

# Puerto Rico

# UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

## OPPORTUNITY REPORT

Prepared by the American Institute for Full Employment • April 2016

**Puerto Rico** has the opportunity to save millions of dollars and promote the overall well-being of its unemployed workers by implementing additional best practices in its Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. UI is an often overlooked, yet critical program for employers and employees. UI policy decisions involve not only significant expenditures in the economy, affecting the business climate and economic development, but also the financial, mental, and physical well-being of the unemployed. In designing their UI programs, federal law allows states substantial flexibility that is rarely used. The American Institute for Full Employment has the resources and personnel to help you design and implement innovative UI and workforce programs that make impact. For a comprehensive review and analysis of how to make a difference, please contact Bill Starks, Unemployment Insurance Project Director at 801-556-2942 or [bills@fullemployment.org](mailto:bills@fullemployment.org).

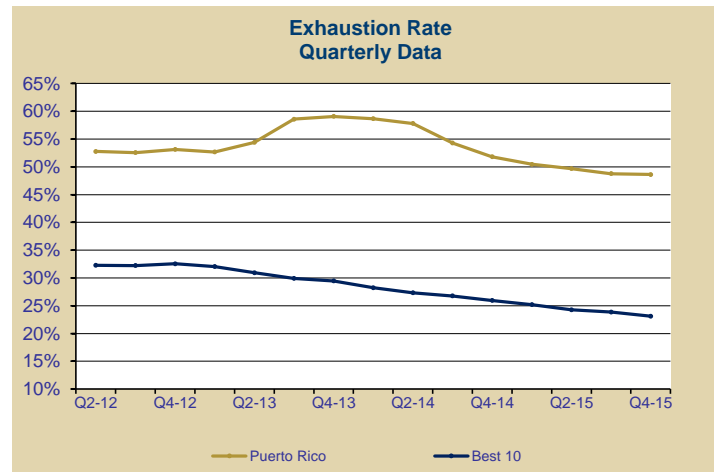
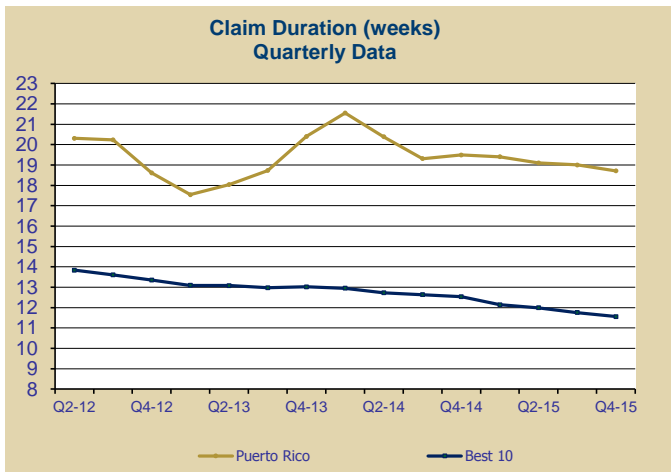
### Unemployment Rate and Caseload

	Dec-14	Dec-15
Unemployment Rate *	12.70%	12.20%
Civilian Labor Force	1,130,310	1,144,133
Unemployed	143,669	139,564
Daily UI Caseload **	27,097	20,219
Total Benefits Paid ***	\$174 mil	\$152 mil

\* Seasonally Adjusted \*\* Regular UI Claims \*\*\* Annual

## Effectiveness

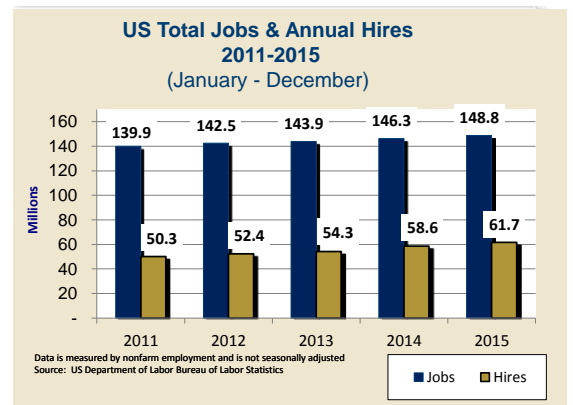
*On average, UI claimants in Puerto Rico did not find their way off of unemployment insurance for over four months, and nearly one half of all claimants exhausted their benefits.*



