

Planning Information Center Census Data Bulletin

RHODE ISLAND
STATEWIDE
PLANNING
PROGRAM



Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program
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New ACS Data Shows Change in Households, Labor Force

The recent release of 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) results documents changes that many believe are driven by challenging economic times: fewer households in the state, more people living together, higher vacancy rates, along with a smaller labor force and changes in the occupations of the labor force.

These trends are found in the 2011 one-year ACS results, released by the Census Bureau in September. The Census administers the ACS on a year-round basis to gather sample data on households and their characteristics, and then uses this data to generate estimates for geographies and populations. The *one-year* dataset is based on surveys administered during the yearlong reference period, and it is available for geographies with populations over 65,000, including Providence, Pawtucket, Cranston, Warwick, and the state of Rhode Island. By providing timely data on a yearly basis, the ACS allows planners and others to track changes over smaller increments of time. For Rhode Island, the 2010 and 2011 ACS results are similar in many areas; however, some statistically significant changes occurred in the state's households, housing, and labor force.

Fewer, Larger Households

The 2011 one-year ACS captures a year-over-year decrease in the number of households in the state. In

BY THE NUMBERS: FROM 2010 TO 2011

- 1,584** estimated decline in population
- 9,964** estimated decline in households
- 5.8%** increase in children of all ages living with parents
- 3.2%** decline in labor force
- 10,006** fewer households with earnings

Source: 2010 and 2011 American Community Survey

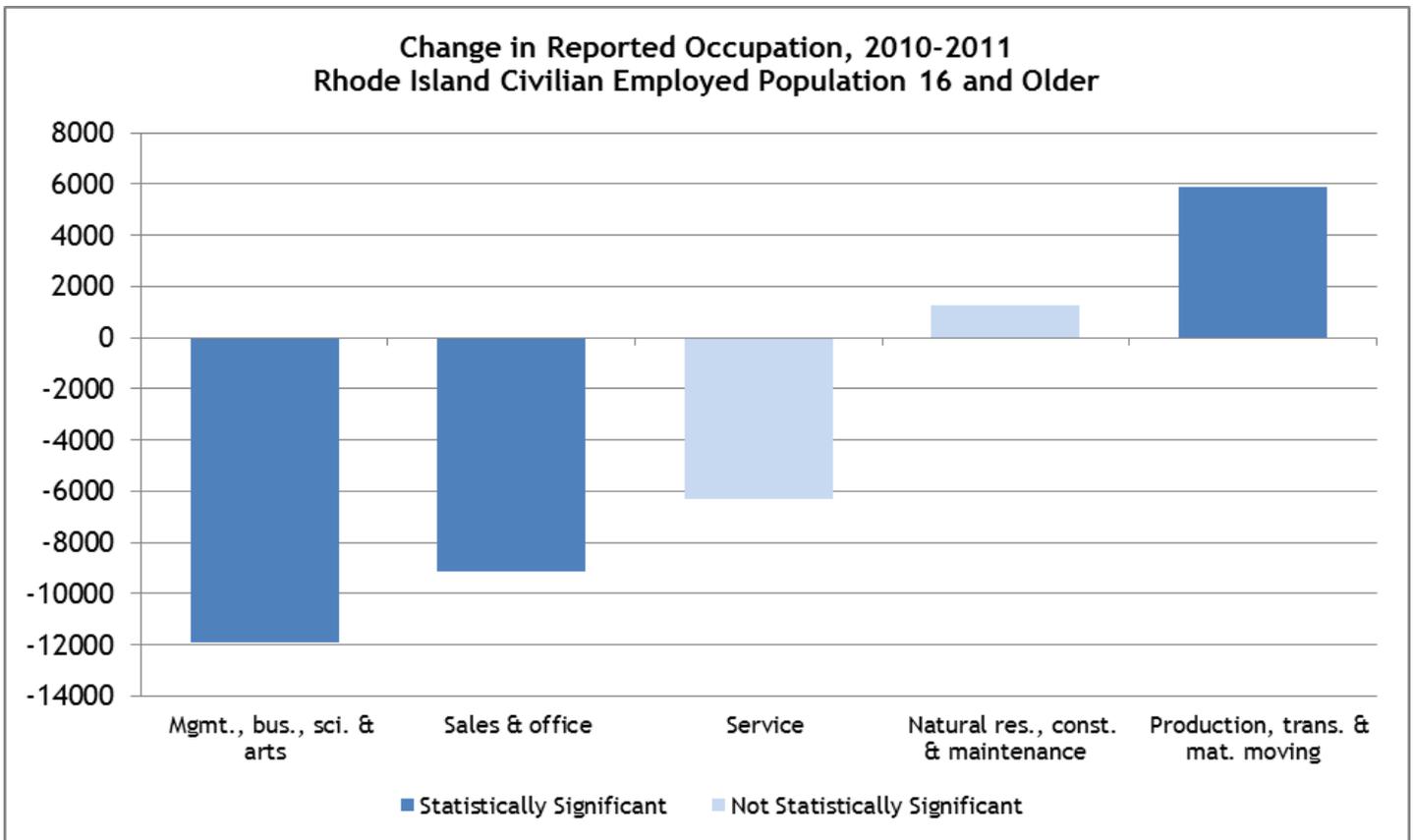
2010, an estimated 412,259 households lived in the state, and in 2011 that number dropped to 402,295. Both population loss and increased household size may be contributing to this decline. Population estimates for Rhode Island show a loss of 1,584 residents between 2010 and 2011.* At the same time, average household size increased from 2.45 to 2.51 individuals per household between 2010 and 2011, and average family household size increased from 3.06 to 3.19. The number of children (of all ages) living at home in Rhode Island increased six percent between 2010 and 2011, as many young adults chose to live with parents during difficult economic times.

