

Economic Well-Being

Median Family Income

DEFINITION

Median family income is the dollar amount which divides Rhode Island families' income distribution into two equal groups – half with incomes above the median and half with incomes below the median. The numbers include only families with their “own children” under age 18, defined as never-married children who are related to the family head by birth, marriage, or adoption.

SIGNIFICANCE

Median family income is a measure of the ability of families to meet the costs of food, clothing, housing, health care, transportation, child care, and higher education. In 2016, the median family income for Rhode Island families with their own children was \$71,926.¹ Rhode Island had the 13th highest median family income nationally and the 4th highest in New England.²

Between 2012 and 2016, Rhode Island's median income for families with their own children differed significantly by family type. The median family income for married two-parent families (\$100,192) was almost two and a half times that of male-headed single-parent families (\$40,427) and more than three and a half times that of female-headed single-parent families (\$26,809).³

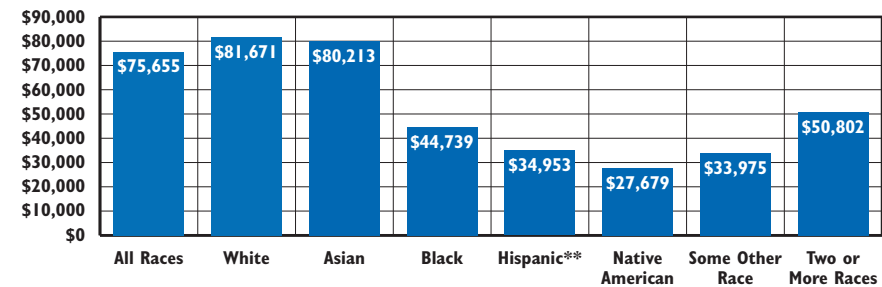
Rhode Island had the nation's highest unemployment rate in 2010 (11.3%), but by 2017 the state's unemployment

rate had decreased to 4.2%, the same as the national unemployment rate, and only slightly higher than the New England rate (3.9%). Despite declines in unemployment, Rhode Island continues to have gaps in unemployment rates by race and ethnicity. In 2017, the unemployment rate for White workers was 4.1%, while it was 7.0% for Black workers and 7.1% for Hispanic workers.^{4,5}

While Rhode Island's unemployment rate has declined, many workers remain unable to find full-time employment and struggle to make ends meet with inadequate and unpredictable income.⁶ More than 23 million people in the U.S. work in low-wage jobs where they are paid \$10.50 per hour or less. Conditions at low-wage jobs, such as fluctuating work hours, lack of paid time off, and strict attendance policies can harm children's development by making it difficult for parents to find and keep affordable high-quality child care and education for their children.⁷

In Rhode Island over the past few decades, income inequality has grown. Since 1979, there has been a 112% income increase for the top 1% of households, compared to a 30% income increase for all other households. The top 5% of households have average incomes (\$320,433) that are 14 times as high as the bottom 20% (\$22,102) of households. Rhode Island is among the top twenty states with the fastest growing income inequality.⁸

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.

- ◆ **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.⁹**
- ◆ **Educational attainment is strongly associated with economic well-being. Rhode Islanders who have achieved a Bachelor's degree or higher have nearly double the wages compared to residents who have only completed high school. More than one in three Hispanic and more than one in five Black adults in Rhode Island lack a high school diploma, compared to one in ten White adults.¹⁰**
- ◆ **According to the 2016 Rhode Island Standard of Need, it costs a single-parent family with two young children \$52,932 a year to pay basic living expenses, including housing, food, health care, child care, transportation, and other miscellaneous items. This family would need an annual income of \$63,238 to meet this budget without government subsidies.¹¹**
- ◆ **An adequate minimum wage and income support programs (including RIte Care health insurance, child care subsidies, SNAP/food stamp benefits, and the Earned Income Tax Credit) are critical for helping low-and moderate-income working families in Rhode Island make ends meet.¹²**

Table 6. Median Family Income, Rhode Island, 2012-2016

CITY/TOWN	1999 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 (ADJUSTED TO 2016 DOLLARS*)	2012-2016 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18	
		ESTIMATES WITH HIGH MARGINS OF ERROR**	ESTIMATES WITH LOWER, ACCEPTABLE MARGINS OF ERROR
Barrington	\$128,000		\$152,442
Bristol	\$76,874		\$82,569
Burrillville	\$79,407	\$75,181	
Central Falls	\$31,725		\$28,585
Charlestown	\$79,400		\$86,458
Coventry	\$88,446		\$94,982
Cranston	\$82,029		\$80,321
Cumberland	\$98,444		\$98,588
East Greenwich	\$156,486		\$165,658
East Providence	\$70,455		\$60,149
Exeter	\$105,577		\$102,708
Foster	\$91,372	\$99,038	
Glocester	\$87,844		\$109,744
Hopkinton	\$85,150		\$88,785
Jamestown	\$114,709	\$139,076	
Johnston	\$81,650		\$87,167
Lincoln	\$92,936	\$74,375	
Little Compton	\$81,705	\$130,875	
Middletown	\$79,718		\$74,250
Narragansett	\$98,385		\$129,375
New Shoreham	\$79,060	\$64,821	
Newport	\$62,166	\$51,547	
North Kingstown	\$96,273		\$106,111
North Providence	\$72,788		\$79,014
North Smithfield	\$102,444		\$104,727
Pawtucket	\$48,381		\$42,667
Portsmouth	\$97,124		\$112,050
Providence	\$35,384		\$34,524
Richmond	\$91,497		\$118,309
Scituate	\$99,661		\$91,500
Smithfield	\$96,655		\$102,250
South Kingstown	\$98,407		\$109,519
Tiverton	\$91,999		\$81,484
Warren	\$77,183		\$58,199
Warwick	\$82,222		\$82,753
West Greenwich	\$101,124		\$103,864
West Warwick	\$60,300		\$54,512
Westerly	\$74,922		\$64,577
Woonsocket	\$49,683		\$32,386
Four Core Cities	NA		NA
Remainder of State	NA		NA
Rhode Island	\$72,880		\$69,335

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Median family income data include only households with children under age 18 who meet the U.S. Census Bureau's definition of a family. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a family as a household that includes a householder and one or more people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.

*The 1999 median family income data are adjusted to 2016 constant dollars by multiplying 1999 dollar values by 1.4415372 as recommended by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The 2012-2016 data come from a Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2012-2016 American Community Survey data. The American Community Survey is a sample survey, and therefore the median family income is an estimate. The reliability of estimates vary by community. In general, estimates for small communities are not as reliable as estimates for larger communities.

**The Margin of Error around the estimate is greater than or equal to 25 percent of the estimate.

The Margin of Error is a measure of the reliability of the estimate and is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Margin of Error means that there is a 90 percent chance that the true value is no less than the estimate minus the Margin of Error and no more than the estimate plus the Margin of Error. See the Methodology Section for Margins of Errors for all communities.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

NA: Median family income cannot be calculated for combinations of cities and towns (i.e., Four Core Cities and Remainder of State).

References

- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2016. Table B19125.
- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2016. Table R1902.
- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2016. Table B19126.
- ^{6,10} *State of working Rhode Island 2017: Paving the way to good jobs.* (2017). Providence, RI: The Economic Progress Institute.
- ⁵ *Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and detailed age, 2017 annual averages – Rhode Island and United States.* (2017). U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.
- ⁷ Vogtman, J. & Schulman, K. (2016). *Set up to fail: When low-wage work jeopardizes parents' and children's success.* Washington, DC: The National Women's Law Center.
- ⁸ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities & Economic Policy Institute. (2016) *Income inequality in Rhode Island: A snapshot.* Retrieved January 9, 2018, from www.cbpp.org
- ⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2012-2016. Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D, B19113E, B19113F, B19113G, & B19113I.
- ^{11,12} *The 2016 Rhode Island Standard of Need.* (2016). Providence, RI: The Economic Progress Institute.

Cost of Housing

DEFINITION

Cost of housing is the percentage of income needed by a very low-income family to cover the average cost of rent.¹ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a very low-income family as a family with an income less than 50% of the Area Median Income. A cost burden exists when more than 30% of a family's monthly income is spent on housing.

SIGNIFICANCE

Inadequate, costly, or crowded housing has a negative impact on children's health, safety, and emotional well-being and on a family's ability to meet a child's basic needs. Children who live in families with cost burdens may live in low-quality and overcrowded housing and move frequently, all of which have been linked to lower educational achievement.^{2,3}

From 2000 to 2013 in Rhode Island, the growth in low- and middle-income families' housing expenses outpaced income growth.⁴ In 2014, 23% of Rhode Island's 156,122 working households spent more than half of their income on housing costs, making Rhode Island the state with the highest cost burden in New England.⁵

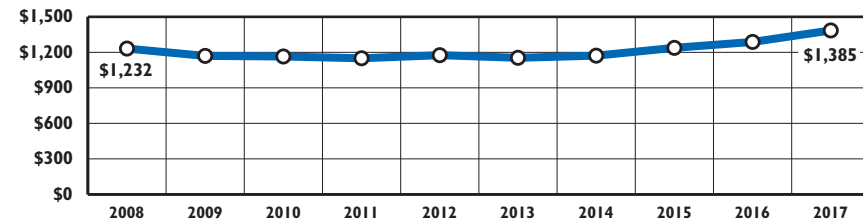
In 2017, a worker would have to earn \$26.63 an hour and work 40 hours a week year-round to be able to afford the average rent in Rhode Island

without a cost burden. This hourly wage is more than two and a half times the 2017 minimum wage of \$9.60 per hour.⁶ In 2017, Rhode Island required the 18th highest hourly wage to afford the rent for a two-bedroom home of any state.⁷

In 2017, the Area Median Income for families in Rhode Island was \$73,640.⁸ Families with this income can afford to purchase a median-priced, single-family home in 11 of the 39 communities in the state. In 2016, the median cost of a single-family home in Rhode Island was \$239,900, 15% higher than 2011, but still 29% lower than 2006.⁹

Federally-funded Section 8 Housing Choice rental vouchers can help low-income individuals and families afford the cost of housing; however there are not enough vouchers to meet the need. Long waiting periods are common and housing authorities may close waiting lists when there are more families on the list than can be helped in the near future.¹⁰ Rhode Island's FY 2015 budget increased the real estate conveyance tax and created a dedicated funding stream for housing subsidies as well as homelessness prevention, housing retention, and lead abatement.¹¹ In 2016, Rhode Island voters approved \$50 million in housing bonds for affordable housing development and urban revitalization.¹²

Average Rent, Two-Bedroom Apartment, Rhode Island, 2008-2017



Source: Rhode Island Housing, Rhode Island Rent Surveys, 2008-2017. Rents include adjustments for the cost of heat, cooking fuel, electricity, and hot water. Adjustments for utilities for each year vary according to HUD annual utility allowances. The HUD utility allowance decreased in 2013, so average rents which include this allowance also decreased.

- ◆ In 2017, the average cost of rent in Rhode Island rose by almost \$100 to \$1,385, after remaining fairly stable between 2008 and 2016, increasing from \$1,232 in 2008 to \$1,288 in 2016.¹³
- ◆ 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. The percentage of homeowners who had a cost burden due to their mortgages decreased between 2008 and 2016, from 42% to 32%.^{14,15}

Cost of Heating and Other Utilities

- ◆ High energy costs make housing even less affordable for low-income families. Research shows that children in households experiencing energy shutoffs are also at risk of hunger and problems with health and development.¹⁶
- ◆ Rhode Island state law prohibits utility shutoffs for protected customers (such as the unemployed and low-income families with children under age two) and customers facing financial hardships during the moratorium period from November 1 through April 15.¹⁷
- ◆ The federally-funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides financial assistance to Rhode Island's low-income households to meet home heating and energy costs.¹⁸ Rhode Island's FFY 2017 allocation for LIHEAP was \$25.3 million.¹⁹ In 2016, Rhode Island created a LIHEAP Enhancement Plan that established per-payment forgiveness of utility debt and allowed previously homeless families to obtain a crisis grant to cover the down payment required to participate in this program.²⁰

Table 7.

