

Rhode Island State Data Center Census Data Bulletin

RHODE ISLAND
STATEWIDE
PLANNING
PROGRAM



State Data Center at the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program
One Capitol Hill, Third Floor, Providence, RI 02908

December 2013

2012 ACS Data Released: Changes in Labor Force, Vacancy Rates, Home Heating Fuel

The recent release of 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) data shows that in the past three years, some of the state's economic, housing, and social characteristics have changed. Many of these changes reflect trends of Rhode Island's recovery from the recession, while others capture external changes, such as the falling price of natural gas. In this month's Census Data Bulletin, we compare Rhode Island's 2012 1-year ACS data to 1-year datasets from 2011 and 2010 and provide some snapshots of our most current data on the economic, housing, and social characteristics of Rhode Island.

Growth in employed labor force

One trend clearly attributable to the recession recovery is the growth in the state's employed labor force. The ACS estimates that between 2010 and 2012, the number of Rhode Island residents counted among the ranks of the employed civilian labor force grew from 490,964 to 512,801, an increase of 21,837, while the estimate of unemployed members of the civilian labor force declined from 60,050 to 52,997. (Note that the ACS uses a different survey methodology and definitions to measure unemployment than the official unemployment statistics, which come from the Current Population Survey, administered jointly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau.) This occurred despite a slight decline in population during these years, from 1,052,567 to 1,050,292.

This good news resulted in a statistically significant growth in the overall labor force—civilian plus armed forces—of 14,177 individuals. The growth in the civilian

BY THE NUMBERS

\$54,554 Median household income in R.I.*

21,837 Increase in employed civilians between 2010 and 2012

5.5% Rental vacancy rate in 2012, down from 9.5% in 2010

\$1,774* Median monthly owner costs for housing units with a mortgage, down from \$1,934* in 2010

* In 2012 dollars

Source: American Community Survey 2012 1-year data.

employed population mostly occurred among people who work in service occupations, with an estimated increase of nearly 10,000, and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations. However the distribution of the major occupation groups remained largely unchanged; no occupation group's share changed by more than one percentage point.

2012 Snapshot: Occupations of Rhode Island Residents		
	Number	Percent
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	183,595	35.8%
Service occupation	105,886	20.6%
Sales and office occupations	124,597	24.3%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	39,524	7.7%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	59,199	11.5%

In 2012, median income for Rhode Island households stood at \$54,554, which was higher than the national median household income, \$51,371.

ABOUT THE DATA

Data in this Bulletin are drawn primarily from the American Community Survey's 1-Year Datasets from 2010, 2011, and 2012. These data are collected from surveys administered during the year indicated. Because the data come from a survey, the results are estimates of population characteristics, each with an associated margin of error. All changes described in this Bulletin are statistically significant the 90% confidence level.

Housing vacancy rate down

While the number of housing units in the state remained nearly constant between 2010 and 2012, the number of those units that were occupied increased. In 2010, there were 61,121 unoccupied housing units but by 2012, that number had fallen to just under 50,000 despite an overall decline in population. This statistically significant change drove the rental vacancy rate from 9.5% to 5.5%. (The homeowner vacancy rate fell too, but the change was not statistically significant.) Most of this change occurred between 2010 and 2011, although the trends continue to move in the same direction.

<i>2012 Snapshot: Housing in Rhode Island</i>		
OCCUPANCY		
Occupied housing units	413,083	89.3%
Vacant housing units	49,535	10.7%
TENURE		
Owner-occupied	247,790	60.0%
Renter-occupied	165,293	40.0%
VEHICLES AVAILABLE		
No vehicles available	41,179	10.0%
1 vehicle available	154,545	37.4%
2 vehicles available	149,979	36.3%
3 or more vehicles available	67,380	16.3%

Replacing Home Heating Oil with Natural Gas

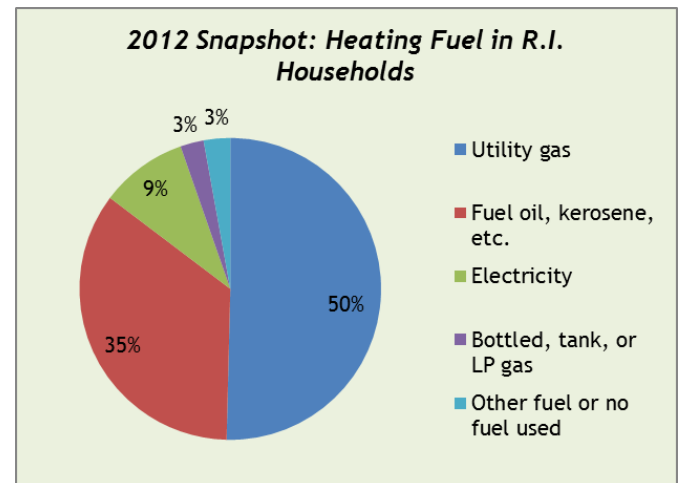
A growing number of Rhode Island property owners are moving from home heating oil to natural gas. Between 2010 and 2012, the number of households using utility gas to heat their homes rose by an estimated 10,470, while the number of households relying on fuel oil or kerosene dropped by 7,639. Most of the increase in natural gas heated households occurred between 2010 and 2011, while the drop in fuel oil occurred mostly between 2011 and 2012. While many older homes were built with furnaces that burn oil, the dramatic drop in the price of natural gas has spurred many households to convert their heating systems to gas. As of 2012, the ACS estimates that 208,173 Rhode Island households use natural gas compared with 144,208 that use oil.

More Households, Older Residents

Along with the increase in occupied housing units between 2010 and 2012, the number of households in the state grew during the same period, from 402,295 to 413,083. When survey recipients respond to the American Community Survey, they indicate how each member of the

household is related to the householder. Between 2010 and 2012, the estimate of children of householders who live in the same household fell by 14,407. One possible explanation is that as economic conditions have improved, adult children have moved out of their parents' homes.

Average household size also fell during this period from 2.51 to 2.44. In addition, households with one or more person over the age of 65 have been growing their ranks, from 106,130 in 2010 to 112,883 in 2012. This figure represents 27.3% of households in Rhode Island.



* Other fuel includes wood, coal or coke, solar, and other fuel

TO LEARN MORE...

To explore the 2012 American Community Survey releases, visit the U.S. Census website, [American FactFinder](http://www.census.gov). You can locate data from a particular dataset or year by going to Advanced Search > Topics > Year or Advanced Search > Topics > Dataset.

Three-year ACS data, which is available for areas with 20,000 people or more, were just released in November. Five-year ACS data, which covers all geographies, will be available in December.

To learn more about comparing 2012 ACS data with other ACS datasets and Decennial Census data, visit [Comparing 2012 American Community Survey Data](http://www.census.gov).

For further information about RI State Data Center resources, contact Vincent Flood at vincent.flood@doa.ri.gov or Amanda Martin at amanda.martin@doa.ri.gov and visit the website at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/geodeminfo/data/index.php>.