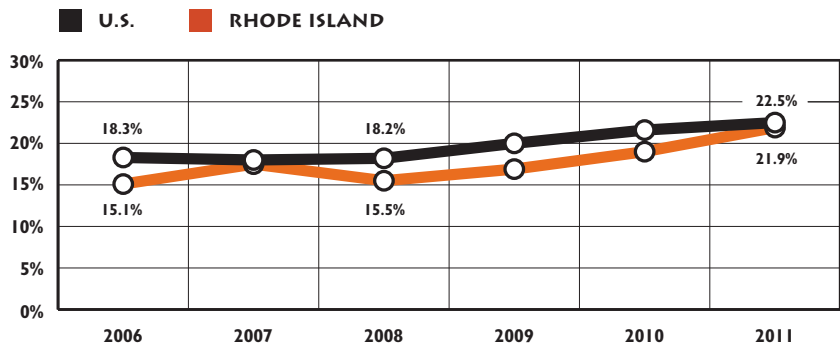


CHILD POVERTY IN RHODE ISLAND

Children most at risk of not achieving their full potential are children who live in poverty. Children in poverty, especially those in poverty for extended periods of time, are more likely to have physical and behavioral health problems, live in food insecure households, experience difficulty in school, become teen parents, earn less as adults, be unemployed more frequently, and fall below the poverty line at least once later in their lives.^{1,2,3,4} While almost half (49%) of all poor children in Rhode Island are White, children of color and children of immigrants are more likely to grow up poor.^{5,6,7} Single parenthood, low educational attainment, part-time or no employment and low wages of parents place children at risk of being poor.^{8,9}

Addressing child poverty in Rhode Island requires a multi-faceted approach, including strategies that attract high-wage jobs, improve the education levels of the workforce and provide access to job training, literacy programs and English language acquisition. Access to affordable, quality child care and health care can help to mitigate the negative effects of poverty on children.

CHILDREN IN POVERTY, U.S. AND RHODE ISLAND, 2006-2011



- ◆ In 2011, 21.9% (47,127) of Rhode Island's 215,484 children under the age of 18 lived below the federal poverty threshold. This is a significant increase from 2008, when 15.5% (34,816) of Rhode Island children were living below the federal poverty threshold.
- ◆ Since the onset of the recession, child poverty rates have steadily increased. Rhode Island's rates rose from 15.5% in 2008 to 21.9% in 2011, while the U.S. rates increased from 18.2% to 22.5% during that same time period. The effects of the recession, which was the longest on record since World War II, have continued to persist well past the official end of the recession.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2011, Tables R1704 and C17024.

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY, RHODE ISLAND, 2000 AND 2006-2010

CITY/TOWN	CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING BELOW POVERTY, 2000		CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING BELOW POVERTY, 2006-2010			
	N	%	ESTIMATES WITH HIGH MARGINS OF ERROR*		ESTIMATES WITH LOWER, ACCEPTABLE MARGINS OF ERROR	
			N	%	N	%
Barrington	127	2.7%	111	2.4%		
Bristol	436	10.0%	178	4.7%		
Burrillville	236	6.0%	458	13.8%		
Central Falls	2,210	40.9%			1,975	35.8%
Charlestown	78	4.7%	13	0.9%		
Coventry	481	5.9%			773	9.4%
Cranston	1,496	9.1%			1,421	8.5%
Cumberland	237	3.1%			340	4.5%
East Greenwich	147	4.1%	152	4.5%		
East Providence	1,126	10.8%			1,388	15.2%
Exeter	112	7.5%	46	3.2%		
Foster	32	2.9%	33	3.1%		
Glocester	178	6.7%	79	3.7%		
Hopkinton	115	5.9%	37	2.1%		
Jamestown	17	1.4%	205	16.5%		
Johnston	527	9.0%	612	10.3%		
Lincoln	329	6.5%	291	6.6%		
Little Compton	8	1.0%	NA	NA		
Middletown	264	6.2%			445	12.2%
Narragansett	235	8.6%	99	4.3%		
New Shoreham	19	10.2%	17	11.9%		
Newport	1,267	24.4%	556	14.4%		
North Kingstown	663	9.7%			378	5.8%
North Providence	579	10.1%			868	14.2%
North Smithfield	72	3.0%	129	5.6%		
Pawtucket	4,542	25.3%			4,505	27.3%
Portsmouth	118	2.8%	215	5.6%		
Providence	18,045	40.5%			14,921	35.6%
Richmond	82	4.2%	148	8.3%		
Scituate	113	4.3%	75	2.9%		
Smithfield	153	3.9%	92	2.6%		
South Kingstown	324	5.3%			405	7.0%
Tiverton	92	2.8%	288	9.3%		
Warren	205	8.4%	155	7.4%		
Warwick	1,243	6.7%			1,317	8.1%
West Greenwich	40	2.7%	140	9.3%		
West Warwick	1,186	18.1%			977	16.5%
Westerly	534	10.0%	502	10.6%		
Woonsocket	3,494	31.8%			3,581	34.9%
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	28,291	35.9%			24,982	33.7%
<i>Remainder of State</i>	12,871	7.8%			12,943	8.5%
<i>Rhode Island</i>	41,162	16.9%			37,925	16.7%

Source: Data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3, P87 and PCT.50 and from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2010, Table B17001.

