



# Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training

## MEDIA ADVISORY



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	<u>Dec 08</u>	<u>Nov 08</u>	<u>Dec 07</u>
RI Unemployment Rate	<b>10.0%</b>	9.3%	5.2%
US Unemployment Rate	<b>7.2%</b>	6.8%	4.9%
RI Job Count ( <i>in thousands</i> )	<b>468.8</b>	471.8	490.8

Highlights:

- The December RI jobless rate rose to 10.0 percent, the highest rate in more than 30 years.
- Last month, the number of unemployed RI residents increased 3,700 over the month to reach 56,800.

### Unemployment Rate Climbs to 10.0 percent

The RI Department of Labor and Training announced today that the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate climbed seven-tenths of a percent over the month, reaching 10.0 percent in December, its highest level in over thirty years.

From November to December of this year, the U.S. unemployment rate rose four-tenths of a percent to reach 7.2 percent, its highest rate since January 1993.

In Rhode Island, the December 2008 job count totaled 468,800, a decline of 3,000 jobs from November's

employment level of 471,800. December marks the twelfth straight month of job losses for both Rhode Island and the United States.

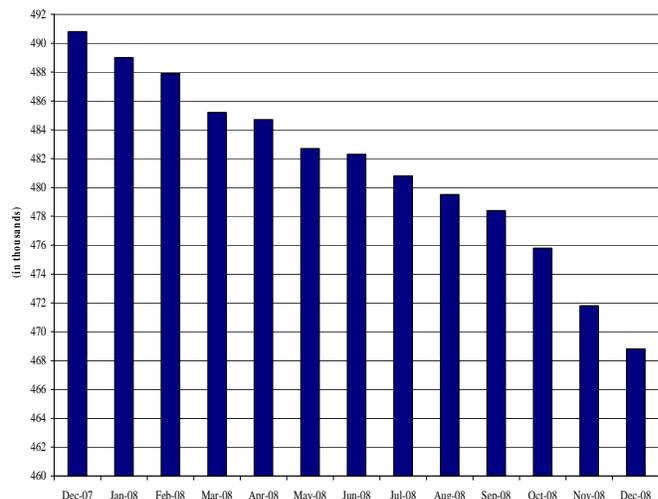
In December, the number of unemployed RI residents—those residents who classify themselves as available for and actively seeking employment—increased by 3,700 over the month to reach 56,800. From December 2007 to December 2008, the number of unemployed RI residents increased 26,600.

On a related note, the number of employed RI residents totaled 509,400 in December 2008, reflecting a decrease of 8,100 from the previous month. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents fell 37,000 between December 2007 and December 2008.

**SECTOR EMPLOYMENT:** Retail Trade employment fell by 900 in December through a shortfall of traditional holiday hiring coupled with widespread losses among most retail industries, including automobile dealerships and home centers.

Also in December, job losses continued in Manufacturing, Construction and Professional & Business Services, with each sector shedding 700 jobs. Elsewhere, over-the-month employment declines were noted in Financial Activities (-400), Wholesale Trade (-300), Accommodation & Food Services (-100), Other Services (-100) and Information (-100).

Rhode Island Seasonally Adjusted Establishment Employment  
December 2007 to December 2008



(Continued)





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### Monthly Employment December 2008, page 2 of 2

Educational Services (+400), Government (+300), Health Care & Social Assistance (+200) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+100) added jobs in December, while employment in Natural Resources & Mining and Transportation & Utilities remained unchanged.

From December 2007 to December 2008, RI jobs declined 22,000 (4.5 %) due to job losses in nearly all economic sectors. The largest annual employment declines were reported in Retail Trade (-4,600), followed by Manufacturing (-3,800), Professional & Business Services (-3,700), Construction (-2,500), Government (-2,100), Financial Activities (-1,900) and Other Services (-1,500). Smaller losses were noted in Wholesale Trade (-900), Accommodation & Food Services (-800), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-600), Transportation & Utilities (-500), Information (-200) and Natural Resources & Mining (-100).

Health Care & Social Assistance and Educational Services reported employment increases over the year, with gains of 800 and 400 jobs, respectively.

**MANUFACTURING:** In December 2008, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$14.05 per hour. The average hourly production wage was up three cents from November and up seven cents from a year ago December. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 38.5 hours per week in December, up two-tenths of an hour over the month but down nine-tenths of an hour since December 2007.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND (in thousands)					
	Dec-08	Nov-08	Dec-07	Net Change From	
				Nov-08	Dec-07
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>468.8</b>	<b>471.8</b>	<b>490.8</b>	<b>-3.0</b>	<b>-22.0</b>
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	-0.1
Construction	19.2	19.9	21.7	-0.7	-2.5
Manufacturing	45.8	46.5	49.6	-0.7	-3.8
Wholesale Trade*	16.1	16.4	17.0	-0.3	-0.9
Retail Trade	46.9	47.8	51.5	-0.9	-4.6
Transportation & Utilities	10.5	10.5	11.0	0.0	-0.5
Information	10.6	10.7	10.8	-0.1	-0.2
Financial Activities	32.6	33.0	34.5	-0.4	-1.9
Professional & Business Services	51.9	52.6	55.6	-0.7	-3.7
Educational Services	24.1	23.7	23.7	0.4	0.4
Health Care & Social Assistance	76.8	76.6	76.0	0.2	0.8
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7.5	7.4	8.1	0.1	-0.6
Accommodation & Food Services	42.5	42.6	43.3	-0.1	-0.8
Other Services	21.7	21.8	23.2	-0.1	-1.5
Government	62.4	62.1	64.5	0.3	-2.1

\* State Calculated Estimate

**UPCOMING REVISIONS:** In February, all states including Rhode Island will perform their annual revision of monthly labor force and employment data. Employment data is benchmarked to the payroll data that is submitted by all employers, and labor force data is revised to reflect new population control totals. As a result, unadjusted job numbers are revised for 2007 and 2008, while seasonally adjusted job numbers and all labor force data are revised for 2004 through 2008.

*Note: Current month figures are preliminary; prior month and year are revised. 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 US 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). The January labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, February 27, 2009.*

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 on the programs and services available to all Rhode Islanders, 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).

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Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities / TDD (401) 462-8006

