



Labor Market Trends and
Early Childhood Education
Workforce
Recommendations

Labor Market Trends



Current Jobs/Employment Data

DLT's Labor Market Information division release RI-based job counts and employment data on a monthly basis

In December (most recent data):

- There were 499,300 RI-based jobs, up 1,800 from November and the highest job count in nine months. RI has recovered 92.6% of the jobs lost during the COVID shutdown.
- RI's unemployment rate was 3.2%, up three-tenths of a point from November. The US unemployment rate was 3.7%.
- The number of employed Rhode Island residents was up 8,700 over the year, as was the labor force (those working or looking for work), which has grown in each of the last nine months.

Monthly Jobs Report - December 2023		
*OTMC	Industry Sector Job Count	*OTYC
1,800	Total Nonfarm 499,300	1,900
1,300	Total Private 433,700	0
0	Mining & Logging 200	0
100	Construction 21,700	-700
-100	Manufacturing 40,100	-400
-100	Wholesale Trade 15,700	-1,200
-100	Retail Trade 46,400	-700
-200	Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities 12,800	-600
-100	Information 5,500	-400
-100	Finance & Insurance 29,200	200
200	Real Estate, Rental & Leasing 6,300	-300
200	Professional, Scientific & Technical Svcs. 29,500	-200
-100	Management of Companies & Enterprises 10,600	-300
200	Administrative & Waste Services 27,100	-800
200	Educational Services 25,300	1,200
600	Health Care & Social Assistance 84,100	3,700
200	Arts, Entertainment & Recreation 8,500	300
400	Accommodation & Food Services 49,100	600
0	Other Services 21,600	-400
500	Government 65,600	1,900

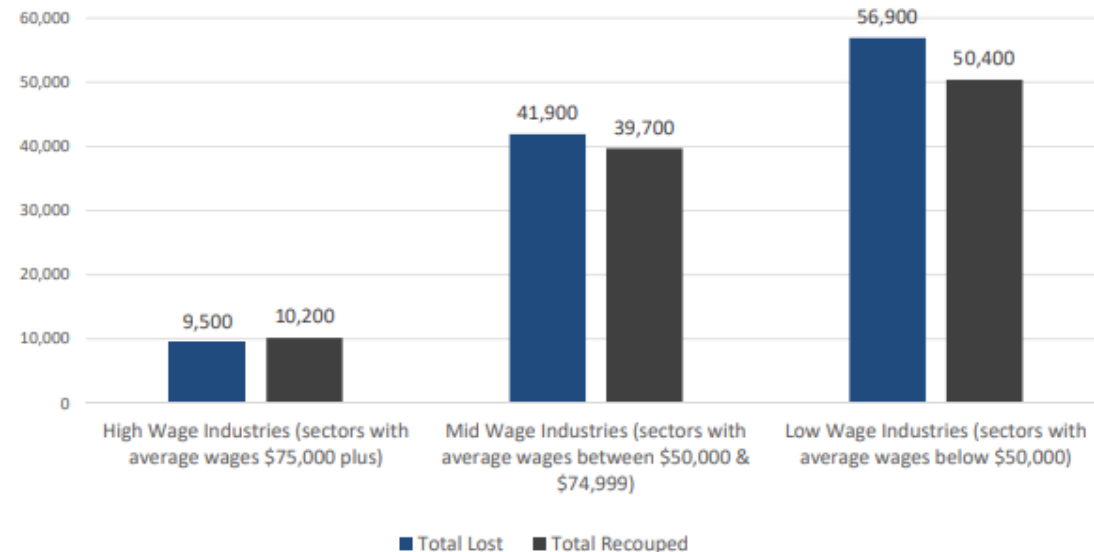
*OTMC - Over-the-month change / OTYC - Over-the-year change

COVID Recovery Data

Lower-wage industries were hit harder during the pandemic

- 52.5% of the jobs lost during the COVID shutdown were in lower wage industries (= avg. earnings <\$50,000), and those industries have been somewhat slower to recover.
- To date, low wage industries have recovered about 87% of the jobs lost.
 - Accommodation & Food Service (avg. wage: \$27,895) is still down 3,900 jobs from February 2020
 - Retail Trade (avg. wage: \$39,894) is still down 1,400 jobs from pre-pandemic level

Jobs Lost and Recovered by Wage Category - February 2020 through December 2023



Over half (52.5%) of the jobs lost during the March to April 2020 shutdown were in low wage industries, 38.7 percent were in mid-wage industries and 8.8 percent were in high wage industries. To date, 88.6 percent of the low wage industries jobs, 94.7 percent of the mid-wage industry jobs and all of the high-wage industry jobs have recovered.

Women Re-entering the Workforce

- In 2023, women’s participation in the labor force was 59.8%, down from 60.6% in 2022.
- Nonetheless, much of the overall labor force participation increase since the pandemic has been driven by women connecting to the labor market.
- The participation rate for women is still above the pre-pandemic rate.
- The industries most severely impacted by COVID-related shutdowns – accommodation & food service, health care & social assistance, and retail trade – are also industries dominated by women.