Cost of Housing for Very Low-Income Families, Rhode Island, 2017

CITY/TOWN	FAMILY INCOME		HOMEOWNERSHIP COSTS		RENTAL COSTS		
	2017 POVERTY LEVEL FAMILY OF THREE	2017 VERY LOW- INCOME FAMILY	TYPICAL MONTHLY HOUSING PAYMENT	% INCOME NEEDED FOR HOUSING PAYMENT, VERY LOW-INCOME FAMILY	AVERAGE RENT 2-BEDROOM APARTMENT	% INCOME NEEDED FOR RENT POVERTY LEVEL FAMILY OF THREE	% INCOME NEEDED FOR RENT VERY LOW- INCOME FAMILY
Barrington	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,691	100%	\$1,573	92%	58%
Bristol	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,018	75%	\$1,467	86%	54%
Burrillville	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,660	61%	\$1,049	62%	39%
Central Falls	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,040	38%	\$1,041	61%	38%
Charlestown	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,216	82%	\$1,498	88%	55%
Coventry	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,563	58%	\$1,366	80%	51%
Cranston	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,535	57%	\$1,369	80%	51%
Cumberland	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,866	69%	\$1,371	81%	51%
East Greenwich	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$3,126	116%	\$1,674	98%	62%
East Providence	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,527	56%	\$1,432	84%	53%
Exeter*	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,989	74%	\$994	58%	37%
Foster*	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,096	78%	\$994	58%	37%
Glocester*	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,900	70%	\$994	58%	37%
Hopkinton*	\$20,420	\$36,150	\$1,842	61%	\$1,123	66%	37%
Jamestown	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$3,393	125%	\$1,932	114%	71%
Johnston	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,633	60%	\$1,386	81%	51%
Lincoln	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,172	80%	\$1,367	80%	51%
Little Compton*	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,890	107%	\$994	58%	37%
Middletown	\$20,420	\$42,200	\$2,395	68%	\$1,683	99%	48%
Narragansett	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,601	96%	\$1,459	86%	54%
New Shoreham*	\$20,420	\$36,150	\$6,212	206%	\$1,123	66%	37%
Newport	\$20,420	\$42,200	\$2,835	81%	\$1,753	103%	50%
North Kingstown	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,484	92%	\$1,583	93%	59%
North Providence	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,623	60%	\$1,392	82%	51%
North Smithfield	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,817	67%	\$1,549	91%	57%
Pawtucket	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,298	48%	\$1,235	73%	46%
Portsmouth	\$20,420	\$42,200	\$2,392	68%	\$1,733	102%	49%
Providence**	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,103	41%	\$1,357	80%	50%
Richmond*	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,037	75%	\$994	58%	37%
Scituate	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,993	74%	\$1,533	90%	57%
Smithfield	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,852	68%	\$1,348	79%	50%
South Kingstown	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,134	79%	\$1,355	80%	50%
Tiverton	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,756	65%	\$1,636	96%	60%
Warren	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,835	68%	\$1,332	78%	49%
Warwick	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,466	54%	\$1,558	92%	58%
West Greenwich*	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$2,473	91%	\$994	58%	37%
West Warwick	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,447	54%	\$1,282	75%	47%
Westerly	\$20,420	\$36,150	\$1,874	62%	\$1,377	81%	46%
Woonsocket	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,293	48%	\$1,138	67%	42%
Four Core Cities	\$20,420	\$32,450	\$1,184	44%	\$1,286	76%	48%
Remainder of State	\$20,420	\$33,603	\$2,210	79%	\$1,448	85%	52%
Rhode Island	\$20,420	\$33,485	\$1,702	61%	\$1,385	81%	50%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

2017 poverty level for a family of three as reported in: *Federal Register*, 82(19), January 31, 2017, pages 8831-8832.

A very low-income family as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is a three-person family with income 50% of the Area Median Income and is calculated separately for each of the three metropolitan areas comprising Rhode Island. Reported by Rhode Island Housing. (2017). *2017 Rhode Island income limits for low- and moderate-income households*. Retrieved February 22, 2018, from www.rhodeislandhousing.org

Data on typical monthly housing payments are from HousingWorks RI's *2017 Housing Fact Book*. They are based on the median selling price of a single-family home using year-end 2016 data and calculated based on a 30-year mortgage at a 3.65% interest rate with a 3.5% down payment. The typical monthly housing payment for the state comes from HousingWorks RI, but core city and remainder of state are calculated by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT using unweighted community data.

Rhode Island Housing, *Rhode Island Rent Survey*, 2017. Average rents are based on a survey of rents in Rhode Island between January and December, 2017. 2017 rents are adjusted using HUD's utility allowance of \$238 for a two-bedroom apartment (includes heat, cooking fuel, electricity, and hot water) unless the listing stated that utilities were included in the rent, in which case the adjustment was not made.

*Rhode Island Housing 2017 *Rhode Island Rent Survey* data are not available. Average rent used for these communities is the HUD 2017 Fair Market Rent for the metropolitan area as reported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The average rent calculated for the state as a whole, for the remainder of state, and four core cities do not include communities for which data from the *Rhode Island Rent Survey* were not available.

Statewide average rent is calculated by taking an average of all listings statewide. Rent averages for the four core cities and the remainder of state are calculated using weighted community data from Rhode Island Housing.

**Typical monthly housing payment for Providence does not include the East Side and therefore cannot be compared to data reported for Providence in Factbooks prior to 2013.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References are on page 175.

Homeless Children

DEFINITION

Homeless children is the number of children under age 18 who stayed at homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters or transitional housing facilities in Rhode Island with their families. This number does not include homeless and runaway youth who are unaccompanied by their families.

SIGNIFICANCE

In the United States, 2.5 million children (one in 30) are homeless each year.¹ Families can become homeless due to lack of affordable housing, unemployment, low-paying jobs, extreme poverty and decreasing government supports. Other causes include domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse, and frayed social support networks.^{2,3,4}

Compared with their peers, homeless children are more likely to become ill (particularly with illnesses such as stomach problems, ear infections, and asthma), develop mental health issues (such as anxiety, depression, and withdrawal), experience significant educational disruption, and exhibit delinquent or aggressive behaviors. Homeless children go hungry at twice the rate of other children.⁵

Homeless children are at a higher risk of abuse and exposure to violence. This trauma can lead to an increase in developmental delays and emotional distress and a decrease in academic

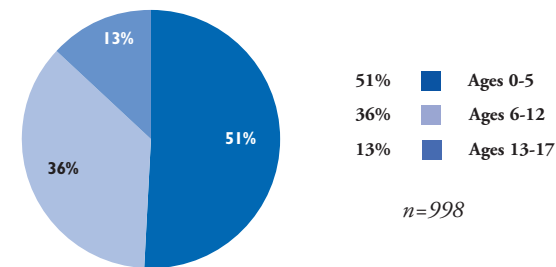
achievement.^{6,7} When homeless children are exposed to multiple traumatic events, they may have increased levels of anxiety, poor impulse control, and difficulty developing trusting relationships.^{8,9}

Families who have experienced homelessness have higher rates of family separation than other low-income families, with children separated from their parents due to shelter rules, state intervention, and/or parents' desires to protect their children from homelessness. Homeless children are more likely to have been placed in foster care (12%) than other children (1%). Homelessness also can be a barrier to reunification; it is estimated that more than 30% of children in foster care in the U.S. could return home if their parents had adequate housing.¹⁰

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.¹¹ Other families are on the state's family shelter waiting list, awaiting placement when a slot opens up.

In 2017, United Way 211 received 124,553 requests from individuals and families seeking housing, housing information, or shelter and 3,758 related to foreclosure prevention.¹²

Children in Emergency Shelters, Domestic Violence Shelters, and Transitional Housing Facilities by Age, 2017



Source: Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project, 2017.

Supporting Homeless Children in Schools

- ◆ **Family residential instability and homelessness contribute to poor educational outcomes for children. Homeless children are more likely to change schools, be chronically absent from school, and have lower academic achievement than children who have housing.**¹³
- ◆ **The federal *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act)* requires that states identify homeless children, allow them to enroll in school even if they lack required documents, allow them to stay in their “home school,” provide transportation when needed, and refer homeless children and families to services including health, dental, and mental health services, tutoring, etc., needed to help them succeed in school.**¹⁴
- ◆ **The *McKinney-Vento Act* defines a child as homeless if he or she does not have a “fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.”¹⁵ 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.**¹⁶
- ◆ **The federal *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*, which re-authorized *McKinney-Vento* in 2015, strengthens existing provisions for homeless students, guarantees school stability for students starting in preschool, and requires schools to report on student achievement and graduation rates for homeless students.**¹⁷

Supporting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness

◆ Many homeless families are comprised of single mothers with children. There are significant barriers to employment for these mothers experiencing homelessness, including low levels of education, lack of employment histories, and unreliable child care. To secure stable employment, homeless parents need education, job skills, and safe, dependable care for their children.¹⁸

◆ 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.¹⁹

◆ Despite the fact that early care and education can help mitigate the impacts of homelessness on children, homeless parents are less likely to receive child care assistance than other families.²⁰

◆ 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.²¹

Table 8. Homeless Children Identified by Public Schools, Rhode Island, 2016-2017 School Year

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	# OF CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS BY PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL
Barrington	3,355	*
Bristol Warren	3,218	11
Burrillville	2,341	37
Central Falls	2,589	63
Chariho	3,270	24
Coventry	4,713	22
Cranston	10,415	33
Cumberland	4,568	*
East Greenwich	2,504	*
East Providence	5,238	37
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,654	*
Foster	265	0
Foster-Glocester	1,147	*
Glocester	547	*
Jamestown	488	*
Johnston	3,190	*
Lincoln	3,002	15
Little Compton	246	0
Middletown	2,191	115
Narragansett	1,326	*
New Shoreham	120	0
Newport	2,198	78
North Kingstown	4,047	60
North Providence	3,493	31
North Smithfield	1,707	*
Pawtucket	8,984	63
Portsmouth	2,464	*
Providence	23,983	227
Scituate	1,305	0
Smithfield	2,384	64
South Kingstown	3,111	22
Tiverton	1,841	0
Warwick	9,124	109
West Warwick	3,474	24
Westerly	2,865	46
Woonsocket	5,863	91
Charter Schools	7,024	25
State-Operated Schools	1,746	*
UCAP	142	0
Four Core Cities	41,419	444
Remainder of State	91,811	770
Rhode Island	142,142	1,245

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, Public School Enrollment in grades preschool to 12 on October 1, 2016.

Number of children identified as homeless by public school personnel includes children in preschool through grade 12 who are identified by public school personnel as meeting the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness, which includes any child who does not have a "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."

Charter schools reporting include Blackstone Academy, Paul Cuffee Charter School, Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy, Southside Charter School, and Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts. State-operated schools reporting include the Metropolitan Regional Career & Technical Center.

The Middletown, Newport, North Kingstown, Warwick, and Woonsocket school districts received grants that provided additional resources to identify and serve homeless students.

*Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These students are still counted in district totals and in the four core cities, remainder of the state, and state totals.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

See Methodology Section for more information.

References

- ^{1,4,18} Bassuk, E.L., DeCandia, C.J., Beach, C.A., & Berman, F. (2014). *America's youngest outcasts: A report card on child homelessness*. Needham, MA: The National Center on Family Homelessness.
- ^{2,5,10} *The characteristics and needs of families experiencing homelessness*. (2011). Needham, MA: The National Center on Family Homelessness.
- ³ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2018). *What causes homelessness?* Retrieved February 6, 2018, from endhomelessness.org
- ⁶ American Academy of Pediatrics. (2013). Providing care for children and adolescents facing homelessness and housing insecurity. *Pediatrics*, 131(6), 1206-1210.

