

Rhode Island's Job Vacancy Report Summary



Spring 2009

**Rhode Island Department
of Labor and Training**

Labor Market Information Unit

The Department of Labor and Training's 2009 Job Vacancy Survey* results indicated that there were an estimated 5,948 job vacancies between May and June 2009. This translated to a job vacancy rate of 1.5 percent or one and a half job openings for every one hundred jobs filled. In comparison, there were 8,912 job vacancies reported during the same period in 2008; reflecting a vacancy rate of 2.2 percent. In 2006, the year prior to the start of the state's current economic downturn, there were nearly 11,000 vacancies reported during this period reflecting a vacancy rate of 2.7 percent or nearly three openings for every one hundred jobs filled.

The decrease in the number of job openings was accompanied by a decrease in the "quality" of openings reflected by increases in the percentages of part-time vacancies and those without benefits. Part-time job vacancies accounted for nearly half (49.6%) of the 2009 vacant positions up from 46.2 percent in 2008 and 44.2 percent in 2006. Less than half the vacancies provided benefits such as health insurance, vacation pay or retirement/pension plans and less than a third provided sick leave or tuition reimbursement. On the positive side, the median wage range (\$13.59 to \$15.69 per hour) for job vacancies increased, a gain of more than 6.0 percent from the 2008 median starting wage range.

Permanent positions accounted for 82.1 percent of the 2009 vacancies, up slightly from 2008 (78.4%), but down from 2006 (87.0%). The remaining vacancies (17.9%) were for seasonal or temporary positions with the largest concentration occurring in the Social Assistance subsector.

During spring 2009, job vacancies were reported in nearly all economic sectors and among all occupational groups. However, most economic sectors reported fewer job vacancies this year than in spring 2008 including the state's five largest employment sectors. As in past surveys, Health Care & Social Assistance, the state's largest employment sector, reported the greatest number of job vacancies estimated at 1,484 for spring 2009, down considerably from the 2,122 (-30.1%) job vacancies reported last year and less than half the number (3,480) reported in 2006. Job vacancies for the Accommodation & Food Services sector were estimated at 1,328, down from 1,809 (-26.6%) last year and 2,001(-33.6%) in 2006. Estimated vacancies for the Retail Trade (576) and Finance & Insurance sectors (197) were both down over 60 percent from the numbers estimated for 2008. The most significant decline was noted in the Manufacturing sector which had just 64 job vacancies in spring 2009, compared to 485 in 2008 and 965 in 2006.

*The Department of Labor and Training's annual Job Vacancy Survey provides information on the quantity and characteristics of job vacancies available at the time of the survey.

Major Findings

Likewise, the two occupational groups with the most estimated vacancies—Food Preparation & Serving (1,321) and Office & Administrative Support (606)—recorded fewer vacancies in 2009 than in both 2008 and 2006. Vacancies in Health Care Support Occupations (514) mirrored the 2008 estimated vacancies (508) but were noticeably down (-37.1%) from the 814 reported in 2006.

Employers were seeking applicants with higher education levels and more specialized experience in spring 2009 than prior to the current economic downturn (2006). Over a quarter (28.3%) of the job openings required a bachelor or advanced degree and nearly two-thirds (63.1%) required experience in a related position up from 19.8 percent and 51.7 percent, respectively. Less than one-quarter of the job openings had no education requirements (23.5%) or were suitable for applicants with no previous work experience (23.8%). In 2008, 38.4 percent of vacancies required either vocational training or some level of postsecondary education. In comparison, 42.2 percent of the job vacancies in 2009 required the same educational attainment.

Less than 11 percent of the 2009 job vacancies required a license or certificate. In comparison, 14.7 percent of the 2008 vacancies and 25.8 percent of the 2006 vacancies had this requirement.

Employers reported that they were constantly recruiting for more than 32 percent of their vacant positions, 41 percent had been open for less than 30 days and 15 percent had been open for 60 days or longer. Vacancy duration changes between 2008 and 2009 showed a higher concentration of positions being listed as open more than 60 days or always hiring.