Four core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket.

NA: The U.S. Census Bureau either did not collect any data on this city/town or too few sample observations were available to compute an estimate.

*The Margin of Error around the estimate is greater than or equal to five percentage points. For more information, see the Methodology section of the 2012 *Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook*.

CENSUS CHANGES AFFECTING POVERTY ESTIMATES

- ◆ Prior to the *2012 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook*, data on child poverty was based on the most recent decennial Census. However, starting with Census 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau shortened the length of the decennial Census survey and no longer included questions on employment, education, or income. To address the absence of detailed socioeconomic data in the decennial survey and provide more timely annual data on socioeconomic characteristics, the U.S. Census Bureau created the American Community Survey (ACS), an ongoing statistical survey that samples a percentage of the population. More detailed socioeconomic information, once collected in the decennial Census survey, is now collected in the ACS.
- ◆ In order to provide the most reliable data on Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT uses the five-year ACS estimates. While these data are the best estimates of child poverty available, estimates for small communities and communities with relatively low poverty rates are not as reliable as estimates for larger communities and communities with higher poverty rates.

CHANGE IN CORE CITY DEFINITION

- ◆ Prior to 2012, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT defined the core cities as communities where more than 15% of children lived in poverty. The six core cities were Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket.
- ◆ Beginning with the *2012 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook*, the definition of core cities was changed to identify the four communities with the highest percentages of children living in poverty. According to the 2006-2010 ACS, more than one in four (25%) children lived below the poverty threshold in each of these cities. The new four core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2006-2010 American Community Survey data.

CHILD POVERTY IN NEW ENGLAND

- ◆ In 2011, Rhode Island had the highest child poverty rate in New England.

CHILDREN IN POVERTY, NEW ENGLAND, 2011

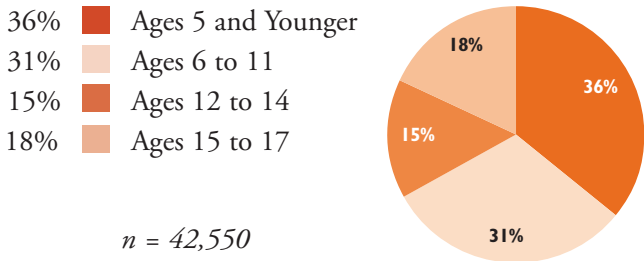
STATE	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY
Connecticut	14.9%
Maine	18.8%
Massachusetts	15.2%
New Hampshire	12.0%
Rhode Island	21.9%
Vermont	14.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011. Table R1704.



RHODE ISLAND'S POOR CHILDREN, 2009-2011

BY AGE

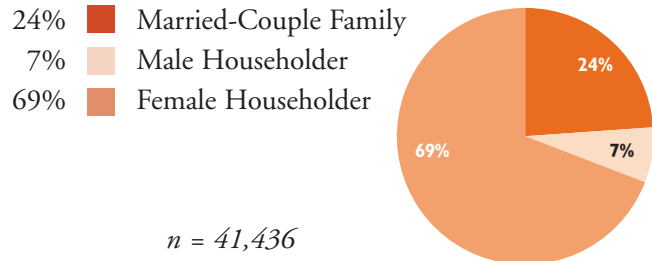


◆ Between 2009 and 2011, more than one-third (36%) of Rhode Island's poor children were ages five and younger. Both nationally, and in Rhode Island, young children from birth through age five are more likely to be poor.

◆ Between 2009 and 2011, 22% (15,236) of all Rhode Island children under age 6 were living below the poverty threshold.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2011. Table B17001.

BY FAMILY STRUCTURE*



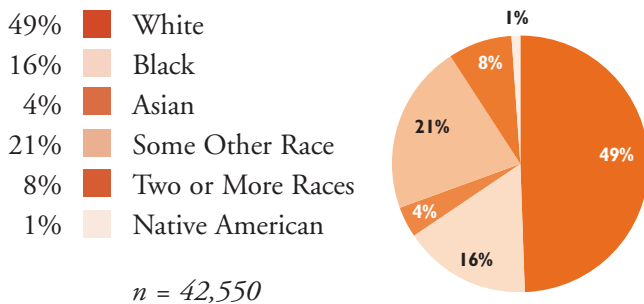
*Only includes related children living in households.

◆ Children in single-parent families are more likely to live in poverty than those in two-parent families. Between 2009 and 2011, 76% of all poor children lived in single-parent families and 24% lived in two-parent families.

