

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December Unemployment Rate Decreases to 3.5 Percent; Rhode Island-Based Jobs Declined 100 from November

CRANSTON, R.I. - The state’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.5 percent in December, the Department of Labor and Training announced Thursday. The December rate was down one-tenth of a percentage point from the November rate of 3.6 percent. Last year the rate was 4.5 percent in December.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 3.5 percent in December, down one-tenth of a percentage point from November. The U.S. rate was 3.9 percent in December 2021.

The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents — those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment — was 20,100, down 500 from November. The number of unemployed residents decreased by 5,600 over the year. Since April 2020, the height of pandemic-related shutdowns, the number of unemployed RI residents is down 80,200.

The number of employed Rhode Island residents was 554,300, down 1,800 over the month and up 10,400 over the year. Since April 2020, the number of employed Rhode Island residents is up 108,200.

The Rhode Island labor force totaled 574,400 in December, down 2,300 over the month and up 4,800 from December 2021. The labor force is up 28,000 from April 2020.

Since February 2020, the month prior to the pandemic-related shutdowns, the number of unemployed RI residents is down 900 and the number of employed RI residents is up 3,500. Currently, there are 2,600 more RI residents participating in the labor force than there were prior to the start of the pandemic. The labor force, employment and unemployment estimates have reached points surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

Rhode Island-Based Jobs

Total nonfarm employment in Rhode Island fell to 497,500 in December, a decrease of 100 jobs from the revised November figure of 497,600.

Three employment sectors, Accommodation & Food Services, Educational Services and Government, each reported a loss of 600 jobs in December.

The Transportation & Utilities sector shed 500 jobs in December, followed by a loss of 100 jobs in Retail Trade.

Offsetting the December job losses was a gain of 800 jobs reported in the Professional & Technical Services sector, recouping almost all the 900 jobs it lost in November. Sizeable job gains were also noted in the Administrative & Waste Services (+500) and Construction (+400) sectors.

	Dec 22	Nov 22	Dec 21
R.I. Unemployment Rate	3.5%	3.6%	4.5%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	3.5%	3.6%	3.9%
R.I. Job Count (<i>in thousands</i>)	497.5	497.6	488.0
Highlights:			
The Rhode Island unemployment rate was 3.5 percent in December, down one-tenth of a percentage point from last month’s rate of 3.6 percent.			
Through December, the Rhode Island economy has recovered 97,800 or 90.5 percent of the 108,100 jobs lost during the pandemic shutdown.			

Smaller but positive December job gains were also noted in the Financial Activities (+300), Health Care & Social Assistance (+100), Information (+100) and Management of Companies (+100) sectors.

Employment in the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Manufacturing, Mining & Logging, Other Services and Wholesale Trade sectors remained unchanged from November.

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 9,500, led by the Construction (+3,500), Health Care & Social Assistance (+2,600), and Professional & Technical Services (+1,600) sectors.

Sizeable annual job gains were also noted in Financial Activities (+800), Government (+800) and Manufacturing (+600), followed by smaller annual gains reported in the Wholesale Trade (+400), Educational Services (+300), Other Services (+200), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+100) and Information (+100) sectors.

An annual decline of 400 jobs in December was reported in each of the Accommodation & Food Services, Administrative & Waste Services, and Retail Trade sectors, followed by smaller annual losses reported in the Management of Companies (-200) and Transportation & Utilities (-100) sectors.

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 108,100 jobs. Through December 2022, the state's economy has recovered 97,800 or 90.5 percent of the jobs lost during the shutdown. Six employment sectors, Construction, Finance & Insurance, Information, Manufacturing, Professional & Technical Services and Wholesale Trade have reported more jobs in December 2022 than they had in the month prior to the pandemic shutdown.

The Transportation & Utilities sector has recovered 94 percent of the jobs lost during the restriction period, followed by the Administrative & Waste Services (92%), Other Services (88%), Accommodation & Food Services (85%), Health Care & Social Assistance (85%), Retail Trade (78%), Real Estate, Rental & Leasing (71%) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (69%).

The Government (46%) sector has yet to recover at least half of their lost jobs, while the Educational Services and Management of Companies sectors remain below its pre-pandemic level.

Manufacturing Hours and Earnings

In December, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$24.29 per hour, up two cents from November, and up one dollar and forty-two from December 2021.

Manufacturing employees worked an average of 39.8 hours per week in December, down one-tenth of an hour over the month, and down four-tenths of an hour from a year ago.

SEASONALLY- ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND (in thousands)					
			Net Change From		
	Dec-22	Nov-22	Dec-21	Nov-22	Dec-21
Total Nonfarm	497.5	497.6*	488.0	-0.1	9.5
Total Private	433.7	433.2*	425.0	0.5	8.7
Mining & Logging	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Construction	23.7	23.3	20.2	0.4	3.5
Manufacturing	40.6	40.6*	40.0	0.0	0.6
Wholesale Trade	16.6	16.6*	16.2	0.0	0.4
Retail Trade	45.5	45.6*	45.9	-0.1	-0.4
Transportation & Utilities	13.2	13.7	13.3	-0.5	-0.1
Information	5.9	5.8*	5.8	0.1	0.1
Financial Activities	35.6	35.3*	34.8	0.3	0.8
Professional & Technical Svcs.	29.9	29.1*	28.3	0.8	1.6
Management of Companies & Enterprises	12.0	11.9	12.2	0.1	-0.2
Administrative & Waste Services	28.7	28.2*	29.1	0.5	-0.4
Educational Services	24.2	24.8	23.9	-0.6	0.3
Health Care & Social Assistance	80.9	80.8*	78.3	0.1	2.6
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	6.8	6.8*	6.7	0.0	0.1
Accommodation & Food Services	47.8	48.4*	48.2	-0.6	-0.4
Other Services	22.1	22.1	21.9	0.0	0.2
Government	63.8	64.4*	63.0	-0.6	0.8
<i>*Revised estimates</i>					

The Department of Labor and Training is scheduled to release the January 2023 labor force figures and job counts at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 9, 2023.