

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

- Maryland has one of the most efficient government structures in the nation as measured by per capita government employment.
- In 2008, Maryland had 614 state and local government employees for every 10,000 residents, well below the U.S. average of 647, 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 16 years. Since 1992, Maryland's state and local government employment per 10,000 population has been ranked between 42nd and 47th in the nation. (See [Table 1.](#)) This is despite the fact that total population has grown by 735,300 (14.9%) and there has been a marked increase in K-college enrollment. For instance, over the 1992 to 2008 period, K-12 public school enrollment grew by 81,200 students (11.0%), public four-year colleges and universities expanded by 35,800 students (31.7%), and community college enrollment increased by 12,900 students (11.2%).
- Maryland's state and local government in the decade of the 1990's and through 2008 has been much more efficient than in previous decades. For example, between 1969 and 1984 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.
- Maryland's most recent ranking stacks up well with states in which it competes for economic development. In 2008, Maryland's rank of 42nd is lower than all but one of its chief economic competitors, including: Delaware (32nd), West Virginia (25th), Virginia (22nd), New York (21st), North Carolina (17th), and South Carolina (16th). (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.