Overall, benefit levels for Rhode Island's job vacancies continued to decrease while median wages increased. The median wage reported for job vacancies in 2009 was between \$13.59 and \$15.69 per hour. In comparison, 2008 job vacancies paid a median wage between \$12.81 and \$14.67 per hour. Less than half of the vacancies provided benefits; such as health (45.1%), paid vacation (40.8%), retirement/pension plan (40.7%) and paid sick leave (33.1%) due in part to the higher portion of vacancies for part-time positions. Nearly two-thirds (66.1%) of the full-time vacancies offered health insurance while less than a quarter (23.8%) of the part-time positions provided this benefit. Significant decreases were also noted for job vacancies with tuition reimbursements.

Private Sector Job Vacancy Data Summary

	2009	2008	2006
Number of Job Vacancies	5,948	8,912	10,949
Job Vacancy Rate (vacancies per 100 filled jobs)	1.5%	2.2%	2.7%
Full-Time Positions	50.4%	53.8%	55.8%
Part-Time Positions	49.6%	46.2%	44.2%
Vacancies Open < 30 Days	40.8%	45.1%	35.8%
Vacancies Open 30-59 Days	11.6%	15.1%	17.8%
Vacancies Open > 60 Days	15.4%	8.8%	12.6%
Constantly Recruiting/ Hiring	32.2%	30.9%	33.7%
Permanent Positions	82.1%	78.4%	87.0%
Temporary/Seasonal Positions	17.9%	21.6%	13.0%
Vacancies Requiring			
Diploma/GED	34.3%	37.6%	41.0%
Vocational Training	11.5%	5.1%	8.3%
Associate Degree	2.4%	8.5%	8.3%
Bachelor Degree	19.0%	21.9%	16.1%
Advanced Degree	9.3%	2.9%	3.7%
No Education Requirement	23.5%	24.1%	22.3%
License or Certificate	10.6%	14.7%	25.8%
General Work Experience	13.2%	19.9%	20.2%
Experience Related to Position	63.1%	58.6%	51.7%
No Experience Required	23.8%	21.5%	28.1%
Median Hourly Wage Range	\$13.59 to \$15.69	\$12.81 to \$14.67	\$11.00 to \$12.00
Vacancies Providing			
Health Insurance	45.1%	62.0%	63.9%
Paid Sick Leave	33.1%	51.9%	52.9%
Paid Vacation	40.8%	59.8%	65.4%
Tuition Reimbursement	21.7%	30.9%	40.2%
Retirement /Pension Plan	40.7%	52.0%	60.9%
No Benefits Offered	43.9%	32.6%	27.2%

NAME (FIRST)
ADDRESS
PERMANENT ADDRESS
ARE YOU 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER?
 YES NO

Job Vacancy Data by Industry Sector

Health Care & Social Assistance reported the largest number of vacancies of all industry sectors with 1,484 openings; leading to a 1.9 percent vacancy rate. These postings represent nearly one-quarter (24.9%) of all vacancies in the state. Nearly half of Health Care & Social Assistance vacancies were full-time positions offering health insurance (52.6%), paid vacation (60.8%), retirement savings plan (51.2%) and/or paid sick leave (47.3%).

With 1,328 vacancies, Accommodation & Food Services employers ranked second in estimated job openings; representing 22.3 percent of all vacancies in the state. The 3.1 percent vacancy rate in this sector was the third highest rate calculated for the 2009 survey. Openings in this sector were primarily part-time jobs (71.5%) with no prior work experience required. More than three-quarters of openings offered no benefits.

The third largest number of vacancies was reported by the Other Services (613) sector which includes Repair & Maintenance, Personal & Laundry Services, and Membership Associations & Organizations. This sector's 2009 vacancy rate (3.4%) was the second highest rate. Approximately one-third of the job openings were for full-time positions. Ninety-five percent of the openings did not offer health care benefits or paid sick leave.

There were 576 estimated job vacancies in the Retail Trade sector in 2009, well below the 1,770 estimated openings reported in 2008. This sector has a vacancy rate of 1.2 percent with 54 percent of the openings for part-time positions on par with 2008 (55%).

Five industry sectors reported job vacancy rates above the private sector average of 1.5 percent: Management of Companies (4.6%); Other Services (3.4%); Accommodation & Food Services (3.1%); Administrative and Waste Services (2.7%); and Health Care & Social Assistance (1.9%).

