

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 2017, the median family income for Rhode Island families with their own children was \$79,967.¹ Rhode Island had the 12th highest median family income nationally and the 4th highest in New England.²

Between 2013 and 2017, 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 (\$102,759) was almost two and a half times that of male-headed single-parent families (\$42,018) and more than three and a half times that of female-headed single-parent families (\$27,380).³

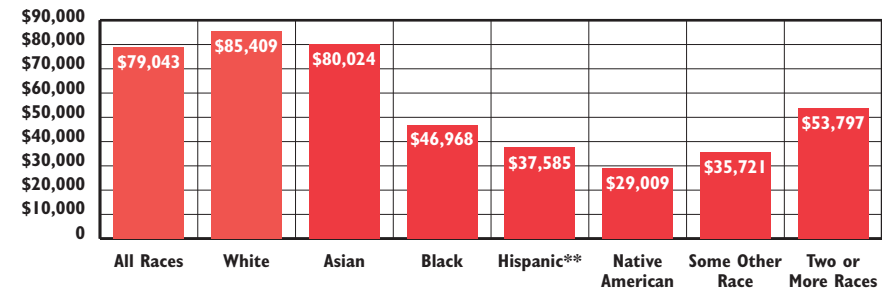
Rhode Island had the nation's highest unemployment rate in 2010 (11.3%), but by 2017 the state's unemployment

rate had decreased to 4.2%, the same as the national unemployment rate, and only slightly higher than the overall New England rate (3.9%). Despite declines in unemployment, Rhode Island continues to have gaps in unemployment rates by race and ethnicity. In 2018, Rhode Island's unemployment rate for White workers was 3.7%, while it was 6.3% for Black workers and 7.2% 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 Almost 24 million people in the U.S. work in low-wage jobs where they are paid \$11.50 per hour or less.⁷ 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.⁸

In Rhode Island over the past few decades, income inequality has grown. In 2015, the top 1% of Rhode Island households had average incomes (\$928,204) that were 18 times more than the bottom 99% (\$50,963) of households. Rhode Island is ranked 32nd of the 50 states in income inequality based on the ratio of top 1% to bottom 99% income.⁹

Median Family Income by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2013-2017*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. 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.¹⁰**
- ◆ **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.¹¹**
- ◆ **According to the 2018 Rhode Island Standard of Need, it costs a single-parent family with two young children \$55,115 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 \$62,844 to meet this budget without government subsidies.¹²**
- ◆ **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.¹³**

Table 6. Median Family Income, Rhode Island, 2013-2017

CITY/TOWN	1999 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 (ADJUSTED TO 2017 DOLLARS*)	2013-2017 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18	
		ESTIMATES WITH HIGH MARGINS OF ERROR**	ESTIMATES WITH LOWER, ACCEPTABLE MARGINS OF ERROR
Barrington	\$131,049		\$153,318
Bristol	\$78,706		\$82,067
Burrillville	\$81,299		\$80,025
Central Falls	\$32,481		\$29,935
Charlestown	\$81,291		\$88,520
Coventry	\$90,553		\$100,471
Cranston	\$83,983		\$78,750
Cumberland	\$100,789		\$104,167
East Greenwich	\$160,214		\$158,889
East Providence	\$72,134		\$67,991
Exeter	\$108,092	\$109,957	
Foster	\$93,549		\$101,250
Glocester	\$89,937		\$111,902
Hopkinton	\$87,179		\$101,837
Jamestown	\$117,442	\$151,836	
Johnston	\$83,595	\$81,357	
Lincoln	\$95,150	\$79,694	
Little Compton	\$83,651	\$96,250	
Middletown	\$81,618		\$74,836
Narragansett	\$100,729		\$134,706
New Shoreham	\$80,943	\$64,375	
Newport	\$63,647		\$81,597
North Kingstown	\$98,567		\$107,455
North Providence	\$74,522		\$75,154
North Smithfield	\$104,885		\$106,047
Pawtucket	\$49,533		\$42,969
Portsmouth	\$99,437		\$115,101
Providence	\$36,227		\$37,183
Richmond	\$93,677		\$105,400
Scituate	\$102,035		\$93,929
Smithfield	\$98,958		\$121,579
South Kingstown	\$100,751		\$117,059
Tiverton	\$94,191		\$80,727
Warren	\$79,022	\$61,250	
Warwick	\$84,181		\$85,346
West Greenwich	\$103,533		\$111,908
West Warwick	\$61,736		\$60,641
Westerly	\$76,707	\$72,143	
Woonsocket	\$50,866		\$31,883
Four Core Cities	NA		NA
Remainder of State	NA		NA
Rhode Island	\$74,616		\$72,430

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 2017 constant dollars by multiplying 1999 dollar values by 1.47587899 as recommended by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The 2013-2017 data come from a Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2013-2017 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, 2017. Table B19125.
- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017. Table R1902.
- U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Table B19126.
- ^{4,6,11} *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 Patrick, K., Berlan, M., & Harwood, M. (2018). *Low-wage jobs held primarily by women will grow the most over the next decade.* Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center.
- ⁸ Vogtman, J. & Schulman, K. (2016). *Set up to fail: When low-wage work jeopardizes parents' and children's success.* Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center.
- ⁹ Sommeiller, E. & Price, M. (2018). *The new gilded age: Income inequality in the U.S. by state, metropolitan area, and county.* Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D, B19113E, B19113G, & B19113I.
- ^{12,13} *The 2018 Rhode Island standard of need.* (2018). 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

