

## Economic Well-Being Indicators

### Children in Poverty

- In 2017, the federal poverty threshold was \$19,749 for a family of three with two children and \$24,858 for a family of four with two children.
- In 2016, nearly one in five (17%) children in Rhode Island (a total of 35,106 children) lived in poverty.
- Between 2012 and 2016, almost two-thirds (64%) of Rhode Island’s children living in poverty lived in just four cities – Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

### Child Poverty Concentrated in Four Core Cities, Rhode Island, 2012-2016

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER IN POVERTY	PERCENTAGE IN POVERTY	NUMBER IN EXTREME POVERTY	PERCENTAGE IN EXTREME POVERTY
Central Falls	2,364	41.6%	1,049	18.5%
Pawtucket	4,859	30.7%	1,996	12.6%
Providence	15,068	37.5%	6,770	16.8%
Woonsocket	3,674	41.1%	1,802	20.2%
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>40,699</i>	<i>19.4%</i>	<i>17,908</i>	<i>8.5%</i>

Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2012-2016 American Community Survey data.

- The four core cities also have substantial numbers of children living in extreme poverty, defined as families with incomes below 50% of the federal poverty level, or \$9,875 for a family of three with two children and \$12,429 for a family of four with two children in 2017.
- Between 2012 and 2016, 22.5% (14,639) of Rhode Island children under age six lived in poverty. Children under age six are at higher risk of living in poverty than any other age group. Exposure to risk factors associated with poverty, including inadequate nutrition, environmental toxins, crowded and unstable housing, maternal depression, trauma and abuse, lower quality child care, and parental substance abuse interferes with young children’s emotional, physical, and intellectual development.

### Cost of Housing

- The average cost of rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island in 2017 was \$1,385. The percentage of renters in Rhode Island who spent 30% or more of their household income on rent was 49% in 2016, which was the same as in 2008.
- In 2017, a worker would have to earn \$26.63 an hour and work 40 hours a week year-round to be able to afford the average rent in Rhode Island without a cost burden. This hourly wage is more than two and a half times the 2017 minimum wage of \$9.60 per hour.

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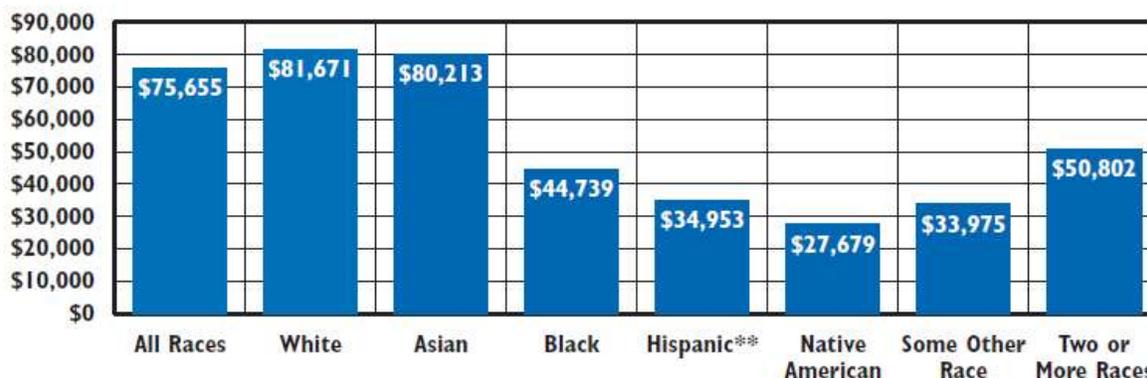
### Homeless Children

- In 2017, 539 families with 998 children stayed at an emergency homeless shelter, domestic violence shelter, or transitional housing facility in Rhode Island. Children made up 22% of the people who used emergency homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, and transitional housing in 2017. Half (51%) of these children were under age six, not yet school age.
- During the 2016-2017 school year, Rhode Island public school personnel identified 1,245 children as homeless. Of these children, 65% lived with other families (“doubled up”), 27% lived in shelters, 7% lived in hotels or motels, and 2% were unsheltered.
- The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is a federal and state partnership program authorized under the *Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG)*. CCDF provides financial assistance to low-income families for child care, so parents can attend work, job training, or educational programs. New CCDBG regulations were issued in 2016. Under the new regulations, homeless children are considered a priority category. Offering priority to families experiencing homelessness can include prioritizing enrollment and waiving copayments for child care.

