

Jobs & Opportunity Index (JOI), May 2016

A Down Month in a Stagnant Trend

Justin Katz, Research Director

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With Rhode Island losing both employment and labor force, in May, the state slipped to 36th in the nation for unemployment. On the broader Jobs & Opportunity (JOI) ranking, Rhode Island's rank remained unchanged at 48 among states, despite lower scores on the two subfactors for which new data was available (five of its 13 datapoints).

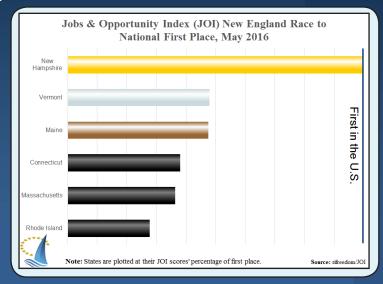
On the three monthly employment datapoints, the decreases were signficant, especially using the originally reported, unrevised numbers for the prior month. Rhode Islanders reporting that they are working dropped by 533, while those working or looking for work dropped by 359. Meanwhile, the number of jobs based the state fell 2,400. The two welfare-related datapoints, were mixed (partly because they have different lags in terms of reporting months). Reliance on Medicaid increased by 2,281 people, while reliance on SNAP (food stamps) fell by 208.

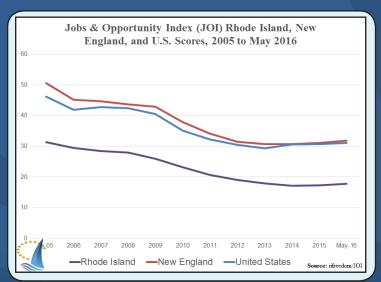
The first chart at right shows the six New England states in the national race. All six experienced a loss of points on the JOI score, but Maine managed to move up to 21st place, as Oklahoma slipped. Connecticut held at 34, as did Vermont, at 20. New Hampshire kept its place at the lead of the nation, although Wyoming gained slightly, and Massachusetts is stuck at 37.

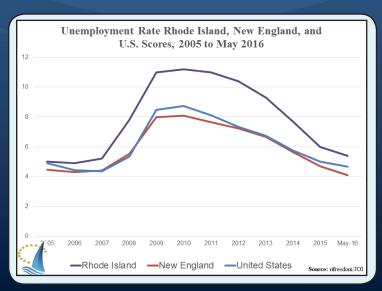
Overall, the gap between Rhode Island's JOI score and the New England average grew in April (see the second chart). When it comes to the unemployment rate, Rhode Island lost ground within New England but gained nationally (third chart), illustrating the problem with using that common metric as an indicator of economic health.

Results for the three underlying JOI factors were:

- **Job Outlook Factor** (measuring optimism adequate work is available): RI remained at 43rd.
- **Freedom Factor** (measuring the level of work against reliance on welfare programs): RI still ranks 39th, although with a lower score.
- **Prosperity Factor** (measuring the financial motivation of income versus taxes): RI still ranks 46th, because no underlying data has been updated.









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New Hampshire		JOI			Job Outlook Factor			Freedom Factor			Prosperity Factor		
New Hampshire		Rank	Trend	Score	Rank	Trend	Score	Rank	Trend	Score			
Nyeming	New Hampshire		60X	64.2		W.	6.1		4005	7.8	2	40V	8.9
North Dakota		2	605	61.0	10	W.	6.1	2	600°Z	9.6	12	603	7.3
South Dakota	Utah	3	603	57.5	5	603	6.6	3	₩.	8.9	14	₩.	7.1
Alaska	North Dakota	4	603	56.5	1	603	10.0	1	W.	10.0	35	60VZ	5.7
Virginia	South Dakota	5	603	50.3	2	603	9.8	8	₩.	6.7	21	₩.	6.4
Virginia	Alaska	6	603	46.5	38	603	4.2	18		4.9	1	₩.	10.0
Sansas	Virginia	7	603	45.5	31	603	4.6	6		7.3	13	60VZ	7.2
Colorado		8	603					7	₩.	7.3		60VZ	6.2
Nebraska	Colorado	9	605	42.2	6			16		4.9	7	603	7.7
Nebraska	Iowa	10	603	40.8	3	W.	8.1	13	9	5.3	20	W.	6.5
Idaho	Nebraska		603			W.					.	W.	
Montana 13 9 37.4 20 ♥ 5.2 21 ♥ 4.8 8 ♥ 7.6 Texas 1 44 ♥ 33.8 8 6.62 17 \$ 4.9 24 ♥ 6.3 Wisconsin 16 ♥ 33.7 19 ♥ 5.4 15 \$ 5.0 19 ♥ 6.6 South Carolina 17 ♥ 32.8 42 ♥ 4.0 31 ♥ 4.1 10 ♥ 7.4 Alabama 19 ♥ 32.3 32 ♥ 4.5 38 ♥ 3.8 4 ♥ 8.0 Vermont 20 № 30.8 15 ♥ 6.0 35 ♥ 4.0 18 ♥ 8.0 Vermont 20 № 30.3 12 ♥ 6.1 29 \$ 4.0 18 ♥ 6.0 Missouri 22	Idaho		8		14	W.		14	600°Z		17	603	6.9
Texas	-		9										
Maryland	Texas	14				8				4.9	24	w	
Wisconsin 16	Maryland			33.7	19	W.	5.4		8	5.0			6.6
South Carolina									₩.		.		
Hawaii	South Carolina	17	605	32.8		W.	4.0		600Z			w	8.0
Alabama				32.3			4.8	28		4.1	10		7.4
Vermont 20 ♥ 30.8 15 ♥ 6.0 35 ♥ 4.0 18 ♥ 6.6 Maine 21 ♦ 30.5 23 ♥ 4.9 32 ♦ 4.0 16 ♥ 7.1 Oklahoma 22 ♥ 30.3 12 ₱ 6.1 29 ♦ 4.1 23 ₱ 6.3 Missouri 23 ₱ 29.2 11 ₱ 6.1 12 ♦ 5.3 42 ₱ 5.2 Nevada 24 ₱ 28.6 50 ₱ 3.4 26 ₱ 4.1 11 ₱ 7.3 Indiana 25 ₱ 28.2 17 ₱ 5.7 20 ♦ 4.8 38 ₱ 5.5 Arizona 26 ₱ 27.5 37 ₱ 4.3 40 ₱ 3.1 6 ₱ 7.7 Mashington 2	Alabama												8.0
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