(continued on page 175)

Secure Parental Employment

DEFINITION

Secure parental employment is the percentage of children living with at least one parent who has full-time, year-round employment.

SIGNIFICANCE

Secure parental employment increases family income and reduces poverty. Children with parents who have steady employment are more likely to have access to health care. Secure parental employment improves family functioning by reducing the stress brought on by unemployment and underemployment of parents. Among poor families, children with working parents are more engaged academically and less likely to repeat a grade or be suspended or expelled from school than children with non-working parents.^{1,2}

Rhode Island's unemployment rate decreased from 4.9% in December 2016 to 4.4% in December 2017. Despite this decline, Rhode Island's unemployment rate is slightly higher than the U.S. unemployment rate of 4.1%. At the height of the recession in December 2009, Rhode Island's unemployment rate was 11.2%.^{3,4}

In 2017, 6% of children in Rhode Island and 5% of children in the U.S. had at least one unemployed parent.⁵ Children with unemployed parents are at increased risk for homelessness, child

abuse or neglect, and failure to finish high school or college.⁶

Even when families have adults with secure parental employment, low wages cause families to remain in poverty. Nationally, nearly one in three (32%) working families are low income (10.6 million), with 24 million children belonging to low-income working families. Additionally, people of color are overrepresented among low-income working families nationally. Of the 24 million children in low-income working families, 58% (14 million) are people of color.⁷ In the workforce, low-income individuals tend to have few opportunities for development, limited benefits, and an overall lack of economic security. In addition, despite gaining experience and seniority, many low-income workers never move out of low-wage jobs.⁸

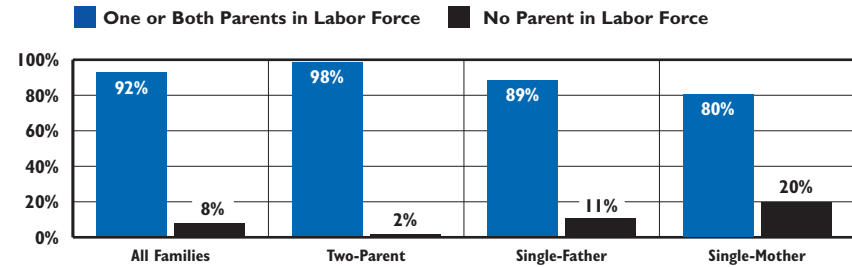
Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment		
	2010	2016
RI	34%	31%
US	33%	28%
National Rank*		38 th
New England Rank**		6 th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, datacenter.kidscount.org

Employment Status of Parents by Family Type, Rhode Island, 2012-2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016. Table B23008.

- ◆ The majority of children living in Rhode Island between 2012 and 2016 had one or both parents in the labor force. Children living with a single parent were 12 times more likely than children living in a two-parent family to have no parents in the labor force. Of children in two-parent families, 71% had both parents in the labor force.⁹
- ◆ Between 2012 and 2016, there were 16,377 Rhode Island children living in families with no parent in the labor force. Children living in families with a single parent represented 88% (14,475) of families with no employed parents.¹⁰
- ◆ Between 2012 and 2016, 15% (3,680) of Rhode Island families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold had at least one adult with full-time, year-round employment, and 43% of low-income Rhode Island families had at least one adult working part-time.¹¹
- ◆ According to the 2016 *Rhode Island Standard of Need*, 72% of Rhode Island single-parent families and 26% of two-parent families with two or more children earn less than the income required to meet their basic needs without public benefits such as SNAP/food stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), child care subsidies, and health insurance.¹²
- ◆ Between 2012 and 2016, 72% of children under age six and 77% of children ages six to 17 in Rhode Island had all parents in the labor force. In comparison, nationally, 65% of children under age six and 71% of children ages six to 17 had all parents in the labor force.¹³

Barriers to Secure Employment for Low-Income Families

- ◆ There are many barriers to employment for those leaving welfare for work. Research shows that welfare leavers who return to welfare after working are much more likely to be in poor health, to have low levels of education, and to have young children than those who remain employed.¹⁴
- ◆ Poor health or a disability may make it difficult for parents to secure or sustain employment. One national study found that 13% of low-income working mothers had some type of disability and 6% had a severe disability. It also found that 16% of low-income working mothers had a child with a disability and that 9% had a child with a severe disability. Higher-income mothers reported lower disability rates for themselves and their children.¹⁵
- ◆ Low-income workers are less likely to have benefits, such as paid time off and flexible work schedules, that would allow them to address the needs of sick children.¹⁶ Approximately 60% of the entire U.S. workforce qualifies for the federal *Family and Medical Leave Act* (FMLA), but many who are eligible cannot afford to take it.¹⁷ In 2013, Rhode Island passed legislation that created the Temporary Caregivers Insurance (TCI) Program, which provides up to four weeks of benefits for workers who need to care for a seriously ill family member or to bond with a newborn, foster, or adopted child.¹⁸ As of January 2018, Rhode Island is one of four states that offer paid family leave.¹⁹
- ◆ Limited education also can be a barrier to sustained employment. Between 2012 and 2016 in Rhode Island, adults without a high school diploma were nearly four times as likely to be unemployed as those with a Bachelor's degree.²⁰
- ◆ Having access to work supports, such as tax credits, SNAP/food stamps, and housing subsidies, can facilitate steady employment over time. Researchers have found links between these programs and positive employment outcomes for parents such as work stability and earnings.²¹

References

¹ Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2017). *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being, 2017*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

² Isaacs, J. (2013). *Unemployment from a child's perspective*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute and First Focus.

(continued on page 175)

Secure Employment and Child Care

- ◆ Research shows a link between adequate child care availability and sustained maternal labor force participation. Studies find that mothers report that the lack of reliable and dependable child care arrangements affected their ability to remain employed.²²
- ◆ In 2016 in Rhode Island, a single mother earning the state median income for a single-mother family (\$25,901) would have to spend half (50.4%) of her income to pay for child care for an infant in center-based care.²³
- ◆ In Rhode Island, child care assistance is available to all income-eligible working families. During the 2007 legislative session, eligibility for child care assistance was rolled back from 225% to 180% of the federal poverty level (\$37,404 for a family of three in 2018).^{24,25}

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC)

- ◆ State and federal Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs) provide tax reductions and wage supplements for low- and moderate-income working families. EITCs reduce child poverty, decrease taxes, and increase work incentives for families struggling to make ends meet. The federal EITC is the nation's most effective antipoverty program for working families. It lifted 6.5 million people, including 3.3 million children, out of poverty in 2015.^{26,27}
- ◆ Benefits of the EITC extend well beyond the time families receive the credit. EITC recipients are more likely to work and earn higher wages, and their children do better in school, are more likely to attend college, and earn more as adults.²⁸
- ◆ State EITCs can supplement the federal EITC to further support working families. In 2016, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed legislation that increased the state's EITC from 12.5% to 15% of the federal EITC. In 2016, approximately 84,000 Rhode Island working families and individuals received a total of \$190 million in EITC tax credits for tax year 2015.²⁹
- ◆ Since 2001, the Child Tax Credit has helped working families offset the cost of raising children. The CTC is a powerful weapon against poverty, lifting 2.7 million people out of poverty in 2016, including 1.5 million children. Boosting a family's income can increase children's opportunities, improve their immediate well-being and health into adulthood.³⁰

Paid Family Leave

DEFINITION

Paid family leave is the number of approved claims to bond with a new child or to care for a seriously ill family member through Rhode Island's Temporary Caregiver Insurance Program (TCI).

SIGNIFICANCE

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. The TCI program is financed entirely by employee contributions.¹

Almost all advanced, industrialized nations guarantee paid leave for new mothers and many include new fathers. In many European countries, families receive at least six months of paid leave to care for a new baby.² The U.S. requires employers with 50 or more workers to offer 12 weeks of leave for workers to care for a new child or to care for a seriously ill family member; however the time off can be unpaid.³ Rhode Island's 1987 *Parental and Family Medical Leave Act* requires a 13-week leave, but does not require that the leave be paid.⁴

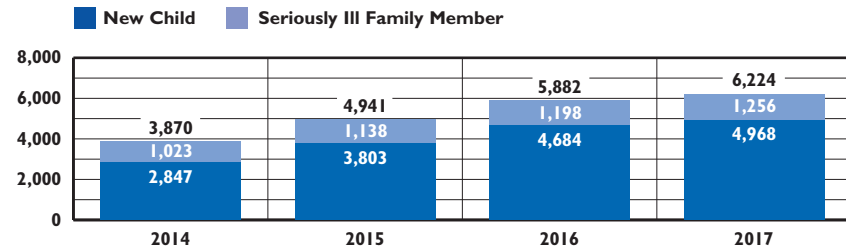
Although some workers in the U.S. have access to paid leave through their employers (estimated at 11% of private sector workers and 17% of public sector

workers), the majority do not. High-wage workers are much more likely to have access to paid family leave than low-wage workers. More than three in four employees in the U.S. report not being able to take family leave when needed because it was unpaid.⁵

Paid family leave provides job security and consistent income so that working parents can care for a new child or any worker can care for a seriously ill family member.⁶ Taking time off from work to care for a new child reduces infant mortality rates and child abuse, improves breastfeeding rates and duration, and increases preventive medical care and immunizations. Mothers who take at least 12 weeks off from work after the birth of a child are less likely to experience depression, which can improve the quality of the care they are able to provide to their infants.^{7,8} Providing time off from work for new parents gives babies time to form secure attachments, which form the foundation for future relationships and development.⁹

Rhode Island's Temporary Disability Insurance Program (TDI) provides partial-wage replacement for participating workers who are temporarily unable to work because of a physical or mental condition, including pregnancy complications and recovery from childbirth.^{10,11} TCI supplements TDI; women who give birth are eligible for both.

Approved Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) Claims by Type, Rhode Island, 2014-2017



Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, TCI Program, 2014-2017.

◆ 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.¹²

◆ Of the 4,968 approved claims to bond with a new child, 98% (4,857) were for a newborn child and 2% were for a combination of newly adopted (25), foster (48), or other (38) children. Thirty-nine percent of claims to bond with a new child were filed by men and 61% were filed by women.¹³

◆ Of the 1,256 approved claims to care for a seriously ill family member, 57% (711) were to care for a spouse or domestic partner, 28% (346) were to care for a parent or parent-in-law, 15% (191) were to care for a child, and 1% (8) were to care for a grandparent. Thirty percent (381) of claims to care for a seriously ill family member were filed by men and 70% (875) were filed by women.¹⁴

Temporary Disability Insurance for Pregnancy Complications & Childbirth

◆ In 2017, there were 3,326 approved TDI claims for disabling pregnancy complications and/or to recover from childbirth.¹⁵ Recovery from childbirth is a disabling condition covered by TDI. In general, six weeks is covered for vaginal births and eight weeks for cesarean section births. More time can be approved for postpartum complications, based on the health care provider's determination. TDI is not available to new parents who do not give birth (e.g., fathers and adoptive parents).¹⁶

Table 9. **Approved Temporary Disability Claims for Childbirth & Temporary Caregiver Claims for Paid Family Leave, Rhode Island, 2017**