Job Vacancy Data by Industry Sector

Industry	Estimated Employment	Projected Vacancies	Job Vacancy Rate	Part-Time Vacancies	Percent of Total Vacancies
Health Care & Social Assistance	76,519	1,484	1.9%	51.1%	24.9%
Accommodation & Food Services	42,895	1,328	3.1%	71.5%	22.3%
Other Services	18,256	613	3.4%	65.4%	10.3%
Retail Trade	49,632	576	1.2%	53.5%	9.7%
Administrative & Waste Services	16,297	432	2.7%	10.4%	7.3%
Management of Companies	9,299	429	4.6%	44.8%	7.2%
Transportation & Warehousing	9,414	218	2.3%	94.5%	3.7%
Educational Services	18,783	209	1.1%	19.1%	3.5%
Professional & Technical Services	21,644	200	0.9%	10.0%	3.4%
Finance & Insurance	25,078	197	0.8%	0.0%	3.3%
Construction	20,375	121	0.6%	0.0%	2.0%
Manufacturing	47,938	64	0.1%	0.0%	1.1%
Wholesale Trade	16,887	45	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	8,049	32	0.4%	96.9%	0.5%

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Job Vacancy Data by Major Occupational Group

In spring 2009, nearly half of all estimated job vacancies were concentrated in just four major occupational groups: Food Preparation & Serving-Related Occupations (1,321), Office & Administrative Support Occupations (606), Healthcare Support Occupations (514) and Healthcare Practitioner & Technical (498) Occupations.

Vacancies reported for Food Preparation & Serving Occupations (1,321) listed minimal educational requirements with the majority of jobs requiring a high school diploma. Vacancies for Waiters & Waitresses, Fast Food Cooks, Food Servers, Food Preparation & Service Workers and Food Preparation & Serving Supervisors were prevalent for this group. This occupational group's 2.8 percent vacancy rate was notably lower than the 2008 vacancy rate of 4.0 percent.

An estimated 606 vacancies were reported for Office & Administrative Support Occupations, resulting in a 0.8 percent vacancy rate for the spring of 2009. This rate was lower than the 2008 rate of 1.3 percent. Vacancies included General Office Clerks, Customer Service Representatives, Administrative Support Workers and Receptionists.

Healthcare Support Occupations vacancies (514) were dominated by Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants; Dental Assistants; and Healthcare Support positions. Over half (56%) of the openings in this occupational group were full-time positions. Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants represented over 60 percent of all openings in this category.

As in past years, Waiters & Waitresses (493); Nursing Aides, Orderlies, & Attendants (328); Retail Salespersons (137); Registered Nurses (182); and Food Preparation & Serving Workers (150) were among the occupations most in demand. However, the numbers of vacancies for these positions were all down in comparison to previous years with the most striking decrease occurring in the demand for Registered Nurses. There were approximately 800 job vacancies for Registered Nurses in 2006 and over 600 vacancies in 2008 compared to 182 this spring.

Job Vacancies by Major Occupational Group

	Estimated Vacancies	Vacancy Rate	Full-Time	Temporary/Seasonal
Private Sector Total	5,948	1.5%	50.4%	17.9%
Management Occupations	196	1.0%	100.0%	1.5%
Business & Financial Operations Occupations	127	0.8%	97.6%	24.4%
Computer & Mathematical Occupations	91	1.0%	90.1%	0.0%
Architecture & Engineering Occupations	59	1.0%	93.2%	6.8%
Life, Physical, & Social Science Occupations	44	1.8%	100.0%	0.0%
Community & Social Services Occupations	245	3.1%	60.8%	32.7%
Legal Occupations	32	1.3%	100.0%	0.0%
Education, Training, & Library Occupations	420	3.5%	52.1%	42.1%
Arts, Entertainment, & Media Occupations	115	1.9%	85.2%	73.9%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations	498	1.8%	56.8%	6.9%
Healthcare Support Occupations	514	2.8%	55.8%	6.2%
Protective Service Occupations	73	1.9%	100.0%	0.0%
Food Preparation & Serving Occupations	1,321	2.8%	17.7%	20.8%
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	93	0.7%	46.2%	28.4%
Personal Care & Service Occupations	419	3.6%	32.7%	3.6%
Sales & Related Occupations	299	0.7%	47.2%	17.9%
Office & Administrative Support Occupations	606	0.8%	56.9%	22.6%
Construction & Extraction Occupations	80	5.6%	96.3%	83.8%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Occupations	239	1.5%	100.0%	0.0%
Production Occupations	156	0.5%	61.5%	4.5%
Transportation & Material Moving Occupations	321	1.4%	13.4%	11.2%