



## Rhode Island's Unemployment Rate Drops to 5.4 percent in September

- ◆ RI's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for September was 5.4 percent, down three-tenths of a percentage point from the revised August rate of 5.7 percent.
- ◆ RI's September unemployment rate was down one and eight-tenths percentage points from last September's figure of 7.2 percent.
- ◆ The national rate was 5.1 percent, unchanged from August and down eight-tenths of a percentage point from the previous year.
- ◆ In September 2015, Rhode Island (5.4%) had the sixteenth highest unemployment rate in the nation. Nine states had unemployment rates of six percent or higher.
- ◆ The September 2015 unemployment rate decreased in thirty-seven states, including Rhode Island (-0.3), New Hampshire (-0.2), Maine (-0.1), Connecticut (-0.1) and Massachusetts (-0.1). Seven states' rates were unchanged, while six states' rates increased, including Vermont (+0.1).
- ◆ Rates in other New England states for September 2015 – Connecticut 5.2 percent, Massachusetts 4.6 percent, Maine 4.4 percent, Vermont 3.7 percent and New Hampshire 3.4 percent.
- ◆ The number of employed RI residents totaled 527,800 in September 2015, down 500 from the previous month. Between September 2014 and September 2015, the number of employed RI residents was up 15,500.
- ◆ Over the month, the number of unemployed Rhode Island residents decreased by 1,300 to 30,400. From September 2014 to September 2015, the number of unemployed residents decreased by 9,400.

## 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 the four quarters ending September 2015 obtained directly from the CPS survey was 6.1 percent. The national U-3 rate was 5.4 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 6.4 percent. The national U-4 rate was 5.9 percent. Including discouraged workers adds three-tenths of a percentage point to Rhode Island's standard definition of unemployment while adding five-tenths of a percentage point to the United State's standard definition. Among the 50 states, 28 states had a greater percentage of discouraged workers than Rhode Island, while 10 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 7.4 percent. The national U-5 was 6.7 percent.

### Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics

(in thousands)

|                      | Rhode Island |        |         | United States |         |         |
|----------------------|--------------|--------|---------|---------------|---------|---------|
|                      | Sept 15      | Aug 15 | Sept 14 | Sept 15       | Aug 15  | Sept 14 |
| Civilian Labor Force | 558.2        | 560.0  | 552.1   | 156,715       | 157,065 | 155,845 |
| Resident Employment  | 527.8        | 528.3  | 512.3   | 148,800       | 149,036 | 146,607 |
| Unemployment         | 30.4         | 31.7   | 39.8    | 7,915         | 8,029   | 9,237   |
| Unemployment Rate    | 5.4%         | 5.7%   | 7.2%    | 5.1%          | 5.1%    | 5.9%    |

- ◆ 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 11.7 percent for Rhode Island. Nationally, the U-6 rate was 10.8 percent.

## Rhode Island Jobs Decrease by 1,800 in September

Estimated nonfarm payroll in Rhode Island totaled 482,100 in September, reflecting a loss of 1,800 jobs from the revised August estimate of 483,900. Over the past three months, Rhode Island has averaged a loss of 300 jobs, but has added 3,000 jobs over the year. Since the start of the year, jobs are up 2,800. Thus far in 2015, job growth has averaged 300 per month, compared with an average monthly gain of 600 jobs during the same period in 2014.

Employment in the Professional & Business Services sector fell by 1,200 in September, marking two consecutive months of declines totaling 1,500 jobs. Despite this significant job loss, employment in Professional & Business is up 2,900 in 2015 and up 2,100 from a year ago.

Jobs in Health Care & Social Assistance continued to trend down as 700 jobs were wiped from the September payroll. Jobs within this sector are down 1,000 in 2015, down 1,200 over the year and the sector has averaged a loss of 500 over the past three months. Financial Activities reported a loss of 500 jobs in September, following a loss of 100 jobs in August, erasing the gain of 600 jobs reported earlier in July.

Government employment dropped by 300 over the month and is down by 500 over the year. Another loss of 300 jobs was also reported in Wholesale Trade, marking the sector's first job loss since April of this year.

Construction employment fell again, shedding 200 jobs from August. This sector has experienced four consecutive months without reporting a job gain, the last one being in May in which 100 jobs were added. Between September 2014 and September 2015, Construction jobs are down 1,800.

The Manufacturing, Retail Trade, Transportation & Utilities and Educational Services sectors each reported an over-the-month loss of 100 jobs, while employment in Information, Other Services and Mining & Logging remained unchanged.