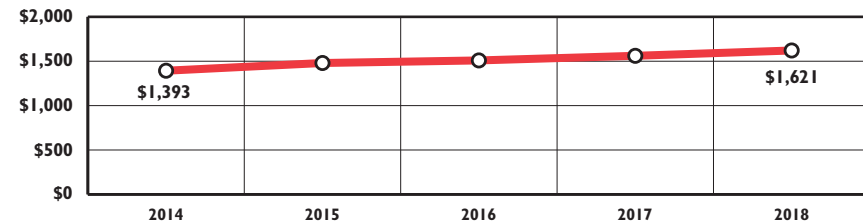
Poor quality, unaffordable, or crowded housing has a negative impact on children's physical health, development, and emotional well-being and on a family's ability to meet a child's basic needs. Children who live in families with cost burdens may live in low-quality and overcrowded housing and move frequently,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

In 2018, a worker would have to earn \$31.17 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 three times the 2018 minimum wage of \$10.10 per hour.⁴ In 2017, Rhode Island required the 18th highest hourly wage to afford the rent for a two-bedroom home of any state.⁵

In 2018, the Area Median Income for families in Rhode Island was \$81,384.⁶ Families with this income can afford to purchase a median-priced, single-family home in 16 of the 39 communities in the state. In 2017, the median cost of a single-family home in Rhode Island was \$255,000, 25% higher than in 2012, but still 22% lower than in 2007.⁷

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.⁸ 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.⁹ Rhode Island invests \$5.21 per capita in affordable homes, compared to neighboring Massachusetts which invests \$100.12 per capita, 20 times as much. Rhode Island State Law establishes a goal that 10% of every community's housing stock qualify as Low- and Moderate-Income Housing. Currently, only six of Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns meet that goal.¹⁰

Average Rent, Two-Bedroom Apartment, Rhode Island, 2014-2018



Source: Rhode Island Housing, Rhode Island Rent Surveys, 2014-2018. 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.

◆ In 2018, the average cost of rent in Rhode Island rose by almost \$60 from \$1,561 in 2017 to \$1,621, increasing 16% since 2014.¹¹

◆ The percentage of renters in Rhode Island who spent 30% or more of their household income on rent was 46% in 2017, down from 49% in 2008. The percentage of homeowners who had a cost burden due to their mortgages decreased from 42% in 2008 to 32% in 2017.^{12,13}

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 food insecurity, poor health, and developmental delays.¹⁴

◆ 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 15.¹⁵

◆ 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.¹⁶ Rhode Island's FFY 2018 allocation for LIHEAP was \$26.9 million.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

Table 7.

Cost of Housing for Very Low-Income Families, Rhode Island, 2018

CITY/TOWN	FAMILY INCOME		HOMEOWNERSHIP COSTS		RENTAL COSTS		
	2018 POVERTY LEVEL FAMILY OF THREE	2018 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	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$3,113	103%	\$1,293	75%	43%
Bristol	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,212	73%	\$1,346	78%	45%
Burrillville	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,773	59%	\$914	53%	30%
Central Falls	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,069	35%	\$1,410	81%	47%
Charlestown*	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,348	78%	\$1,014	59%	34%
Coventry	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,756	58%	\$1,626	94%	54%
Cranston	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,764	59%	\$1,606	93%	53%
Cumberland	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,935	64%	\$1,846	107%	61%
East Greenwich	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$3,478	115%	\$1,653	95%	55%
East Providence	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,712	57%	\$1,630	94%	54%
Exeter	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,198	73%	\$1,123	65%	37%
Foster*	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,240	74%	\$1,014	59%	34%
Glocester*	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,066	69%	\$1,014	59%	34%
Hopkinton*	\$20,780	\$36,000	\$1,843	61%	\$1,161	67%	39%
Jamestown*	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$4,060	135%	\$1,014	59%	34%
Johnston	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,822	60%	\$1,759	102%	58%
Lincoln	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,454	81%	\$1,647	95%	55%
Little Compton*	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$3,500	116%	\$1,014	59%	34%
Middletown	\$20,780	\$42,350	\$2,646	75%	\$1,579	91%	45%
Narragansett	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,713	90%	\$1,550	90%	51%
New Shoreham*	\$20,780	\$36,000	\$5,787	193%	\$1,161	67%	39%
Newport	\$20,780	\$42,350	\$2,966	84%	\$1,572	91%	45%
North Kingstown	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,395	80%	\$1,522	88%	51%
North Providence	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,756	58%	\$1,501	87%	50%
North Smithfield	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,004	67%	\$1,349	78%	45%
Pawtucket	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,492	50%	\$1,374	79%	46%
Portsmouth	\$20,780	\$42,350	\$2,658	75%	\$1,782	103%	50%
Providence**	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,257	42%	\$1,760	102%	58%
Richmond*	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,131	71%	\$1,014	59%	34%
Scituate*	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,055	68%	\$1,014	59%	34%
Smithfield	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,107	70%	\$1,156	67%	38%
South Kingstown*	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,426	81%	\$1,014	59%	34%
Tiverton	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,065	69%	\$1,532	88%	51%
Warren	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,028	67%	\$1,653	95%	55%
Warwick	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,611	53%	\$1,601	92%	53%
West Greenwich	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$2,664	88%	\$1,933	112%	64%
West Warwick	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,597	53%	\$1,548	89%	51%
Westerly	\$20,780	\$36,000	\$2,106	70%	\$1,463	84%	49%
Woonsocket	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,497	50%	\$1,177	68%	39%
Four Core Cities	\$20,780	\$36,150	\$1,329	44%	\$1,637	95%	54%
Remainder of State	\$20,780	\$36,669	\$2,400	79%	\$1,614	93%	53%
Rhode Island	\$20,780	\$36,350	\$1,851	61%	\$1,621	94%	54%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

