

State and Local Government Employees per 10,000 Population – Key Points

- Maryland still maintains one of the most efficient government structures in the nation as measured by per capita government employment.
- In 2014, Maryland had 578 state and local government employees for every 10,000 residents, well below the U.S. average of 604, and the 42nd lowest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. (See [Table 1.](#))
- Maryland’s efficient government has been a hallmark of the State over the last 22 years. Since 1991, Maryland’s state and local government employment per 10,000 population has been ranked between 40th and 47th in the nation. (See [Table 1.](#)) This is despite the fact that total population has grown by 1,108,800 (22.8%) and there has been a marked increase in both public school K-12 and college enrollment. For instance, over the 1991 to 2014 period, K-12 public school enrollment grew by 123,100 students (17.1%), and since 1992 public four-year colleges and universities expanded by 49,900 students (44.2%), and community college enrollment increased by 23,600 students (20.5%).
- Since the 1990s Maryland’s state and local government has been much more efficient than in previous decades. For example, between 1969 and 1985 Maryland had a higher state and local government employee to population ratio than the U.S. in all but one year. (See [Chart 1.](#)) Maryland’s ratio peaked in 1979 when it had the country’s 16th highest number of state and local government employees per 10,000 population, with a ratio that was seven percent higher than the U.S. average.
- Within the last 10 years, the state and local government employee per 10,000 population ratio peaked in 2008 just before the effects of the Great Recession took hold for both Maryland (609), and the U.S (648). This ratio has dropped for both U.S. and Maryland since then in large part due to tight budgets brought on by the Great Recession (December 2007 to June 2009) and the lackluster recovery. Maryland was less adversely impacted by this downturn and its reduction in state and local government employment per 10,000 population since 2008 was less (-31) than the national reduction (-44).
- Maryland’s most recent ranking stacks up well with states in which it competes for economic development. In 2014, Maryland’s rank of 42nd is lower than all but one of its chief economic competitors, including: Delaware (28th), West Virginia (16th), Virginia (27th), New York (24th), North Carolina (19th), and South Carolina (21st). (See [Table 2.](#))

Note: Since public service functions are handled by different levels of government among the states, one cannot legitimately compare per capita state government and local government employment separately across states. Only by combining both branches of government can a meaningful per capita comparison be made.