Rhode Island-Based Jobs Increase 100 from June; July Unemployment Rate Remains at 2.7 Percent

CRANSTON, R.I. - The state’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 2.7 percent in July, matching the lowest rate on record*, the Department of Labor and Training announced Thursday. The July rate was unchanged from the June rate of 2.7 percent. Last year the rate was 6.0 percent in July.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 3.5 percent in July, down one-tenth of a percentage point from June. The U.S. rate was 5.4 percent in July 2021.

The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents — those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment — was 15,200, down 500 from June. The number of unemployed residents decreased by 19,600 over the year. Since April 2020, the height of pandemic-related shutdowns, the number of unemployed RI residents is down 85,100.

The number of employed Rhode Island residents was 558,000, up 1,800 over the month and up 18,000 over the year. Since April 2020, the number of employed Rhode Island residents is up 111,900.

The Rhode Island labor force totaled 573,200 in July, up 1,300 over the month but down 1,600 from July 2021. The labor force is up 26,800 from April 2020.

Since February 2020, the month prior to the pandemic-related shutdowns, the number of unemployed RI residents is down 5,800 and the number of employed RI residents is up 7,200. Currently, there are 1,400 more RI residents participating in the labor force than there were prior to the start of the pandemic. The labor force, employment and unemployment levels have now reached points surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

Rhode Island-Based Jobs

The Rhode Island economy reported a modest job gain in July, as the number of jobs totaled 496,200, an increase of 100 jobs from the revised June count of 496,100. The June job count was revised down by 300. This revision resulted in jobs decreasing by 300 from May to June, the first monthly job loss since January.

The Administrative & Waste Services and Educational Services sectors each added 400 jobs in July, followed by a gain of 300 jobs in the Government sector.

Rounding out the July gains was an increase of 200 jobs reported in both the Manufacturing and Professional & Technical Services sectors, and an increase of 100 jobs in both the Financial Activities and Information sectors.

Offsetting some of the July job gains was a loss of 400 jobs reported in both the Health Care & Social Assistance and Retail Trade sectors. The Retail Trade sector has reported a job loss for four consecutive months, totaling 1,300 jobs.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Jul 22</th>
<th>Jun 22</th>
<th>Jul 21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R.I. Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>U.S. Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.I. Job Count (in thousands)</td>
<td>496.2</td>
<td>496.1</td>
<td>483.5</td>
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Highlights:

- The Rhode Island unemployment rate was 2.7 percent in July, unchanged from last month’s rate of 2.7 percent.
- Through July, the Rhode Island economy has recovered 96,500 or 89.3 percent of the 108,100 jobs lost during the pandemic shutdown.
The Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Other Services sectors lost 300 and 200 jobs in July, respectively, while a loss of 100 jobs was reported in each of the Accommodation & Food Services, Management of Companies and Wholesale Trade sectors.

The number of jobs in the Construction, Mining & Logging and Transportation & Utilities sectors remained unchanged in July.

Due to the unprecedented pandemic-related shutdowns and restrictions implemented in April 2020, the number of jobs in Rhode Island plunged to 399,700. Gradually, restrictions began to ease, and the economy began an upward recovery trend. Over the year, Rhode Island jobs are up 12,700, led by the Accommodation & Food Services (+3,600) sector. Health Care & Social Assistance employment is up 2,700 jobs since July 2021, followed by the Construction (+1,800), Professional & Technical Services (+1,600), Manufacturing (+1,100) and Other Services (+1,000) sectors.

Smaller annual job gains were noted in the Transportation & Utilities (+900), Administrative & Waste (+300), Wholesale Trade (+300), Educational Services (+300), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+200), Government (+200) and Information (+100) sectors, while the number of jobs remained even in the Mining & Logging sector.

Over the year, jobs were down in the Financial Activities (-600), Retail Trade (-500) and Management of Companies (-300) sectors.

To help prevent the outbreak of the coronavirus, many industries in the state were ordered to close or operate with restrictions in April and May of 2020, resulting in the loss of 108,100 jobs. Through July 2022, the state’s economy has recovered 96,500 or 89 percent of the jobs lost during the shutdown. Five employment sectors, Construction, Manufacturing, Professional & Technical Services, Transportation & Utilities and Wholesale Trade have reported more jobs in July 2022 than they had in the month prior to the pandemic shutdown.

The Accommodation & Food Services sector has recovered 90 percent of the jobs lost during the restriction period, followed by the Information (88%), Administrative & Waste Services (87%), Retail Trade (84%), Other Services (83%), Health Care & Social Assistance (81%), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (73%), and Government (52%) sectors.

The Real Estate, Rental & Leasing (43%) and Educational Services (13%) sectors have recovered less than half the jobs lost during the shutdown, while the Financial Activities and Management of Companies sectors have yet to recover any of the jobs lost during the pandemic shutdown.

**Manufacturing Hours and Earnings**

In July, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned $23.66 per hour, down six cents from June, but up one dollar and twenty-three cents from July 2021.

Manufacturing employees worked an average of 40.4 hours per week in July, up three-tenths of an hour over the month, and up an hour and a half from a year ago.

*Current methodology for calculating labor force statistics began in 1976. Statistics prior to 1976 are not strictly comparable. Since 1976, the lowest seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Rhode Island is 2.7 percent, occurring in April 1988, May 1988, June 2022 and July 2022.*

The Department of Labor and Training is scheduled to release the August 2022 labor force figures and job counts at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 15, 2022.