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## **Rhode Island-Based Jobs Fell by 6,300 from November; December Unemployment Rate Increases to 8.1 Percent**

**CRANSTON, R.I.** - The state’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 8.1 percent in December, the Department of Labor and Training announced Thursday. The December rate was up eight-tenths of a percentage point from the November rate of 7.3 percent. Last year the rate was 3.5 percent in December.

The U.S. unemployment rate was 6.7 percent in December, unchanged from November. The U.S. rate was 3.6 percent in December 2019.

The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents — those residents classified as available for and actively seeking employment — was 44,000, up 4,600 from November. Over the year, the number of unemployed residents increased by 24,700.

The number of employed Rhode Island residents was 498,400, down 3,800 from November. Last December there were 537,600 employed Rhode Island residents.

The Rhode Island labor force totaled 542,400 in December, up 700 from November and down 14,500 from December 2019 (556,900).

### **Rhode Island-Based Jobs**

Rhode Island implemented a three-week “pause” from Nov. 30 through Dec. 20, intended to reduce the community spread of COVID-19. These temporary restrictions led to a decrease of 6,300 jobs in December. The state’s revised November total nonfarm job count of 468,200 fell to 461,900 in December.

The number of jobs in the Accommodation & Food Sector fell by 3,300 in December, as restaurant capacity was limited to 33 percent of its total capacity. In addition, the two state casinos were closed during the three-week pause, resulting in hundreds of job losses.

Government employment dropped by 1,300 in December with most of those losses stemming from state and local government educational services.

December employment in the Other Services sector declined by 700, while employment in Health Care & Social Assistance fell by 600. Large job declines were reported among nursing and residential care facility workers and among social assistance workers.

A loss of 400 jobs was reported in both the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation and Professional & Business Services sectors, while smaller job declines were noted in the Manufacturing (-200) sector. A loss of 100 jobs was reported in the Financial Activities, Educational Services and Information sectors.

	<u>Dec 20</u>	<u>Nov 20</u>	<u>Dec 19</u>
R.I. Unemployment Rate	8.1%	7.3%	3.5%
U.S. Unemployment Rate	6.7%	6.7%	3.6%
R.I. Job Count ( <i>in thousands</i> )	461.9	468.2	505.7
<b>Highlights:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Rhode Island unemployment rate was 8.1 percent in December, up 0.8 of a percentage point from last month’s rate of 7.3 percent.</li> <li>• Through December, the Rhode Island economy has recovered 51,600 or 52.6 percent of the 98,100 lost jobs during the pandemic shutdown.</li> </ul>			

Fueled by holiday deliveries and holiday shopping, the Transportation & Utilities and Retail Trade sectors added 400 and 300 jobs, respectively. Wholesale Trade employment rose by 200 in December, while Construction employment remained unchanged.

To help prevent the outbreak of the coronavirus, many industries in the state were ordered to close in March and April, resulting in the loss of 98,100 jobs. Through December, the state's economy has recovered 51,600 or 52.6 percent of the jobs lost. The Financial Activities sector has recovered 85 percent of the 2,000 jobs it lost during the shutdown, followed by the Retail Trade (83.0%), Manufacturing (72.7%) and Health Care & Social Assistance (60.8%) sectors.

The Construction (57.7%), Accommodation & Food Sector (54.7%) and Professional & Business Services (54.1%) sectors have all recovered at least half of the jobs lost during the pandemic shutdown.

Those sectors which have recovered less than half of the jobs they lost include Transportation & Utilities (44.8%), Other Services (41.9%), Educational Services (35.7%) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (22.4%).

Since December, the Government, Information and Wholesale Trade sectors have yet to recover any of the jobs they lost in March and April.

Due to the unprecedented pandemic-related employment declines in March and April, nearly all employment sectors reported year-over-year declines in December. The Accommodation & Food Services (-15,000) sector led all sectors in year-over-year jobs losses, followed by the Health Care & Social Assistance (-5,200), Professional & Business Services (-4,700), Other Services (-3,900), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (-3,700) and Government (-3,300) sectors.

Educational Services (-2,300), Retail Trade (-1,600), Transportation & Utilities (-1,500), and Wholesale Trade (-1,200) also reported sizable job declines between December 2019 and December 2020. Smaller annual declines were noted in the Manufacturing (-700), Information (-600) and Construction (-300) sectors.

Financial Activities and Mining & Logging each added 100 jobs since December 2019.

SEASONALLY-ADJUSTED NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN RHODE ISLAND				
<i>(in thousands)</i>				
	Dec-20	Nov-20	Dec-19	Net Change From
				Nov-20 Dec-19
<b>Total Nonfarm</b>	<b>461.9</b>	<b>468.2 *</b>	<b>505.7</b>	<b>-6.3 -43.8</b>
<b>Total Private</b>	<b>399.4</b>	<b>404.4 *</b>	<b>439.9</b>	<b>-5.0 -40.5</b>
Mining & Logging	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.0 0.1
Construction	19.2	19.2 *	19.5	0.0 -0.3
Manufacturing	38.8	39.0 *	39.5	-0.2 -0.7
Wholesale Trade	16.0	15.8	17.2	0.2 -1.2
Retail Trade	46.9	46.6	48.5	0.3 -1.6
Transportation & Utilities	11.6	11.2	13.1	0.4 -1.5
Information	5.3	5.4	5.9	-0.1 -0.6
Financial Activities	35.5	35.6 *	35.4	-0.1 0.1
Professional & Business Services	63.3	63.7 *	68.0	-0.4 -4.7
Educational Services	24.3	24.4 *	26.6	-0.1 -2.3
Health Care & Social Assistance	77.7	78.3 *	82.9	-0.6 -5.2
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	4.4	4.8	8.1	-0.4 -3.7
Accommodation & Food Services	37.5	40.8 *	52.5	-3.3 -15.0
Other Services	18.6	19.3 *	22.5	-0.7 -3.9
Government	62.5	63.8 *	65.8	-1.3 -3.3

*\*Revised estimates*

## Manufacturing Hours and Earnings

In December, production workers in the Manufacturing sector earned \$20.85 per hour, down thirty-seven cents from November, but up one dollar and forty-nine cents from December 2019.

Manufacturing employees worked an average of 38.8 hours per week in December, up one hour and three-tenths over the month, and unchanged 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](http://www.dlt.ri.gov).

The Department of Labor and Training is scheduled to release the January 2021 labor force figures and job counts at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, March 11, 2021.