



Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Drops to 6.8 percent in December

- ◆ RI's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December was 6.8 percent, down three-tenths of a percentage point from November.
- ◆ RI's December unemployment rate was down two and a half percentage points from last December's figure of 9.3 percent.
- ◆ The national rate was 5.6 percent, down two-tenths of a percentage point from November and down one and one-tenth percentage points from the previous year.
- ◆ In December 2014, Rhode Island (6.8%) had the fourth highest unemployment rate in the nation, trailing Mississippi (7.2%), California (7.0%) and Georgia (6.9%).
- ◆ The December 2014 unemployment rate decreased in forty-two states, including Rhode Island (-0.3), Massachusetts (-0.3), Maine (-0.2), Vermont (-0.2), Connecticut (-0.1) and New Hampshire (-0.1). Four states' rates increased, while four states' rates were unchanged.
- ◆ Rates in other New England states for December 2014 – Connecticut 6.4 percent, Massachusetts 5.5 percent, Maine 5.5 percent, Vermont 4.5 percent and New Hampshire 4.0 percent.
- ◆ The number of employed RI residents totaled 515,300 in December 2014, up 1,200 from the previous month. Between December 2013 and December 2014, the number of employed RI residents was up 16,200.
- ◆ Over the month, the number of unemployed Rhode Island residents decreased by 2,000 to 37,300. From December 2013 to December 2014, the number of unemployed residents decreased by 13,800.

Alternate Measures of Labor Underutilization for Rhode Island

There are six alternative measures of labor underutilization available through the Current Population Survey (CPS) which provide narrower as well as broader definitions of labor underutilization. These alternative measures, which are referred to as U-1 through U-6, are available on a quarterly basis. While state unemployment averages derived solely from the CPS data are not strictly comparable to the official state average unemployment rates, these alternative measures can provide insight into the volume of states' discouraged populations and those working part-time for economic reasons.

- ◆ The U-3 rate is the rate closest to the standard definition of unemployment - individuals in the labor force without a job who are available for and actively seeking work. Rhode Island's average unemployment rate for 2014 obtained directly from the CPS survey was 7.7 percent, tied for the highest rate among all states. The national U-3 rate was 6.2 percent.
- ◆ Expanding this definition to include "discouraged workers" (U-4), individuals who want a job, but have given up looking for work because they believe no work available for them, yields an unemployment rate of 8.1 percent, the third highest rate among all states. The national U-4 rate was 6.6 percent. Including discouraged workers adds four-tenths of a percentage point to Rhode Island's standard definition of unemployment as well as adding four-tenths of a percentage point to the United State's standard definition. Among the 50 states, 20 states had a greater percentage of discouraged workers than Rhode Island, while 21 had a lower percentage.
- ◆ The inclusion of discouraged workers and those that are "marginally attached" (U-5), individuals who want a job, are currently available for work, but have not looked in the past twelve months for a variety of reasons other than discouragement, yields an unemployment rate of 9.0 percent, the fourth highest rate among all states. The national U-5 was 7.5 percent.

Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics

(in thousands)

	Rhode Island			United States		
	Dec 14	Nov 14	Dec 13	Dec 14	Nov 14	Dec 13
Civilian Labor Force	552.6	553.3	550.1	156,129	156,402	155,047
Resident Employment	515.3	514.1	499.1	147,442	147,331	144,671
Unemployment	37.3	39.3	51.1	8,688	9,071	10,376
Unemployment Rate	6.8%	7.1%	9.3%	5.6%	5.8%	6.7%

- ◆ The broadest measure of unemployment (U-6) includes discouraged workers, marginally attached workers and those working part-time for economic reasons yields an unemployment rate of 13.5 percent for Rhode Island, the seventh highest rate among all states. Nationally, the U-6 rate was 12.0 percent.

Rhode Island Jobs Decrease by 100 in December

Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 478,900 in December, reflecting a loss of 100 jobs from the revised November estimate of 479,000. In all, 7,700 jobs were added in Rhode Island in 2014, the largest annual gain since 2000 when 9,500 jobs were added to the economy.

