

January 19, 2016

Contact: Grace Palmer, gpalmer@brookings.edu, 202.765.8561

Read more: [Rhode Island innovates: A competitive strategy for the Ocean State](#)

Brookings Institution releases economic strategy for Rhode Island

Washington, D.C. – The Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program announced the conclusion of its six-month analysis of the Rhode Island economy today. The effort, completed in collaboration with the Battelle Technology Partnerships Practice (now TEconomy Partners, LLC) and Monitor Deloitte, produced an assessment of the state’s economy and recommendations for fostering future growth that benefits all Rhode Islanders.

The project team found that the Rhode Island economy has underperformed in recent years, relative to New England states and the nation as a whole, due to the loss of once strong advanced industries.

Rhode Island should now focus on seven future-oriented industries that represent promising potential sources of sustainable economic growth. Five are advanced industries, which invest heavily in R&D and STEM workers:

- Biomedical Innovation
- IT-Software, Cyber Physical Systems and Data Analytics
- Defense Shipbuilding and Maritime
- Advanced Business Services
- Design, Food, and Custom Manufacturing

And two are opportunity industries, which provide jobs that pay well for those without a four-year degree:

- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Arts, Education, Hospitality, and Tourism

A three-part strategy that strengthens the state’s core innovation, placemaking, and skills drivers while enhancing the state’s business environment and business-civic execution capacity is necessary to strengthen these industries and create a statewide platform for growth.

“The nature and scale of the economic challenges facing Rhode Island require a new kind of collaborative governance from the state’s private, public, and civic sectors,” said Mark Muro, the leader of the project and a senior fellow and director of policy for the Metropolitan Policy Program. “This new strategy will help Rhode Island mobilize that collaboration in order to strengthen its economy and extend opportunity and prosperity to all Rhode Islanders.”

The Brookings strategy for economic development encourages active collaboration between the state and its business and civic partners on three targeted initiatives:

- **Rhode Island Innovates**, which invests in Rhode Island's innovation capacity, quality of place, and skilled workforce.
- **Rhode Island Competes**, which focuses on upgrading the state's business environment through improvements to tax regimes, commercial/industrial development, and rail connections.
- **Rhode Island Acts**, which aims to improve in-state capacity for business-led civic engagement by creating a business-led partnership organization that can help Rhode Island deliver needed transformative initiatives.

* * *

***The Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings** delivers research and solutions to help metropolitan leaders build an advanced economy that works for all. To learn more, please visit www.brookings.edu/metro. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/brookingsmetro.*