◆ Between 2009 and 2011, 39% of children in single-parent households lived in poverty, compared to 7% in married-couple households.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2011. Table B17006.

BY RACE PERCENTAGE OF ALL POOR CHILDREN

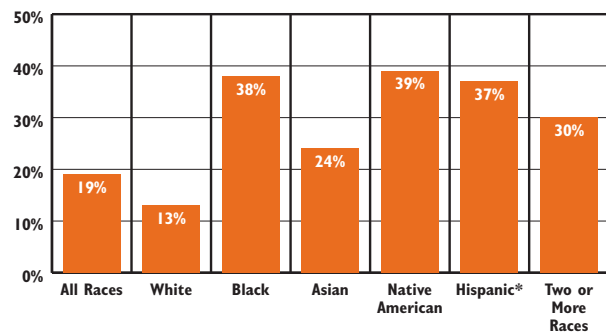


◆ Of all children living in poverty in Rhode Island between 2009 and 2011, nearly half (49%) were White, 16% were Black, 4% were Asian, 1% were Native American, 21% were Some other race, and 8% were Two or more races.

◆ Using Census definitions, Hispanic children may be included in any race category. Between 2009 and 2011, 39% (16,724) of Rhode Island's poor children were Hispanic.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2011. Tables S1701, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020E, B17020G, and B17020I.

PERCENTAGE OF ALL CHILDREN OF A SPECIFIED RACE/ETHNICITY, 2009-2011



◆ While nearly half of all poor children in Rhode Island are White, minority children are much more likely to be living in poverty.

◆ Between 2009 and 2011 in Rhode Island, 39% of Native American children, 38% of Black children, 37% of Hispanic children, and 24% of Asian children lived in families with incomes below the poverty threshold, compared to 13% of White children.

*Hispanic children may be included in any race category.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2011. Tables B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020E, B17020G, and B17020I.

CHILDREN LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY

- ◆ Families with incomes below 50% of the federal poverty threshold are considered to be living in extreme poverty. In 2011, the extreme poverty level was \$9,062 for a family of three with two children and \$11,406 for a family of four with two children.¹⁰
- ◆ Of the 47,127 children living below the poverty threshold in Rhode Island in 2011, 48% lived in extreme poverty. In total, an estimated 11% (22,756) of all children in Rhode Island lived in extreme poverty.¹¹

THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON YOUNG CHILDREN

- ◆ The negative effects of poverty on children last well beyond childhood into adolescence and adulthood. Poverty is linked to chronic stress, which adversely alters early brain development that serves as the basis for learning, behavior and health later in life.¹²

ADULT OUTCOMES BY POVERTY STATUS BETWEEN THE PRENATAL YEAR AND AGE FIVE

	INCOME BELOW THE POVERTY LINE MEAN OR %	INCOME BETWEEN ONE AND TWO TIMES THE POVERTY LINE MEAN OR %	INCOME MORE THAN TWICE THE POVERTY LINE MEAN OR %
Completed schooling	11.8 yrs	12.7 yrs	14.0 yrs
Earnings (\$1,000)*	\$17.9	\$26.8	\$39.7
Annual work hours	1,512	1,839	1,963
Food Stamps*	\$896	\$337	\$70
Poor health	13%	13%	5%
Arrested (men only)	26%	21%	13%
Nonmarital birth (women only)	50%	28%	9%

Source: Duncan, G. & Magnuson, K. (2011). *The long reach of early childhood poverty*. Retrieved November 5, 2012, from www.stanford.edu. *Earnings and Food Stamp values are in 2005 dollars.

- ◆ Compared with children in families with incomes at least twice the federal poverty threshold, children who are poor between the prenatal period and age five complete less school and as adults earn less, work fewer hours, receive more Food Stamp assistance, are more likely to report poor health, are more likely to be arrested, and are more likely to give birth while under age 21 and unmarried.¹³

THE COST OF CHILDHOOD POVERTY

- ◆ There is a significant economic loss to society when children grow up in poverty. The estimated cost imposed on American society by childhood poverty stands at close to \$500 billion annually.
- ◆ Public investments in effective poverty alleviation programs could result in future cost savings.

CHILDHOOD POVERTY'S AGGREGATE COSTS

Forgone Earnings	1.3% of GDP
Crime	1.3% of GDP
Health	1.2% of GDP
Total (%)	3.8% of GDP
Total (\$)	\$500 billion

Source: Holzer, H.J., Schanzenbach, D.W., Duncan, G.J., & Ludwig, J. (2007). *The economic costs of poverty in the United States: Subsequent effects of children growing up poor*. Ann Arbor, MI: National Poverty Center.