2018 poverty level for a family of three as reported in: *Federal Register*, 82(19), January 31, 2018, 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 defined separately for each of the three metropolitan areas comprising Rhode Island and for the state as a whole. Core city and remainder of state are calculated by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT using unweighted community data. Reported by Rhode Island Housing. (2018). *2018 Rhode Island income limits for low- and moderate-income households*. Retrieved January 29, 2019, from www.rhodeislandhousing.org

Data on typical monthly housing payments are from HousingWorks RI's *2018 Housing Fact Book*. They are based on the median selling price of a single-family home using year-end 2017 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*, 2018. Estimates include rent and utility costs. Starting with the *2019 Factbook* average rent is calculated using the CoStar database for two-bedroom units. Average utility costs from the U.S. Census American Community Survey's annual one-year sample, which includes gas, fuel, water, and electricity for two-bedroom units. All values are in unadjusted dollars. Statewide average based on all units in state. Data cannot be compared to prior Factbooks.

*Rhode Island Housing 2018 *Rhode Island Rent Survey* data are not available. Average rent used for these communities is the HUD 2018 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.

(Sources continued with References 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

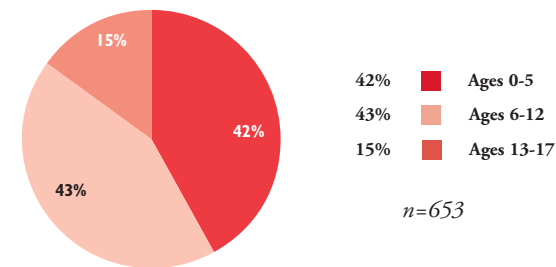
achievement.^{6,7} When homeless children are exposed to multiple traumatic events, they may have increased levels of anxiety, poor impulse control, and difficulty developing trusting relationships.^{8,9}

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 2018, 403 families with 653 children stayed at an emergency homeless shelter, domestic violence shelter, or transitional housing facility in Rhode Island. Children made up 17% of the people who used emergency homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, and transitional housing in 2018. Forty-two percent of these children were under age six, not yet school age. As of December 12, 2018, there were 152 families on the state's wait list awaiting shelter.¹¹

In 2018, United Way 211 received 95,406 calls from individuals and families seeking housing or shelter and 2,980 related to foreclosure prevention.¹²

Children in Emergency Shelters, Domestic Violence Shelters, and Transitional Housing Facilities by Age, 2018



Source: Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project, 2018.

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 In Rhode Island, just 60.7% of homeless students graduate high school on-time compared to 84.1% of all students.¹⁴**
- ◆ **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 offer services including health, dental, and mental health services, tutoring, etc., needed to help them succeed in school.¹⁵**
- ◆ **The *McKinney-Vento Act* defines a child as homeless if he or she does not have a “fixed, regular and adequate night-time residence.”¹⁶ During the 2017-2018 school year, Rhode Island public school personnel identified 1,579 children as homeless. Of these children, 72% lived with other families (“doubled up”), 19% lived in shelters, 7% lived in hotels or motels, and 2% were unsheltered.¹⁷**
- ◆ **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.¹⁸**

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 childcare. To secure stable employment, homeless parents need education, job skills, and safe, dependable care for their children.¹⁹

◆ 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.²⁰

◆ 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.²¹

◆ 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.²²

Table 8. Homeless Children Identified by Public Schools, Rhode Island, 2017-2018 School Year

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	# OF CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS BY PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL
Barrington	3,362	*
Bristol Warren	3,226	24
Burrillville	2,273	52
Central Falls	2,518	113
Chariho	3,211	33
Coventry	4,746	96
Cranston	10,364	46
Cumberland	4,647	11
East Greenwich	2,498	0
East Providence	5,267	41
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,680	*
Foster	295	*
Foster-Glocester	1,257	16
Glocester	540	*
Jamestown	494	*
Johnston	3,265	*
Lincoln	3,083	20
Little Compton	248	0
Middletown	2,181	107
Narragansett	1,323	*
New Shoreham	2,237	0
Newport	120	96
North Kingstown	3,955	42
North Providence	3,631	46
North Smithfield	1,734	*
Pawtucket	8,738	68
Portsmouth	2,442	*
Providence	24,075	261
Scituate	1,269	0
Smithfield	2,395	54
South Kingstown	3,069	34
Tiverton	1,835	0
Warwick	8,953	84
West Warwick	2,790	10
Westerly	3,588	64
Woonsocket	5,982	129
Charter Schools	7,909	48
State-Operated Schools	1,749	10
UCAP	136	0
Four Core Cities	41,313	571
Remainder of State	91,842	968
Rhode Island	142,949	1,539

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, Public School Enrollment in grades preschool to 12 on October 1, 2017.

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 include Achievement First Rhode Island, Beacon Charter School, Blackstone Academy, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, Charette Charter, The Compass School, The Greene School, Highlander, International Charter, Kingston Hill Academy, Learning Community, Paul Cuffee Charter School, Rhode Island Nurses Institute, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy, Segue Institute for Learning, Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy, Southside Charter School, Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, and Village Green Virtual. State-operated schools reporting include the Metropolitan Regional Career & Technical Center and the Rhode Island School for the Deaf.