The estimated total number of housing units also fell between 2010 and 2011, from 464,741 to 463,416, a decline of 0.3%. The estimated number of occupied housing units fell by 9,964, or 2.4%, while the number of vacant housing units increased by 8,639, leading to an increase in the rental vacancy rate from 5.8% in 2010 to 9.5% in 2011.

ABOUT THE DATA

Data in this Bulletin are drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2010 and 2011 one-year estimates. Each estimate has an associated margin of error, which corresponds with a 90 percent confidence level; that is, there is a 90 percent chance that the true count is within the margin of error of the estimate. While there is no universal standard, a general rule of thumb is that reliable estimates have a margin of error no larger than one quarter of the estimate itself. All the ACS estimates in this bulletin fall under this threshold, and all changes described are statistically significant unless indicated otherwise.

*The reference date for population estimates is July 1 of the corresponding year.



Source: 2010 and 2011 one-year ACS

Shrinking Labor Force

In another signal of the slow economy, Rhode Island's labor force declined by an estimated 18,576 between 2010 and 2011. The labor force includes employed individuals and unemployed individuals, defined as those who do not have a job and have actively looked for a job in the past four weeks. The estimate of employed Rhode Island residents declined from 569,816 in 2010 to 551,014 in 2011, while the estimate of the unemployed did not change significantly. The decline in the size of the labor force could be attributed to employed or unemployed people leaving the state, leaving the labor force (*i.e.* no longer looking for work), or both.

	2010	2011
In labor force	572,801	554,225
Civilian labor force	569,816	551,014
Employed	511,235	490,964
Unemployed *	58,581	60,050
Armed Forces *	2,985	3,211
Not in labor force	285,905	303,912

* no statistically significant change

The labor force also changed in its occupational distribution. The number of employed civilians 16 and older who reported an occupation in “management, business, arts and science” or “sales and office” fell, while those reporting “production, transportation, or material moving” occupations rose. “Service” occupations and “natural resource, construction and maintenance” occupations had no significant change between 2010 and 2011.

TO LEARN MORE...

To explore other 2011 ACS data, visit the U.S. Census website, [American FactFinder](#). Three-year ACS data, which is available for areas with 20,000 people or more, will be released in October. Five-year ACS data, which covers all geographies, will be available in December.

To learn more about comparing 2011 ACS data with 2010 ACS data and the 2010 Census, visit [Comparing 2011 American Community Survey Data](#).

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.