



Donald L. Carcieri  
Governor  
Sandra M. Powell  
Director

# Employment Bulletin

Rhode Island  
Department of  
Labor & Training  
1511 Pontiac Ave.  
Cranston, RI 02920  
401-462-8740  
www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi

June 2009

## Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Rises to 12.1 Percent

- ◆ RI's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May was 12.1 percent, increasing one percentage point from the April rate of 11.1 percent.
- ◆ RI's May unemployment rate is up 4.7 percentage points from last year's figure of 7.4 percent.
- ◆ The national rate increased 0.5 of a percentage point to 9.4 percent, the highest rate since August 1983. Rhode Island, along with South Carolina, has the 3rd highest rate in the nation, trailing Michigan (14.1%) and Oregon (12.4%).
- ◆ The unemployment rate increased in 48 states - including four other New England states (Vermont was unchanged). The one percent increase in RI's rate was second only to Michigan which increased 1.4 percent. In all, thirteen states have unemployment rates in the double digits.
- ◆ Rates in other New England States – Massachusetts 8.2 percent; Connecticut 8.0 percent, Maine 8.3 percent, Vermont 7.3 percent, New Hampshire 6.5 percent.
- ◆ In May, the number of unemployed Rhode Island residents increased by 5,800 to reach 68,500, the state's highest jobless level on record. From May 2008 to May 2009, the number of unemployed residents increased by 26,600.
- ◆ The number of employed RI residents totaled 497,600 in May 2009, reflecting a decrease of 3,100 from the previous month. Between May 2008 and May 2009, the number of employed RI residents fell by 28,100.

## New Maximum Weekly Benefit Rates for Unemployed Individuals

The RI Department of Labor and Training has announced new maximum weekly benefit rates of \$546 for Unemployment Insurance (UI) and \$694 for Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI). The new UI and TDI rates will be in effect for claimants whose benefit years begin on or after July 1, 2009.

These new rates reflect an increase of \$18 for UI and \$23 for TDI. The previous maximum rates were \$528 for UI and \$671 for TDI. Individuals who established claims prior to July 1, 2009 will continue to be paid at their present rate for the duration of their benefit year. A benefit year is the 52-week period that starts once a new claim is filed.

The maximum rate for UI benefits is set at 67 percent of the average weekly wage of workers covered by the Employment Security Act. The average weekly wage paid to workers covered by the Employment Security Act in calendar year 2008 was \$815.98. Sixty-seven percent of that average weekly wage is \$546.71. After rounding down to the next lower dollar amount, the new maximum for Unemployment Insurance will be \$546. The maximum weekly benefit rate for UI claimants with five or more dependents is \$682, an increase of \$22.

The maximum weekly benefit rate for TDI benefits is set at 85 percent of the average weekly wage paid to workers covered by the Employment Security Act. Accordingly, the new maximum for Temporary Disability Insurance is \$694 (85 percent of \$815.98 rounded to the next highest dollar amount). The maximum weekly benefit rate for TDI claimants with five or more dependents is \$936, an increase of \$31.

Weekly benefit rates for UI and TDI recipients are set at approximately 60 percent of their average weekly earnings (not including dependents allowance or \$25 stimulus payment) up to the maximum benefit rates. In 2008, the average weekly UI payment was \$354. Approximately 25 percent of UI recipients were entitled to the 2008 maximum weekly benefit amount. The TDI average weekly payment was \$389 in 2008.

### New Maximum Benefit Rates

UI - \$546  
TDI - \$694

### Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics

(in thousands)

	Rhode Island			United States		
	May 09	Apr 09	May 08	May 09	Apr 09	May 08
Civilian Labor Force	566.1	563.4	567.6	155,081	154,731	154,510
Resident Employment	497.6	500.7	525.7	140,570	141,007	145,974
Unemployment	68.5	62.7	41.9	14,511	13,724	8,536
Unemployment Rate	12.1%	11.1%	7.4%	9.4%	8.9%	5.5%

## Rhode Island Jobs Decline by 1,100 in May

In Rhode Island, the May 2009 job count totaled 463,500, a decline of 1,100 jobs from April's revised employment level of 464,600. May's employment level marks the lowest employment level since March 1999 (461,100).