CITY/TOWN	TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE (TDI) CLAIMS			TEMPORARY CAREGIVER INSURANCE (TCI) CLAIMS		
	TDI FOR PREGNANCY COMPLICATIONS	TDI FOR CHILDBIRTH	TOTAL TDI CLAIMS	TCI TO BOND WITH NEW CHILD	TCI TO CARE FOR FAMILY MEMBER	TOTAL TCI CLAIMS
Barrington	24	19	43	53	11	64
Bristol	23	16	39	62	26	88
Burrillville	17	29	46	73	15	88
Central Falls	23	36	59	55	18	73
Charlestown	3	7	10	29	12	41
Coventry	48	64	112	202	69	271
Cranston	102	123	225	403	78	481
Cumberland	51	40	91	147	42	189
East Greenwich	15	14	29	49	14	63
East Providence	78	64	142	220	67	287
Exeter	8	14	22	29	14	43
Foster	5	7	12	24	5	29
Glocester	14	7	21	29	12	41
Hopkinton	5	16	21	31	12	43
Jamestown	*	*	*	9	3	12
Johnston	35	48	83	141	53	194
Lincoln	29	29	58	101	26	127
Little Compton	0	*	*	4	1	5
Middletown	21	29	50	62	7	69
Narragansett	8	9	17	27	18	45
New Shoreham	*	0	*	0	0	0
Newport	15	33	48	70	8	78
North Kingstown	36	38	74	134	20	154
North Providence	32	57	89	159	45	204
North Smithfield	12	9	21	46	14	60
Pawtucket	106	118	224	365	67	432
Portsmouth	13	26	39	38	10	48
Providence	280	363	643	713	156	869
Richmond	5	5	10	13	3	16
Scituate	11	9	20	59	19	78
Smithfield	25	28	53	97	45	142
South Kingstown	23	28	51	82	27	109
Tiverton	11	14	25	42	8	50
Warren	23	12	35	35	16	51
Warwick	135	154	289	605	127	732
West Greenwich	9	9	18	9	0	9
West Warwick	49	62	111	115	38	153
Westerly	19	31	50	84	18	102
Woonsocket	46	47	93	128	46	174
Out-of-State	171	174	345	424	86	510
Four Core Cities	455	564	1,019	1,261	287	1,548
Remainder of State	908	1,054	1,962	3,283	883	4,166
Rhode Island	1,363	1,618	2,981	4,544	1,170	5,714
Total Program Claims	1,534	1,792	3,326	4,968	1,256	6,224

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Approved TDI claims for pregnancy complications and childbirth and approved TCI claims, 2017. Approved TDI claims for pregnancy complications include cesarean births. TDI claims approved for pregnancy complications retain that code regardless of when the birth happens so they are not counted in the childbirth column.

In 2017 in Rhode Island, the average length of approved TDI claims for pregnancy complications was 9.7 weeks and the average number of weeks approved to recover from childbirth was 7.1 weeks. The average length of approved TCI claims for a new child was 3.4 weeks while the average number of weeks approved to care for a seriously ill family member was 3.5 weeks.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

Out-of-State are approved claims for residents of states other than Rhode Island. TDI and TCI are available to employees of Rhode Island companies and organizations, including employees who are not residents of the state.

*Data for any town with less than 5 total approved claims are suppressed by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training.

References

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- Ochshorn, S. & Skinner, C. (2012). *Building a competitive future right from the start: How paid leave strengthens 21st century families*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty.
- Business support for the Family and Medical Leave Act*. (2013). Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.
- Rhode Island Parental and Family Medical Leave Act*, Title 28 Rhode Island General Law § 28-48-2 (1987,1990).
- Family leave in the early years*. (2013). Washington, DC: Zero to Three.

(continued on page 176)

Children Receiving Child Support

DEFINITION

Children receiving child support is the percentage of parents who make child support payments on time and in full as indicated in the Rhode Island Office of Child Support Services system. The percentage does not include cases in which paternity has not been established or cases in which the non-custodial parent is not under a court order because he/she cannot be located. Court orders for child support and medical support require establishment of paternity.

SIGNIFICANCE

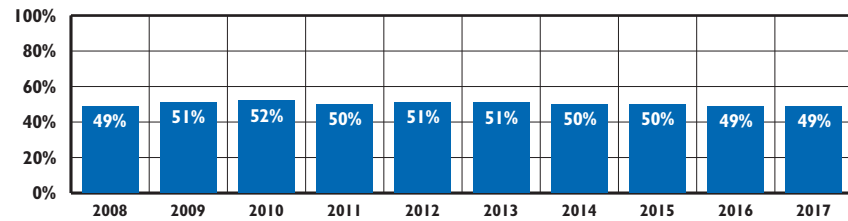
Child support is a major part of the safety net for children and families. In 2016, one in five U.S. children (15.6 million) received public child support services.^{1,2} Child support provides a mechanism for non-custodial parents (usually fathers) to contribute to the financial and medical support of their children. Child support programs can increase the reliability of child support paid by helping custodial parents locate the non-custodial parent, establishing paternity and support orders, and removing barriers to payment, such as referring parents to employment services, supporting co-parenting relationships, and helping to prevent family violence.³

The receipt of child support payments can significantly improve the economic well-being of a child growing up in a family with a non-custodial

parent. In 2015, child support lifted more than 790,000 U.S. children out of poverty, and for poor custodial parents that received full child support, these payments represented more than two-thirds (70%) of their mean personal income. Custodial parents who receive steady child support payments are more likely to find work faster and stay employed longer than those who do not and are less likely to rely on public assistance programs.^{4,5,6}

For many families, even when a child support order is in place, payments can be unreliable. Noncustodial parents of poor children are often poor themselves and have limited ability to provide financial support to their children.⁷ Incarcerated parents with active child support orders are unable to pay while in prison, and may face legal and financial burdens upon release.⁸ Fatherhood programs that focus on low-income, non-custodial parents and provide a combination of job skills training and employment assistance, parenting skills, relationship building with the co-parent, and links to the child support system can increase child support payments. Non-custodial parents who pay regular child support are more involved with their children, providing them with emotional and financial support. The receipt of regular child support payments can have a positive effect on children's academic achievement.^{9,10}

Non-Custodial Parents With Court Orders Who Pay Child Support on Time and in Full, Rhode Island, 2008-2017

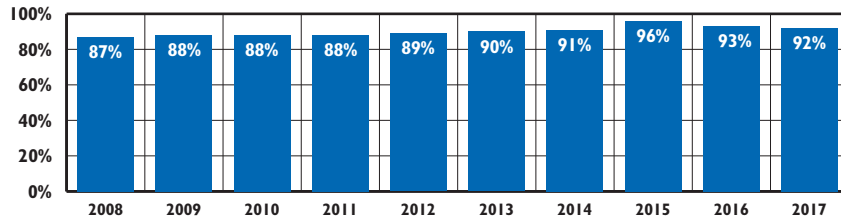


Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support Services, 2008-2017.

- ◆ As of December 1, 2017, there were 73,028 children in Rhode Island's Office of Child Support Services system, including private, interstate, and IV-D cases (i.e., families receiving RI Works, RIte Care, or child-care assistance). Forty-five percent of the children in the Child Support system with a known Rhode Island residence lived in the four core cities. Nearly half (49%) of non-custodial parents under court order in Rhode Island were making child support payments on time and in full.¹¹
- ◆ In 2017, the Rhode Island Office of Child Support Services collected \$94.4 million in child support, an increase of about \$500,000 over the previous year. Eighty-six percent (\$81.5 million) of the funds collected were distributed directly to families and the remainder was retained by the state and federal governments as reimbursement for RI Works, RIte Care, and other expenses.¹²
- ◆ In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2016, the Rhode Island Office of Child Support Services collected \$5.38 for every \$1.00 Rhode Island spent on administering the program.¹³
- ◆ During FFY 2017, there were 17,624 court orders for non-custodial parents to provide medical insurance and 10,611 orders for non-custodial parents to contribute funds toward medical coverage. More than \$5.3 million in payments was retained by the state to offset the cost of RIte Care, and approximately \$2.4 million was disbursed directly to families to offset the cost of private health insurance coverage or other medical expenses.¹⁴
- ◆ In 2017, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a law that allows the Office of Child Support Services to automatically file a motion to modify or a motion for relief when a noncustodial parent is or will be incarcerated for 180 days or more. This law also clarifies that incarceration may not be considered by the court as "voluntary unemployment."¹⁵

Children Receiving Child Support

Rhode Island Children in the Office of Child Support Services System With Paternity Established, 2008-2017



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support Services, 2008-2017. Includes all children in the child support system – private, interstate, and IV-D cases (i.e., cases that received assistance with child support because they were receiving RI Works, RIte Care, or child care assistance benefits).

- ◆ The percentage of children in the Rhode Island child support system with paternity established increased from 87% of children in 2008 to 92% of children in 2017.¹⁶
- ◆ When applying for cash assistance, child care assistance, or RIte Care, parents are asked to provide information on the other parent to the Office of Child Support Services. This information is used to establish paternity (if not already established), and to seek child support payments and/or medical support. Victims of domestic violence can apply for a waiver of this requirement if providing this information could endanger themselves or their children.^{17,18}
- ◆ In FFY 2016, Rhode Island had the lowest rate of court orders established for child support in New England (Maine – 95%; Connecticut – 91%; Vermont – 90%; Massachusetts – 87%; New Hampshire – 81%; Rhode Island – 79%). The national average for cases with child support orders established is 86%.¹⁹ In FFY 2016, Rhode Island had the highest case/staff ratio in New England at 720 cases per person, five times that of the lowest state, Vermont.²⁰ High caseloads and a low number of full time staff affects the Office of Child Support Services’ ability to establish court orders for child support.

References

^{1,13,19,20} U.S. Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children & Families. (2017). *FY 2016 preliminary report*. Retrieved January 23, 2018, from www.acf.hhs.gov

² Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2016). *Table POP-1: Child population: Number of children (in millions) ages 0-17 in the United States by Age, 1950-2016 and projected 2017-2050*. Retrieved January 23, 2018, from www.childstats.gov

(continued on page 176)

Child Support and Rhode Island Works

- ◆ As of December 1, 2017, Rhode Island’s Office of Child Support Services system included 4,723 children enrolled in RI Works.²¹
- ◆ In 2017, the average child support obligation for children enrolled in RI Works was \$281 per month, compared to an average child support obligation of \$396 per month for children in non-RI Works families.²² (Calculations for child support payments are based on both parents’ incomes, so it is expected that the average child support obligation for children enrolled in RI Works would be lower.)
- ◆ In Rhode Island, only the first \$50 of child support paid on time each month on behalf of a child receiving RI Works cash assistance (called a “pass-through” payment) goes to the custodial parent caring for the child. The remainder of the payment is retained by the federal and state governments as reimbursement for assistance received through RI Works.²³
- ◆ In FFY 2017 in Rhode Island, an average of 493 families received at least one “pass-through” payment each month, for a total of \$287,485 paid to families enrolled in RI Works.²⁴
- ◆ States have the option to increase the amount of money passed through to children. States that pass through up to \$100 per month for one child (and up to \$200 per month for two or more children) and disregard this income in calculating eligibility for cash assistance do not have to reimburse the federal government for its share of the child support collected. Since this federal policy change went into effect, a number of states have increased the amount they pass through to children. Rhode Island has not implemented this option.^{25,26}
- ◆ More generous child support “pass-through” policies for families receiving cash assistance provide a greater incentive for custodial parents to seek child support and for noncustodial parents to make regular payments. Increased “pass-throughs” could therefore increase total child support collections and increase family income.²⁷

Children in Poverty

DEFINITION

Children in poverty is the percentage of children under age 18 who are living in households with incomes below the poverty threshold, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty is determined based on income received during the year prior to the Census.