### Median Family Income

- In 2016, the median family income for Rhode Island families with their own children was \$71,926. Rhode Island had the 13th highest median family income nationally and the 4th highest in New England.
- The median income for White families in Rhode Island is higher than that of Asian families, and much higher than that of Black, Hispanic, and Native American families.

**Median Family Income by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2012-2016\***



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016. Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D, B19113E, B19113G, and B19113I. \*Median Family Income by race and ethnicity includes all families because data for families with “own children” are not available by race and ethnicity. \*\*Hispanics may be in any race category.

### Paid Family Leave

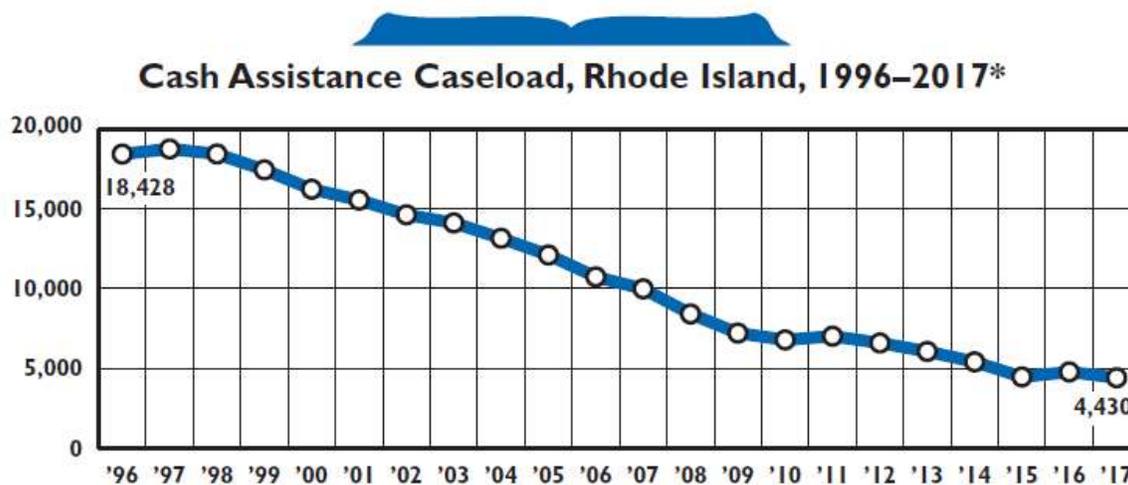
- Rhode Island’s Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) program, established in 2014, provides up to four weeks of wage replacement benefits to eligible workers who need to take time off from work to bond with a newborn, adopted or foster child, or to care for a seriously ill family member. There were 6,224 approved claims for TCI during 2017 (up from 5,882 in 2016); 80% (4,968) were to bond with a new child and 20% (1,256) were to care for a seriously ill family member.

### Children Receiving Child Support

- As of December 1, 2017, there were 73,028 children in Rhode Island’s Office of Child Support Services system. Among these children, 4,723 were enrolled in Rhode Island Works (RI Works). In Rhode Island, the first \$50 of child support paid on time and in full each month on behalf of a child receiving RI Works cash assistance goes to the custodial parent. The remainder is retained by the federal and state government as reimbursement for assistance received through RI Works.
- Non-custodial parents who pay regular child support are more involved with their children, providing them with emotional and financial support, and receipt of regular child support can have a positive effect on children’s economic well-being.

### Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

- Since 1996, when the program began, the Rhode Island cash assistance caseload has declined steadily. Between 1996 and 2017, the Rhode Island cash assistance caseload decreased by 76% from 18,428 cases to 4,430 families.