Government employment fell by 600 in May, in part because nearly all of the temporary federal government workers hired in April for the Census 2010 completed the necessary tasks in preparation for the survey. In addition, job declines were noted in Professional & Business Services (-300) and Other Services (-200), and smaller job losses were reported in Health Care & Social Assistance (-100), Wholesale Trade (-100), Manufacturing (-100), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-100), Transportation & Utilities (-100), Information (-100), Educational Services (-100) and Retail Trade (-100).

Over-the-month job gains were reported in two sectors, Accommodation & Food Services (+500) and Construction (+300), while employment in Financial Activities and Natural Resources & Mining remained unchanged.

From May 2008 to May 2009, RI jobs declined 20,700 (-4.3%). Job declines occurred in nearly all economic sectors, with the most significant annual employment declines reported in Manufacturing (-4,900), Retail Trade (-3,200), Professional & Business Services (-3,000), Construction (-2,500), Government (-2,000) and Financial Activities (-1,200). Smaller over-the-year losses were noted in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-800), Other Services (-700), Wholesale Trade (-700), Transportation & Utilities (-500), Information (-500), Accommodation & Food Services (-400) Health Care & Social Assistance (-200) and Natural Resources & Mining (-100).

### Establishment Employment in Rhode Island Seasonally Adjusted

	Net Change From				
	May-09	Apr-09	May-08	Apr-09	May-08
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>463.5</b>	<b>464.6</b>	<b>484.2</b>	<b>-1.1</b>	<b>-20.7</b>
Natural Resources & Mining	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.0	-0.1
Construction	18.1	17.8	20.6	0.3	-2.5
Manufacturing	43.6	43.7	48.5	-0.1	-4.9
Wholesale Trade	16.2	16.3	16.9	-0.1	-0.7
Retail Trade	46.7	46.8	49.9	-0.1	-3.2
Transportation & Utilities	10.5	10.6	11.0	-0.1	-0.5
Information	10.1	10.2	10.6	-0.1	-0.5
Financial Activities	32.2	32.2	33.4	0.0	-1.2
Professional & Business Services	51.8	52.1	54.8	-0.3	-3.0
Educational Services	23.3	23.4	23.3	-0.1	0.0
Health Care & Social Assistance	76.3	76.4	76.5	-0.1	-0.2
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7.3	7.4	8.1	-0.1	-0.8
Accommodation & Food Services	43.1	42.6	43.5	0.5	-0.4
Other Services	22.1	22.3	22.8	-0.2	-0.7
Government	62.0	62.6	64.0	-0.6	-2.0

### Manufacturing Employment in Rhode Island Not Seasonally Adjusted

	Employment				
	(in thousands)			Net Change From:	
	May 09	Apr 09	May 08	Apr 09	May 08
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>43.5</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>48.6</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>-5,100</b>
<b>Durable Goods</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>-3,500</b>
Fabricated Metal Product Mfg.	6.0	6.0	6.7	0	-700
Computer & Electronic Product Mfg.	4.1	4.1	4.2	0	-100
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	7.7	7.7	8.5	0	-800
Jewelry & Silverware	5.1	5.1	5.6	0	-500
<b>Non-Durable Goods</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>-1,600</b>
Chemical Manufacturing	3.6	3.6	4.0	0	-400

Educational Services remained unchanged over the year.

**MANUFACTURING:** In May 2009, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$13.97 per hour. The average hourly production wage was up 19 cents from April 2009 and up four cents from May 2008. Manufacturing employees worked an average of 36.7 hours per week in May, down an hour over the month, and down an hour and eight-tenths over the year.

