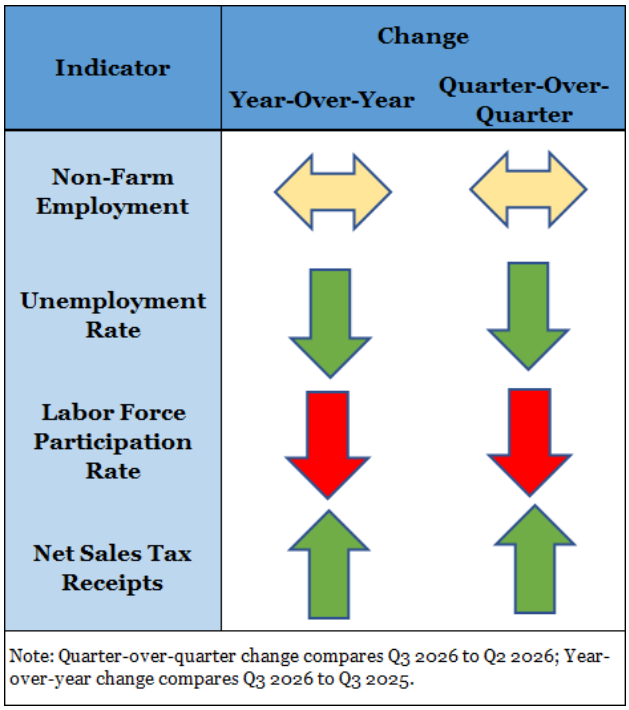
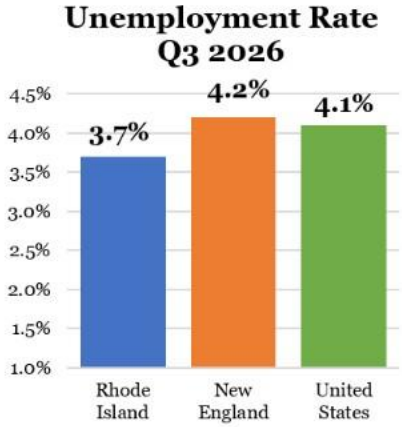
Rhode Island Key Performance Indicators
QUARTERLY BRIEFING
A JOINT PUBLICATION OF THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC STUDIES AT BRYANT UNIVERSITY AND THE RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC EXPENDITURE COUNCIL
RIPEC

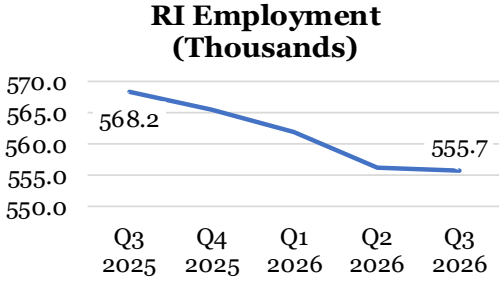
Q3 2026 – Highlights

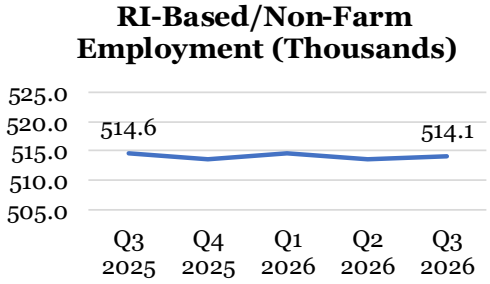
- Rhode Island economic indicators for the third quarter of 2026 reflect persistent labor supply constraints alongside stable in-state jobs and resilient consumer demand. While the unemployment rate declined, this improvement was driven by a shrinking labor force rather than employment expansion, with resident employment falling for a fifth consecutive quarter. Nevertheless, in-state nonfarm payrolls remained stable and aggregate demand—measured by gains in net sales tax receipts—increased quarter over quarter and year over year.
- Net sales tax receipts increased 3.3 percent in Q3 2026, compared to an increase of 4.2 percent in Q2 2026 (*seasonally adjusted*). Year-over-year net sales tax receipts grew by 7.5 percent.
- Rhode Island-based jobs (nonfarm employment) were essentially unchanged in Q3 2026 at 514,100, up 0.1 percent (400 jobs) from Q2 2026 and down 0.1 percent (500 jobs) from Q3 2025.

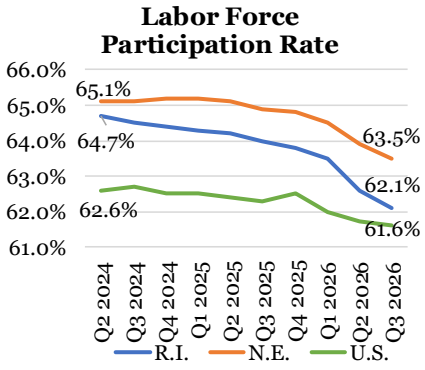


Note: Quarter-over-quarter change compares Q3 2026 to Q2 2026; Year-over-year change compares Q3 2026 to Q3 2025.



