

Planning Information Center Census Data Bulletin

RHODE ISLAND
STATEWIDE
PLANNING
PROGRAM



Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program
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Employment Data for Rhode Island Planners

With jobs and the economy on the mind of the American public, many planners in Rhode Island are paying close attention to local and statewide economic development efforts. Economic conditions don't only affect unemployment, they also impact many land use issues, from where people live to the kind of housing they can afford, from transportation infrastructure to commercial development. This bulletin explores datasets that can help planners understand economic conditions and opportunities.

Data Show Employment Numbers Are Up

Employment data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) provides quarterly and annual figures for covered employment and wages by industry at several geographies, including state, county, and city/town. In the first quarter of 2012, the most recent period for which data are available, Rhode Island had an average employment of 440,553, of which 380,454 were private sector jobs and the remainder were government jobs. This figure increased from the first quarter of 2011, when there were 436,402 jobs in the state. However, the 2012 jobs count is over 17,000 fewer than the first quarter figure from ten years prior, in 2002. The difference represents a loss of approximately 11,100 private sector jobs between 2002 and 2012 and 6,600 public sector jobs.

BY THE NUMBERS

440,553 latest jobs count for Rhode Island

436,402 comparable jobs count, 2011

458,295 comparable jobs count, 2002

5.8 Narragansett's unemployment rate as of Sept. 2012, the lowest of any city/town

13.9 Central Falls' unemployment rate as of Sept. 2012, highest in the state

1 in 4 share of R.I. jobs located in Providence

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Jobs More Concentrated Than Residents

QCEW data can also help planners identify geographic patterns of employment and wages down to the city/town level. Rhode Island's jobs are somewhat more concentrated than its residential population, in keeping with traditional suburban-urban development patterns. The state's top five cities for employment—Providence, Warwick, Cranston, Pawtucket, and East Providence—account for 52.4% of the state's employment but these communities are home to only 43.8% of the state's population. It is no surprise that suburban or rural residents commute to jobs in cities, but local unemployment figures in Rhode Island demonstrate that in some places, residents may not be benefitting from living near these job centers. In Providence and Pawtucket, unemployment in 2011 was

ABOUT THE DATA

Data in this Bulletin are drawn from multiple sources. QCEW data, also known as ES-202 data, track jobs and wages in all employment covered by state unemployment insurance law and the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees program. Self-employed individuals are not counted. QCEW data for Rhode Island are developed through a federal-state partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics and Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. Unemployment statistics are developed by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics program, administered by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Geography of Jobs, Residents, and Unemployment Rates: The Top 5 Cities for Jobs in Rhode Island					
	Employment	% of R.I. Employment	Population	% of R.I. Population	Unemployment Rate, 2011
Providence	106,791	24.2%	178,042	16.9%	13.7
Warwick	46,520	10.6%	82,672	7.9%	10.3
Cranston	33,880	7.7%	80,387	7.6%	11.1
Pawtucket	23,376	5.3%	71,148	6.8%	13
East Providence	20,441	4.6%	48,688	4.6%	11.7
Rhode Island	440,533	100.0%	1,052,567	100.0%	11.3

Sources: QCEW data reported in RI DLT City and Town Quarterly Report, 2012 First Quarter (Employment); Census 2010 (Population); RI DLT Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2011 Average (Unemployment Rate).

at or above 13 percent. (Monthly unemployment data available for 2012 show that both cities' unemployment rates are falling, along with the statewide unemployment rate.)

Industry Strengths

The QCEW also provides information on different industrial sectors such as their employment, total payrolls, and number of establishments in a given area. These numbers alone can help planners track change over time, and they are available by city and town. However, it can be helpful to contextualize local numbers in a statewide or national picture. One convenient way to assess Rhode Island's economic niches is to review location quotients for different sectors. Location quotients measure the share of jobs or establishments in a particular sector in a geographic analysis area, such as Newport County or the state of Rhode Island, compared with a base area, usually the United States. Location quotients (or LQs) over 1 indicate a relative concentration in the analysis area, and LQs less than 1 indicate the opposite.

For example, some of Rhode Island's highest employment location quotients are in unsurprising subsectors, such as fishing, hunting and trapping (LQ of 1.84), but the state has a lesser-known, small but significant niche in data processing, hosting and related services. This subsector employed over 3,000 people in 2011, and at 3.5, its LQ is the highest of all subsectors in the state.

With location quotients, it is also possible to explore smaller geographies, such as counties, cities or towns, in comparison with the country or the state. For example, when comparing Newport County to the

rest of the country, some obvious concentrations are made apparent—fishing and tourism-related subsectors—but other sectoral strengths emerge, such as computer and electronic product manufacturing (LQ 4.7) and textile product mills (LQ 3.9). Quantifying these local assets can provide a foundation for economic development strategies. See the box below for a link to an online location quotient calculator provided by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

TO LEARN MORE...

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training (DLT) puts out a report, [State of the State: A Statistical Profile of Rhode Island's Cities and Towns](#), which summarizes employment data by locality and provides some statewide context. The online [DLT Labor Market Information Data Center](#) provides many other datasets on the labor market.

To explore historic and current employment and wage data for Rhode Island and its cities and towns, visit DLT's QCEW data webpage at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/es202.htm>. For an online *location quotient calculator*, visit http://data.bls.gov/location_quotient/ControllerServlet. For additional detail, such as age, race, gender, and educational background, visit the U.S. Census Bureau's Quarterly Workforce Indicators page for Rhode Island at <http://lehd.did.census.gov/datatools/qwiapp.html>.

For further information about Planning Information Center resources, contact Amanda Martin at Rhode Island Statewide Planning: amanda.martin@doa.ri.gov or (401) 222-4720.