SIGNIFICANCE

Poverty is related to every KIDS COUNT indicator. Children in poverty, especially those who experience poverty in early childhood and for extended periods, are more likely to have physical and behavioral health problems, experience difficulty in school, become teen parents, and earn less or be unemployed as adults.^{1,2,3} Children in poverty are less likely to be enrolled in preschool, more likely to attend schools that lack resources and rigor, and have fewer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.^{4,5,6}

Nationally and in Rhode Island, children of color are more likely to grow up poor than White children. Children under age six, who have single parents, whose parents have low educational levels, or whose parents work part-time or are unemployed are at increased risk of living in poverty.^{7,8}

In 2017, the federal poverty threshold was \$20,780 for a family of three with two children and \$25,100 for a family of four with two children.⁹

The official poverty measure does not reflect the effects of key government policies and programs that support families living in poverty, does not take into account the increased cost of transportation, child care, housing, and medical care, and does not consider geographic variations in the cost of living. To address these limitations, in 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau began releasing a Supplemental Poverty Measure. This measure does not replace the official measure, but provides policy makers with a new way to evaluate the effects of anti-poverty policies.¹⁰

According to the *2016 Rhode Island Standard of Need*, a single-parent family with two children would need to earn \$52,932 a year to meet its basic needs, more than twice the federal poverty level for a family of three. Work supports such as subsidized child care, health coverage (RIte Care), food assistance, and tax credits, can help families with incomes below the federal poverty level meet their basic needs.¹¹

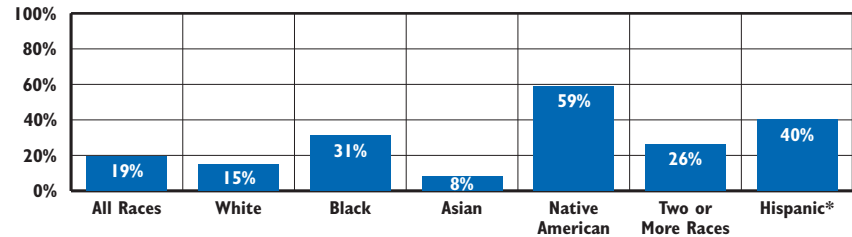
Children in Poverty				
	2013	2014	2015	2016
RI	21.5%	19.8%	19.4%	17.0%
US	22.2%	21.7%	20.7%	19.5%
National Rank*				22nd
New England Rank**				5th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2016. Table R1704.

Children in Poverty, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2012-2016

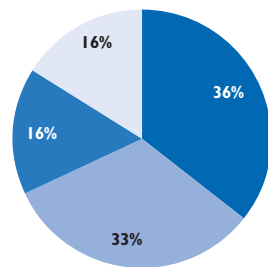


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016. Tables S1701, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020G and B17020I. *Hispanic children may be included in any race category.

- ◆ Between 2012 and 2016, 19% (40,699) of Rhode Island's 209,667 children under age 18 with known poverty status lived in households with incomes below the federal poverty threshold.¹²
- ◆ In Rhode Island as well as in the United States as a whole, Hispanic, Black, and Native American children are more likely than White and Asian children to live in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold.¹³
- ◆ Between 2012 and 2016, over half (56%) of all children living in poverty in Rhode Island were White, 14% were Black, 2% were Asian, 2% were Native American, 18% were Some other race, and 8% were Two or more races. During the same period of time, 59% of Native American, 40% of Hispanic, and 31% of Black children in Rhode Island lived in poverty, compared to 8% of Asian children and 15% of White children.¹⁴
- ◆ Between 2012 and 2016, 48% of Rhode Island's poor children were Hispanic. Hispanic children may be included in any race category. The Census Bureau asks about race separately from ethnicity, and the majority of families who identify as Some other race also identify as Hispanic.¹⁵
- ◆ In 2016, nearly one in five (17%) children in Rhode Island (a total of 35,106 children) lived in poverty.¹⁶

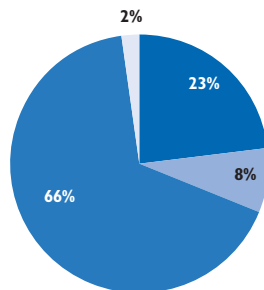
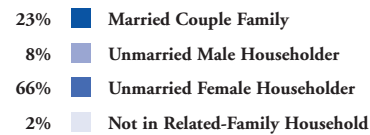
Rhode Island's Poor Children, 2012-2016

By Age



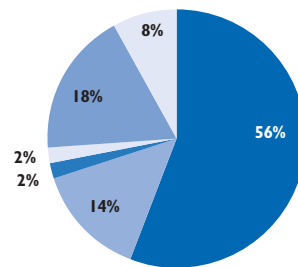
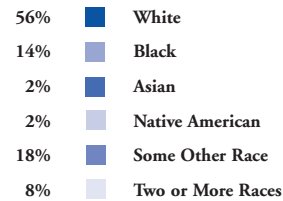
n=40,699

By Family Structure



n=40,699

By Race*



n=40,699

*Hispanic children may be included in any race category. Between 2012 and 2016, 19,356 (48%) of Rhode Island's 40,699 poor children were Hispanic.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012-2016. Tables S1701, B17001, B17006, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020F, B17020G, & B17020I. Population includes children for whom poverty status was determined. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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%
Rhode Island	40,699	19.4%	17,908	8.5%

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

◆ Between 2012 and 2016, almost two-thirds (64%) of Rhode Island's children living in poverty lived in just four cities. These cities, termed core cities, are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket, all communities in which more than one in four children live below poverty (37% between 2012-2016). 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.^{17,18}

Young Children Under Age Six in Poverty, Four Core Cities and Rhode Island, 2012-2016

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER <AGE 6 IN POVERTY	PERCENTAGE <AGE 6 IN POVERTY
Central Falls	1,062	44.9%
Pawtucket	1,858	32.8%
Providence	5,129	37.8%
Woonsocket	1,458	45.0%
Rhode Island	14,639	22.5%

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

◆ Between 2012 and 2016, 22.5% (14,639) of Rhode Island children under age six lived in poverty.¹⁹ Children under age six are at higher risk of living in poverty than any other age group.²⁰ 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.^{21,22}

Children in Poverty

Financial Asset Building

- ◆ Having assets such as bank or credit union accounts provides families with a safe place to store their money and allows families to conduct basic financial transactions, manage financial emergencies related to unemployment or illness, and plan for their future.^{23,24}
- ◆ Many low-income families lack knowledge about or access to traditional banks and instead rely on cash transactions or alternative financial services, such as check-cashing stores, payday lenders, rent-to-own stores, and refund anticipation loans. These families pay high fees for financial transactions and high interest rates on loans, and often struggle to build credit histories and achieve economic security.^{25,26}
- ◆ In Rhode Island in 2015, 5% of households did not have a checking or savings account, compared to 7% for the U.S. as a whole. Nationally, households with incomes less than \$15,000 and households where Spanish is the only language spoken are less likely to have a checking or savings account. These households are more likely to use alternative financial services, such as money orders, cash checking services, or payday lenders.²⁷
- ◆ Raising awareness about the importance of saving and consumer protections, providing financial education and counseling, preventing predatory lending, and connecting families to safe and affordable financial products can support families in using traditional banking institutions and increase their savings.²⁸
- ◆ State and federal policies that protect families from predatory mortgage lending and payday lending and expand access to convenient, cost-effective, and safe financial services would allow families to keep more of their earnings, save and invest more, and could ultimately promote a more stable workforce and stronger communities.^{29,30,31}
- ◆ Many public assistance programs have eligibility provisions that limit the amount of assets and/or the value of vehicles a family can own. Such policies discourage families from saving and building the assets they need to improve their economic security.³²
- ◆ Rhode Island currently has a \$1,000 asset limit to qualify for and retain RI Works cash assistance and is one of only nine states with such a restrictive asset limit. Under Rhode Island law, the value of one vehicle for each adult household member (not to exceed two vehicles per household) does not count toward the family's asset limit.^{33,34}

Building Blocks of Economic Security

Income Supports

- ◆ The Supplemental Poverty Measure shows the positive impact of government programs, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Social Security, SNAP, and housing subsidies. These programs keep millions of children out of poverty.³⁵

Health Coverage and Access to Care

- ◆ Low-income people are the most likely to be uninsured; some because of job loss, some are ineligible for coverage through their employers because they work part-time, and others cannot afford the cost.³⁶ Children with health insurance (public or private) are more likely to have a regular and accessible source of health care than uninsured children.³⁷

Affordable Quality Child Care

- ◆ In Rhode Island in 2015, the average cost of center-based child care for one infant was \$12,091.³⁸ Child care subsidies can help poor families afford the cost of high-quality child care, which can help parents maintain employment and support children's development.³⁹

Educational Attainment

- ◆ Fifty-four percent of Rhode Island children whose parents lack a high school diploma and 32% of children whose parents have only a high school diploma live in poverty.⁴⁰ By 2020, 71% of all jobs in Rhode Island will require postsecondary training beyond high school.⁴¹

Affordable Housing

- ◆ In 2017, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island was \$1,385.⁴² In Rhode Island, a family of three with an income at the federal poverty level would need to spend 81% of its income on rent to pay this amount, well above the recommended percentage of 30%.^{43,44} Nationally, only one in four eligible low-income families receive rental assistance to help them afford the high cost of housing.⁴⁵

Child Support

- ◆ As of December 1, 2017, there were 73,028 children in Rhode Island's Office of Child Support Services system.⁴⁶ Child support helps reduce poverty. Custodial parents who receive steady child support payments are less likely to rely on public assistance and more likely to find work faster and stay employed longer than those who do not.⁴⁷ Among poor custodial parents that received full child support in 2015 in the U.S., these payments represented 58% of their mean personal income.⁴⁸

Table 10. Children Living Below the Federal Poverty Threshold, Rhode Island, 2000 and 2012-2016

CITY/TOWN	CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING BELOW POVERTY 2012-2016					
	CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING BELOW POVERTY, 2000		ESTIMATES WITH HIGH MARGINS OF ERROR*		ESTIMATES WITH LOWER, ACCEPTABLE MARGINS OF ERROR	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Barrington	127	2.7%			43	1.0%
Bristol	436	10.0%			249	7.6%
Burrillville	236	6.0%	493	15.1%		
Central Falls	2,210	40.9%	2,364	41.6%		
Charlestown	78	4.7%	187	13.3%		
Coventry	481	5.9%			741	11.1%
Cranston	1,496	9.1%			2,475	15.9%
Cumberland	237	3.1%			738	10.6%
East Greenwich	147	4.1%			55	1.6%
East Providence	1,126	10.8%			1,156	12.8%
Exeter	112	7.5%	118	10.2%		
Foster	32	2.9%	41	5.3%		
Glocester	178	6.7%			86	4.5%
Hopkinton	115	5.9%	104	6.9%		
Jamestown	17	1.4%	138	13.8%		
Johnston	527	9.0%			623	12.0%
Lincoln	329	6.5%			652	13.3%
Little Compton	8	1.0%	54	9.6%		
Middletown	264	6.2%			414	11.3%
Narragansett	235	8.6%			30	1.5%
New Shoreham	19	10.2%	20	22.2%		
Newport	1,267	24.4%			612	17.4%
North Kingstown	663	9.7%			622	10.6%
North Providence	579	10.1%			568	10.8%
North Smithfield	72	3.0%			46	2.0%
Pawtucket	4,542	25.3%			4,859	30.7%
Portsmouth	118	2.8%			144	4.1%
Providence	18,045	40.5%			15,068	37.5%
Richmond	82	4.2%			65	4.0%
Scituate	113	4.3%	231	11.8%		
Smithfield	153	3.9%			39	1.1%
South Kingstown	324	5.3%			450	9.6%
Tiverton	92	2.8%			298	10.7%
Warren	205	8.4%	327	17.8%		
Warwick	1,243	6.7%			900	6.2%
West Greenwich	40	2.7%	-	-	-	-
West Warwick	1,186	18.1%	1,191	22.2%		
Westerly	534	10.0%	824	19.6%		
Woonsocket	3,494	31.8%			3,674	41.1%
Four Core Cities	28,291	35.9%			25,965	36.7%
Remainder of State	12,871	7.8%			14,734	10.6%
Rhode Island	41,162	16.9%			40,699	19.4%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3, P87 and PCT.50 and Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2012-2016 American Community Survey data. The data include the poverty rate for all children for whom poverty was determined, including "related" children and "unrelated children" living in the household.