FOUR MEASURES OF FAMILY FINANCES

THE FEDERAL POVERTY THRESHOLD

◆ In 2012, the official *federal poverty threshold* was \$18,123 for a family of three with two children and \$22,811 for a family of four with two children.¹⁴ The official poverty threshold was set by the federal government in 1963, and was based on the cost of a minimum diet for a family of four. The cost of food was multiplied by three, since at that time about one-third of after-tax expenditures of families were spent on food. The poverty threshold is adjusted annually according to the increase in the Consumer Price Index. The method of calculating the poverty threshold has not been adjusted to address the changes in family expenditures since its development in the 1960s, particularly the rising costs of housing, transportation, child care, and medical care. It also does not consider geographic variations in the cost of living.¹⁵

SUPPLEMENTAL POVERTY MEASURE

◆ In 2010, the federal Interagency Technical Working Group began developing a *Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM)* that is more complex and comprehensive than the federal poverty threshold in terms of how it estimates economic need. Tax payments and work expenses are included in family resource estimates and expenditures on basic necessities (food, shelter, clothing and utilities) and are adjusted for geographic differences. The SPM will not replace the official poverty measure, but it will serve as an additional indicator of economic well-being and provide a deeper understanding of economic conditions and the impact of policy decisions and show the effects of taxes and in-kind transfers on the poor.^{16,17}

THE FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES

◆ The federal poverty threshold, previously described, is used by the Census Bureau to calculate all official poverty population statistics. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) uses a simplified version of the federal poverty threshold, called the *federal poverty guidelines (or federal poverty levels)*, for administrative purposes, such as determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs. In 2012, the Federal Poverty Level (100% FPL) for a family of three is \$19,090.¹⁸ Many government assistance programs for low-income people now use income eligibility limits that are higher than the federal poverty level in order to help families meet their basic needs.

FAMILY INCOME LEVEL BASED ON THE FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES

2012 FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES	ANNUAL INCOME FAMILY OF THREE	ANNUAL INCOME FAMILY OF FOUR
50% FPL	\$9,545	\$11,525
100% FPL	\$19,090	\$23,050
130% FPL	\$24,817	\$29,965
185% FPL	\$35,317	\$42,643
200% FPL	\$38,180	\$46,100
225% FPL	\$42,953	\$51,863
250% FPL	\$47,725	\$57,625

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2012). 2012 Federal Poverty Guidelines. *Federal Register*, 77(17), 4034-4035.

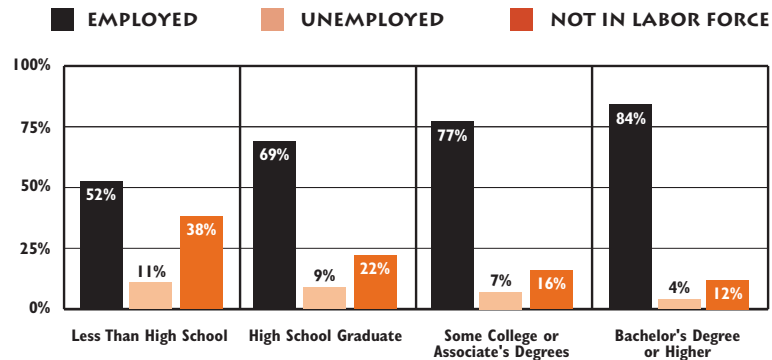
THE RHODE ISLAND STANDARD OF NEED

◆ *The Rhode Island Standard of Need*, a measure calculated by the Economic Progress Institute, considers multiple factors, including the costs of housing, food, transportation, child care and health care as well as the cash value of tax credits and income support programs (e.g., SNAP, child care assistance, RIte Care) to show what it costs for families to make ends meet. In 2012, a single parent raising a preschooler and a school-aged child would need \$49,272 a year to meet its basic needs, two and a half times the federal poverty level for a family of three (\$19,090).¹⁹

IMPROVING PARENTAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

- ◆ Increasing the education, skills and training of low-income and unemployed (or underemployed) parents is vital to local economic success and to child and family well-being.²⁰ The need for workers with postsecondary training and education is not only increasing presently, but will also intensify in the near future. By 2018, it is projected that 61% of all jobs in Rhode Island (321,000) will require some postsecondary training beyond high school.^{21,22}
- ◆ More than one in six (15%) Rhode Island adults over age 25 had less than a high school education in 2011. Of these adults, 24% (25,172) had incomes below the poverty threshold.²³

EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY EDUCATION ATTAINMENT, RHODE ISLAND ADULTS, 2009-2011



- ◆ Adults with higher levels of education were more likely to be in the labor force and to be employed in Rhode Island between 2009 and 2011.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2011. Table B23006. Note: Data refer to population ages 25 to 64. Individuals in the Armed Forces are considered employed.

EDUCATING CHILDREN IN POVERTY

- ◆ In Rhode Island, students in the core cities consistently have lower reading and math proficiency rates, attend lower performing schools, have lower graduation rates, and attend lower performing schools than their peers in the remainder of the state.