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 state, and state totals.

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

References

^{14,19} 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.

^{25,10} *The characteristics and needs of families experiencing homelessness*. (2011). Needham, MA: The National Center on Family Homelessness.

(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. 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 4.5% in December 2017 to 3.9% in December 2018 and is now at the same level as the U.S. unemployment rate. During the recession in December 2009, Rhode Island's unemployment rate was 11.1%.^{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 many families to remain in poverty. Nationally, 30% of working families are low income (9.9 million). While the number of low-income working families fell slightly between 2015 and 2016, there are more low-income working families than at the onset of the recession in 2007 (9.5 million). Additionally, people of color are overrepresented among low-income working families. In 2016, families headed by people of color represented 41% of all working families, while accounting for 60% of low-income working families. In the workforce, low-income individuals tend to have few opportunities for advancement, limited benefits, and an overall lack of economic security.⁷

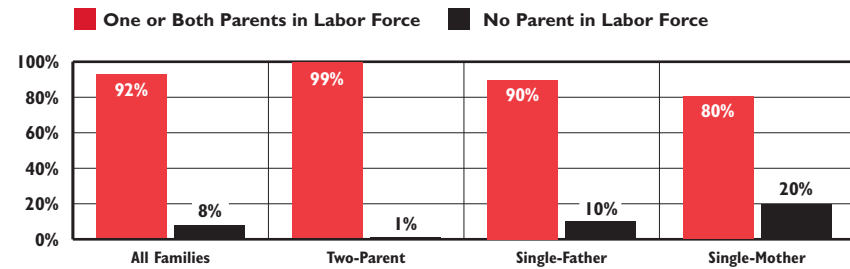
Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment		
	2010	2016
RI	34%	31%
US	33%	28%
National Rank*		38th
New England Rank**		6th

*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, 2013-2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Table B23008.

- ◆ The majority of children living in Rhode Island between 2013 and 2017 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.⁸
- ◆ Between 2013 and 2017, there were 15,497 Rhode Island children living in families with no parent in the labor force. Children living in families with a single parent represented 88% (13,623) of families with no employed parents.⁹
- ◆ Between 2013 and 2017, 16% (3,923) of Rhode Island families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold had at least one adult with full-time, year-round employment, and 41% of Rhode Island families living in poverty had at least one adult working part-time.¹⁰
- ◆ According to the 2018 *Rhode Island Standard of Need*, 67% of Rhode Island single-parent families and 28% 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.¹¹
- ◆ Between 2013 and 2017, 72% of children under age six and 76% 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.¹²

Barriers to Secure Employment for Low-Income Families

- ◆ Families leaving cash assistance can face many barriers to employment. Research shows that families who leave welfare due to time limits or sanctions often have barriers such as mental and physical impairments, a child with a disability, or learning disabilities that can impede their ability to secure or sustain employment.¹³
- ◆ 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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ Rhode Island is one of six states that offer paid family leave.¹⁷
- ◆ Limited education also can be a barrier to sustained employment. Between 2013 and 2017 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.¹⁸
- ◆ Having access to work supports, such as tax credits, SNAP/food stamps, child care, and health insurance, 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.¹⁹

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.
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- ³ Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. (n.d.). *Rhode Island labor force statistics, seasonally adjusted 1976-present*. Retrieved January 17, 2019, from www.dlt.ri.gov
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- ⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Table B23008.

(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 affordable child care arrangements affected their ability to remain employed.²⁰
- ◆ In 2017 in Rhode Island, a single mother earning the state median income for a single-parent family (\$26,809) would have to spend half (49.9%) of her income to pay for child care for an infant in center-based care.²¹
- ◆ In Rhode Island, child care assistance is available to all income-eligible working families with incomes at or below 180% of the federal poverty level (\$38,394 for a family of three in 2019). Families may continue to receive their child care subsidy until their income reaches 225% of the federal poverty level (\$47,993 for a family of three).^{22,23,24}

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 serve as an incentive to work for families struggling to make ends meet. The federal EITC is the nation's most effective antipoverty program for working families. It lifted 5.8 million people, including about 3 million children, out of poverty in 2016.^{25,26}
- ◆ 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.²⁷
- ◆ State EITCs can supplement the federal EITC to further support working families. In 2016, the Rhode Island General Assembly increased the state's EITC from 12.5% to 15% of the federal EITC. In 2017, approximately 81,000 Rhode Island working families and individuals received a total of \$185 million in federal EITC tax credits.^{28,29}
- ◆ The Child Tax Credit (CTC) helps working families offset the cost of raising children. The CTC lifted 2.7 million people out of poverty in 2016, including 1.5 million children. Boosting a family's income can expand opportunities for children and improve their immediate well-being, as well as improve outcomes 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 partial 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

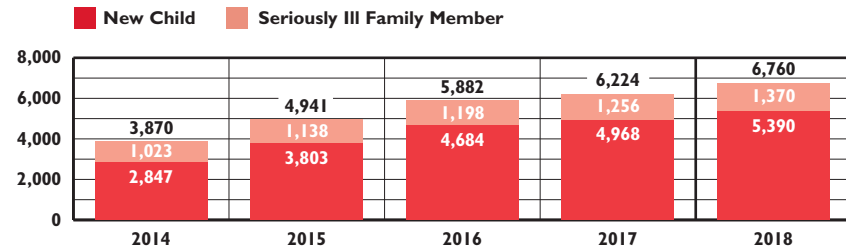
Although some workers in the U.S. have access to paid leave through their employers (estimated at 11% of private

