



Rhode Island Job Vacancy Survey

Health Care & Social Assistance

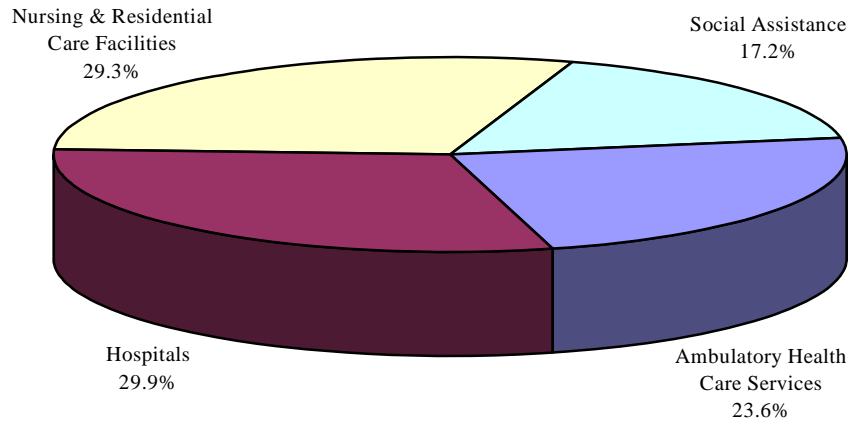
Spring 2006



In Spring 2006, the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training's Job Vacancy Survey estimated that the Ocean State's private sector economy had 10,949 openings. Of these job vacancies, nearly 32 percent (3,480) were in Health Care & Social Assistance industries. This led all industry sectors, surpassing the number of job vacancies measured in Accommodation & Food Services (2,001) and Retail Trade (1,347) combined. These 3,480 job openings in Health Care & Social Assistance translated into a job vacancy rate of 4.8 percent, or nearly five job openings for every one hundred already filled. This job vacancy rate was the highest reported in the private sector economy and well above the statewide vacancy rate of 2.7 percent.

Health Care & Social Assistance is broken down into four subsectors: Ambulatory Health Care Services, Hospitals, Nursing & Residential Care Facilities, and Social Assistance. Of these subsectors, Hospitals (1,042) reported the most job openings, accounting for nearly 30 percent of all Health Care & Social Assistance vacancies. Nursing & Residential Care Facilities reported a similar share of job openings, at 1,019 vacancies, or 29.3 percent of Health Care & Social Assistance vacancies. Ambulatory Health Care Services (820) and Social Assistance (599) reported a fewer number of vacancies. However, in terms of job vacancy rates, Social Assistance led the four subsectors with a rate of 5.9 percent, followed by Nursing & Residential Care Facilities (5.8%), Hospitals (4.4%), and Ambulatory Health Care Services (3.8%). Each of the four subsectors had job vacancy rates above the statewide average (2.7%) during the survey period.

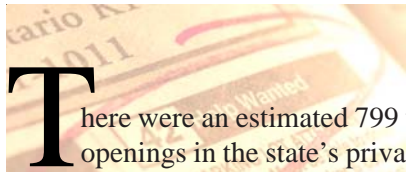
Job Vacancies in the Health Care & Social Assistance Sector
Spring 2006



Registered Nurses (RN), Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants (Nursing Aides), and Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses (LPN) were three of the top fourteen occupations with the most estimated vacancies in Spring 2006. Combined, they accounted for 1,606 vacancies, or 14.7 percent of all estimated job openings statewide. As expected, nearly all (99.4%) of these occupational vacancies were reported by Health Care & Social Assistance firms, with a handful of RN openings in Finance & Insurance, Educational Services, and Manufacturing. Due to the small number of occupational vacancies outside of healthcare, we have combined vacancy characteristic data across industries.

Top 15 Occupations with the Most Estimated Vacancies in Spring 2006	
Registered Nurses	799
Waiters & Waitresses	681
Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants	635
Retail Salespersons	404
Personal & Home Care Aides	377
Cashiers	368
Restaurant Cooks	300
Combined Food Preparation & Serving Wrks.	259
Food Preparation Workers	227
Laborers and Freight, Stock & Material Movers	224
Customer Service Representatives	188
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	182
Teacher Assistants	173
Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	172
Counter Attendants	160

The *Rhode Island Job Vacancy Survey* is conducted annually by the Department's Labor Market Information unit. It provides accurate, objective, and timely information on the quantity and quality of job vacancies throughout the state. These statistics supply a measure of employer demand for workers and an analysis of job vacancy characteristics, including wages and benefits offered, education and experience requirements, and full or part-time status. For more information on JVS, including detailed survey results and reports, visit: www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/jvs.htm.