EDUCATION INDICATORS OF SUCCESS, CORE CITIES AND RHODE ISLAND, 2011-2012

CORE CITY	PERCENT OF 4TH GRADERS WITH READING PROFICIENCY	PERCENT OF 4TH GRADERS WITH MATH PROFICIENCY	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES	PERCENT OF SCHOOLS NOT SUBJECT TO STATE INTERVENTION
Central Falls	45%	37%	70%	60%
Pawtucket	60%	48%	63%	87%
Providence	46%	42%	66%	43%
Woonsocket	59%	59%	63%	100%
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>63%</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>79%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>84%</i>	<i>98%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>90%</i>

Sources: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)*, October 2011. Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, *Class of 2011*. Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011-2012.

- ◆ High poverty schools that are successful at raising student achievement have strong leaders, regularly communicate high expectations for students and staff, nurture positive relationships among adults and students, have a strong focus on academics, use student data to individualize instruction, make decisions collaboratively, employ enthusiastic and diligent teachers, and effectively select, cultivate and use personnel.^{24,25}



STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS IMPROVING THE LIVES OF LOW-INCOME CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN RHODE ISLAND

RI WORKS

◆ The goal of the Rhode Island Works Program (RI Works) is to help parents make successful transitions to work by providing cash assistance and work supports, including employment services, SNAP benefits, health insurance and subsidized child care. RI Works replaced the Family Independence Program (FIP) in 2008.²⁶ In December 2011, there were 5,427 adults and 11,508 children under age 18 enrolled in RI Works. More than two-thirds (68%) of RI Works beneficiaries were children, and half (50%) of the children enrolled in RI Works were under the age of six.²⁷

RITE CARE/RITE SHARE HEALTH COVERAGE

◆ RItE Care, Rhode Island's Medicaid managed care health insurance program for low-income children and families, provides comprehensive quality health care for children under age 19 and pregnant women with family incomes less than 250% FPL, and for parents of eligible children under age 18 with family incomes less than 175% FPL. As of December 2011, RItE Care had an enrollment of 83,088 children who qualified for coverage based on income.²⁸ RItE Care also covers specific groups of children who qualify based on a disability or because they are in foster care or receiving an adoption subsidy.²⁹ Families who meet RItE Care income eligibility guidelines are enrolled in the RItE Share premium assistance program if a parent works for an employer who offers a qualifying health plan. The family is enrolled in the employer's plan and the state pays the employee's share of the premium. As of December 2011, RItE Share enrollment was 8,193 children and 3,378 parents.^{30,31}

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

◆ In 2011 in Rhode Island, 73% (48,071) of children under age six had all available parents in the labor force.³² The quality and stability of a child care setting is crucial to a parent's ability to work and to the child's development.³³ Child care costs represent a significant part of a low-income family's budget. In 2010, families with children under age 15 living below the poverty threshold spent 40% of their income each month on child care, compared to 7% for families above the threshold.³⁴ In Rhode Island families with children under age 13, who work 20 or more hours per week and earn less than 180% FPL are eligible for child care assistance.³⁵ In December 2011, there were 7,708 child care subsidies in Rhode Island, up from 7,592 in December 2010. Since peaking in 2003, there has been a 46% decrease in the number of child care subsidies.³⁶

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

◆ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, helps low-income individuals and families obtain better nutrition through monthly benefits they can use to purchase food at retail stores and farmers' markets.³⁷ The federal government pays the full cost of an individual's SNAP benefits and approximately half of the state's cost to administer the program. As of 2009, most individuals, couples and families may qualify for SNAP if their gross income is less than 185% FPL and their net income is below 100% FPL after allowable deductions for housing and child care costs.^{38,39} In October 2011 in Rhode Island, there were 100,776 adults and 65,825 children enrolled in SNAP.⁴⁰

CHILD SUPPORT

◆ Child support provides a mechanism for non-custodial parents to contribute to the financial support of their children. The receipt of regular child support payments can significantly improve the economic well-being of a child in a family with a non-resident parent. Custodial parents who receive steady child support payments are less likely to receive cash assistance and more likely to find work faster and stay employed longer than those who do not.⁴¹ In 2011, half (50%) of non-custodial parents under court order in Rhode Island were making child support payments on time and in full.⁴²

LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

◆ The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides assistance to those households most vulnerable to the high cost of home heating in relation to income. In Rhode Island, LIHEAP is administered by the Office of Energy Resources and delivered locally by Rhode Island's network of Community Action Programs (CAPs). In Fiscal Year 2012, Rhode Island was allocated \$23 million in LIHEAP funding, which was used to provide 37,000 low-income Rhode Island families with heating grants and 7,000 families with crisis assistance.^{43,44}

HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM (SECTION 8)