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. 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. Providing time off from work for new parents gives babies time to form secure attachments, which form the foundation for healthy relationships and development.^{6,7,8,9}

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 Claims by Type, Rhode Island, 2014-2018



Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, TCI Program, 2014-2018

- ◆ There were 6,760 approved claims for TCI during 2018 (up from 6,224 in 2017); 80% were to bond with a new child and 20% were to care for a seriously ill family member. Forty-four percent of individuals contributing to TDI/TCI earn less than \$20,000, yet only 16% of all approved TCI claims were for an individual with wages in this category.¹²
- ◆ Of the 5,390 approved claims to bond with a new child, 98% (5,256) were for a newborn child and 2% were for a newly adopted (27), foster (64), or other child (43). Forty-one percent of claims to bond with a new child were filed by men and 59% were filed by women.¹³
- ◆ Of the 1,370 approved claims to care for a seriously ill family member, 55% were to care for a spouse or domestic partner, 30% were to care for a parent or parent-in-law, 14% were to care for a child, and 1% were to care for a grandparent. Thirty-one percent of claims to care for a seriously ill family member were filed by men and 69% were filed by women.¹⁴

Temporary Disability Insurance for Pregnancy Complications & Childbirth

- ◆ In 2018, there were 1,532 approved TDI claims for disabling pregnancy complications and 1,798 TDI claims 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

Paid Family Leave

Table 9. Approved Temporary Disability Claims for Childbirth & Temporary Caregiver Claims for Paid Family Leave, Rhode Island, 2018

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	13	24	37	54	15	69
Bristol	15	20	35	71	21	92
Burrillville	19	24	43	59	20	79
Central Falls	28	30	58	58	14	72
Charlestown	6	18	24	20	12	32
Coventry	46	66	112	211	65	276
Cranston	111	128	239	431	108	539
Cumberland	44	56	100	158	38	196
East Greenwich	12	35	47	64	12	76
East Providence	71	65	136	226	68	294
Exeter	11	5	16	30	11	41
Foster	*	9	13	33	*	36
Glocester	11	14	25	47	12	59
Hopkinton	8	5	13	31	14	45
Jamestown	0	5	5	23	*	27
Johnston	38	48	86	177	50	227
Lincoln	22	18	40	66	25	91
Little Compton	0	0	0	6	*	8
Middletown	21	26	47	34	17	51
Narragansett	*	9	13	25	9	34
New Shoreham	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newport	32	24	56	58	8	66
North Kingstown	25	42	67	128	25	153
North Providence	42	44	86	160	52	212
North Smithfield	14	12	26	35	18	53
Pawtucket	114	114	228	385	84	469
Portsmouth	17	21	38	67	12	79
Providence	307	328	635	874	177	1,051
Richmond	5	8	13	19	9	28
Scituate	11	33	44	46	21	67
Smithfield	29	15	44	110	26	136
South Kingstown	21	26	47	81	24	105
Tiverton	12	17	29	46	13	59
Warren	9	20	29	39	12	51
Warwick	123	131	254	482	134	616
West Greenwich	12	9	21	26	8	34
West Warwick	60	53	113	228	38	266
Westerly	25	26	51	78	20	98
Woonsocket	39	65	104	158	34	192
<i>Out-of-State</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>205</i>	<i>356</i>	<i>546</i>	<i>135</i>	<i>681</i>
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	<i>488</i>	<i>537</i>	<i>1,025</i>	<i>1,475</i>	<i>309</i>	<i>1,784</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>893</i>	<i>1,056</i>	<i>1,949</i>	<i>3,369</i>	<i>917</i>	<i>4,295</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>1,381</i>	<i>1,593</i>	<i>2,974</i>	<i>4,844</i>	<i>1,226</i>	<i>6,079</i>
<i>Total Program Claims</i>	<i>1,532</i>	<i>1,798</i>	<i>3,330</i>	<i>5,390</i>	<i>1,370</i>	<i>6,760</i>

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, 2018. 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 2018 in Rhode Island, the average length of approved TDI claims for pregnancy complications was 9.6 weeks. The average length of approved TCI claims to bond with a new child was 3.2 weeks while the average number of weeks approved to care for a seriously ill family member was 2.8 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. Employees of certain governmental entities do not contribute to and cannot claim TDI or TCI.

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

References

- ¹ The State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Department of Labor and Training. (2014). *Temporary Caregiver Insurance [Brochure]*.
- ²⁵ 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.
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- ⁴ *Rhode Island Parental and Family Medical Leave Act*, Title 28 Rhode Island General Law § 28-48-2 (1987,1990).
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(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

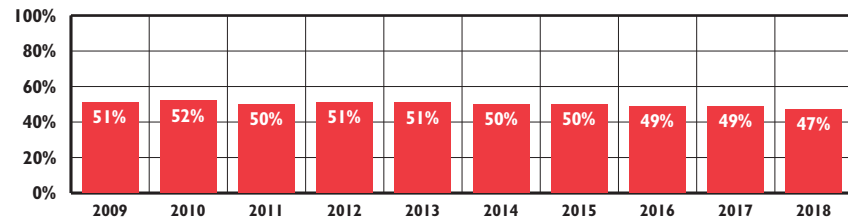
Child support is a major part of the safety net for children and families. In 2017, one in five U.S. children (15.1 million) received public child support services.^{1,2} Child support provides a mechanism for non-custodial parents (usually fathers) to contribute to the financial and medical support of their children. Child support programs can encourage responsible co-parenting and increase the reliability of child support paid by helping custodial parents locate the non-custodial parent, establishing paternity and support orders, and monitoring and enforcing child support obligations.³