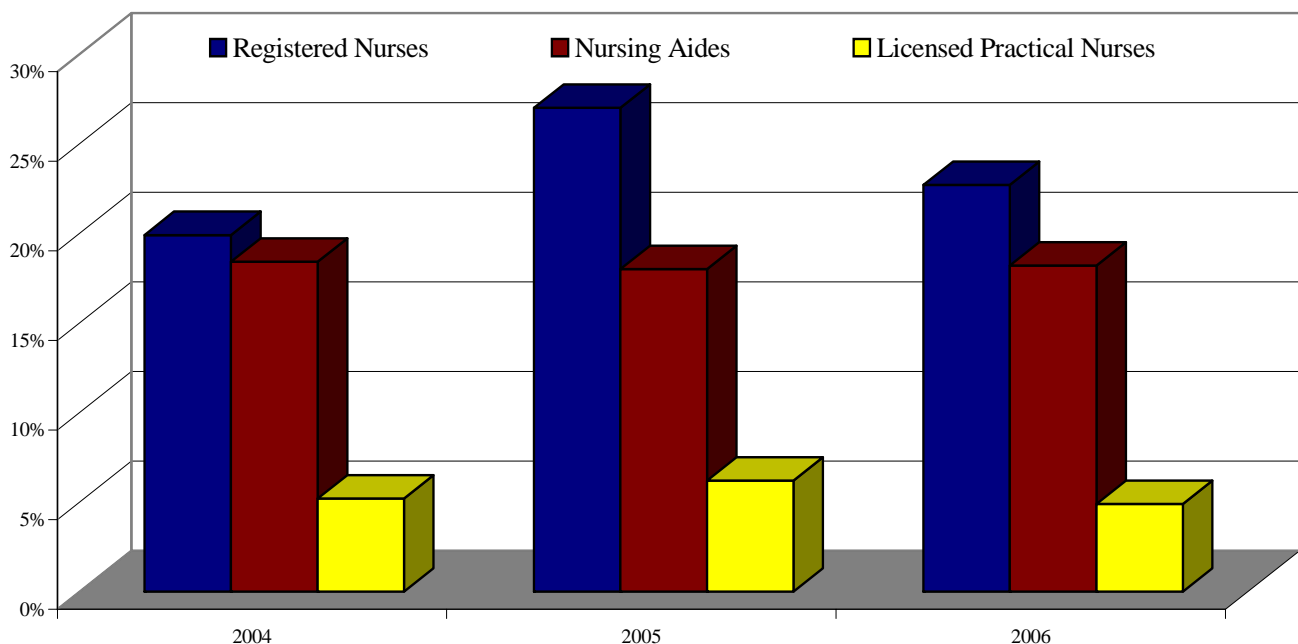
There were an estimated 799 vacancies for Registered Nurses in Spring 2006, accounting for 7.3 percent of all job openings in the state's private sector. More than half of all RN vacancies were in Hospitals (57.6%), followed by the Ambulatory Health Care Services (20.7%) and Nursing & Residential Care Facilities (19.5%) subsectors. The number of RN vacancies in Rhode Island has fluctuated during the past three Job Vacancy Surveys. In Spring 2004, an estimated 575 RN vacancies existed in the state's Health Care & Social Assistance sector. One year later, 900 RN vacancies were reported by healthcare-related firms. As a percentage of Health Care & Social Assistance vacancies, RN's accounted for 20 percent of all Health Care vacancies in 2004; 27 percent in 2005; and 23 percent in 2006. In each of the past three surveys (2004, 2005, and 2006), RN's consistently led all occupations in total job openings. It should be noted that the Job Vacancy Survey produces "point-in-time" estimates and labor demand changes on a daily basis. Exact counts of all job openings in the labor market cannot be known with certainty.

An estimated 635 vacancies existed for Nursing Aides in Spring 2006, accounting for 5.8 percent of all private sector vacancies. Of these, three out of every five vacancies (60.3%) were in Nursing & Residential Care Facilities, followed by the Ambulatory Health Care Services (22.7%), Hospitals (10.1%), and Social Assistance (6.9%) subsectors. The number of Nursing Aides vacancies in Rhode Island has remained relatively stable. In Spring 2004, employers reported an estimated 532 openings for Nursing Aides, followed by 630 vacancies in 2005. During this period, Nursing Aides have accounted for roughly 18 percent of all Health Care & Social Assistance vacancies.

Of the 172 Licensed Practical Nurses vacancies measured during Spring 2006, roughly 73 percent were in Nursing & Residential Care Facilities, followed by Ambulatory Health Care Services (18.6%) and Hospitals (8.7%). LPN's accounted for 4.9 percent of all Health Care & Social Assistance vacancies in Rhode Island during the survey period. In past Job Vacancy Surveys, the number of estimated LPN vacancies numbered 151 in 2004 and subsequently rose to 223 in 2005, accounting for 5.2 percent and 6.7 percent of all Health Care & Social Assistance openings, respectively.