◆ Families that spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing face a cost burden and may have difficulty affording other basic needs, such as food, clothing, and health care. In 2011, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island was \$1,150. A family of three living at the federal poverty level would have to spend 74% of its income to pay this rent.^{45,46} Federally-funded Section 8 rental vouchers can help low-income families afford the high cost of housing; however, there are not enough vouchers to meet the need.⁴⁷

TAX CREDITS MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR WORKING FAMILIES

EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT

◆ The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. In 2011, 78,000 Rhode Island working families and individuals received tax credits from EITC for tax year 2010. Rhode Island families and individuals received a total of \$165 million in EITC tax credits for tax year 2010.⁴⁸

◆ The federal EITC program is the nation's most effective antipoverty program for working families. In 2010, the EITC lifted 6.3 million people, including 3.3 million children, out of poverty.⁴⁹

◆ Of 25 states and Washington, DC offering state EITCs, 22 offer fully-refundable credits, meaning taxpayers receive the entire tax credit even if it exceeds their income tax liability.⁵⁰ Currently, Rhode Island offers a partially-refundable state EITC equal to 25% of the federal EITC, with 15% of this being refundable (i.e., 3.75% of the federal EITC).⁵¹

CHILD AND DEPENDENT CARE CREDIT

◆ The Child and Dependent Care Credit is federal tax credit available if a parent paid someone to care for a child under age 13 or a qualifying dependent (i.e., someone who is physically or mentally incapable of self-care). The credit can be up to 35% of qualifying work-related child and dependent care expenses, depending upon income.⁵²

CHILD TAX CREDIT

◆ The Child Tax Credit can reduce the federal income tax families owe by up to \$1,000 for each qualifying child under the age of 17. The Child Tax Credit is partially refundable and provides an important source of income for low-income working families.⁵³

◆ In 2010, the federal Child Tax Credit kept approximately 2.6 million people, including 1.4 million children, out of poverty.⁵⁴



RECOMMENDATIONS

WORK SUPPORTS, INCOME, AND FINANCIAL ASSET BUILDING

- ◆ Improve access to work support programs, including RIte Care, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, child care assistance, and RI Works, by helping families access all programs for which they are eligible, allowing phone contact rather than mandating in-person meetings, reducing unnecessary documentation requirements by facilitating cross-program information sharing, and simplifying renewals. These programs can help families meet their basic needs and move out of poverty and have a proven impact on long-term job retention and asset accumulation.⁵⁵
- ◆ Increase Rhode Island's commitment to family economic security by eliminating the periodic time limit for RI Works, which currently allows families to only receive cash assistance for up to 24 months in any 60-month period.
- ◆ Eliminate the six-month cap on education and training for parents enrolled in RI Works who have limited literacy and/or English-language skills.
- ◆ Help working poor families build financial assets by providing financial literacy training and protecting families from predatory mortgage lending and payday lending.
- ◆ Make the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) fully refundable.

HEALTH COVERAGE

- ◆ Retain current RIte Care eligibility levels and comprehensive benefit packages for children, parents and pregnant women.
- ◆ Maximize all options available through the Affordable Care Act to create opportunities for children and families to get and keep affordable health coverage.

HOUSING

- ◆ Build, rehabilitate, and subsidize affordable housing for families with little or no income by funding the Neighborhood Opportunities Program, securing adequate numbers of Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers, and developing a permanent, dedicated funding source for affordable housing.⁵⁶
- ◆ Prevent homelessness by allocating resources for shelter diversion programs, rapid re-housing, and housing stabilization.⁵⁷
- ◆ Invest adequate funding in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to ensure that all those who are eligible can receive assistance.

CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION

- ◆ Restore child care assistance eligibility back to 225% FPL. Absent a full restoration, allow currently eligible families to continue participating in the program as family income increases up to 225% FPL and allow currently eligible working families to access additional hours of subsidized child care in order to participate in job training or education programs. Families rely on child care to enable them to work and to provide the early education experiences needed to prepare their children for school.⁵⁸
- ◆ Invest in high-quality early education programs for young children and families, including Early Head Start, Head Start and State Pre-K.

TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION AND SUPPORT FOR TEEN PARENTS

- ◆ Improve access to health care services and comprehensive sex education for teens. Teen pregnancy and parenting threaten the development of teen parents as well as their children. Teen parents are less likely to have the financial resources, social supports and parenting skills needed for healthy child development. Children born to teens are more likely to experience child maltreatment, have learning and behavior problems, live in poverty, go to prison, and become teen parents themselves.^{59,60}
- ◆ Expand education and economic opportunity for vulnerable teens, especially pregnant and parenting teens. Provide pathways to a high school diploma that work for parenting teens, school-to-career options, and realistic, affordable post-secondary educational opportunities that give young people a vision for their future and provide real economic opportunity.
- ◆ Invest in evidence-based home visiting programs that support teen parents and their children and improve child development outcomes.

