

2025 Labor Force Revisions

The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training’s Labor Market Information Division in conjunction with the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) recently completed the annual revision of labor force statistics through an annual process known as “Benchmarking.” This year labor force statistics for both the “seasonally adjusted” data and “not seasonally adjusted” data were revised back to January 2021*.

Benchmark revisions to the state’s 2025 unemployment rate indicate that the state ended the year with a 4.4 percent unemployment rate, up one-tenth of a percentage point from the rate initially reported for December 2025. Unemployment rates were revised downward nine months of the year, from January through September, and were revised upward in November and December. Due to the Federal Government shutdown, there were no estimates produced for October 2025. The largest downward revision occurred in July 2025, where the rate was revised down by six-tenths of a percentage point. April, May and June saw a downward revision of half a percentage point. Both November and December posted an upward revision of one-tenth of a percentage point.

Over the year, the December rate was down one-tenth (-0.1) of a percentage point from the December 2024 rate of 4.5 percent; pre-benchmarked data indicated a 0.2 percentage point decrease in the unemployment rate from December 2024 to December 2025.

The record high unemployment rate remains at 17.9 percent from April 2020, occurring during the pandemic-related shutdown, while the lowest rate on record is 2.7 percent occurring between March 2023 and July 2023.

REVISED Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics (in thousands)													
	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25
Labor Force	594.5	594.6	594.7	594.6	594.5	594.4	594.4	594.1	593.6	592.8	-	591.8	591.8
Employment	567.9	567.9	567.9	568.0	568.1	568.4	568.9	568.9	568.3	567.3	-	565.6	565.5
Unemployment	26.6	26.7	26.7	26.6	26.4	26.0	25.5	25.2	25.2	25.5	-	26.2	26.3
Unemployment Rate	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	-	4.4	4.4
PREVIOUSLY RELEASED Seasonally Adjusted Labor Force Statistics (in thousands)													
	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25
Labor Force	591.4	591.1	590.6	589.0	588.1	587.6	587.4	587.7	588.8	589.8	-	591.1	590.4
Employment	564.7	564.0	562.6	560.4	559.3	558.8	559.0	559.6	561.7	563.6	-	565.9	564.8
Unemployment	26.8	27.1	28.0	28.5	28.8	28.8	28.4	28.1	27.1	26.3	-	25.2	25.6
Unemployment Rate	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.6	4.5	-	4.3	4.3
Change in Labor Force Estimates													
	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25
Labor Force	3,100	3,500	4,100	5,600	6,400	6,800	7,000	6,400	4,800	3,000	-	700	1,400
Employment	3,200	3,900	5,300	7,600	8,800	9,600	9,900	9,300	6,600	3,700	-	-300	700
Unemployment	-200	-400	-1,300	-1,900	-2,400	-2,800	-2,900	-2,900	-1,900	-800	-	1,000	700
Unemployment Rate	0.0	-0.1	-0.2	-0.3	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.6	-0.3	-0.2	-	0.1	0.1

The benchmark process also revealed that the number of unemployed RI residents was overestimated for the first three quarters of the year and underestimated for the last two months of 2025. The largest downward revisions occurred in June (-2,900) and July (-2,900) while the largest upward revision occurred in November (+1,000). The year ended with 26,300 unemployed RI residents, 700 more than the previous December 2025 estimate indicated. Over the year, the number of unemployed RI residents decreased 300 from the revised December 2024 estimate; pre-benchmarked data showed a decrease of 1,200.

The seasonally adjusted employment level was understated for ten of eleven months of the year. The largest upward revisions occurred in June (+9,900) and May (+9,600). The year ended with 565,500 employed RI residents, 700 more than the previously reported December 2025 estimate indicated. Over the year, the number of employed RI residents was down 2,400 from the revised December 2024 level of 567,900. Pre-benchmarked estimates indicated a gain of 100.

Labor force estimates were revised upward every month of 2025, with the largest upward revisions occurring in June (+7,000) and May (+6,800). Over the year (December 2024 to December 2025) the RI labor force decreased by 2,700; pre-benchmarked data indicated a decrease of 1,000.

The Benchmarking Process: A Brief Explanation

Labor force statistics are revised to incorporate updated inputs, new population controls, re-estimation of models, revised seasonal adjustment factors, and adjustment to new division and national control totals. This year, seasonally adjusted data and not seasonally adjusted data were revised back to January 2021. For information on this year’s benchmarking process, visit <https://www.bls.gov/lau/launews1.htm>

*The unemployment statistics series for all states started in January 1976.