The Rhode Island Job Vacancy Survey collects a host of other important vacancy characteristics data. For example, in Spring 2006, roughly 63 percent of RN vacancies were full-time positions (defined as 35 or more hours of work per week), while 44 percent of Nursing Aides and LPN openings were full-time jobs. The former occupation had a higher concentration of full-time vacancies than Health Care & Social Assistance (54.4% full-time) and the private sector (55.8% full-time) as a whole. Also, nearly all RN (97.0%), Nursing Aides (98.0%), and LPN (99.4%) vacancies were permanent positions. These rates were above the private sector average (87.0%) and on par with that reported throughout Health Care & Social Assistance (97.8%).

RN, Nursing Aides, and LPN Vacancies as a Percent of Health Care & Social Assistance Vacancies 2004-2006





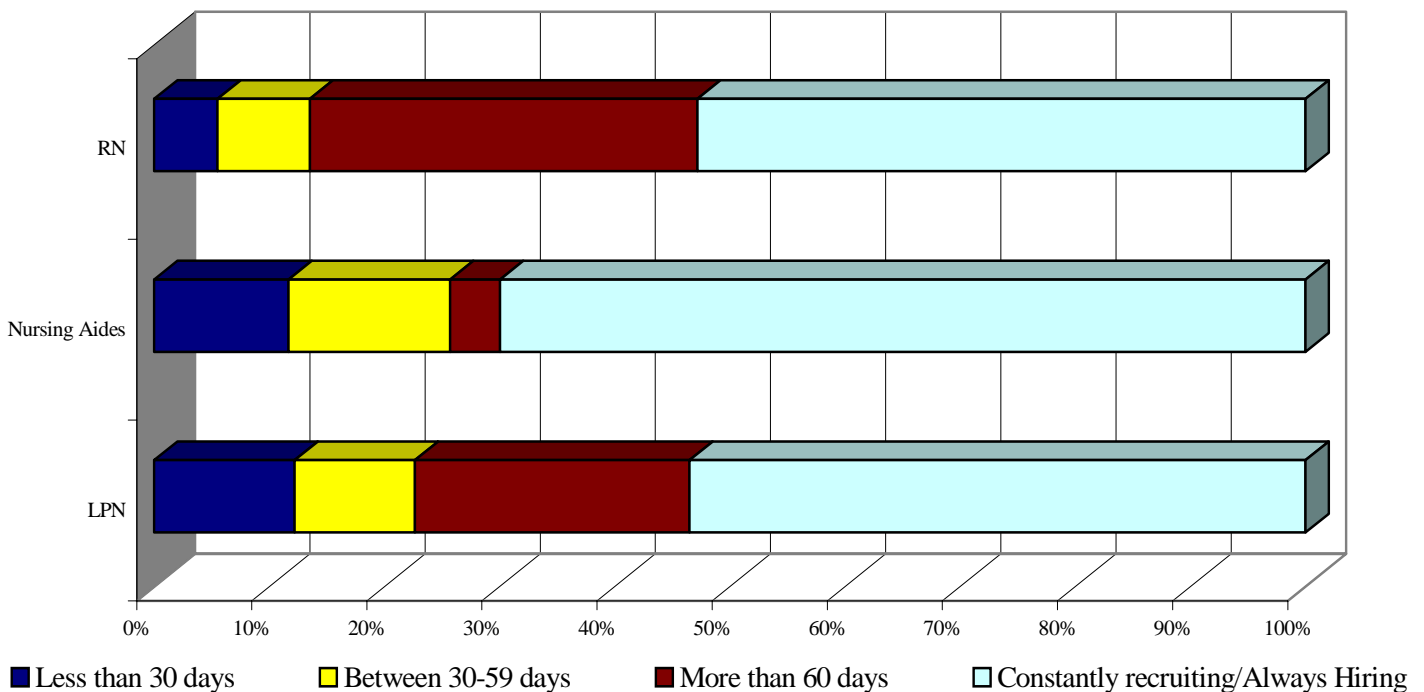
For each reported job vacancy, employers were asked to note the length of time the job had been left unfilled. Job vacancy duration can serve as an indicator of workforce shortages due to an expanding economy or lack of willing applicants, high labor turnover, or a thin pool of qualified candidates due to specialized education or training requirements. An estimated 44.6 percent of Health Care & Social Assistance vacancies were being constantly recruited for or were always open for hire between May and June 2006. In addition, 22.1 percent had been vacant for more than sixty days. The proportion of hard-to-fill vacancies in healthcare has remained high during the past few years: in 2004, 53 percent of industry sector vacancies had been open for more than sixty days or were always open for hire, while in 2005, the share was 46 percent. In comparison, 46 percent of all private sector vacancies measured during Spring 2006 had been open for more than sixty days or were constantly being recruited for. This was 20 percentage points below that measured in Health Care & Social Assistance. These data indicate that a significant number of industry sector jobs have been vacant for some time and healthcare-related businesses continue to face a unique challenge in meeting their staffing needs, both in the short- and long-term.