The American Community Survey is a sample survey, and therefore the number and percentage of children living in poverty provided are estimates, not actual counts. The reliability of these estimates varies by community. In general, 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.

*The Margin of Error around the percentage is greater than or equal to five percentage points.

The Margin of Error is a measure of the reliability of the estimate and is provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Margin of Error means that there is a 90 percent chance that the true value is no less than the estimate minus the Margin of Error and no more than the estimate plus the Margin of Error. (See the Methodology Section for Margins of Errors for all communities.)

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

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(continued on page 176)

Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

DEFINITION

Children in families receiving cash assistance is the percentage of children under age 18 who were living in families receiving cash assistance through the Rhode Island Works Program (RI Works). These data measure the number of children and families enrolled in RI Works during the month of December. Children and families who participated in the program at other points in the year but who were not enrolled in that month are not included.

SIGNIFICANCE

The goal of RI Works is to help very low-income families meet their basic needs by providing cash assistance and work supports, including employment services, SNAP benefits, health insurance, and subsidized child care. Children and families qualify for cash assistance based on their income, resources, and the number of people in their families.¹

RI Works cash assistance recipients must participate in an employment plan unless they meet specific criteria for an exemption. This employment plan must take into account the parent's skills, education, and family responsibilities as well as local employment opportunities and should outline a process for helping the parent meet his or her employment goals. Parents should be informed about opportunities to seek additional

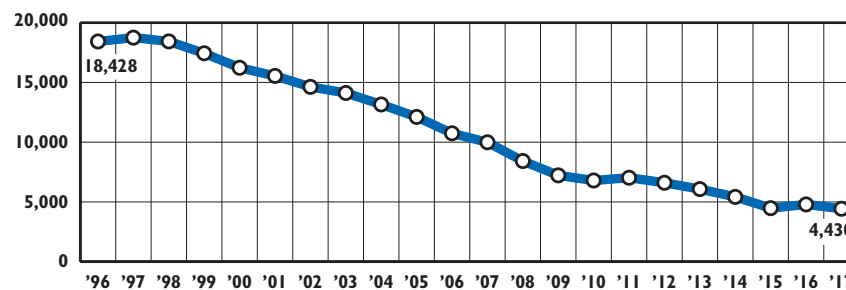
education or training to improve their employability prospects.²

RI Works provides a safety net for some children whose parents are unable to work due to a disability and can function as an unemployment system for parents who do not have sufficient earnings or work experience to qualify for unemployment benefits. RI Works also provides time-limited supplementary cash assistance to very low-income working families.³ In December 2017, the average hourly wage of working parents enrolled in RI Works was \$11.16 per hour.⁴

RI Works connects families to the Office of Child Support Services, which assists families in establishing paternity (when applicable), identifying and locating non-custodial parents, and obtaining child support payments from non-custodial parents.⁵ In Rhode Island, the first \$50 of child support paid on time each month on behalf of a child enrolled in RI Works goes to the custodial parent caring for the child. The balance is kept by the state and federal governments as reimbursement for assistance received through RI Works.^{6,7}

The maximum monthly RI Works benefit for a family of three is \$554 per month.⁸ Families receiving the maximum monthly cash benefit have incomes that are less than one-half the federal poverty level and are living in extreme poverty.⁹

Cash Assistance Caseload, Rhode Island, 1996–2017*



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.

- ◆ 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.¹⁰
- ◆ The RI Works caseload declined due to policies implemented in 2008, when the program changed from the Family Independence Program (FIP) to RI Works. These policies included new time limits (a 48-month lifetime limit for benefits and a periodic time limit that limits assistance to no more than 24 months of assistance in any 60-month period), closing child-only cases when parents reach their time limit, and limiting eligibility for legal permanent residents to those who have had that status for five years.¹¹
- ◆ In December 2017, there were 2,943 adults and 7,593 children under age 18 enrolled in RI Works. Almost three-quarters (72%) of RI Works beneficiaries were children, and 43% of the children enrolled in RI Works were under the age of six.¹²
- ◆ In December 2017, 55% of RI Works cases were single-parent families, 41% were child-only cases, and 4% were two-parent families.¹³
- ◆ High unemployment rates for adults with limited education, coupled with shorter time limits for cash assistance, leaves many families with children experiencing deep poverty, hardship, and homelessness. In 2016, 15,755 children in Rhode Island lived in extreme poverty, yet only 8,960 children received cash assistance in December 2016.^{14,15}

Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

RI Works Policies

Work Requirements

◆ Single-parent families must participate in a work activity for a minimum of 20 hours per week if they have a child under age six and a minimum of 30 hours per week if their youngest child is age six or older. For two-parent families, one or both parents must participate in work activities for an individual or combined total of 35 hours per week.¹⁶

Time Limits

◆ The lifetime limit for RI Works is 48 months. Families also are limited to no more than 24 months of cash assistance in a 60-month period. All cash assistance issued in Rhode Island or any other state since May 1, 1997 counts toward the lifetime limit, while assistance received since July 1, 2008 counts toward the 24-month periodic time limit.¹⁷

Hardship Extensions

◆ Families can apply for hardship extensions that allow them to continue receiving cash assistance after reaching the time limit if the parent has a documented significant disability, is caring for a significantly disabled family member, is unable to pursue employment due to domestic violence, is homeless, or is unable to work because of “a critical other condition or circumstance.” While parents must submit requests for hardship extensions (initially for six months, and then for three-month extensions), there is no limit on the total time a family can receive a hardship extension.^{18,19}

Child-Only Cases

◆ Child-only cases are those that receive assistance for only the children in the family because the child’s parent is ineligible. Child-only cases include children living with a non-parent or a parent who is disabled and receiving Supplemental Security Income.²⁰

Sanctions

◆ If a parent misses a required appointment, refuses or quits a job, or in some other way fails to comply with an employment plan and is not able to establish “good cause” (e.g., lack of child care, illness, a family crisis or other allowed circumstance), the family’s cash benefit is reduced. If benefits are reduced for a total of three months (consecutive or not) due to non-compliance, the family’s case is closed and the entire family loses the RI Works benefit. Benefits can be restored in the month after the parent reapplies and comes into compliance.²¹

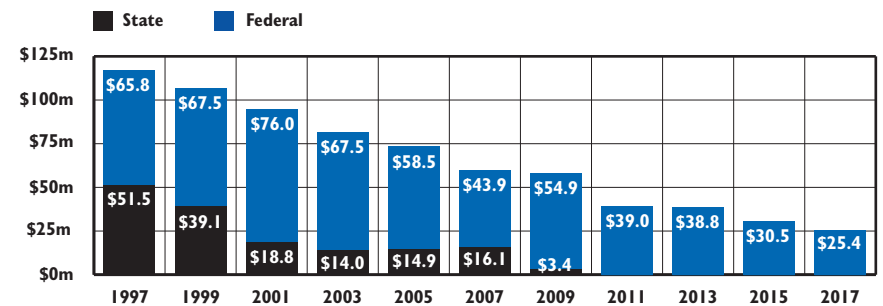
RI Works by Case Type, 2017

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Child-only cases	1,807	41%
Cases with adults with a work activity	1,397	32%
Cases with adults exempt from a work activity*	885	20%
Unknown status	341	8%
Total RI Works Caseload	4,430	

Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, RI Bridges Database, 2017.

*RI Works regulations require that all parents and caretaker relatives included in the cash assistance grant participate in a work activity unless they receive a temporary exemption. Exemptions from work activities include: youngest child under age one (188), in third trimester of pregnancy (88), caring for a disabled spouse or child (4), being a victim of domestic violence (9), illness or incapacity (495), or second parent is a non-participant (82). Nineteen parents had multiple reasons for exemptions. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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.

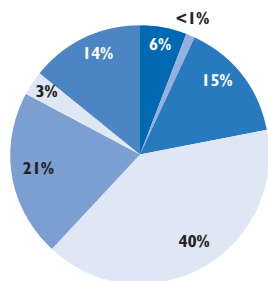
◆ In State Fiscal Year 2017, for the eighth year in a row, no state general revenue was allocated for cash assistance. State general revenue spending for cash assistance has decreased steadily over the past 20 years. The cash assistance program is now entirely supported by federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds. The total expenditures for cash assistance in Rhode Island (federal and state) decreased by 80% between 1996 (when the program began) and 2017, from \$126.5 million to \$25.4 million.^{22,23}

Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

Activities of Families Enrolled in the RI Works Program, December 2017

By Type of Activity

6% (89)	Employed
<1% (6)	Work Experience
15% (215)	Education/Training
40% (557)	Job Search
21% (290)	Job Readiness
3% (42)	Youth Success
14% (198)	Multiple Activities



n = 1,397

Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, RI Bridges Database, December 2017. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

◆ As of December 2017, 6% of families with work activities were employed, down from 28% in December 2008. Less than 1% were in unpaid work experience.^{24,25} Work experience can help parents gain new skills, knowledge, and work habits to improve their employability.²⁶

◆ Parents with limited training and skills can participate in basic education and work skills programs. Parents also can receive up to one year of vocational education as part of their 48-month lifetime limit.²⁷ As of December 2017, 15% of families were participating in education or training programs.²⁸

◆ More than one-third (40%) of families with a work activity were participating in job search activities, including job search and job skills development programs delivered in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, primarily through their netWORKri one-stop career center locations. Another 21% were participating in job readiness activities, including vocational rehabilitation services delivered by the Office of Rehabilitation Services, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and housing and homelessness services needed to address barriers to employment.^{29,30}

◆ An additional 3% of families were in the Youth Success Program, a program for young parents, and 14% of families were in multiple activities.³¹

Support for Young Parents

◆ A child is nine times more likely to grow up in poverty if that child's mother gave birth as a teen, the parents were unmarried when the child was born, and the mother did not receive a high school diploma or GED.³²

◆ RI Works provides additional support to young parents. Parents who are under age 20 and do not have a high school diploma or GED are required to receive parenting skills training and are supported in completing their high school education while enrolled in RI Works. In addition, pregnant or parenting teens under age 18 are required to live with their parent, legal guardian, or adult relative or in an adult-supervised setting.³³

◆ In December 2017, there were 104 families with a head of household under the age of 20 enrolled in RI Works, representing 2% of the total caseload.³⁴

Support for Individuals with Disabilities and Their Families

◆ Nationally, 10% of adult cash assistance recipients have a severe disability and require help with self-care or routine activities, and a much larger percentage (about 40%) have an emotional, cognitive, sensory, or cognitive disability that may be a barrier to employment.³⁵

◆ Under RI Works, parents with disabilities may be exempt from work requirements only if they are receiving or are eligible for SSI or SSDI. Other parents with disabilities are referred to the Office of Rehabilitation Services for further assessment, vocational rehabilitation services, and help applying for SSI, or to substance abuse or mental health treatment, as appropriate.³⁶

◆ As of December 2017, 582 families (or 13% of the total RI Works caseload) had hardship extensions, 18 for a physical or mental disability, three who were unable to work due to a domestic violence situation, one due to homelessness, and 560 because of economic hardship or another critical condition or circumstance.³⁷ Nationally, many families leave cash assistance not because they find work, but because they reach their time limit or are sanctioned. These families often have barriers to employment, such as a mental or physical impairment, or a child with a disability.³⁸

Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

Table 11. Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance (RI Works), Rhode Island, December 2017

