty salons.

Over the year, total nonfarm employment decreased by 1,000. Job losses were reported in eight economic sectors, including Other Services (-1,400), Health Care & Social Assistance (-1,100), Construction (-800), Retail Trade (-700), Government (-600), Financial Activities (-500), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-500) and Accommodation & Food Services (-500).

Educational Services employment posted the largest over-the-year increase in February, with a gain of 2,000 jobs, followed by Professional & Business Services (+1,100), Information (+800), Wholesale Trade (+600), Manufacturing (+500) and Transportation & Utilities (+100).

**MANUFACTURING:** In February 2012, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$18.11 per hour. The average hourly production wage was up 38 cents from January 2012 and up \$3.15 from February 2011. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 40.1 hours per week in February, down four-tenths of an hour over the month but up an hour and four-tenths over the year.

**METHODOLOGY:** The unemployment figures are based largely on a survey of households in Rhode Island and measure the

unemployment status of people who live in the state. Unemployment rates prior to 1976 are not recognized by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as official since the methodology used at that time is not comparable to today's methods. The establishment employment figures are derived from a survey of businesses in Rhode Island and measure the number of jobs in the state. Rhode Island labor market information is available at [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi). Additional information on procedures for producing CES estimates is available on the BLS web site at <http://www.bls.gov/sae/cesprocs.htm>. The March labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, April 20, 2012.

**ABOUT DLT:** The RI Department of Labor and Training offers employment services, educational services and economic opportunity to both individuals and employers. DLT protects Rhode Island's workforce by enforcing labor laws, prevailing wage rates and workplace health and safety standards. The department also provides temporary income support to unemployed and temporarily disabled workers. For more information, please call the RI Department of Labor and Training at (401) 462-8000 or visit the web site at [www.dlt.ri.gov](http://www.dlt.ri.gov).

<b>SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND</b>					
<i>(in thousands)</i>					
	<u>Feb-12</u>	<u>Jan-12</u>	<u>Feb-11</u>	Net Change From	
				<u>Jan-12</u>	<u>Feb-11</u>
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>458.4</b>	<b>457.9</b>	<b>459.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>-1.0</b>
Mining & Logging	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Construction	14.9	15.6	15.7	-0.7	-0.8
Manufacturing	41.0	41.0	40.5	0.0	0.5
Wholesale Trade	16.6	16.6	16.0	0.0	0.6
Retail Trade	45.7	45.6	46.4	0.1	-0.7
Transportation & Utilities	10.8	10.9	10.7	-0.1	0.1
Information	10.6	10.5	9.8	0.1	0.8
Financial Activities	30.2	30.4	30.7	-0.2	-0.5
Professional & Business Services	55.2	54.5	54.1	0.7	1.1
Educational Services	26.7	26.3	24.7	0.4	2.0
Health Care & Social Assistance	77.1	77.3	78.2	-0.2	-1.1
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7.1	7.1	7.6	0.0	-0.5
Accommodation & Food Services	41.5	40.5	42.0	1.0	-0.5
Other Services	20.8	21.4	22.2	-0.6	-1.4
Government	60.1	60.1	60.7	0.0	-0.6