On an occupational level, it has been clear that Health Care & Social Assistance firms have had extreme difficulty filling vacant RN positions. This has been due to both rising demand for their services and the shortage of qualified candidates in Rhode Island. In Spring 2006, more than half (52.8%) of all RN vacancies were always open for hire, while an additional 33.7 percent had been open for more than sixty days. This high concentration of persistent, unfilled openings (86.5%) was similar to that reported in Spring 2004 (87.9%) and significantly higher than the private sector average (46.3%).

Similarly, between May and June 2006, more than 77 percent of LPN vacancies had been open for more than sixty days or were always open for hire. Although this was slightly less than the 84.5 percent reported in 2004, it nonetheless highlights the staffing problems facing healthcare industries.

Nursing Aides vacancies were also difficult to fill, facing not only the increased demand for workers witnessed throughout healthcare, but also the high turnover rates associated with positions of this nature. Many of these jobs, including CNA's and orderlies, do not require college education or specialized training. They are often part-time jobs, filled by students and moonlighters who are willing to change employers for small increases in their hourly wage rate or seeking other career paths, whether it be in healthcare-related occupations or elsewhere. In Spring 2006, slightly more than 77 percent of Nursing Aides vacancies had been open for more than sixty days or were always open for hire.

Job Vacancy Duration for RN, Nursing Aides, and LPN Vacancies
Spring 2006





Above-average proportions of vacancies with benefits were reported throughout the Ocean State’s Health Care & Social Assistance sector. Roughly 70 percent of measurable healthcare-related openings provided prospective hires access to health insurance for which the employer contributed partial or full payment. More than three-quarters (75.6%) of Health Care & Social Assistance vacancies provided access to a retirement plan. Both of these rates were above those reported for the private sector as a whole, at 63.9 percent and 60.9 percent, respectively. Also, seven out of every ten industry sector vacancies offered paid sick leave (71.3%) and/or paid vacation (76.2%) time - proportions significantly higher than private sector averages (52.9% offered sick leave and 65.4% had paid vacation time). During the Spring 2006 survey period, one-fifth (20.1%) of Health Care & Social Assistance-related vacancies did not offer any of these benefits. This was less than the private sector average (27.2%) and an improvement from the rate reported for healthcare vacancies in Spring 2004 (23.4%).

Between May and June 2006, a high percentage of Registered Nurses vacancies offered non-wage benefits. Nearly nine out of every ten RN openings had health care, paid sick leave, paid vacation time, and/or a retirement savings plan attached to them. Tuition reimbursement was also offered for 81 percent of RN vacancies during the survey period. All of these rates were well above private sector and industry sector averages. Moreover, these proportions were equivalent to or greater than benefit levels reported in 2004. During that time, 82 percent of RN openings had health insurance; 87 percent had paid sick leave; 88 percent had paid vacation; 61 percent had tuition reimbursement; and 81 percent had a retirement plan. Just 10 percent of measurable RN vacancies did not offer benefits in Spring 2006, compared to 27.2 percent of vacancies throughout the state’s private sector.

Benefit levels for Nursing Aides and LPN vacancies were significantly below those of RN openings, but generally above private sector averages. Roughly 65 percent of Nursing Aides and 63 percent of LPN vacancies offered health insurance, compared to 64 percent of all measurable vacancies statewide. Nearly four out of five Nursing Aides (78.4%) and LPN (79.6%) openings provided access to a retirement plan versus three out of five (60.9%) openings throughout Rhode Island’s private sector. No benefits were offered with 13.7 percent of Nursing Aides vacancies and 16 percent of LPN openings in Spring 2006. Although the latter was consistent with earlier surveys, the former marked a considerable improvement over the 31 percent of Nursing Aides vacancies without benefits reported in 2004.

Benefits Offered with Job Vacancies in Health Care & Social Assistance

Spring 2006

<i>Industry Sector</i>	<i>Health Insurance</i>	<i>Paid Sick Leave</i>	<i>Paid Vacation</i>	<i>Tuition Reimburse.</i>	<i>Retirement Svgs. Plan/ Pension</i>	<i>No Benefits Offered</i>
Private Sector Total	63.9%	52.9%	65.4%	40.2%	60.9%	27.2%
Health Care & Social Assistance	69.5%	71.3%	76.2%	52.7%	75.6%	20.1%
Registered Nurses	87.8%	87.2%	88.2%	81.0%	86.7%	10.1%
Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants	65.2%	66.8%	79.4%	50.2%	78.4%	13.7%
Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses	63.0%	65.4%	67.3%	46.3%	79.6%	16.0%

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