EDUCATION

- ◆ Focus on the importance of reading proficiently by the end of third grade. Children who are not proficient in reading by the end of third grade are four times less likely to graduate from high school than proficient readers, profoundly affecting their future earnings.⁶¹
- ◆ Improve access to full-day kindergarten programs for all children and families. Participation in full-day, high-quality kindergarten can help close achievement gaps between the highest and lowest performing students in both reading and math.⁶² In the 2011-2012 school year, 64% of Rhode Island kindergartners were in a full-day program.⁶³
- ◆ Improve high school graduation rates by using data to identify students at-risk of dropping out and providing individualized academic and social supports, improving school climate, creating eighth to ninth grade transition programs, supporting personalized learning and meaningful student connections with adults in school, and implementing rigorous, engaging, and relevant curricula.⁶⁴
- ◆ Provide academic, financial and social supports for low-income, minority and first-generation college students to help increase college enrollment and completion rates.^{65,66}

ADULT EDUCATION AND JOBS

- ◆ An estimated 150,000 Rhode Island working-age adults (ages 16 and older) are not enrolled in school and have no high school diploma or have limited English-language skills. Many face both of these obstacles to success in the labor market.⁶⁷
- ◆ Increase investments in GED attainment programs, literacy and English-language programs, and workforce training, key strategies for improving the economic security of low-income parents.

