

EMBARGOED until 2:00 p.m.  
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## February Unemployment Rate Drops to 6.3 Percent; Jobs down 2,700 from January

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that the state's **seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** for February 2015 dropped to 6.3 percent, down two-tenths of a percentage point from the January 2015 rate and down two and one-tenth percentage points from the February 2014 rate. This is the lowest unemployment rate since January 2008.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 5.5 percent in February 2015, down two-tenths of a percentage point from the previous month and down one and two-tenths percentage points over the year.

The number of **unemployed RI residents**—those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment—was 34,800, down 1,100 from the January figure of 35,900. This represents the lowest unemployment level since December 2007. Over the year, the number of unemployed dropped by 11,900.

A total of 17,453 individuals collected Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits in February 2015,\* down from 19,977 a year ago. This month, UI claimants accounted for 45.8 percent of the total unemployed.

The number of **employed RI residents** was 514,800, up 1,700 from the January figure of 513,100. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents was up 6,400 from February 2014.

The RI labor force totaled 549,600 in February 2015, up 600 from January 2015 but down 5,500 from February 2014.

**JOBS BASED IN RHODE ISLAND:** Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 479,000 in February, reflecting a loss of 2,700 jobs from the January estimate of 481,700. The February downturn erased all of January's (+2,400) job gains and marks the largest monthly job decline since July 2009 (-2,900). Despite the significant decline, there are currently 3,900 more jobs now than in February 2014.

Over-the-month job losses were noted in ten economic sectors with the largest occurring in the Educational Services sector. Educational Services lost 800 jobs in February, negating the 500 job gains reported in January. Over-the-year employment in Educational Services is down 500.

Cold temperatures and measurable snowfall in February may have been a contributory factor in job declines in service-providing sectors such as Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services. The number of jobs in Retail Trade was down by 500 over the month, while employment in Accommodation & Food Services was down by 400. Employment within the Construction industry, another industry impacted by weather conditions, also lost 400 jobs in February.

	<u>Feb 15</u>	<u>Jan 15</u>	<u>Feb 14</u>
RI Unemployment Rate	6.3%	6.5%	8.4%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	5.5%	5.7%	6.7%
RI Job Count ( <i>in thousands</i> )	479.0	481.7	475.1
<b>Highlights:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RI unemployment rate declined to 6.3%, its lowest level since January 2008.</li> <li>• The number of RI-based jobs is down 2,700, in February, erasing the gain of 2,400 jobs added in January.</li> <li>• The number of employed RI residents increased by 1,700 over the month.</li> <li>• There were 17,453 individuals collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits in February.*</li> </ul>			

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February payroll declines were also reported in the Government (-300), Financial Activities (-200), Transportation & Utilities (-100), Professional & Business Services (-100), Information (-100) and Other Services (-100) sectors.

Manufacturing and Mining & Logging were the only two sectors to add employment in February, adding 200 and 100 jobs, respectively. The Manufacturing sector has added jobs in each of the last five months and is up 1,100 over the year.

Employment remained unchanged in the Health Care & Social Assistance, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Wholesale Trade sectors.

Over the year, total nonfarm employment increased by 3,900 as job gains appeared in ten economic sectors, including Manufacturing (+1,100), Accommodation & Food Services (+900), Other Services (+900), Transportation & Utilities (+800) and Professional & Business Services (+600). Smaller over-the-year gains were also noted in Construction (+200), Financial Activities (+200), Health Care & Social Assistance (+200), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+200) and Mining & Logging (+100).

Employment in four sectors — Educational Services (-500), Government (-300), Retail Trade (-300) and Information (-200) — was down over the year. Employment in Wholesale Trade remained unchanged since February 2014.

**MANUFACTURING:** In February 2015, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$18.04 per hour, down 35 cents from January 2015 and down 76 cents from February 2014. Manufacturing production employees worked an average of 38.3 hours per week in February, up three-tenths of an hour over the month but down an hour and two-tenths from a year ago.

<b>SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND</b>					
<i>(in thousands)</i>					
	<u>Feb-15</u>	<u>Jan-15</u>	<u>Feb-14</u>	Net Change From	
				<u>Jan-15</u>	<u>Feb-14</u>
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>479.0</b>	<b>481.7</b>	<b>475.1</b>	<b>-2.7</b>	<b>3.9</b>
<b>Total Private</b>	<b>419.2</b>	<b>421.6</b>	<b>415.0</b>	<b>-2.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Mining & Logging	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Construction	16.5	16.9	16.3	-0.4	0.2
Manufacturing	41.7	41.5	40.6	0.2	1.1
Wholesale Trade	16.9	16.9	16.9	0.0	0.0
Retail Trade	46.6	47.1	46.9	-0.5	-0.3
Transportation & Utilities	11.7	11.8	10.9	-0.1	0.8
Information	8.6	8.7	8.8	-0.1	-0.2
Financial Activities	32.4	32.6	32.2	-0.2	0.2
Professional & Business Services	60.5	60.6	59.9	-0.1	0.6
Educational Services	23.9	24.7	24.4	-0.8	-0.5
Health Care & Social Assistance	80.6	80.6	80.4	0.0	0.2
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	9.0	9.0	8.8	0.0	0.2
Accommodation & Food Services	46.8	47.2	45.9	-0.4	0.9
Other Services	23.7	23.8	22.8	-0.1	0.9
Government	59.8	60.1	60.1	-0.3	-0.3

**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 of employment figures is 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 Current Employment Statistics (CES) estimates is available on the BLS web site at <http://www.bls.gov/sae/cesprocs.htm>. The March 2015 labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Thursday, April 16, 2015, at 2:00 p.m.

**ABOUT DLT:** The RI Department of Labor and Training offers employment services, educational services and economic opportunities 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).

\* Refers to the number of new and reopened claims filed by UI beneficiaries and claims filed by those already collecting UI in the week that includes the 12<sup>th</sup> of the month.