Accommodation & Food Services and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation were the only sectors to report over-the-month job gains adding 1,600 and 200 jobs, respectively. Employment in Accommodation & Food Services is up 1,700 since the start of the year and up 2,300 from a year ago. Arts, Entertainment & Recreation employment is up 100 over the year.

In September, the national workforce grew at a rate of 0.1 percent from August, while falling by 0.3 percent in New England. The nation's employment grew by 142,000, while in the six state region, employment fell by 18,200. New Hampshire (+500) was the only regional state to add jobs, while September job declines were reported in Connecticut (-7,600), Massachusetts (-7,100), Vermont (-2,100) and Maine (-100).

Nonfarm payroll employment decreased in 27 states in September, increased in 20 states and remained unchanged in 3 states. The largest over-the-month percentage decreases in employment occurred in Hawaii (-1.3) followed by Vermont and Wyoming (-0.7 percent each). The largest over-the-month percentage increases in employment occurred in Delaware and Kansas (+0.4 percent each) followed by South Carolina (+0.3%).

|                                  | Net Change From |              |              |             |            |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
|                                  | Sep-15          | Aug-15       | Sep-14       | Aug-15      | Sep-14     |
| <b>Total Nonfarm</b>             | <b>482.1</b>    | <b>483.9</b> | <b>479.1</b> | <b>-1.8</b> | <b>3.0</b> |
| <b>Total Private</b>             | <b>422.4</b>    | <b>423.9</b> | <b>418.9</b> | <b>-1.5</b> | <b>3.5</b> |
| Natural Resources & Mining       | 0.2             | 0.2          | 0.2          | 0.0         | 0.0        |
| Construction                     | 14.7            | 14.9         | 16.5         | -0.2        | -1.8       |
| Manufacturing                    | 41.9            | 42.0         | 40.9         | -0.1        | 1.0        |
| Wholesale Trade                  | 16.6            | 16.9         | 16.8         | -0.3        | -0.2       |
| Retail Trade                     | 47.4            | 47.5         | 47.2         | -0.1        | 0.2        |
| Transportation & Utilities       | 11.4            | 11.5         | 11.0         | -0.1        | 0.4        |
| Information                      | 8.5             | 8.5          | 8.8          | 0.0         | -0.3       |
| Financial Activities             | 32.5            | 33.0         | 32.7         | -0.5        | -0.2       |
| Professional & Business Services | 63.5            | 64.7         | 61.4         | -1.2        | 2.1        |
| Educational Services             | 24.8            | 24.9         | 24.3         | -0.1        | 0.5        |
| Health Care & Social Assistance  | 79.7            | 80.4         | 80.9         | -0.7        | -1.2       |
| Arts, Entertainment & Recreation | 8.8             | 8.6          | 8.7          | 0.2         | 0.1        |
| Accommodation & Food Services    | 48.7            | 47.1         | 46.4         | 1.6         | 2.3        |
| Other Services                   | 23.7            | 23.7         | 23.1         | 0.0         | 0.6        |
| Government                       | 59.7            | 60.0         | 60.2         | -0.3        | -0.5       |

|                                    | Employment     |             |             |                   |            |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|
|                                    | (in thousands) |             |             | Net Change From : |            |
|                                    | Sep 15         | Aug 15      | Sep 14      | Aug 15            | Sep 14     |
| <b>Manufacturing</b>               | <b>41.8</b>    | <b>42.1</b> | <b>41.1</b> | <b>-300</b>       | <b>700</b> |
| <b>Durable Goods</b>               | <b>26.9</b>    | <b>27.1</b> | <b>26.3</b> | <b>-200</b>       | <b>600</b> |
| Fabricated Metal Product Mfg.      | 5.7            | 5.7         | 5.7         | 0                 | 0          |
| Computer & Electronic Product Mfg. | 3.2            | 3.2         | 3.3         | 0                 | -100       |
| Transportation Equipment Mfg.      | 5.1            | 5.1         | 4.6         | 0                 | 500        |
| Miscellaneous DG Manufacturing     | 5.4            | 5.4         | 5.6         | 0                 | -200       |
| Jewelry & Silverware               | 3.2            | 3.2         | 3.4         | 0                 | -200       |
| <b>Non-Durable Goods</b>           | <b>14.9</b>    | <b>15.0</b> | <b>14.8</b> | <b>-100</b>       | <b>100</b> |
| Chemical Manufacturing             | 3.1            | 3.1         | 3.1         | 0                 | 0          |

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).