CITY/TOWN	# OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18	NUMBER RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE		% OF CHILDREN RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE
		FAMILIES	CHILDREN	
Barrington	4,597	5	6	<1%
Bristol	3,623	30	63	2%
Burrillville	3,576	17	26	1%
Central Falls	5,644	248	453	8%
Charlestown	1,506	4	4	<1%
Coventry	7,770	39	51	1%
Cranston	16,414	198	290	2%
Cumberland	7,535	46	79	1%
East Greenwich	3,436	14	20	1%
East Providence	9,177	104	160	2%
Exeter	1,334	3	6	<1%
Foster	986	3	3	<1%
Glocester	2,098	6	12	1%
Hopkinton	1,845	8	13	1%
Jamestown	1,043	5	10	1%
Johnston	5,480	81	144	3%
Lincoln	4,751	49	87	2%
Little Compton	654	5	5	1%
Middletown	3,652	34	62	2%
Narragansett	2,269	8	11	<1%
New Shoreham	163	0	0	0%
Newport	4,083	144	266	7%
North Kingstown	6,322	46	88	1%
North Providence	5,514	68	117	2%
North Smithfield	2,456	8	11	<1%
Pawtucket	16,575	419	707	4%
Portsmouth	3,996	15	20	1%
Providence	41,634	1,862	3,371	8%
Richmond	1,849	6	7	<1%
Scituate	2,272	7	10	<1%
Smithfield	3,625	15	19	1%
South Kingstown	5,416	27	46	1%
Tiverton	2,998	33	44	1%
Warren	1,940	18	24	1%
Warwick	15,825	173	247	2%
West Greenwich	1,477	2	3	<1%
West Warwick	5,746	127	191	3%
Westerly	4,787	27	39	1%
Woonsocket	9,888	513	849	9%
Other/Unknown	NA	13	29	NA
Four Core Cities	73,741	3,042	5,380	7%
Remainder of State	150,215	1,375	2,184	1%
Rhode Island	223,956	4,430	7,593	3%

Education and Training Supporting Employment

◆ An estimated 150,000 working-age adults (ages 16 or older) in Rhode Island 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.³⁹

◆ By 2020, 71% of jobs in Rhode Island will require post-secondary education beyond high school.⁴⁰ Between 2012 and 2016, the unemployment rate for Rhode Islanders without high school diplomas was 13%, compared to 10% for those with high school degrees and 3% for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.⁴¹

◆ Parents enrolled in RI Works face significant barriers to success in the labor market. Thirty percent of parents enrolled in RI Works report not finishing high school.⁴² Among a recently tested group of parents receiving cash assistance, more than one-third (38%) of those tested in English tested at or below the sixth-grade reading level, while almost two-thirds (62%) of native Spanish speakers enrolled in RI Works tested at or below the sixth-grade reading level on a Spanish-language version of the test.⁴³

◆ Research comparing mandatory job-search-first and mandatory education-or-training-first programs has found that the most effective approach is a mixed strategy where beneficiaries are encouraged to look for and take full-time jobs that pay above the minimum wage, offer benefits, have the potential for advancement, and also are offered high-quality, work-focused, and short-term education or training to improve their employability.⁴⁴ States should explore how to meet their work participation rate while offering beneficiaries a chance to improve job skills and long-term work preparedness.⁴⁵

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Human Services, RI Bridges Database, December 2017. The Rhode Island Department of Human Services changed the method for calculating the caseload and persons receiving cash assistance starting in the 2012 Factbook. Comparisons to data presented in previous Factbooks should be made with caution.

The denominator is the total number of children under age 18 from U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, Summary File 1.

Communities may have more families than children receiving cash assistance because a pregnant woman without children is eligible if she is in the final trimester of her pregnancy.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

^{1,2,3,5,8,16,17,18,20,21,26,30,33,36} Rhode Island Department of Human Services. (2016). *Rhode Island Department of Human Services code of rules: RI Works program (Sections 1400 through 1436)*. Retrieved February 13, 2018, from www.dhs.ri.gov

(continued on page 177)

Children Receiving SNAP Benefits

DEFINITION

Children receiving SNAP benefits is the number of children under age 18 who participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in October 2017.

SIGNIFICANCE

Hunger and lack of regular access to sufficient food are linked to serious physical, psychological, emotional, and academic problems in children and can interfere with their growth and development.¹² The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program, helps low-income individuals and families obtain better nutrition through monthly benefits they can use to purchase food at retail stores and some farmers' markets.³ Child food insecurity has been shown to decrease by almost one-third after their families have received SNAP benefits for six months.⁴

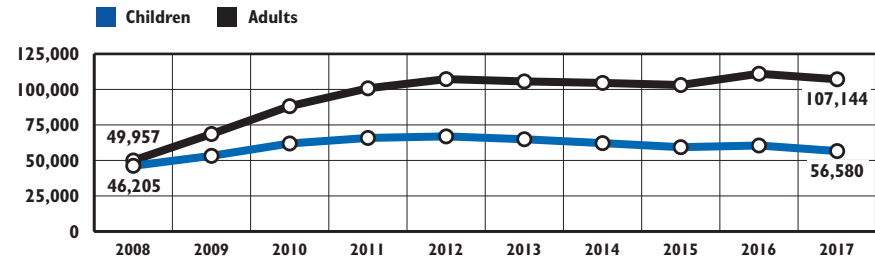
Nationally, SNAP is available to households with gross monthly incomes below 130% of the federal poverty level, (\$26,546 for a family of three in 2017) net monthly incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level, and no more than \$2,250 in resources.⁵ In 2009, Rhode Island implemented expanded categorical eligibility, an option encouraged by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, allowing the state to increase the gross income limit and

remove the resource limit for most applicants.⁶⁷ The gross monthly income limit for Rhode Island is now 185% of the federal poverty level (\$37,777 for a family of three in 2017).^{8,9} Households must still meet the net monthly income limit of 100% of the federal poverty level after allowable deductions, which include deductions for housing costs and child care.¹⁰

SNAP is an important anti-hunger program that helps individuals and families purchase food when they have limited income, face unemployment or reduced work hours, or experience a crisis.¹¹ 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).^{12,13} In October 2017, the average monthly SNAP benefit for a family of three in Rhode Island was \$379.¹⁴

Participation in SNAP has been associated with improvement in current and long-term health outcomes among low-income or food insecure children.¹⁵ SNAP also is effective in reducing poverty. Nationally in 2015, SNAP reduced poverty 20.9% for non-Hispanic Blacks, 17.6% for Hispanics, 15.5% for non-Hispanic Whites, and 21.3% for working families.¹⁶ In addition, SNAP is a quick and effective form of economic stimulus because it moves money directly into the local economy.¹⁷

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.

- ◆ Of the 163,724 Rhode Islanders enrolled in SNAP in October 2017, 65% were adults and 35% were children. Of the children enrolled in SNAP, 34% were under the age of six.¹⁸
- ◆ 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.^{19,20}

Food Insecurity in Rhode Island

- ◆ The USDA defines food insecurity as not always having access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Between 2014 and 2016, 12.8% of Rhode Island households and 13.0% of U.S. households were food insecure. In 2016, 16.5% of all U.S. households with children were food insecure, while 43.8% of U.S. households with children with incomes below the poverty level experienced food insecurity.²¹
- ◆ Federal nutrition programs provide assistance to children and families through SNAP, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch Program, the National School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.²² In 2017, food pantries and soup kitchens provided emergency food assistance to more than 57,000 Rhode Islanders each month who needed additional help to meet their nutritional needs.²³

Children Receiving SNAP Benefits

Table 12. Children Under Age 18 Receiving SNAP Benefits, Rhode Island, October 2017

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER PARTICIPATING
Barrington	96
Bristol	413
Burrillville	384
Central Falls	3,171
Charlestown	154
Coventry	913
Cranston	3,057
Cumberland	699
East Greenwich	180
East Providence	1,709
Exeter	92
Foster	86
Glocester	111
Hopkinton	183
Jamestown	41
Johnston	1,023
Lincoln	608
Little Compton	40
Middletown	449
Narragansett	193
New Shoreham	7
Newport	1,367
North Kingstown	825
North Providence	1,080
North Smithfield	190
Pawtucket	6,393
Portsmouth	242
Providence	21,355
Richmond	97
Scituate	151
Smithfield	187
South Kingstown	543
Tiverton	377
Warren	285
Warwick	2,391
West Greenwich	62
West Warwick	1,691
Westerly	776
Woonsocket	4,803
Unknown	156
Four Core Cities	35,722
Remainder of State	20,702
Rhode Island	56,580

Increasing Access to SNAP Benefits

◆ The transition to the RI Bridges/UHIP computer system caused backlogs in applications for SNAP and other benefits. While the state has made progress in reducing the backlog, there are still issues to address to ensure that applications for SNAP benefits are processed in a timely manner, including staffing and technical issues with the computer system.²⁴

◆ Rhode Island could increase access to SNAP benefits for children and families by ensuring adequate staffing in field offices, reducing wait times, reducing documentation requirements, simplifying renewal processes, improving communications with clients and community partners, providing additional staff training, and seeking recommendations for system improvements from line staff.^{25,26}

Note to Table

In 2008, the Food Stamp Program was renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) data are from the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, RI Bridges Database, October 2017.

Due to changes in the availability of data, we report participation for the entire month of October, rather than October 1 in this Factbook. Due to this change in methodology, *Children Receiving SNAP Benefits* cannot be compared with Factbooks prior to 2016.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

References

- ¹ *Food insecurity: Indicators of child and youth well-being.* (2016). Washington, DC: Child Trends.
- ^{2,4,15} Carlson, S. & Keith-Jennings, B. (2018). *SNAP is linked with improved nutritional outcomes and lower health care costs.* Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
- ³ Food Research and Action Center. (2017). *FRAC facts: SNAP strengths.* Retrieved February 23, 2018, from www.frac.org
- ^{5,10} U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2018). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Am I eligible for SNAP?* Retrieved February 14, 2018, from www.fns.usda.gov
- ⁶ *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) 2009-2012 accomplishments.* (n.d.). Cranston, RI: Rhode Island Department of Human Services.
- ⁷ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2009). *Improving access to SNAP through broad-based categorical eligibility. Memorandum to regional administrators.* Retrieved February 20, 2018, from www.fns.usda.gov
- ⁸ Rhode Island Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *SNAP eligibility.* Retrieved February 14, 2018, from www.dhs.ri.gov
- ^{9,13} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2017). Annual update of the HHS poverty guidelines. *Federal Register*, 82(19), 8831-8832.

(continued on page 177)

Women and Children Participating in WIC

DEFINITION

Women and children participating in WIC is the percentage of eligible women, infants, and children enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

SIGNIFICANCE

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a federally-funded preventive program that provides participants with nutritious food, nutrition education, and access to health care and social services. WIC serves pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under five years of age living in households with incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level (\$37,777 per year for a family of three in 2017). Any individual who participates in SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program), Rte Care, Medicaid, or Rhode Island Works is automatically income-eligible for WIC. Participants must also have a specified nutritional risk, such as anemia, high-risk pregnancy, or abnormal growth, or be in need of supplemental food to qualify.^{1,2}

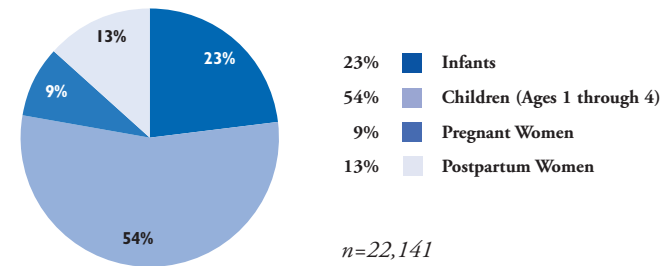
Compared to children who receive WIC benefits, young children who are eligible for WIC but not participating are more likely to be in poor health, at risk for developmental delays,

underweight, short for their age, and/or experience food insecurity (i.e., live in families that do not always have enough food for an active healthy life).³ Food insecurity in early childhood can lead to impaired cognitive, behavioral, and psychosocial development, and can limit academic achievement.⁴ Pregnant women also have special nutritional needs that influence pregnancy outcomes and the health of their children.⁵

WIC participation has been shown to reduce infant mortality, improve birth outcomes (including reducing the likelihood of low birthweight and prematurity), enhance maternal and child dietary intake, reduce risk of child abuse and neglect, improve child growth rates, boost cognitive development, and increase the likelihood of having a regular source of medical care.^{6,7}