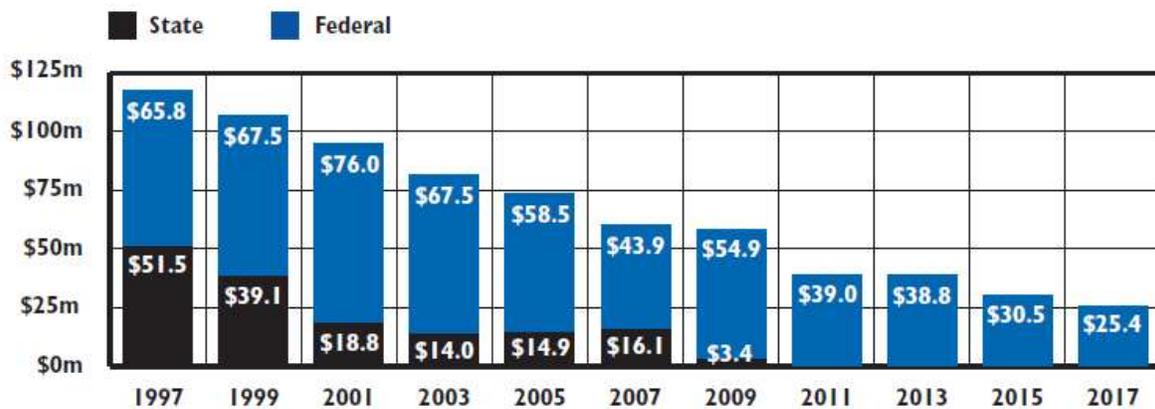


Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, December 1, 1996–2015 and RI Bridges Database, December 2016 and 2017. Cases can be child-only or whole families and multiple people can be included in one case.  
 \*The Rhode Island Department of Human Services changed the method for calculating the caseload data starting in the 2012 Factbook. This change is reflected in 2010–2017 caseload data. Comparisons to earlier years should be made with caution. Starting in 2016, caseload data are for the month of December and not for a point in time, December 1.

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- In 2016, 15,755 children in Rhode Island lived in extreme poverty, yet only 8,960 children received cash assistance in December 2016.
- In State Fiscal Year 2017, for the eighth year in a row, no state general revenue was allocated for cash assistance. The cash assistance program is now entirely supported by federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds.

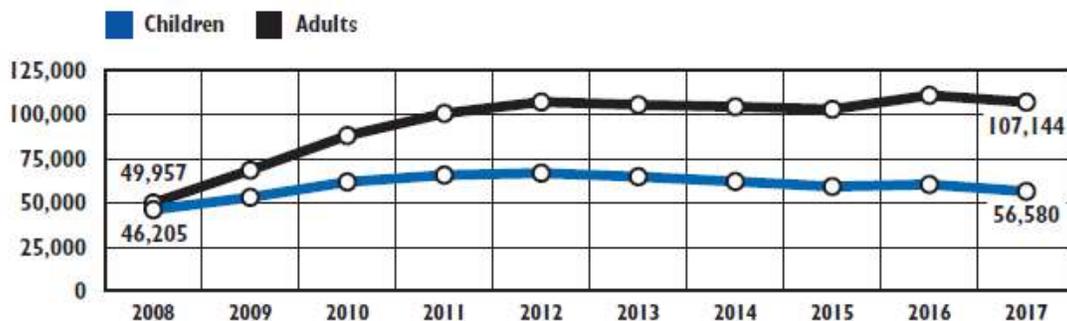
### Rhode Island Cash Assistance Expenditures, State Fiscal Years 1997-2017



Sources: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, *Family Independence Program 2007 annual report*. (FY 1996-2001); House Fiscal Advisory Staff. (2004-2017). Budget as enacted: Fiscal Years 2005-2018. (FY 2001-2017). Fiscal years 1996-2016 are funds spent and FY 2017 is final budget.

### Children Receiving SNAP Benefits

### Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Children and Adults, Rhode Island, 2008-2017



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, 2008–2015 and RI Bridges Database, 2016–2017. Data represent children under age 18 and adults who participated in SNAP during the month of October.

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- The number of children and adults receiving SNAP benefits decreased slowly between 2012 and 2015, then increased in 2016. It is possible that the 2016 increase is due to efforts to avoid denying eligible SNAP recipients during the difficult transition to the RI Bridges/UHIP computer system. Between 2016 and 2017, the number of adults receiving SNAP benefits decreased by 3,901, and the number of children receiving SNAP decreased by 3,925.
- In Rhode Island during October 2017, 79% of SNAP recipients had gross incomes below the federal poverty level (\$20,420 for a family of three in 2017).
- In October 2017, the average monthly SNAP benefit for a family of three in Rhode Island was \$379.