Child support is a critical tool to provide resources for children living in poverty. The receipt of child support payments can significantly improve the economic well-being of a child growing

up in a family with a non-resident parent. In 2015, child support kept 790,000 U.S. children out of poverty, and for poor custodial parents that received full child support, these payments represented more than half (58%) of their mean personal income. Custodial parents who receive steady child support payments are less likely to rely on public assistance programs and more likely to find work than those who do not.^{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 Child support systems that encourage relationship building with the co-parent, positive parenting, and can strengthen parent-child relationships and increase child support payments. Non-custodial parents who pay regular child support are more involved with their children, providing them with critical emotional support and care. Child support reduces the risk of child maltreatment, and has a positive effect on children's academics and behavior.^{9,10}

Non-Custodial Parents With Court Orders Who Pay Child Support on Time and in Full, Rhode Island, 2009-2018

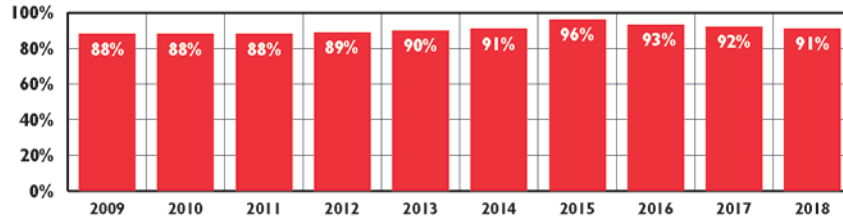


Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support Services, 2009-2018.

- ◆ As of December 1, 2018, there were 71,628 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 (47%) of non-custodial parents under court order in Rhode Island were making child support payments on time and in full.¹¹
- ◆ In 2018, the Rhode Island Office of Child Support Services collected \$94.7 million in child support, an increase of about \$273,000 over the previous year. Eighty-seven percent (\$82.7 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 (cash assistance), RIte Care health coverage, and other expenses.¹²
- ◆ In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2017, the Rhode Island Office of Child Support Services collected \$5.85 for every \$1.00 Rhode Island spent on administering the program.¹³
- ◆ During FFY 2018, there were 16,313 court orders for non-custodial parents to provide medical insurance and 9,650 orders for non-custodial parents to contribute funds toward medical coverage. More than \$4.3 million in payments was retained by the state to offset the cost of RIte Care, while approximately \$3.1 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, 2009-2018



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support Services, 2009-2018. 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 88% of children in 2009 to 91% of children in 2018.¹⁶
- ◆ 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 2017, Rhode Island had the lowest rate of court orders established for child support in New England (Maine – 95%; Connecticut – 93%; Vermont – 89%; Massachusetts – 89%; New Hampshire – 82%; Rhode Island – 77%). The national average for cases with child support orders established is 87%.¹⁹
- ◆ In FFY 2017, Rhode Island had the highest case/staff ratio in New England at 704 cases per person, nearly five times that of the lowest state, Vermont (141 cases per person).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. (2018). *FY 2017 preliminary report*. Retrieved January 29, 2019, 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, 1950-2017 and projected 2018-2050*. Retrieved January 29, 2019, from www.childstats.gov

(continued on page 176)

Child Support and Rhode Island Works

- ◆ As of December 1, 2018, Rhode Island's Office of Child Support Services system included 4,883 children enrolled in the cash assistance program (Rhode Island Works [RI Works]).²¹
- ◆ In December 2018, the average child support obligation for children enrolled in RI Works was \$295 per month, compared to an average child support obligation of \$407 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
- ◆ An average of 413 families received at least one "pass-through" payment each month, for a total of \$239,512 paid to families enrolled in RI Works in FFY 2018.²⁴
- ◆ States have the option to increase the amount of money passed through to children. Pass through money is not included in calculating eligibility for cash assistance, which means it does not reduce the amount of the family's cash assistance. Under this federal policy, a number of states have increased the amount they pass through to children. Some states pass through up to \$100 per month for one child (and up to \$200 per month for two or more children). Rhode Island is one of eight states with a pass-through policy that limits the pass-through amount to \$50, regardless of the number of children in the household.^{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, because more of the child support payment goes to the child. Increased pass-throughs could therefore increase total child support collections, increase custodial family income, and potentially encourage constructive coparenting.^{27,28}

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 2018, the federal poverty threshold was \$20,231 for a family of three with two children and \$25,465 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 an additional way to evaluate the effects of anti-poverty policies.¹⁰

According to the *2018 Rhode Island Standard of Need*, it costs a single-parent family with two young children \$55,115 a year to pay basic living expenses, more than two and half times the federal poverty level for a family of three. This family would need an annual pre-tax income of \$62,844 to meet this budget without government subsidies. Work supports can help families with incomes below the federal poverty level meet their basic needs.¹¹

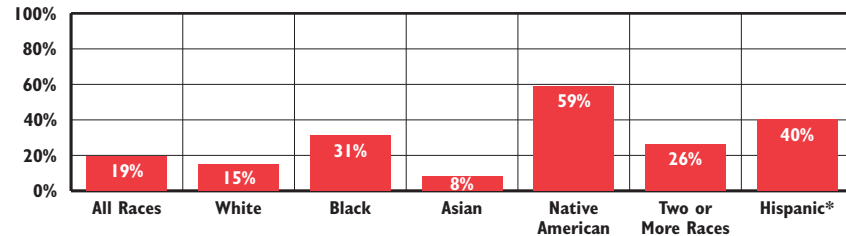
Children in Poverty				
	2014	2015	2016	2017
RI	19.8%	19.4%	17.0%	16.6%
US	21.7%	20.7%	19.5%	18.4%
National Rank*				24th
New England Rank**				6th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2017. Table R1704.