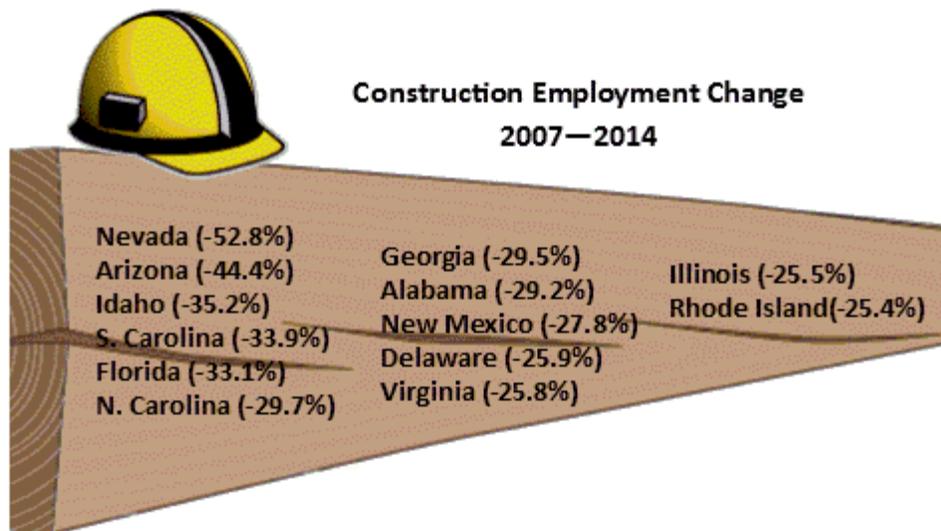
Current month's figures are preliminary and subject to change.

## Construction Sector Struggles



During the Great Recession period between December 2007 and June 2009, the Construction sector across the nation was amongst the hardest hit sectors in terms of job losses. In Rhode Island, nearly 3,400 jobs or 15.8 percent of the Construction workforce was lost during the 18 month downturn.

By the end of 2014, the Construction woes still continued in Rhode Island and throughout the country as several states were still reporting Construction job losses, resulting in employment levels well below their 2007 levels. In the Ocean State, the 2014 employment level in the Construction sector was down a quarter (-25.4%) from the 2007 employment level. Nevada's Construction workforce was cut in half as 52.8 percent of the sectors workforce was lost between 2007 and 2014.



In addition to Nevada, 11 other states reported more Construction employment losses than Rhode Island during the 2007 to 2014 period. These states include Arizona (-44.4%), Idaho (-35.2%), South Carolina (-33.9%), Florida (-33.1%), North Carolina (-29.7%) and Georgia (-29.5%). Also between 2007 and 2014, Alabama's Construction workforce shrunk by 29.2 percent, followed by New Mexico (-27.8%), Delaware (-25.9%), Virginia (-25.8%) and Illinois (-25.5%).

## Characteristics of the Insured Unemployed

A total of 7,209 individuals were eligible to collect Unemployment Insurance benefits in September 2015, down 1,192 (-14.2%) from the 8,401 collecting these benefits in September 2014. In all, 27.5 percent of Rhode Island's unemployed workers were eligible to collect unemployment benefits in September.

Of the 7,209 individuals collecting Unemployment Insurance benefits, 29.1 percent faced long-term unemployment (defined as collecting unemployment insurance for fifteen weeks or more), down from 30.8 percent in September 2014.

On an industry basis, 14.5 percent (1,042) of the State's insured unemployed workers came from the Health Care & Social Assistance sector. There were also 1,002 individuals with an attachment to the Manufacturing sector, accounting for 13.9 percent of all insured unemployed workers. An additional 13.2 percent (953) of those collecting UI benefits in September had worked in the Administrative & Waste Services sector. Large numbers of insured unemployed were also reported in Retail Trade (749) and Construction (491). 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, September 2015