REFERENCES

- ^{1,2,8} Moore, K. A., Redd, Z., Burkhauser, M., Mbwana, K., & Collins, A. (2009). *Children in poverty: Trends, consequences, and policy options*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.
- ³ Ratcliffe, C. & McKernan, S. (2012). *Childhood poverty and its lasting consequence*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- ³ Frank, D., et al. (2010). Cumulative hardship and wellness of low-income, young children: Multisite surveillance study. *Pediatrics*, 125(5), e1115-e1123.
- ⁴ U.S. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2012). *America's children in brief: Key national indicators of well-being, 2012*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- ⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2011. Tables B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020E, B17020G, & B17020I.
- ⁶ Wight, V. R., Chau, M., & Aratani, Y. (2010). *Who are America's poor children? The official story*. New York, NY: National Center for Children and Poverty, Columbia University.
- ⁹ Addy, S. & Wight, V. (2012). *Basic facts about low-income children, 2010*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University.
- ^{10,14} U.S. Census Bureau. (2011). *Poverty thresholds for 2011 by size of family and number of related children under 18 years*. Retrieved October 16, 2012, from www.census.gov
- ¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011. Table B17024.
- ¹² Shonkoff, J., Garner, A. & the Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, Committee on Early Childhood, Adoption, and Dependent Care, and Section on Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (American Academy of Pediatrics). (2012). The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress. *Pediatrics*, 129(1), e232-246.
- ¹³ Duncan, G. J. & Magnuson, K. (Winter 2011). The long reach of child poverty. *Pathways: A magazine of poverty, inequality and social policy*, 22-27.
- ^{15,16} Short, K. (2011). *The research Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2010*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau.
- ¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *Observations from the Intergency Technical Working Group on developing a Supplemental Poverty Measure*. Retrieved October 24, 2012, from www.census.gov
- ¹⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2012). 2012 Federal Poverty Guidelines. *Federal Register*, 77(17), 4034-4035.
- ¹⁹ *The 2012 Rhode Island Standard of Need*. (2012). Providence, RI: The Economic Progress Institute.
- ²⁰ Hernandez, D. J. & Marotz, K. G. (2011). Disparities in child well-being across income groups: Trends in the U.S. from 1985 to 2008. *Child Indicators Research*, 5(1), 93-121.
- ²¹ *Early warning! Why reading by the end of the third grade matters: A KIDS COUNT special report*. (2010). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- ²² Carnevale, A. P., Smith, N., & Strohl, J. (2010). *Help wanted: Projections of jobs and education requirements through 2018*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.
- ²³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011. Table S1701.
- ²⁴ Kannapel, P. J. & Clements, S. K. (2005). *Inside the black box of high-performing high-poverty schools*. Lexington, KY: Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence.
- ²⁵ Almy, S. & Tooley, M. (2012). *Building and sustaining talent: Creating conditions in high-poverty schools that support effective teaching and learning*. Washington, DC: The Education Trust.
- ²⁶ Rhode Island Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *Rhode Island Works*. Retrieved November 2, 2012, from www.dhs.ri.gov
- ²⁷ Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, 2011.
- ^{28,30} Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services, MMIS Database, December 31, 2011.
- ²⁹ Rhode Island Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *RtE Care*. Retrieved November 2, 2012, from www.dhs.ri.gov
- ³¹ Rhode Island Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *RtE Share*. Retrieved November 2, 2012, from www.dhs.ri.gov
- ³² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011. Table B23008.
- ³³ Chaudry, A., et al. (2011). *Child care choices of low-income working families*. Retrieved November 1, 2012, from www.urban.org
- ³⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. (2010). *Who's minding the kids? Child care arrangements: Spring 2010 – table six*. Retrieved November 1, 2012, from www.census.gov
- ³⁵ Rhode Island Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *Child Care Assistance*. Retrieved November 2, 2012, from www.dhs.ri.gov
- ³⁶ Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, 2003-2011.
- ³⁷ United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2012). Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Retrieved November 11, 2012, from www.fns.usda.gov/snap
- ³⁸ *Policy basics: Introduction to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. (2012). Washington DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
- ³⁹ Rhode Island Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *Food Assistance*. Retrieved November 2, 2012, from www.dhs.ri.gov
- ⁴⁰ Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, 2011.
- ⁴¹ Turetsky, V. (2005). *The Child Support Enforcement program: A sound investment in improving children's chances in life*. Retrieved January 17, 2012, from www.clasp.org
- ⁴² Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support Services, 2011.
- ⁴³ Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources. (n.d.). *An explanation of the LIHEAP program*. Retrieved November 1, 2012, from www.energy.ri.gov
- ⁴⁴ Office of Community Services. (2012). *FY 2012 allocation of LIHEAP block grant funds*. Retrieved November 5, 2012, from www.acf.hhs.gov
- ⁴⁵ Rhode Island Housing, Rhode Island Rent Survey, 2011.
- ⁴⁶ Rhode Island KIDS COUNT calculations using data from Rhode Island Housing, 2011.
- ⁴⁷ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (n.d.). *Housing choice vouchers fact sheet*. Retrieved November 7, 2012, from hud.gov
- ^{48,50} National Conference of State Legislators. (2012). *Tax credits for working families: Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)*. Retrieved November 7, 2012, from ncl.org
- ⁴⁹ *Policy basics: The Earned Income Tax Credit*. (2012). Washington DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
- ⁵¹ Corporation for Enterprise Development. (2012). *Resource guide: Tax credits for working families*. Retrieved November 6, 2012, from cfed.org
- ⁵² U.S. Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service. (2011). *Ten things to know about the child and dependent care credit*. Retrieved November 7, 2012, from irs.gov
- ^{53,54} *Policy basics: The Child Tax Credit*. (2012). Washington DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
- ⁵⁵ Rosenbaum, D. & Dean, S. (2011). *Improving the delivery of key work supports: Policy and practice opportunities at a critical moment*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
- ^{56,57} Burchman, H., Elliott, J., & Wagner, S. (2012). *Opening Doors Rhode Island: Strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness*. Providence, RI: RI Housing Resources Commission, RI Interagency Council on Homelessness, and RI Housing.
- ⁵⁸ Schulman, K. & Blank, H. (2011). *State child care assistance policies 2011: Reduced support for families in challenging times*. Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center.
- ⁵⁹ *Teen pregnancy and overall child well-being*. (2010). Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- ⁶⁰ *Teen pregnancy, poverty, and income disparity*. (2010). Washington, DC: The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy.
- ⁶¹ Hernandez, D. J. (2012). *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- ⁶² Kauerz, K. (2010). *PreK-3rd: Putting full-day kindergarten in the middle*. Washington, DC: Foundation for Child Development.
- ⁶³ Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Kindergarten enrollment, October 1, 2011.
- ⁶⁴ Kennelly, L. & Monrad, M. (2007). *Approaches to dropout prevention: Heeding early warning signs with appropriate interventions*. Retrieved September 29, 2009, from www.betterhighschools.org
- ⁶⁵ *Ready for college: Advocates series action brief #1*. (2006). Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment.
- ⁶⁶ *Increasing college success: A road map for governors*. (2009). Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices.
- ⁶⁷ *Request for proposals: Adult education for college, work & career, family, and community, FY2011-FY2015*. (2010). Providence, RI: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a children's policy organization that provides information on child well-being, stimulates dialogue on children's issues, and promotes accountability and action.

Primary funding for Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is provided by The Rhode Island Foundation, United Way of Rhode Island, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Prince Charitable Trusts, Hasbro Children's Fund, Birth to Five Policy Alliance, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, UnitedHealthcare, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, America's Promise Alliance, First Focus, and other corporate, foundation and individual sponsors.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Staff

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director
Jill Beckwith, Deputy Director
Leanne Barrett, Senior Policy Analyst
Jim Beasley, Policy Analyst
Dorene Bloomer, Finance Director
Jennifer Capaldo, Administrative Assistant
W. Galarza, Executive Assistant/
 Office Manager
Stephanie Geller, Policy Analyst
Amy Lanctot, Communications Coordinator
John Neubauer, Policy Analyst
Kayla Cuadrado, Intern, Wheaton College
Cindy Lung, Intern, Brown University

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

One Union Station
 Providence, RI 02903
 401-351-9400
 401-351-1758 (fax)
 rikids@rikidscount.org
 www.rikidscount.org



Production of the Issue Brief Series is made possible through the generous support of Hasbro Children's Fund