



# Rhode Island Economic Update

August 21, 2015

## Summary

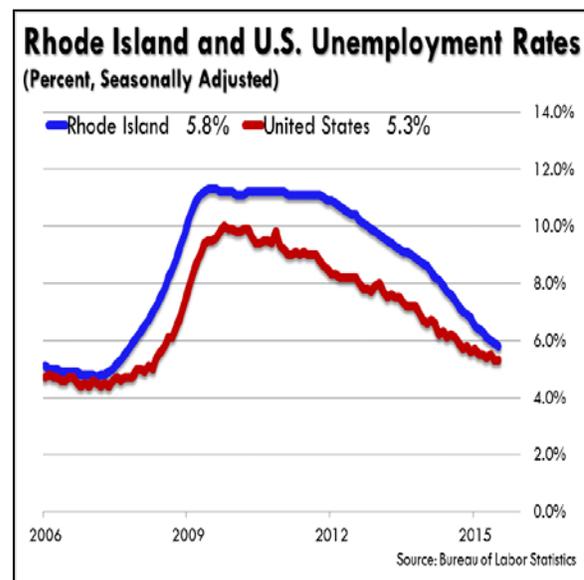
Nonfarm payroll employment in Rhode Island increased by 3,300 jobs and the unemployment rate fell to 5.8 percent in July according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

## Rhode Island Unemployment Rate

During July, the unemployment rate in Rhode Island declined by 0.1 percentage point to 5.8 percent. The number of people counted as unemployed fell by 787 in July to 32,246, while the labor force grew by 1,299 to 559,838. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 33 posted lower unemployment rates for the month than Rhode Island. A year earlier, the unemployment rate in Rhode Island stood at 7.6 percent.

The 10 year peak for the unemployment rate in Rhode Island was 11.3 percent in August 2009. This also represents the series high for the unemployment rate in Rhode Island. The 10 year low for the unemployment rate in Rhode Island was 4.7 percent in February 2007. The series low for the unemployment rate in Rhode Island occurred in May 1988 when the unemployment rate reached 2.9 percent. BLS began publishing the state unemployment rate series in 1976.

The national unemployment rate was unchanged at 5.3 percent in July. July's unemployment rate was 0.9 percentage point lower than a year earlier when the rate stood at 6.2 percent. The ten year high for the national unemployment rate was 10.0 percent in October 2009. The ten year low was 4.4 percent in May 2007.



## Rhode Island Payroll Employment

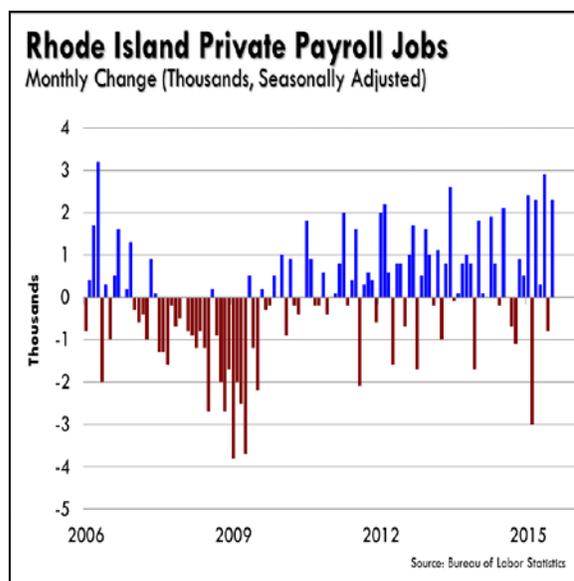
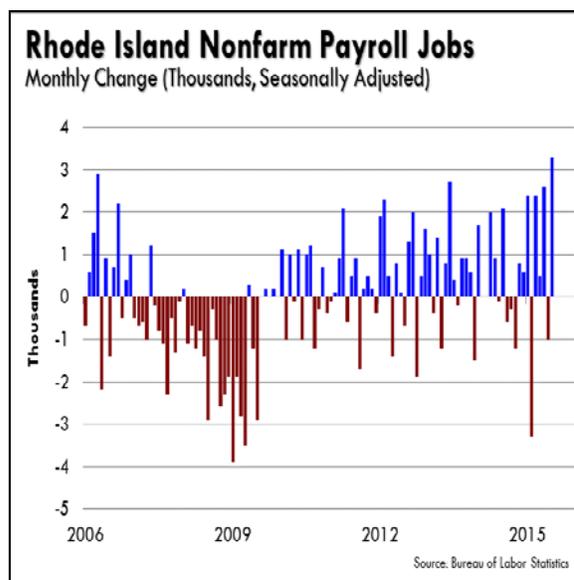
Rhode Island nonfarm payrolls increased by 3,300 jobs, or 0.68 percent, on a seasonally adjusted basis during July. In the prior month, nonfarm payrolls declined by 1,000. Over the past 12 months nonfarm payrolls in Rhode Island increased by 6,200, or 1.29 percent. Rhode Island nonfarm payroll employment has increased in 7 of the past 12 months.

Nationally nonfarm payrolls increased by 215,000 jobs in July, or 0.15 percent. Over the 12 month period ending in July 2015, nonfarm payrolls grew by 2,915,000 jobs, or 2.09 percent. Rhode Island ranks 32nd among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in nonfarm payroll employment over the past 12 months.

During July, Rhode Island private sector payrolls increased by 2,300, or 0.54 percent. Private sector payrolls declined by 800 jobs in the prior month. Over the past 12 months, private sector payrolls in Rhode Island increased by 6,000, or 1.43 percent. Rhode Island private sector payroll employment has increased in 7 of the past 12 months.