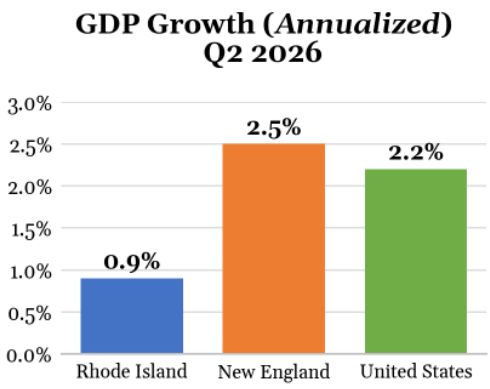


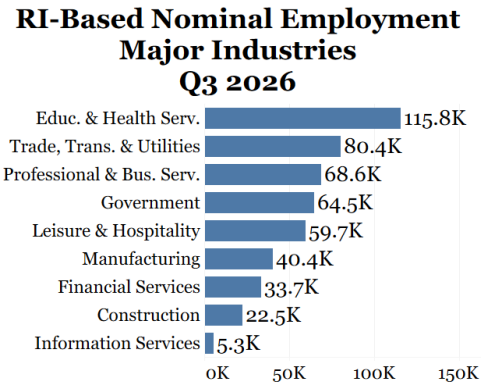


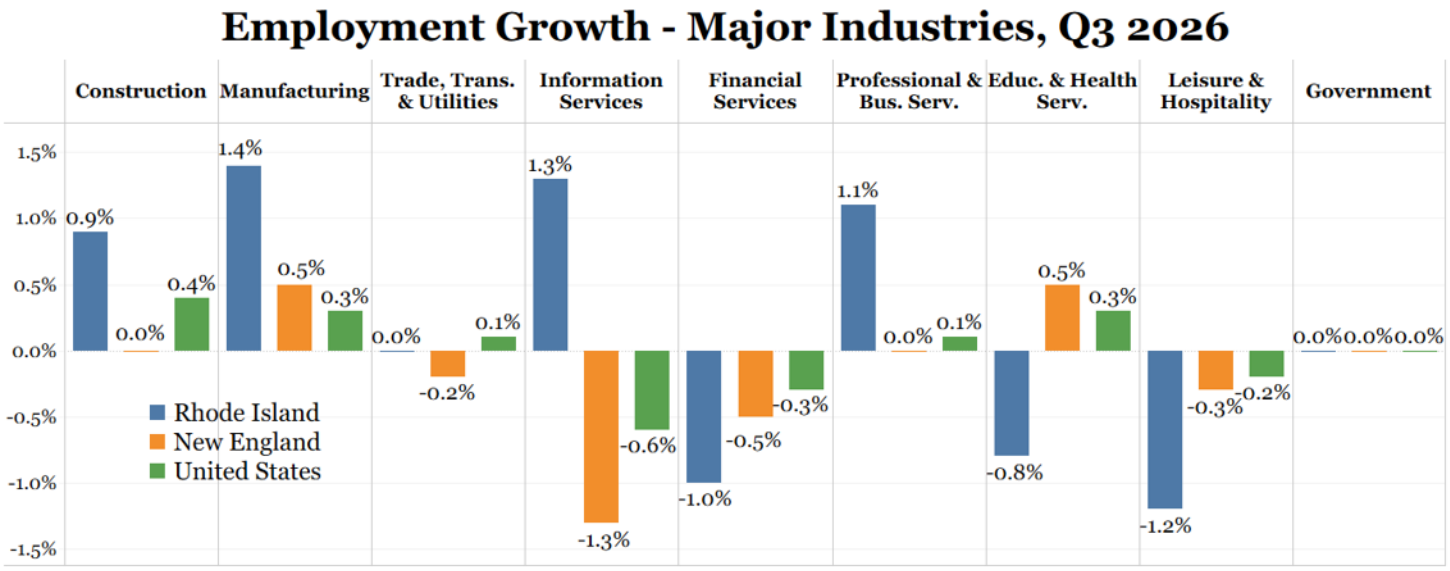


- In Q3, the number of Rhode Islanders employed fell by a marginal 0.1 percent (500 workers) to 555,700. Resident employment was down 2.2 percent (12,500 workers) year-over-year and at its lowest level since Q4 2021.
- Rhode Island's unemployment rate fell for a second consecutive quarter, from 4.3 percent in Q2 2026 to 3.7 percent in Q3, its lowest level since Q4 2023. Rhode Island's rate was below both New England (4.2 percent) and the U.S. (4.1 percent) in Q3 2026.
- Rhode Island's labor force participation rate fell to 62.1 percent in Q3 2026, marking nine consecutive quarters of decline since peaking at 64.7 percent in Q2 2024. Labor force participation also declined in New England (-1.6 percentage points) and the U.S. (-1.0 percentage points) over this period, but by less than Rhode Island's 2.6-percentage-point drop.
- The number of unemployed Rhode Islanders fell by 3,600 quarter-over-quarter, from 25,100 to 21,500, and was 3,800 lower than a year earlier.

- After decreasing in Q1 2026, Rhode Island's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew at an annualized rate of 0.9 percent in Q2 2026, significantly trailing New England (2.5 percent) and the U.S. (2.2 percent). Data for Q3 2026 are not yet available.
- Rhode Island gained jobs in three of nine major industry sectors in Q3 2026. Professional and business services saw the largest increase (+700 jobs), followed by manufacturing (+600), and construction (+200).
- Three sectors shed jobs in Q3. Education and health services, the state's largest sector, saw the largest decrease (-900), followed by leisure and hospitality (-700) and financial services (-300).
- Employment was unchanged in trade, transportation and utilities and in government in Q3 2026 and was essentially flat in information services, which added 100 jobs.
- Year-over-year, three sectors added jobs: education and health services (+2,100), manufacturing (+1,200), and professional and business services (+300). Trade, transportation, and utilities and construction were essentially unchanged, while the remaining four sectors declined, led by leisure and hospitality (-1,800) and financial services (-1,400).







About the RI KPI
The Rhode Island Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Quarterly Briefing was developed by the Center for Global and Regional Economic Studies at Bryant University and the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council to highlight key measures that gauge economic activity in the Ocean State on a quarterly basis. The KPI makes use of the most current available data.

Data revisions and corrections
The Quarterly Briefing incorporates revisions to employment data by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and to quarterly GDP data by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Click here for the data used to create the RI KPI