Children in Poverty, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2013-2017



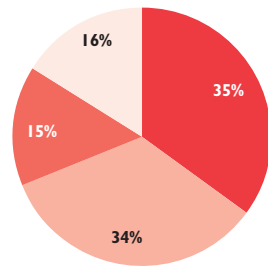
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Tables S1701, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020G and B17020I. *Hispanic children may be included in any race category.

- ◆ Between 2013 and 2017, 19% (39,229) of Rhode Island's 207,838 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.^{13,14}
- ◆ Between 2013 and 2017, over half (55%) 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 9% were Two or more races. During this same time period, 64% of Native American, 38% of Hispanic, and 29% of Black children in Rhode Island lived in poverty, compared to 9% of Asian children and 14% of White children.¹⁵
- ◆ Between 2013 and 2017, 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.¹⁶
- ◆ In 2017, about one in six (17%) children in Rhode Island (a total of 33,858 children) lived in poverty.¹⁷

Rhode Island's Poor Children, 2013-2017

By Age

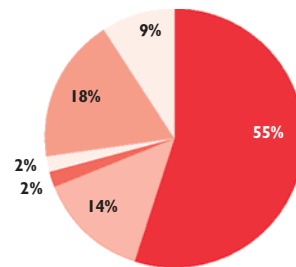
- 35% ■ Ages 5 and Younger
- 34% ■ Ages 6 to 11
- 15% ■ Ages 12 to 14
- 16% ■ Ages 15 to 17



n=39,229

By Race*

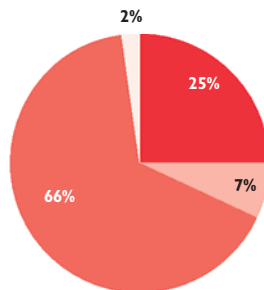
- 55% ■ White
- 14% ■ Black
- 2% ■ Asian
- 2% ■ Native American
- 18% ■ Some Other Race
- 9% ■ Two or More Races



n=39,229

By Family Structure

- 25% ■ Married Couple Family
- 7% ■ Unmarried Male Householder
- 66% ■ Unmarried Female Householder
- 2% ■ Not in Related-Family Household



n=39,229

*Hispanic children may be included in any race category. Between 2013 and 2017, 19,356 (48%) of Rhode Island's 40,699 poor children were Hispanic.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013-2017. Tables S1701, B17001, B17006, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020E, B17020F, B17020G, & B17020I. Population includes children for whom poverty status was determined.

Child Poverty Concentrated in Four Core Cities, Rhode Island, 2013-2017

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER IN POVERTY	PERCENTAGE IN POVERTY	NUMBER IN EXTREME POVERTY	PERCENTAGE IN EXTREME POVERTY
Central Falls	2,297	41.5%	809	14.6%
Pawtucket	4,913	30.9%	1,735	10.9%
Providence	14,520	36.0%	6,309	15.7%
Woonsocket	3,357	38.5%	1,661	19.0%
Rhode Island	39,229	18.9%	16,523	7.9%

Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2013-2017 American Community Survey data.

◆ Between 2013 and 2017, almost two-thirds (64%) of Rhode Island's children living in poverty lived in just four cities. These cities, termed core cities, include Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket, all communities in which more than one in four children live below poverty (36% between 2013-2017). 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 threshold, or \$10,116 for a family of three with two children and \$12,733 for a family of four with two children in 2018.^{18,19}

Young Children Under Age Six in Poverty, Four Core Cities and Rhode Island, 2013-2017

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER <AGE 6 IN POVERTY	PERCENTAGE <AGE 6 IN POVERTY
Central Falls	938	45.1%
Pawtucket	1,766	31.8%
Providence	4,776	34.7%
Woonsocket	1,328	43.6%
Rhode Island	13,560	20.9%

Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2013-2017 American Community Survey data.