*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](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/ces.htm). With the release of the January estimates, the seasonally adjusted jobs and unemployment data have been revised back to 2004. Current month's figures are preliminary and subject to change.*



## Newest Occupational Employment and Wages Released

Rhode Island workers earned a median hourly wage of \$16.42 in May 2008, according to the latest Occupational Employment Statistics survey. This median hourly wage was the third highest in New England, and nearly a dollar higher than the national median of \$15.57 per hour. In New England, Massachusetts led the states with the highest median hourly wage of \$19.09, followed closely by Connecticut at \$18.91 per hour. New Hampshire followed in fourth place with median hourly earnings of \$16.01. Vermont and Maine had the lowest median hourly wages in the region at \$15.31 and \$14.78 per hour respectively and were the only two New England states to have average hourly wages lower than the national median.

### Best Paying Occupational Groups

Management occupations reported the highest paying occupations in the Rhode Island workforce with a median hourly rate of \$45.53. This group employed 4.5 percent of the workforce. Computer and Mathematical occupations had the second highest paying occupations with a median hourly rate of \$34.88. This group employed 2.1 percent of Rhode Island workers. Architecture and Engineering occupations ranked third in highest wages with a median hourly rate of \$34.43. This group employed 1.6 percent of Rhode Island workers.

### Most Frequently Employed Occupational Groups

Office and Administrative Support occupations employed the largest number of workers in Rhode Island. This group employed 17.9 percent of the workforce at a median hourly rate of \$15.23. Employees working in Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations were the second largest occupational group in the Rhode Island workforce. This group employed 9.9 percent of Rhode Island workers at a median hourly rate of \$9.11. Sales and Related occupations were the third most frequently employed occupations in the Rhode Island workforce. This group employed 9.2 percent of the workforce at a median hourly rate of \$11.77.

Note: The median is the middle value of the wage distribution. If 101 wage values are reported for an occupation and are listed in ascending order, the median wage would be the 51st value on the list. There are 50 values below it and 50 values above it.

## Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed

A total of 23,148 individuals were eligible to collect “regular” Unemployment Insurance benefits in May 2008, up 7,506 (+48%) from the 15,642 collecting these benefits in May 2008. In addition, 10,065 individuals collected Emergency Unemployment Compensation and 2,138 collected Extended Benefits. In all, 52 percent of Rhode Island’s unemployed workers were eligible to collect unemployment benefits.

Of the 23,148 individuals collecting “regular” Unemployment Insurance benefits, nearly 42 percent faced long-term unemployment (defined as collecting unemployment insurance for fifteen weeks or more), up from 29.2 percent in May 2008.

On an industry basis, 23.5 percent (5,437) of the State’s insured unemployed workers came from the Manufacturing sector. There were also 3,450 individuals with an attachment to the Construction sector, accounting for 14.9 percent of all insured unemployed workers. An additional 10.0 percent (2,326) of those collecting UI benefits in May had worked in the Administrative & Waste Services sector. Large numbers of insured unemployed were also reported in Retail Trade (2,009), Health Care & Social Assistance (1,403) and Accommodation & Food Service (1,391). For more information, go to [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/uiadmin/characteristics.htm](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/uiadmin/characteristics.htm).

### Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed, May 2009

	Total	Long-Term	Percent Long-Term
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,148</b>	<b>9,620</b>	<b>41.6%</b>
Male	13,536	5,667	41.9%
Female	9,612	3,953	41.1%
<b>Selected Industries</b>	<b>23,148</b>	<b>9,620</b>	<b>41.6%</b>
Construction	3,450	1,409	40.8%
Manufacturing	5,437	2,322	42.7%
Wholesale Trade	1,147	462	40.3%
Retail Trade	2,009	893	44.4%
Transportation & Warehousing	666	334	50.2%
Information	549	200	36.4%
Finance & Insurance	1,099	541	49.2%
Real Estate	453	196	43.3%
Professional & Tech. Services	1,137	365	32.1%
Administrative & Waste Services	2,326	865	37.2%
Educational Services	242	89	36.8%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,403	553	39.4%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	361	158	43.8%
Accommodation & Food Services	1,391	623	44.8%
Other Services	642	275	42.8%
Public Administration	135	55	40.7%