The Professional and Business Services sector lost 1,100 jobs in December, negating the addition of 1,000 jobs reported in November. The loss is attributed to reported declines among companies offering administrative and waste services.

Local retailers withheld from adding employment to their payrolls in December leading to a decrease of 400 jobs in the Retail Trade sector. In addition, job declines were also noted in Health Care & Social Assistance (-200), Government (-100), Financial Activities (-100) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-100).

Accommodation & Food Services employment continued to rise in December, adding 600 jobs over the month. Employment within this sector has increased in four of the last five months resulting in a gain of 1,900 jobs since July.

A gain of 400 jobs was reported in the Manufacturing sector stemming from a boost in the non-durable goods component. Employment in the state's Manufacturing sector has increased in six of the last eight months.

The Other Services sector also added 400 jobs over the month with smaller gains reported in Educational Services (+300), Construction (+100) and Transportation & Utilities (+100). Employment in the Wholesale Trade, Information and Mining & Logging sectors remained unchanged over the month.

Nationally, employment increased by 252,000 or 0.2 percent in December, while job growth in the New England region was strong, increasing by 17,400 jobs. Massachusetts added 10,900 jobs since November, followed by Connecticut (+4,800) and New Hampshire (+3,700).

	Net Change From				
	Dec-14	Nov-14	Dec-13	Nov-14	Dec-13
Total Nonfarm	478.9	479.0	471.2	-0.1	7.7
Total Private	419.2	419.2	411.2	0.0	8.0
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	16.8	16.7	15.9	0.1	0.9
Manufacturing	41.6	41.2	40.5	0.4	1.1
Wholesale Trade	16.7	16.7	16.8	0.0	-0.1
Retail Trade	46.5	46.9	46.9	-0.4	-0.4
Transportation & Utilities	11.6	11.5	11.1	0.1	0.5
Information	8.7	8.7	8.8	0.0	-0.1
Financial Activities	33.1	33.2	32.1	-0.1	1.0
Professional & Business Services	59.5	60.6	58.8	-1.1	0.7
Educational Services	24.6	24.3	22.8	0.3	1.8
Health Care & Social Assistance	80.8	81.0	80.4	-0.2	0.4
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	8.9	9.0	8.8	-0.1	0.1
Accommodation & Food Services	47.1	46.5	45.8	0.6	1.3
Other Services	23.1	22.7	22.3	0.4	0.8
Government	59.7	59.8	60.0	-0.1	-0.3

	Employment				
	(in thousands)			Net Change From:	
	Dec 14	Nov 14	Dec 13	Nov 14	Dec 13
Manufacturing	41.8	41.4	40.7	400	1,100
Durable Goods	27.5	27.4	26.3	100	1200
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg.	5.6	5.5	5.6	100	0
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg.	3.3	3.3	3.4	0	-100
Transportation Equipment Mfg.	4.1	4.1	3.9	0	200
Miscellaneous DG Manufacturing	5.6	5.6	5.8	0	-200
Jewelry & Silverware	3.3	3.3	3.5	0	-200
Non-Durable Goods	14.3	14.0	14.4	300	-100
Chemical Manufacturing	3.0	3.0	3.0	0	0

Vermont (-1,400), Maine (-500) and Rhode Island (-100) were the regional states to report December job declines.

In December, nonfarm payroll employment increased in 41 states and decreased in 9 states. The largest over-the-month percentage increase in employment occurred in Alaska and Montana (+0.7% each), followed by New Hampshire (+0.6%). The largest over-the-month percentage declines in employment occurred in Idaho and Vermont (-0.4% each), followed by Delaware, Minnesota and New Mexico (-0.2% each).

The employment figures in this section are derived from a survey of businesses in Rhode Island and measure the number of jobs in the state.

Not seasonally adjusted total nonfarm employment data is available at: www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/ces.htm.

Current month's figures are preliminary and subject to change.



