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Rhode Island-Based Jobs Rose by 800 from July; August Unemployment Rate Increases to 5.8 Percent

CRANSTON, R.I. - The state’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 5.8 percent in August, the Department of Labor and Training announced Thursday. The August rate was up one-tenth of a percentage point from the revised July rate of 5.7 percent. Last year the rate was 12.6 percent in August.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 5.2 percent in August, down two-tenths of a percentage point from July. The U.S. rate was 8.4 percent in August 2020.

The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents — those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment — was 30,900, up 100 from July. The number of unemployed residents decreased by 35,800 over the year.

The number of employed Rhode Island residents was 503,800, down 1,500 from July. Last August there were 463,300 employed Rhode Island residents.

The Rhode Island labor force totaled 534,700 in August, down 1,400 from July but up 4,700 from August 2020 (530,000).

Since February 2020, the month prior to the pandemic-related shutdowns, the number of unemployed RI residents is up 8,700 and the number of employed RI residents is down 36,000. Currently, there are 27,300 fewer RI residents participating in the labor force than there were prior to the start of the pandemic.

Rhode Island-Based Jobs

Total nonfarm payroll employment in Rhode Island rose to 477,900 in August, an increase of 800 jobs from the revised July job count of 477,100. The Ocean State’s economy has reported eight consecutive months of job gains totaling 20,100 jobs, or an average of 2,500 jobs per month.

Notable jobs gains occurred in Accommodation & Food Services as the sector added 900 jobs in August. The robust job gains were mainly due to gains reported among full-service restaurants.

Employment in Professional & Business Services increased by 400 in August, followed by a gain of 200 jobs in both the Construction and Retail Trade sectors.

Lastly, the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Financial Activities and Health Care & Social Assistance sectors all reported an increase of 100 jobs from July.

The number of jobs in the Information, Government and Mining & Logging sectors remained unchanged in August.

After reporting a gain of 1,000 jobs in July, employment in the Manufacturing sector fell by 600 in August as payrolls shrunk within the durable goods component of the sector.

	<u>Aug 21</u>	<u>Jul 21</u>	<u>Aug 20</u>
R.I. Unemployment Rate	5.8%	5.7%	12.6%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	5.2%	5.4%	8.4%
R.I. Job Count (<i>in thousands</i>)	477.9	477.1	457.3
Highlights:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rhode Island unemployment rate was 5.8 percent in August, up one-tenth of a percentage point from last month’s revised rate of 5.7 percent. • Through August, the Rhode Island economy has recovered 78,700 or nearly 73 percent of the 108,000 jobs lost during the pandemic shutdown. 			

A decrease of 200 jobs was reported in both the Transportation & Utilities and Wholesale Trade sectors, while a decrease of 100 jobs was reported in both the Educational Services and Other Services sectors.

Due to the unprecedented pandemic-related shutdowns and restrictions implemented in April 2020, the number of jobs in Rhode Island plunged to 399,200. Gradually, restrictions started to ease, and the economy began a slow upward trend. Over the year, Rhode Island jobs are up 20,600, led by the Accommodation & Food Services (+5,600) sector. Manufacturing employment is up 2,700 jobs since August 2020, followed by the Construction (+2,600), Health Care & Social Assistance (+2,400), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+1,900), Retail Trade (+1,800), Other Services (+1,200) and Wholesale Trade (+1,000) sectors.

Smaller annual job gains were noted in the Financial Activities (+600), Transportation & Utilities (+500), Professional & Business Services (+300), Educational Services (+200) and Information (+200) sectors.

Government employment is down 400 from a year ago.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND					
<i>(in thousands)</i>					
	Aug-21	Jul-21	Aug-20	Net Change From	
				Jul-21	Aug-20
Total Nonfarm	477.9	477.1 *	457.3	0.8	20.6
Total Private	414.9	414.1 *	393.9	0.8	21.0
Mining & Logging	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	21.3	21.1 *	18.7	0.2	2.6
Manufacturing	39.9	40.5	37.2	-0.6	2.7
Wholesale Trade	15.8	16.0 *	14.8	-0.2	1.0
Retail Trade	45.9	45.7 *	44.1	0.2	1.8
Transportation & Utilities	13.0	13.2 *	12.5	-0.2	0.5
Information	5.3	5.3 *	5.1	0.0	0.2
Financial Activities	34.6	34.5 *	34.0	0.1	0.6
Professional & Business Services	65.1	64.7 *	64.8	0.4	0.3
Educational Services	23.9	24.0	23.7	-0.1	0.2
Health Care & Social Assistance	78.1	78.0 *	75.7	0.1	2.4
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7.1	7.0	5.2	0.1	1.9
Accommodation & Food Services	44.4	43.5 *	38.8	0.9	5.6
Other Services	20.3	20.4	19.1	-0.1	1.2
Government	63.0	63.0 *	63.4	0.0	-0.4

**Revised estimates*

To help prevent the outbreak of the coronavirus, many industries in the state were ordered to close or operate with restrictions in March and April of 2020, resulting in the loss of 108,000 jobs. Through August 2021, the state's economy has recovered 78,700 or 73 percent of the jobs lost during the shutdown. Three employment sectors, Construction, Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade have recovered all the jobs lost during the economic shutdown.

The Transportation & Utilities sector has regained 89 percent of the jobs it lost during the restriction period, followed by the Retail Trade (82%), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (77%), Accommodation & Food Services (75%), Health Care & Social Assistance (70%), Other Services (65%) and Professional & Business Services (63%) sectors.

The Financial Activities sector has recovered 42 percent of the jobs it lost during the pandemic shutdown, while the Information sector has recovered 38 percent and the Educational Services sector has regained 3 percent.

The number of jobs in the Government sector is still below its pandemic-level low point.

Manufacturing Hours and Earnings

In August, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$22.68 per hour, up twenty-five cents from July, and up two dollars and ten cents from August 2020.

Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.3 hours per week in August, up four-tenths of an hour over the month, and up two hours from a year ago.

About DLT: The Department of Labor and Training (DLT) offers employment services, educational services and economic opportunities to both individuals and employers. DLT protects Rhode Island's workforce by enforcing labor laws, prevailing wage rates and workplace health and safety standards. The department also provides temporary income support to unemployed and temporarily disabled workers. For more information, please call the Department of Labor and Training at (401) 462-8000 or visit the website at www.dlt.ri.gov.

The Department of Labor and Training is scheduled to release the September 2021 labor force figures and job counts at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 21, 2021.