**Consumer Price Index for  
All Urban Consumers**      % Change

	May 09	Apr 09	May 08	Prev. Year
All Items	213.9	213.2	216.6	-1.3%

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

**Free Training Available Online through  
netWORKri**

The netWORKri One-Stop Career Centers are making several online training modules available for free to Rhode Islanders needing short-term skills training. Available training programs include Skills Tutor®, Medcom/Trainex® and Skill Soft®.

Skills Tutor®, which offers training for job seekers needing remedial help in mathematics, reading and language arts, is currently available to netWORKri clients who are interested in pursuing a GED or who test below an 8th-grade level of proficiency. Once participants are assigned individual user names and passwords, not only may they access the system through the computers available at the Providence and Pawtucket netWORKri centers, but they may log on from any computer at any location with internet access. Both participating netWORKri centers have trained staff to assist Skills Tutor clients on site. Staff members are also available to offsite users through email and telephone assistance.

Adults who need additional job training can receive up to 90-days unlimited access to a catalog of more than 5,000 Skill Soft® non-credit classes and nearly 400 Medcom/Trainex® healthcare-related non-credit classes. Like the Skills Tutor® offerings, these courses can be accessed from any computer with an internet connection once a student has received a username and password. Nearly 400 Medcom/Trainex® courses are available to improve the skills of those seeking employment in the health care industry and more than 5,000 Skill Soft® courses in subject areas such as information technology, desktop computing and business skills are also available.

Initial registration for Medcom/Trainex® and Skill Soft® programs are currently only available through the West Warwick netWORKri. However, the training will be rolled out through a series of customer orientations, which potential students must attend in order to become approved users. Orientations will be held 8:30-10:00 am at Woonsocket netWORKri – July 10, Providence netWORKri – July 31 and Pawtucket netWORKri – August 21.

**City & Town  
Unadjusted Unemployment Rates for May**

	2009	2008		2009	2008
Barrington	8.9	5.0	Newport	10.0	5.9
Bristol	11.4	6.3	North Kingstown	9.7	6.1
Burrillville	12.2	6.5	North Providence	11.7	7.5
Central Falls	16.6	10.7	North Smithfield	11.0	6.6
Charlestown	11.5	7.0	Pawtucket	15.3	8.9
Coventry	11.7	6.8	Portsmouth	9.3	5.4
Cranston	12.3	7.3	Providence	14.6	9.3
Cumberland	11.1	6.1	Richmond	8.0	4.5
East Greenwich	10.6	7.0	Scituate	12.0	7.3
East Providence	13.0	7.8	Smithfield	10.7	6.2
Exeter	9.2	5.7	South Kingstown	9.3	6.2
Foster	11.9	6.2	Tiverton	12.0	6.8
Glocester	9.6	5.4	Warren	12.2	6.7
Hopkinton	11.1	7.0	Warwick	11.2	6.8
Jamestown	6.5	4.7	West Greenwich	9.6	6.0
Johnston	12.7	7.8	West Warwick	12.5	7.5
Lincoln	11.5	6.5	Westerly	9.8	6.5
Little Compton	10.2	5.6	Woonsocket	14.6	9.0
Middletown	9.1	5.7			
Narragansett	7.2	4.8	State of R.I.	12.1	7.3
New Shoreham	10.7	7.1	United States	9.1	5.2

**Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity**

	May	Apr	May	% Change		Year to Date		
	2009	2009	2008	Apr 09	May 08	2009	2008	% Change
<b>Regular Claims</b>								
Initial Claims	6,927	10,381	5,633	-33.3%	23.0%	57,088	40,480	41.0%
Number of Payments	91,613	110,415	51,890	-17.0%	76.6%	538,437	345,822	55.7%
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$34.3	\$40.9	\$18.5	-16.2%	85.2%	\$200.1	\$125.5	59.4%
Exhaustions (Final Payments)	3,215	3,159	1,608	1.8%	99.9%	13,765	8,269	66.5%
<b>Emergency Unemployment Compensation</b>								
Initial Claims	3,088	3,360	n/a	-8.1%	n/a	14,158	n/a	n/a
Number of Payments	41,086	44,148	n/a	-6.9%	n/a	223,586	n/a	n/a
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$14.6	\$15.5	n/a	-6.1%	n/a	\$78.7	n/a	n/a
<b>Extended Benefits</b>								
Initial Claims	1,068	647	n/a	65.1%	n/a	2,175	n/a	n/a
Number of Payments	10,147	5,288	n/a	91.9%	n/a	18,125	n/a	n/a
Amount of Payments (gross millions)	\$3.6	\$1.7	n/a	105.0%	n/a	\$6.1	n/a	n/a

**R.I. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND TRAINING**  
**2009 UI AND TDI QUICK REFERENCE**  
(Effective July 5, 2009)

	<b>UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE</b>	<b>TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE</b>
<b>TAXABLE WAGE BASE</b>	\$18,000	\$56,000
<b>TAX SCHEDULES/TAX RATES</b> Employment Security Job Development Assessment (JDA)	Schedule I: 1.90% to 10.0% 1.69% to 9.79% 0.21%	1.5% Deducted from Employee's Wages
<b>NEW EMPLOYER RATE</b>	2.36% (+0.21%JDA)	NONE (Employee Tax)
<b>EMPLOYEE WAGE DEDUCTION</b>	NONE (employer payroll tax)	1.5% of first \$56,000 earned
<b>WAITING PERIOD</b>	7 days	7 days (paid retroactively if customer out for 28 consecutive days or more)
<b>BASE PERIOD</b>	The first four of the last five completed calendar quarters prior to claim; or last 4 completed quarters if needed to meet minimum earnings requirement.	
<b>ELIGIBILITY - MONETARY</b> Based on a Minimum Wage of \$7.40/hour.	\$8,880 in base period wages; or \$1,480 in one of the base period quarters and total base period wages of at least 1.5 times the highest quarter earnings, and total base period earnings of at least \$2,960.	
<b>ELIGIBILITY - NONMONETARY</b>	Worked for a subject employer and unemployed through no fault.	Worked for a subject employer and have medically certified disability.
<b>WEEKLY BENEFIT RATE</b>	4.62% of total high quarter wages in base period.	
<b>MIN. WEEKLY BENEFIT AMOUNT</b> Based on minimum wage of \$7.40/hour	\$68 per week	\$69 per week
<b>MAX. WEEKLY BENEFIT AMOUNT</b> Based on the 2008 average weekly wage of \$815.98	\$546 per week	\$694 per week
<b>DEPENDENT'S ALLOWANCE</b>	Greater of \$10 or 5% of weekly benefit rate (up to 5 depts.)	Greater of \$10 or 7% of weekly benefit rate (up to 5 depts.)
<b>MAX. WEEKLY BENEFIT AMOUNT WITH MAX. 5 DEPENDENTS</b>	\$682 per week	\$936 per week
<b>MAXIMUM DURATION</b>	26 weeks	30 weeks
<b>REASONS FOR DENIAL OF BENEFITS</b>	Quit without good cause; fired for misconduct; refusal of suitable work; labor dispute (except lock-out); insufficient earnings in base period.	No medical certification; insufficient earnings in the base period. Receipt of unemployment or workers' compensation benefits.
<b>BENEFIT APPLICATIONS</b>	Call (401) 243-9100 to file.	Call (401) 462-8420 for application

**A Product of the Labor Market Information Unit**