Revisions made in 2014 to the WIC food package have increased access to a wider variety of nutritious foods and strengthened breastfeeding support.⁸ WIC consistently promotes breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding.⁹ In Rhode Island in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2017, 78% of mothers participating in WIC initiated breastfeeding. Seventeen percent of infants participating in WIC were breastfed at three months of age, and 14% were breastfed at six months of age.¹⁰

Women, Infants, and Children Enrolled in WIC, Rhode Island, September 2017



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, WIC Program, September 2017. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

- ◆ **Infants and children ages one through four comprised more than three-quarters (77%) of the population being served by WIC in September 2017 in Rhode Island. Women accounted for over one-fifth (9% pregnant and 13% postpartum) of the population being served.**¹¹
- ◆ **In September 2017, 70% of WIC participants in Rhode Island were White, 16% were Black or African-American, 3% were Asian, and 11% identified as other races or more than one race. Fifty-one percent of WIC participants identified as Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics are included in the racial groups above.**¹²
- ◆ **Three of the four core cities – Central Falls (60%), Providence (60%), and Woonsocket (59%) – had WIC participation rates exceeding the statewide enrollment rate of 50% in 2017. The enrollment rate for Pawtucket was the same as the statewide rate of 50%.**¹³
- ◆ **WIC is not an entitlement program. Congress determines funding annually, and WIC is not funded at a level that is sufficient to serve all eligible women and children.**¹⁴ Rhode Island received \$22.9 million in federal WIC funding during FFY 2017, which was less than the \$23.3 million in funding for FFY 2016.¹⁵
- ◆ **The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) improves participants' intake of fresh fruits and vegetables by enabling participants to purchase produce at authorized local farmers' markets using WIC benefits.**¹⁶ In Rhode Island, 31 farmers' markets provided fresh produce to 12,371 WIC participants through the FMNP in FFY 2017.¹⁷

Women and Children Participating in WIC

Table 13.

Women, Infants, and Children Enrolled in WIC, September 2017

CITY/TOWN	ESTIMATED NUMBER ELIGIBLE	NUMBER ENROLLED	% OF ELIGIBLE ENROLLED
Barrington	128	34	27%
Bristol	420	176	42%
Burrillville	437	155	35%
Central Falls	2,036	1,227	60%
Charlestown	161	63	39%
Coventry	773	365	47%
Cranston	2,766	1,447	52%
Cumberland	662	222	34%
East Greenwich	180	46	26%
East Providence	1,616	696	43%
Exeter	125	40	32%
Foster	106	35	33%
Glocester	178	45	25%
Hopkinton	219	51	23%
Jamestown	35	8	23%
Johnston	952	435	46%
Lincoln	536	130	24%
Little Compton	42	10	24%
Middletown	397	173	44%
Narragansett	157	47	30%
New Shoreham	39	5	13%
Newport	883	437	49%
North Kingstown	611	195	32%
North Providence	1,091	477	44%
North Smithfield	214	71	33%
Pawtucket	5,051	2,532	50%
Portsmouth	252	77	31%
Providence	14,409	8,673	60%
Richmond	88	75	85%
Scituate	186	43	23%
Smithfield	297	92	31%
South Kingstown	527	162	31%
Tiverton	342	136	40%
Warren	310	118	38%
Warwick	2,215	868	39%
West Greenwich	125	33	26%
West Warwick	1,413	625	44%
Westerly	729	242	33%
Woonsocket	3,188	1,875	59%
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	<i>24,684</i>	<i>14,307</i>	<i>58%</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>19,212</i>	<i>7,834</i>	<i>41%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>43,896</i>	<i>22,141</i>	<i>50%</i>

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, WIC Program, September 2017.

Note: WIC participation rates in this Factbook can be compared to all Factbooks, with the exception of the 2011 Factbook, which used a July rather than September 30 reference date. Additionally, since 2007, the “estimated number eligible” is based on calculations done by the Rhode Island Department of Health to determine the number of pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under age five who live in families with an income less than 185% of the federal poverty level. In previous years, the “estimated number eligible” was based on 2000 Census data (2005 and 2006 Factbooks) and 1990 Census data (all Factbooks prior to 2005).

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

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Children Participating in School Breakfast

DEFINITION

Children participating in school breakfast is the percentage of low-income children who participate in the School Breakfast Program. Children are counted as low-income if they are eligible for and enrolled in the Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program.

SIGNIFICANCE

The School Breakfast Program helps ensure that the nation's most vulnerable children start their day off with a healthy meal. During the 2016-2017 school year, 12.2 million low-income children in the U.S. participating in the School Breakfast Program ate breakfast at school each day, continuing a pattern of steady year-over-year growth in student participation over the past decade.¹ The School Breakfast Program offers nutritious meals, which together with school lunches, make up a large proportion of the daily dietary intake of participating children.² The School Breakfast Program helps schools support academic success and improved attendance, behavior and health, including reduced obesity rates.³

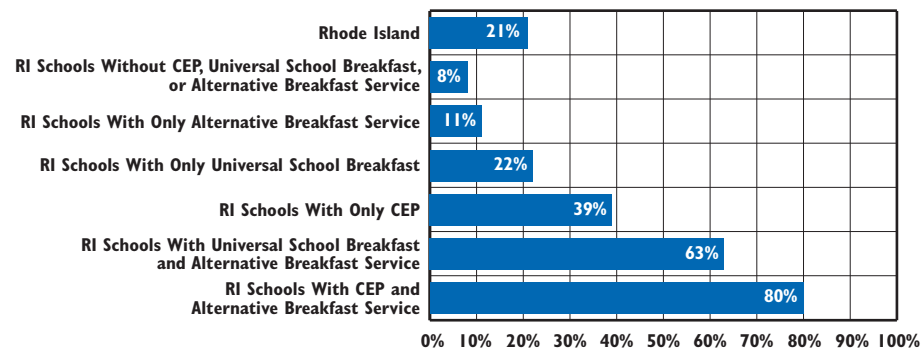
Food-insecure families often do not have sufficient food to provide nutritious breakfasts every morning, and children in these families are at risk of falling behind their peers physically, cognitively, academically, emotionally, and socially. Children who are

undernourished are more likely to have poorer cognitive functioning when they miss breakfast. They are more likely to have behavior, emotional, and academic problems, more likely to repeat a grade, and more likely to be suspended.^{4,5} Nationally, kindergarteners in households experiencing food insecurity are more likely to be chronically absent than their peers in food-secure households.⁶

Rhode Island law requires that all public schools make breakfasts and lunches available to all students, including students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on their income (less than 130% of the federal poverty level for free meals and between 130% and 185% of the federal poverty level for reduced-price meals).^{7,8}

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 who participated in the School Lunch Program. Rhode Island ranks 31st in the U.S. for participation in the School Breakfast Program, up from 33rd last year. If Rhode Island increased low-income student participation in the School Breakfast Program to 70% of School Lunch Program participation, the state would receive \$2.6 million in additional federal funds to support the School Breakfast Program.⁹

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.¹⁰ During the 2017-2018 school year, Central Falls School District, all elementary schools in Providence Public School District, Highlander Charter School, and the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center were using CEP.¹¹**
- ◆ **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.^{12,13} During the 2017-2018 school year, all schools in Cranston and Woonsocket, selected schools in five other districts, eleven charter schools, and the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program offered universal school breakfast.¹⁴**
- ◆ **Making breakfast part of the school day is another proven strategy for increasing breakfast participation, reducing stigma, and increasing convenience. In fact some states are adopting legislation requiring schools to offer “breakfast after the bell.”^{15,16} During the 2017-2018 school year, several Rhode Island school districts offered alternative breakfast service, including breakfast in the classroom, “grab and go” breakfasts, bagged breakfasts, or breakfast on a cart in all or some of their schools.¹⁷**

Children Participating in School Breakfast

Table 14.

Children Participating in School Breakfast, Rhode Island, October 2017

SCHOOL DISTRICT	OCTOBER 2017 ENROLLMENT	ESTIMATED AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN BREAKFAST	% OF ALL CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN BREAKFAST	# OF LOW-INCOME STUDENTS	ESTIMATED LOW-INCOME AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN BREAKFAST	% OF ALL LOW-INCOME CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL BREAKFAST
Barrington	3,378	57	2%	186	18	10%
Bristol Warren	3,356	335	10%	1,135	217	19%
Burrillville	2,392	115	5%	791	82	10%
Central Falls	2,728	1,428	52%	NA	NA	NA
Charlho	3,377	180	5%	703	118	17%
Coventry	4,967	407	8%	1,487	314	21%
Cranston	11,340	2,707	24%	4,554	1,643	36%
Cumberland	4,689	438	9%	1,116	301	27%
East Greenwich	2,541	45	2%	156	27	17%
East Providence	6,061	1,124	19%	3,124	821	26%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,660	90	5%	265	51	19%
Foster	264	43	16%	59	38	64%
Foster-Glocester	1,323	88	7%	258	50	20%
Glocester	551	48	9%	83	26	32%
Jamestown	499	19	4%	54	9	17%
Johnston	3,645	331	9%	1,587	272	17%
Lincoln	3,265	120	4%	888	123	14%
Little Compton	330	*	<1%	52	*	2%
Middletown	2,198	149	7%	679	114	17%
Narragansett	1,322	63	5%	306	37	12%
New Shoreham	124	17	14%	22	10	46%
Newport	2,513	539	21%	1,427	415	29%
North Kingstown	4,156	280	7%	898	209	23%
North Providence	3,929	692	18%	1,703	411	24%
North Smithfield	1,727	77	4%	361	43	12%
Pawtucket	9,766	2,197	22%	6,716	1,659	25%
Portsmouth	2,498	92	4%	423	58	14%
Providence	26,570	12,339	46%	NA	NA	NA
Scituate	1,290	22	2%	224	14	6%
Smithfield	2,674	113	4%	416	59	14%
South Kingstown	3,237	198	6%	637	162	25%
Tiverton	1,958	105	5%	548	79	14%
Warwick	9,464	722	8%	3,391	561	17%
West Warwick	3,991	560	14%	1,991	453	23%
Westerly	2,781	339	12%	1,061	270	25%
Woonsocket	6,496	2,196	34%	4,641	1,770	38%
<i>Charter Schools</i>	<i>8,164</i>	<i>3,038</i>	<i>37%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>State-Operated Schools</i>	<i>1,818</i>	<i>461</i>	<i>25%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>UCAP</i>	<i>205</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>56%</i>
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	<i>45,560</i>	<i>18,160</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>97,500</i>	<i>10,117</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>30,585</i>	<i>7,007</i>	<i>23%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>153,247</i>	<i>31,878</i>	<i>21%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, October 2017.

NA indicates that data on low-income students and their participation in school breakfast was not available because some or all schools in this district were using the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and therefore not collecting data on the incomes of students' families.

*Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These students are still counted in district totals and in the four core cities, remainder of the state, and state totals.

Charter schools include: Achievement First Rhode Island, Beacon Charter High School for the Arts, Blackstone Academy, Blackstone Valley Prep, The Compass School, Paul Cuffee Charter School, The Greene School, Highlander Charter School, Hope Academy, International Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, The Learning Community, RI Nurses Institute Middle College Charter School, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy, Segue Institute for Learning, Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy, South Side Elementary Charter School, Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, and The Village Green Virtual Charter School. State-operated schools include William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School, the Rhode Island School for the Deaf, and Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center. UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

The October 2017 enrollment and number of low-income students are for the full month of October and are not comparable with the October 1, 2017 enrollment numbers reported elsewhere in the Factbook.

"Estimated Average Daily Participation in Breakfast" is the average number of students who ate breakfast in school per school day during October 2017.

"Estimated Low-Income Average Daily Participation in Breakfast" is the average number of students eligible for and enrolled in free or reduced-price meals that ate breakfast in school per school day during October 2017.

(Sources and References are continued on page 177)