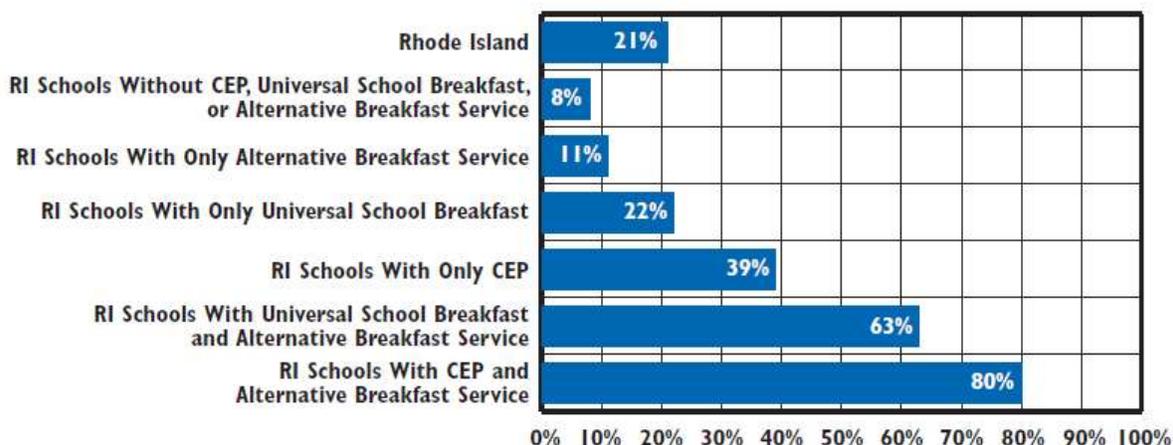
### **Women and Children Participating in WIC**

- In September 2017, 22,141 women, infants, and children in Rhode Island were enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). The program served 50% of eligible women, infants, and children.
- WIC participation has been shown to reduce infant mortality, improve birth outcomes, enhance maternal and child dietary intake, reduce child abuse and neglect, improve child growth rates, boost cognitive development, and increase the likelihood of having a regular source of medical care.

### **Children Participating in School Breakfast**

- During the 2016-2017 school year in Rhode Island, 53 low-income students participated in the School Breakfast Program for every 100 low-income students that participated in the School Lunch Program.

**Children Participating in the School Breakfast Program,  
Rhode Island, October 2017**



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Office of Statewide Efficiencies, October 2017.

- The federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows schools and districts with 40% or more students identified as low-income (e.g., enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or at-risk (i.e., homeless or in foster care) to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students and offers higher reimbursements.
- Universal School Breakfast Programs, which provide free breakfast to all children regardless of income, increase school breakfast participation by removing the stigma often associated with school breakfast and can reduce the administrative burden for schools.
- Making breakfast part of the school day is another proven strategy for increasing breakfast participation, reducing stigma, and increasing convenience.

**Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Economic Well-Being**

- In Rhode Island, a number of measures show that the economic well-being of children and families differs substantially by race and ethnicity.

**Economic Well-Being Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island**

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
Children in Poverty	15%	40%	31%	8%	59%	19%
Births to Mothers with <12 Years Education	7%	25%	15%	12%	23%	12%
Unemployment Rate	4%	7%	7%	NA	NA	4%
Median Family Income	\$81,671	\$34,953	\$44,739	\$80,213	\$27,679	\$75,655
Homeownership	64%	26%	31%	49%	22%	60%

Sources: *Children in Poverty* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016. Tables B17001, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020H, and B17020I. *Maternal Education* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2012-2016. *Unemployment Rate* data are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2017. *Median Family Income* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016, Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D & B19113I. *Homeownership* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016, Tables B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D & B25003I. Hispanics also may be included in any of the race categories. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race. NA indicates that the rate was not calculated because the number was too small to calculate a reliable rate.