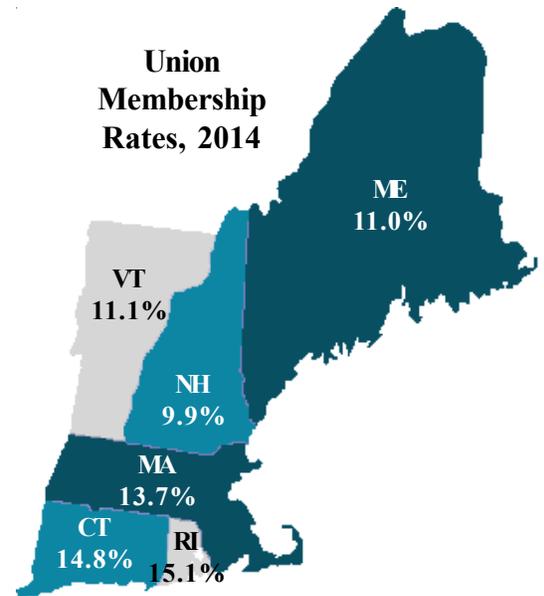
2014 Union Membership in Rhode Island

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 15.1 percent (68,000) of Rhode Island private and public sector workers were union members in 2014. This represented an over-the-year decrease of one and eight-tenths percentage points, or 9,000 workers. The number of union members were at its lowest level in over twenty years and accounted for the smallest percentage of employed workers since 2007 (15.0%).

Nationally, the union membership rate was 11.1 percent in 2014, down two-tenths of a percentage point from 2013 and well below the 20.1 percent measured in 1983. Among the fifty states, Rhode Island, along with Illinois, reported the eighth highest union membership rate, trailing New York (24.6%), Alaska (22.8%), Hawaii (21.8%), Washington (16.8%), New Jersey (16.5%), California (16.3%) and Oregon (15.6%). North Carolina (1.9%), South Carolina (2.2%), Mississippi (3.7%) and Utah (3.7%) had the lowest union membership rates in 2014.

Regionally, the Ocean State had the highest union membership rate in New England, followed by Connecticut (14.8%) and Massachusetts (13.7%). Vermont (11.1%), Maine (11.0%) and New Hampshire (9.9%) had union membership rates at or below the national average.

Union members and workers whose jobs are covered by a union or employee association contract represented 12.3 percent of the nation's wage and salary workers and 15.8 percent of Rhode Island's wage and salary workers. For more information, go to: www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/publications/union.htm



Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed

A total of 10,520 individuals were eligible to collect "regular" Unemployment Insurance benefits in December 2014, down 1,485 (-12.4%) from the 12,005 collecting these benefits in December 2013. In all, 31.7 percent of Rhode Island's unemployed workers were eligible to collect unemployment benefits in December.

Of the 10,520 individuals collecting "regular" Unemployment Insurance benefits, 23.5 percent faced long-term unemployment (defined as collecting unemployment insurance for fifteen weeks or more), down from 24.2 percent in December 2013.

On an industry basis, 13.8 percent (1,451) of the State's insured unemployed workers came from the Administrative & Waste Services sector. There were also 1,346 individuals with an attachment to the Construction sector, accounting for 12.8 percent of all insured unemployed workers. An additional 11.8 percent (1,237) of those collecting UI benefits in December had worked in the Health Care & Social Assistance sector. Large numbers of insured unemployed were also reported in Accommodation & Food Services (1,129), Manufacturing (972) and Retail Trade (846). For more information, go to www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/uiadmin/characteristics.htm.

Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed, December 2014

	Total	Long-Term	Percent Long-Term
Total	10,520	2,472	23.5%
Male	6,058	1,073	17.7%
Female	4,462	1,399	31.4%
Selected Industries	10,520	2,472	23.5%
Construction	1,346	119	8.8%
Manufacturing	972	284	29.2%
Wholesale Trade	394	119	30.2%
Retail Trade	846	256	30.3%
Transportation & Warehousing	216	53	24.5%
Information	149	30	20.1%
Finance & Insurance	393	173	44.0%
Real Estate	222	46	20.7%
Professional & Tech. Services	496	153	30.8%
Administrative & Waste Services	1,451	229	15.8%
Educational Services	229	109	47.6%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,237	484	39.1%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	476	26	5.5%
Accommodation & Food Services	1,129	166	14.7%
Other Services	407	115	28.3%
Public Administration	90	23	25.6%

Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers

				% Change
	Dec 14	Nov 14	Dec 13	Prev. Year
All Items	234.8	236.2	233.0	0.8%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Employer Demand for Workers in Rhode Island

The *Conference Board Help Wanted OnLine* (HWOL) data series reported that there were 20,700 advertisements for Rhode Island based jobs this month, an increase of 400 (+2.0%) from the November 2014 postings, and up 1,500 (+7.8%) from the advertised vacancies posted online in December 2013. There were an estimated 3.75 advertised vacancies for every 100 persons in Rhode Island's labor force.

Help Wanted OnLine Advertised Job Vacancies

	Dec 14	Nov 14	Dec 13
RI Vacancies	20,700	20,300	19,200
<i>Labor Demand Rate *</i>			
Rhode Island	3.75	3.66	3.49
US	3.31	3.36	3.19
Connecticut	3.73	3.82	3.66
Massachusetts	4.34	4.43	4.28
Maine	4.15	4.26	3.47
New Hampshire	3.71	4.09	3.64
Vermont	3.84	3.86	3.18
<i>Supply/Demand Rate **</i>			
Rhode Island	1.80	1.94	2.66
US	1.68	1.73	2.10

* Number of advertised vacancies per 100 persons in labor force

** Number of unemployed persons in state per advertised vacancy

Source: The Conference Board

City & Town Unadjusted Unemployment Rates for December

	2014	2013		2014	2013
Barrington	4.4	6.2	Newport	6.3	9.8
Bristol	5.4	7.9	North Kingstown	4.8	7.3
Burrillville	6.0	8.8	North Providence	6.0	8.6
Central Falls	7.7	10.4	North Smithfield	5.0	7.8
Charlestown	6.1	9.9	Pawtucket	6.7	10.5
Coventry	5.3	8.0	Portsmouth	5.8	8.4
Cranston	6.0	8.7	Providence	7.5	10.5
Cumberland	5.1	7.7	Richmond	4.2	6.0
East Greenwich	5.2	8.1	Scituate	5.3	8.0
East Providence	6.1	9.3	Smithfield	5.4	7.8
Exeter	5.4	8.0	South Kingstown	5.2	8.5
Foster	6.3	8.3	Tiverton	5.3	8.8
Glocester	4.4	7.1	Warren	6.0	8.6
Hopkinton	5.1	8.8	Warwick	5.2	8.0
Jamestown	4.2	6.4	West Greenwich	4.2	7.5
Johnston	6.2	9.0	West Warwick	6.5	9.8
Lincoln	5.1	7.8	Westerly	6.0	8.0
Little Compton	6.0	8.0	Woonsocket	7.2	10.5
Middletown	5.7	9.1			
Narragansett	4.3	7.0	State of R.I.	6.0	8.9
New Shoreham	16.6	20.6	United States	5.4	6.5

Nationally, there were an estimated 3.31 advertised vacancies for every 100 persons in labor force. Among the New England states, Massachusetts (4.34), Maine (4.15) and Vermont (3.84) had higher vacancy rates than Rhode Island.

There were an estimated 1.80 unemployed Rhode Island residents for every advertised job in December, down from 1.94 unemployed residents estimated per November advertisements. Nationally, there were 1.68 unemployed persons for every job opening advertised in December, down from 1.73 in November.

Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity

Regular Claims	Dec.	Nov.	Dec.	% Change		Annual		
	2014	2014	2013	Nov. 14	Dec. 13	2014	2013	% Change
Initial Claims	9,808	5,149	8,379	90.5%	17.1%	76,712	79,864	-3.9%
Number of Payments	46,812	29,778	54,090	57.2%	-13.5%	559,852	611,257	-8.4%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$15.1	\$9.8	\$18.3	54.1%	-17.5%	\$184.2	\$207.7	-11.3%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	1,111	838	1,411	32.6%	-21.3%	13,803	16,329	-15.5%

**Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization by State
2014 Annual Average**

State	Measure					
	U-1	U-2	U-3	U-4	U-5	U-6
United States	3.0	3.1	6.2	6.6	7.5	12.0
Alabama	3.8	3.6	7.1	7.6	8.6	12.6
Alaska	2.5	3.6	7.1	7.6	8.4	11.5
Arizona	3.3	3.1	7.0	7.6	8.6	14.7
Arkansas	2.1	2.9	6.0	6.1	6.9	10.2
California	3.8	3.9	7.5	8.0	9.0	15.2
Colorado	2.4	2.4	4.9	5.1	5.7	9.4
Connecticut	3.7	3.7	6.6	7.2	8.0	12.6
Delaware	3.0	3.0	5.8	6.5	7.1	11.2
District of Columbia	5.1	3.6	7.8	8.3	9.0	11.9
Florida	3.5	3.2	6.3	6.8	7.5	12.8
Georgia	4.0	3.2	7.2	7.9	8.8	13.3
Hawaii	1.9	1.8	4.4	4.7	5.6	10.2
Idaho	1.5	2.3	4.7	4.8	5.6	10.3
Illinois	3.9	3.8	7.0	7.4	8.2	12.7
Indiana	2.5	3.2	6.1	6.5	7.3	11.3
Iowa	1.6	2.6	4.6	4.8	5.3	8.8
Kansas	1.7	2.3	4.6	4.8	5.6	9.1
Kentucky	3.1	3.2	6.5	6.8	7.8	11.7
Louisiana	2.9	2.8	6.4	6.9	7.8	11.3
Maine	2.4	3.1	5.7	6.2	7.1	11.9
Maryland	3.2	2.7	5.8	6.2	7.2	10.7
Massachusetts	2.9	3.1	5.8	6.1	7.0	11.5
Michigan	3.5	3.7	7.2	7.6	8.6	13.9
Minnesota	1.7	2.2	4.0	4.3	5.0	8.7
Mississippi	4.1	3.5	7.7	8.4	9.4	13.6
Missouri	2.8	3.6	6.4	6.8	7.5	11.8
Montana	1.5	2.6	4.6	4.9	5.7	10.3
Nebraska	1.1	1.6	3.3	3.5	4.1	7.0
Nevada	4.2	4.0	7.7	8.4	9.4	15.3
New Hampshire	1.9	2.4	4.2	4.5	5.2	9.7
New Jersey	3.8	4.1	6.7	7.1	8.0	12.4
New Mexico	4.0	2.6	7.0	7.6	9.1	13.2
New York	3.6	3.6	6.4	6.9	7.9	12.4
North Carolina	3.2	2.8	6.2	6.8	7.6	12.1
North Dakota	0.8	1.3	2.8	3.0	3.5	5.4
Ohio	2.6	2.6	5.6	6.0	6.8	10.9
Oklahoma	1.6	2.0	4.5	5.0	5.9	8.6
Oregon	3.2	3.7	7.1	7.4	8.3	14.2
Pennsylvania	2.8	3.1	5.7	6.2	7.2	11.6
Rhode Island	4.2	4.3	7.7	8.1	9.0	13.5
South Carolina	3.2	2.7	6.4	7.1	8.2	12.5
South Dakota	1.0	1.5	3.5	3.7	4.2	6.4
Tennessee	2.8	3.4	6.6	7.1	8.0	13.1
Texas	2.0	2.2	5.0	5.4	6.1	9.9
Utah	1.2	1.8	3.9	4.2	4.8	8.2
Vermont	1.4	2.2	4.2	4.5	5.1	8.8
Virginia	2.4	2.4	5.2	5.5	6.5	10.4
Washington	2.6	3.2	6.3	6.6	7.5	12.5
West Virginia	3.2	3.3	6.6	7.1	8.1	12.4
Wisconsin	2.4	3.2	5.6	5.8	6.8	10.3
Wyoming	1.4	1.9	4.4	4.5	5.0	7.5