|                                  | Total        | Long-Term    | Percent Long-Term |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>7,209</b> | <b>2,095</b> | <b>29.1%</b>      |
| Male                             | 3,352        | 918          | 27.4%             |
| Female                           | 3,857        | 1,177        | 30.5%             |
| <b>Selected Industries</b>       | <b>7,209</b> | <b>2,095</b> | <b>29.1%</b>      |
| Construction                     | 491          | 88           | 17.9%             |
| Manufacturing                    | 1,002        | 260          | 25.9%             |
| Wholesale Trade                  | 363          | 128          | 35.3%             |
| Retail Trade                     | 749          | 235          | 31.4%             |
| Transportation & Warehousing     | 150          | 23           | 15.3%             |
| Information                      | 117          | 53           | 45.3%             |
| Finance & Insurance              | 365          | 133          | 36.4%             |
| Real Estate                      | 136          | 49           | 36.0%             |
| Professional & Tech. Services    | 439          | 154          | 35.1%             |
| Administrative & Waste Services  | 953          | 229          | 24.0%             |
| Educational Services             | 239          | 43           | 18.0%             |
| Health Care & Social Assistance  | 1,042        | 336          | 32.2%             |
| Arts, Entertainment & Recreation | 93           | 26           | 28.0%             |
| Accommodation & Food Services    | 442          | 143          | 32.4%             |
| Other Services                   | 289          | 97           | 33.6%             |
| Public Administration            | 57           | 16           | 28.1%             |

**Consumer Price Index for  
All Urban Consumers**

|           |         |        |         | % Change   |
|-----------|---------|--------|---------|------------|
|           | Sept 15 | Aug 15 | Sept 14 | Prev. Year |
| All Items | 237.9   | 238.3  | 238.0   | 0.0%       |

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, a decrease of 400 (-1.9%) from the August 2015 postings, and up 500 (+2.5%) from the advertised vacancies posted online in September 2014. There were an estimated 3.69 advertised vacancies for every 100 persons in Rhode Island's labor force.

**Help Wanted OnLine  
Advertised Job Vacancies**

|                              | Sept 15 | Aug 15 | Sept 14 |
|------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| RI Vacancies                 | 20,700  | 21,100 | 20,200  |
| <i>Labor Demand Rate *</i>   |         |        |         |
| Rhode Island                 | 3.69    | 3.76   | 3.66    |
| US                           | 3.36    | 3.45   | 3.22    |
| Connecticut                  | 4.03    | 4.11   | 3.77    |
| Massachusetts                | 4.73    | 4.69   | 4.31    |
| Maine                        | 3.53    | 3.69   | 4.18    |
| New Hampshire                | 3.41    | 3.49   | 4.00    |
| Vermont                      | 3.66    | 3.40   | 3.81    |
| <i>Supply/Demand Rate **</i> |         |        |         |
| Rhode Island                 | 1.47    | 1.50   | 1.97    |
| US                           | 1.50    | 1.48   | 1.84    |

\* 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 September**

|                 | 2015 | 2014 |                  | 2015 | 2014 |
|-----------------|------|------|------------------|------|------|
| Barrington      | 3.3  | 4.9  | Newport          | 3.7  | 5.6  |
| Bristol         | 4.2  | 6.0  | North Kingstown  | 3.7  | 5.4  |
| Burrillville    | 4.6  | 6.6  | North Providence | 4.9  | 7.0  |
| Central Falls   | 6.2  | 8.5  | North Smithfield | 4.1  | 5.5  |
| Charlestown     | 4.6  | 7.1  | Pawtucket        | 5.6  | 8.1  |
| Coventry        | 4.5  | 6.4  | Portsmouth       | 4.1  | 6.0  |
| Cranston        | 4.8  | 7.0  | Providence       | 5.8  | 8.3  |
| Cumberland      | 3.9  | 5.5  | Richmond         | 2.7  | 4.2  |
| East Greenwich  | 4.3  | 6.2  | Scituate         | 4.2  | 5.9  |
| East Providence | 5.2  | 7.4  | Smithfield       | 4.2  | 6.3  |
| Exeter          | 3.8  | 5.5  | South Kingstown  | 4.2  | 6.3  |
| Foster          | 4.2  | 6.2  | Tiverton         | 4.2  | 6.1  |
| Glocester       | 3.7  | 5.1  | Warren           | 4.6  | 6.7  |
| Hopkinton       | 4.8  | 7.0  | Warwick          | 4.2  | 6.2  |
| Jamestown       | 3.3  | 4.8  | West Greenwich   | 4.2  | 6.1  |
| Johnston        | 4.9  | 6.9  | West Warwick     | 4.9  | 7.3  |
| Lincoln         | 4.0  | 5.9  | Westerly         | 5.6  | 8.1  |
| Little Compton  | 3.2  | 5.5  | Woonsocket       | 6.2  | 8.8  |
| Middletown      | 4.0  | 5.7  |                  |      |      |
| Narragansett    | 3.2  | 4.7  | State of R.I.    | 4.7  | 6.9  |
| New Shoreham    | 5.1  | 7.6  | United States    | 4.9  | 5.7  |

Nationally, there were an estimated 3.36 advertised vacancies for every 100 persons in the labor force. Among the New England states, Massachusetts (4.73) and Connecticut (4.03) had higher vacancy rates than Rhode Island.