Jan 2015 - Dec 2015 Average	Best 5	Best 10	PR	PR Rank
<b>CLAIM DURATION</b> The average number of weeks UI claimants received benefits	10.9	11.6	18.7	52
<b>EXHAUSTION RATE</b> The average percentage of UI claimants who exhausted their benefits	19.2%	23.1%	48.6%	52

### US Total Jobs & Annual Hires Summary

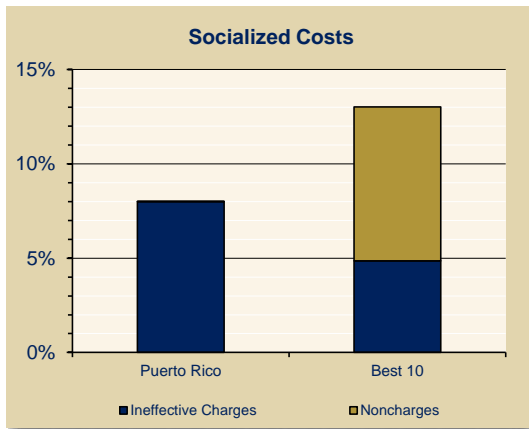
*In an economy of approximately 150 million jobs, US employers made over 60 million hires - more than one hire for every three jobs. Common statistics track only net new jobs, but our dynamic economy creates many more opportunities than just those from net new jobs. Job openings and hiring activity come from a variety of sources normally, including: 1) quits, 2) retirement, 3) moves, 4) firing, 5) total new job creation and other causes*



For the purposes of this report, "States" include the 50 US states plus the District of Columbia, The Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. "Rank" is from 1 to 53, with 1 being the best performance per category. All base data used and developed in this report was sourced from the US Department of Labor and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

# Efficiency

Puerto Rico's UI tax structure had 38% less socialized costs than the Best 10 states, costing all employers \$17 million for such charges.



2014	Best 5	Best 10	PR	PR Rank
<b>SOCIALIZED COSTS *</b>	11%	13%	8%	1

The percentage of benefit costs not charged to responsible employers, but instead socialized as:

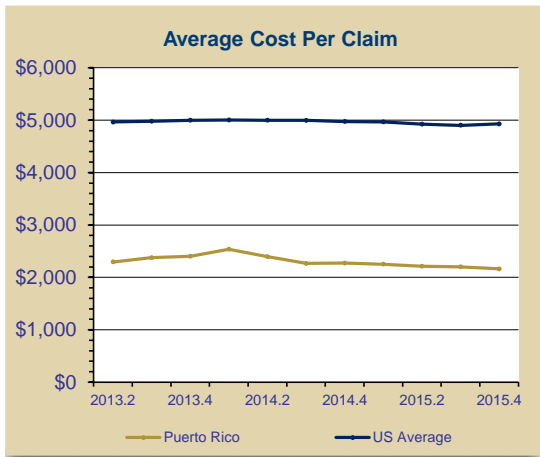
- 1) Noncharges - the total amount of benefit payments not charged to individual employer experience rating accounts. They often shift to the UI tax system social program costs: such as payments to workers who voluntarily quit, and
- 2) Ineffective Charges - the yearly amount of benefit charges assigned to individual employers that exceed the amount of contributions paid by those same employers in the following year. These charges tend to lessen some employers' responsibility to pay the full cost of their claims, due to e.g. a maximum tax rate that is too low or an otherwise less responsive tax structure.

The levels of both noncharges and ineffective charges are largely within the control of state policy makers and affect the state's unemployment rates by raising or lowering: 1) the cost of employing a worker and 2) the cost of laying off a worker.

\* Data from the 2013 Significant Measures Report - U.S. Department of Labor Office of Workforce Security

# Cost

The average UI claim cost in Puerto Rico was 55% less than the US average.



Jan 2015 - Dec 2015 Average	PR	US Average
<b>AVERAGE COST PER CLAIM</b>	\$2,163	\$4,927
The average annual amount of regular benefits paid per first payment. This is a function of duration and benefit levels.		
<b>WAGE REPLACEMENT RATE</b>	23.0%	33.9%
The average amount of weekly UI benefits paid per claimant divided by the average amount of weekly wages earned.		

## How We Can Assist Your State in Improving Performance

- Analysis of claimant information flow between agencies and job sources
- Evaluation of performance measures and incentives
- Examination of coordination of all agencies involved with UI claimant
- Integration of claimant work search rules, incentives and assistance
- Analysis of a subsidized wage program for employers willing to train UI claimants

For a more detailed evaluation contact our consultants at

**800-562-7752**

or visit us on the web at [fullemployment.org](http://fullemployment.org)

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