Year	Total Labor Force Participation Rate	Men	Women
2023	64.1	68.7	59.8
2022	64.0	67.6	60.6
2021	63.6	67.3	60.3
2020	63.4	69.4	57.8
2019	64.2	70.4	58.4

Source: RIDLT – Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program/Current Population Survey

Investment in Early Childhood Workforce

Through Real Jobs Rhode Island, federal and state resources are directed to workforce development efforts

- 14-week Early Childcare & Education Training Program (CCRI & BOCA) **COMING 2024**
- 12-month RI BEST Bilingual Early Childhood Education Training (CCRI) **COMING 2024**
- 10-week Early Childhood Educator Training (Genesis Center) **COMING 2024**
- 10-week Foreign-Trained Educators Program (Genesis Center) *est. 2024*
- Pre-Apprenticeship Training for Family Childcare Providers (SEIU) *est. 2023*
- 18-month Registered Apprenticeship Program for Family Childcare Providers (SEIU) *est. 2021*



**Governor's Workforce Board
Rhode Island**

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Recommendations on Early Childhood Workforce Development

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Recommendations

Meeting the Demand for Childcare/ECE Workers



- Allocate funding to the design and implementation of new workforce training programs and career pathways for childcare workers.
 - Provide additional funding to the Department of Labor and Training's Real Jobs Rhode Island program to fund the training of new and diverse workers to meet the industry demand. Real Jobs participants are supported with wrap-around services administered through the RI Reconnect program at the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner.
- Work with the Department of Education to prioritize the use of Perkins dollars to significantly expand Career and Technical Education programs for Childcare Workers and Early Childhood Education.
 - For additional information on current CTE pipelines see Slide 15.
 - Expand and encourage programs to offer Early Childhood Education as a career option. Most programs are currently geared toward teaching occupations in K-12 schools.

Note: Adopting recommendations related to **Increasing CCAP Reimbursement Rates** and **Childcare/ECE Worker Wages and Benefits** (see slides 19-20) are also critical to addressing the workforce recruitment and retention challenges in this industry.



- Support the efforts of the Department of Labor and Training, the Department of Human Services, RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner, and industry stakeholders to develop new certifications and pathways that ensure worker competencies and facilitate hiring and promotions.
- Support diversity and equity within the industry to better meet the needs of families.
 - As a first step, develop a report on the current demographics of the Early Childhood Education workforce including age, race, ethnicity, gender, and languages utilized to facilitate the identification of areas for improvement.
 - This could be done through surveys administered by the Department of Human Services in collaboration with SEIU 1199 to include family childcare providers.
 - Incorporate findings into recruitment efforts for new programs/pathways developed.
- Improve the availability and delivery of professional development/continuing education for workers to support retention and growth within the industry.
 - Allocate funding to the Department of Human Services and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner to work collaboratively on the continuity and expansion of T.E.A.C.H. programming; maximizing college credits for various types of learning, including training and work experience.

Increasing CCAP Reimbursement Rates



- Increase all Childcare Assistance Program (CCAP) base rates with the goal of increasing worker wages, worker retention and overall program quality.
 - Join states/districts including the District of Columbia, New Mexico, and Virginia in transitioning to a Cost of Care Model (the national best practice).
 - As a first step, increase CCAP reimbursement base rates to meet and exceed the ACF's Equal Access Standard, which requires that state reimbursement rates meet at least the 75th percentile of providers' average market rates.
 - Provider Market Rate Surveys are conducted every three (3) years to determine local childcare providers' average market rate.
 - The last Market Rate Survey was conducted in 2021 and the next survey will be conducted in 2024.
 - Rhode Island's base reimbursement rate for full-time infant care in a licensed childcare center is currently at the 50th percentile.

*Statutory rate increases would not impact Family Child Care (FCC), as FCC rates are negotiated by the CBA. At the time of re-negotiation, it would be strongly encouraged that the rates are in alignment.
 - Evaluate the eligibility criteria for CCAP to increase the number of families eligible to help stabilize the childcare market and assist potential workers with childcare needs.
 - CCAP utilization has significantly decreased since the beginning of the pandemic (it is about 40% lower than it was pre-pandemic).

Sample Licensed Childcare Center Weekly Reimbursement Rate for Full-Time Infant Care (based on the 2021 Market Rate Survey)	
100 th Percentile (Target Base/1-Star Rate)	\$391.92
95 th Percentile	\$367.00
90 th Percentile	\$352.50
85 th Percentile	\$310.75
80 th Percentile	\$300.00
75 th Percentile (Compliance Base/1-Star Rate)	\$289.00
70 th Percentile	\$281.50
65 th Percentile	\$275.00
60 th Percentile	\$270.00
55 th Percentile	\$267.75
50 th Percentile (Current Base/1-Star Rate)	\$265.00

Source: Coffey, Maureen. (2023, March 9) [States Can Improve Childcare Assistance Through Cost Modeling](#). Center for American Progress

Source: RI Childcare Market Rate Survey Report 2021 <https://dhs.ri.gov/programs-and-services/child-care/child-care-providers/market-rate-survey>

Childcare/ECE Worker Wages and Benefits

- Help raise the wage rate for childcare workers to \$18.00 per hour by implementing the recommendations on the previous slide. This increase would:
 - Reduce Childcare Worker job openings due to transfers to other industry sectors; significantly improving the retention of workers within the occupation.
 - Currently, 48% of our annual childcare worker job openings are due to workers transferring to other occupational areas for higher wages and better benefits.
- Pursue additional benefit plans for childcare workers including healthcare and retirement plans. Additional benefits should include:
 - Automatic CCAP Eligibility for Workers in Licensed Childcare Programs (regardless of total household income)
 - This would be a major selling point for working in the industry and would alleviate the financial burdens on providers who are currently trying to offer discounted rates to attract workers at a significant financial loss.
 - The State of Kentucky recently adopted a similar practice.
 - Special auto loan and mortgage rates/programs
 - Access to free higher education
 - Scholarships or student loan deferment programs like Wavemaker

Note: New benefit programs should endeavor to support workers in both center-based and family-based provider environments.

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