There were an estimated 1.47 unemployed Rhode Island residents for every advertised job in September, down from 1.50 unemployed residents estimated per August advertisements. Nationally, there were 1.50 unemployed persons for every job opening advertised in September, up from 1.48 in August.

**Unemployment Insurance Claims Activity**

|                                     | Sept.  | Aug.   | Sept.  | % Change |          | Year to Date |         |          |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------|----------|--------------|---------|----------|
|                                     | 2015   | 2015   | 2014   | Aug. 15  | Sept. 14 | 2015         | 2014    | % Change |
| <b>Regular Claims</b>               |        |        |        |          |          |              |         |          |
| Initial Claims                      | 3,779  | 3,983  | 4,318  | -5.1%    | -12.5%   | 50,435       | 57,014  | -11.5%   |
| Number of Payments                  | 27,265 | 44,261 | 37,894 | -38.4%   | -28.0%   | 393,575      | 452,936 | -13.1%   |
| Amount of Payments (gross millions) | \$9.0  | \$13.4 | \$12.6 | -32.8%   | -28.6%   | \$127.5      | \$149.3 | -14.6%   |
| Exhaustions (Final Payments)        | 693    | 880    | 1,067  | -21.3%   | -35.1%   | 7,939        | 10,995  | -27.8%   |

## Sharing the Construction Woes

In 2014, Rhode Island's Construction sector employed an average of 16,498 workers, down 5,615 (-25.4%) since 2007. Nationally, between 2007 and 2014, average employment loss within the Construction sector was 19.3 percent. During this period, a total of twelve states reported larger employment declines in the Construction sector than Rhode Island. Ahead of Rhode Island were Nevada (-52.8%), Arizona (-44.4%), Idaho (-35.2), South Carolina, (33.9%), Florida (-33.1%), North Carolina (-29.7%), Georgia (-29.5), Alabama (-29.2%), New Mexico (-27.8%), Delaware (-25.9%), Virginia (-25.8%) and Illinois (-25.5%).

The Construction sector is comprised of three subsectors: Construction of Buildings, Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction and Specialty Trade Contractors. Below is a snapshot, by subsector, of the construction jobs lost in RI between 2007 and 2014 and a look at those states which reported more job losses within each subsector.

*Source: RI Department of Labor and Training; Bureau of Labor Statistics—Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*

### Construction of Buildings—Rhode Island (-25.9%)

|                         |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Nevada (-54.1%)         | Florida (-36.1%)        | Arkansas (-28.3%)      |
| Arizona (-46.4%)        | Alabama (-36.0%)        | Utah (-27.7%)          |
| New Mexico (-37.9%)     | North Carolina (-35.5%) | California (-27.3%)    |
| Idaho (-37.7%)          | Virginia (-33.4%)       | Indiana (-26.9%)       |
| Delaware (-37.7%)       | Georgia (-30.6%)        | Maryland (-26.6%)      |
| South Carolina (-37.6%) | Missouri (-30.2%)       | New Hampshire (-26.0%) |
| Montana (-37.4%)        | Illinois (-29.5%)       | Washington (-26.0%)    |

### Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction—Rhode Island (-11.5%)

|                         |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Nevada (-49.1%)         | North Carolina (-22.0%) | California (-15.1%) |
| Arizona (-39.9%)        | Arkansas (-21.3%)       | New Mexico (-14.9%) |
| Georgia (-36.5%)        | Washington (-20.5%)     | Hawaii (-14.8%)     |
| Idaho (-36.1%)          | Wyoming (-20.0%)        | Wisconsin (-14.1%)  |
| Florida (-33.3%)        | Utah (-19.2%)           | Nebraska (-13.2%)   |
| South Carolina (-31.2%) | Delaware (-17.1%)       | Missouri (-11.5%)   |
| Oregon (-27.9%)         | Mississippi (-15.5%)    |                     |

### Specialty Trade Contractors—Rhode Island (-27.2%)

|                         |
|-------------------------|
| Nevada (-53.0%)         |
| Arizona (-44.7%)        |
| Idaho (-34.0%)          |
| South Carolina (-33.0%) |
| Florida (-32.1%)        |
| Alabama (-31.2%)        |
| North Carolina (-29.3%) |
| Georgia (-27.4%)        |