Nationally, private sector payroll jobs increased by 210,000 in July, or 0.18 percent. Over the past 12 months, the nation's economy has added 2,853,000 private sector payroll jobs, an increase of 2.43 percent. Rhode Island ranks 33rd among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for percentage gain in private sector payroll employment over the past 12 months.

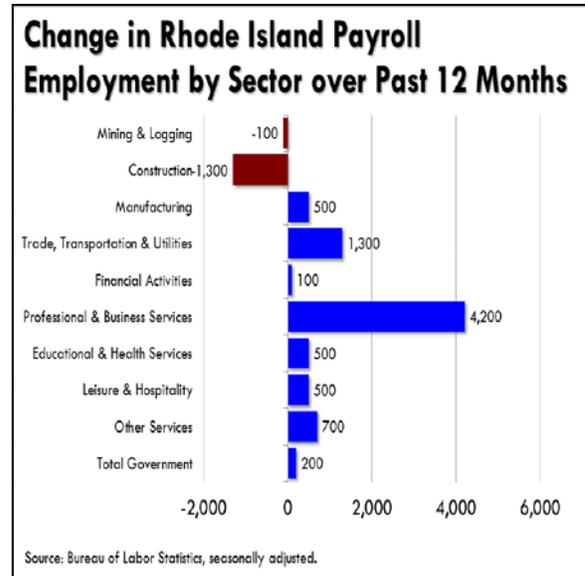
During July, total government payroll employment in Rhode Island increased by 1,000, or 1.68 percent. Federal government payroll employment increased by 600, or 0.31 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 300, or 0.08 percent, while local government payroll employment increased by 8,600, or 0.67 percent.



Over the past year, total government payroll employment increased by 200, or 0.33 percent. State government payroll employment declined by 4,000, or 1.10 percent. Local government payroll employment increased by 26,500, or 2.08 percent.

The best performing sectors on a seasonally adjusted basis during July were Professional & Business Services (+1,400) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+1,200). The poorest performing sector during the month was Leisure & Hospitality (-1,400).

The best performing sectors during the last twelve months were Professional & Business Services (+4,200) and Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+1,300). The poorest performing sectors for the year were Construction (-1,300) and Mining & Logging (-100).

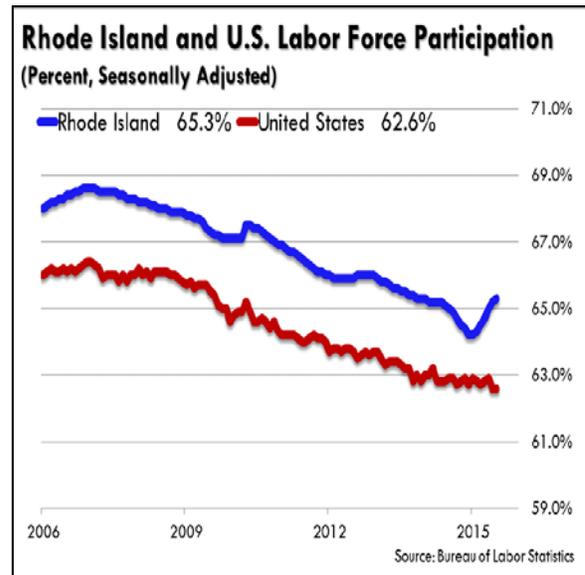


### Other Rhode Island Labor Force Statistics

The labor force participation rate in Rhode Island rose to 65.3 percent in July from 65.2 percent the prior month. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 17 have a higher labor force participation rate than Rhode Island. The labor force participation rate in Rhode Island is unchanged from a year earlier. The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 and older who are employed or actively looking for work.

The 10 year high for the labor force participation rate in Rhode Island was 68.6 percent in February 2007. This also represents the series high for the labor force participation rate in Rhode Island. The 10 year low for the labor force participation rate was 64.2 percent in January 2015. The series low for the labor force participation rate occurred in October 1976 when the labor force participation rate hit 62.8 percent.

The national labor force participation rate remained at 62.6 percent in July. That rate is 0.2 percentage point lower than a year earlier. The rate for June and July are the lowest recorded since October 1977.



The employment-to-population ratio, or the percentage of the Rhode Island civilian noninstitutionalized population 16 years and older counted as employed, rose to 61.6 percent in July from 61.3 percent the prior month. Among the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 19 have higher employment-to-population ratios than Rhode Island. The employment-to-population ratio in Rhode Island is 1.5 percentage points higher than a year earlier.

The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio in Rhode Island was 65.4 percent in February 2007. The series high for the employment-to-population ratio in Rhode Island occurred in March 1989 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 66.0 percent. The 10 year low for the employment-to-population ratio was 58.7 percent in December 2011. The series low for the employment-to-population ratio occurred in December 1976 when the employment-to-population ratio hit 57.5 percent.

The national employment-to-population ratio held steady at 59.3 percent in July. At 59.3 percent, the national employment-to-population ratio is below its level of 59.4 percent when the recession ended in June 2009. The all-time high for the employment-to-population ratio was 64.7 percent in April 2000. The 10 year high for the employment-to-population ratio was 63.4 percent in December 2006. The recent low occurred in October 2013 when the employment-to-population ratio dipped to 58.2 percent. The last time the employment-to-population posted a reading lower than 58.2 percent was July 1983.

State employment and unemployment data for August is scheduled for release on Friday, September 18. The national employment situation report for August will be released on Friday, September 4.