◆ Between 2013 and 2017, 20.9% (13,560) of Rhode Island children under age six lived in poverty.²⁰ Children under age six are at higher risk of living in poverty than any other age group.²¹ 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.^{22,23}

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, and plan for their future.^{24,25}
- ◆ 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, and rent-to-own stores. 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.^{26,27}
- ◆ In Rhode Island in 2017, 6.5% of households did not have a checking or savings account, the same as the U.S. rate. Nationally, households with lower income, disabled working-age adults, or adults with less than a high school education, as well as Black and Hispanic households, are less likely to have a checking or savings account.²⁸
- ◆ 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.²⁹
- ◆ States can protect consumers from high-cost payday lending by prohibiting these loans outright or enacting measures that make the loans more affordable, such as an annual rate cap or limiting the amount of monthly payments as a percent of a borrower's monthly income. Rhode Island is the only New England state that does not currently protect against payday lending.^{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 kept 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 do not have access to coverage through their employers, 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 2018, the average annual cost of center-based child care for one infant was \$13,093.³⁸ 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

- ◆ By 2020, 71% of all jobs in Rhode Island will require postsecondary training beyond high school.⁴⁰ Forty-seven percent of Rhode Islanders had a postsecondary degree or certificate in 2016.⁴¹

Affordable Housing

- ◆ In 2018, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island was \$1,621.⁴² In Rhode Island, a family of three with an income at the federal poverty level would need to spend 94% of its income on rent to pay this amount, well above the recommended 30%. Nationally, only one in four eligible low-income families receive rental assistance to help them afford the high cost of housing.^{43,44}

Child Support

- ◆ As of December 1, 2018, there were 71,628 children in Rhode Island's Office of Child Support Services system.⁴⁵ 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 be employed than those who do not.⁴⁶ Among poor custodial parents that received full child support in 2015 in the U.S., these payments represented 58% of their mean personal income.⁴⁷

Table 10. Children Living Below the Federal Poverty Threshold, Rhode Island, 2000 and 2013-2017

CITY/TOWN	CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING BELOW POVERTY 2013-2017					
	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%			70	1.6%
Bristol	436	10.0%			229	7.2%
Burrillville	236	6.0%	456	14.1%		
Central Falls	2,210	40.9%	2,297	41.5%		
Charlestown	78	4.7%	132	10.4%		
Coventry	481	5.9%			722	10.7%
Cranston	1,496	9.1%			2,296	14.4%
Cumberland	237	3.1%			774	11.0%
East Greenwich	147	4.1%			101	2.9%
East Providence	1,126	10.8%			919	11.1%
Exeter	112	7.5%	40	3.5%		
Foster	32	2.9%	39	5.3%		
Glocester	178	6.7%	153	7.7%		
Hopkinton	115	5.9%	111	7.9%		
Jamestown	17	1.4%	73	6.9%		
Johnston	527	9.0%	692	13.6%		
Lincoln	329	6.5%			648	13.3%
Little Compton	8	1.0%	41	7.2%		
Middletown	264	6.2%			423	12.5%
Narragansett	235	8.6%			18	0.9%
New Shoreham	19	10.2%	28	30.8%		
Newport	1,267	24.4%	743	21.2%		
North Kingstown	663	9.7%			661	11.6%
North Providence	579	10.1%			482	9.0%
North Smithfield	72	3.0%			138	5.5%
Pawtucket	4,542	25.3%			4,913	30.9%
Portsmouth	118	2.8%			200	5.7%
Providence	18,045	40.5%			14,520	36.0%
Richmond	82	4.2%	68	4.2%		
Scituate	113	4.3%	203	10.2%		
Smithfield	153	3.9%			41	1.2%
South Kingstown	324	5.3%			388	8.4%
Tiverton	92	2.8%			218	8.0%
Warren	205	8.4%	324	19.1%		
Warwick	1,243	6.7%			899	6.4%
West Greenwich	40	2.7%			1	0.1%
West Warwick	1,186	18.1%	1,040	19.8%		
Westerly	534	10.0%	771	18.8%		
Woonsocket	3,494	31.8%			3,357	38.5%
Four Core Cities	28,291	35.9%			25,087	35.6%
Remainder of State	12,871	7.8%			14,142	10.3%
Rhode Island	41,162	16.9%			39,229	18.9%

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 2013-2017 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 place of residence and should outline a process for helping the parent meet his or her employment goals. Parents should be informed about opportunities to seek

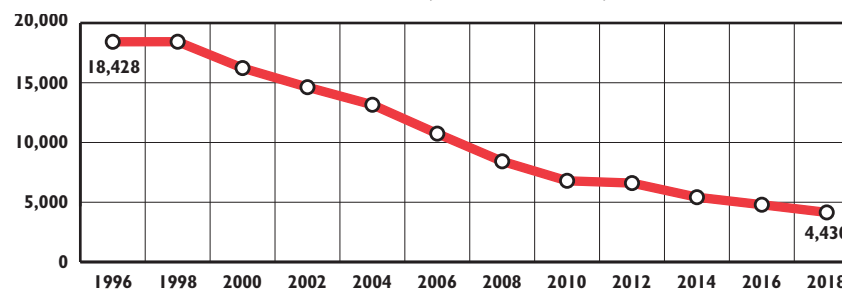
additional education or training to improve their employability prospects.²

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 2018, the average hourly wage of working parents enrolled in RI Works was \$11.17 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, 1996–2018*



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, December 1, 1996-2015 and RI Bridges Database, December 2016-2018. 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 2010-2018 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 2018, the Rhode Island cash assistance caseload decreased by 77% from 18,428 cases to 4,149 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 the entire family's case 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 2018, there were 2,781 adults and 7,195 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 2018, 58% of RI Works cases were single-parent families, 39% were child-only cases, and 3% 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 2017, 10,761 children in Rhode Island lived in extreme poverty, yet only 7,593 received cash assistance in December 2017.^{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. Rhode Island is one of only 13 states that has a lifetime limit less than the federal 60-month time limit, and one of only eight states that imposes a periodic time limit on its entire caseload.^{17,18}

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 (for six-month periods), there is no limit on the total time a family can receive a hardship extension.^{19,20}

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.²¹

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.²²

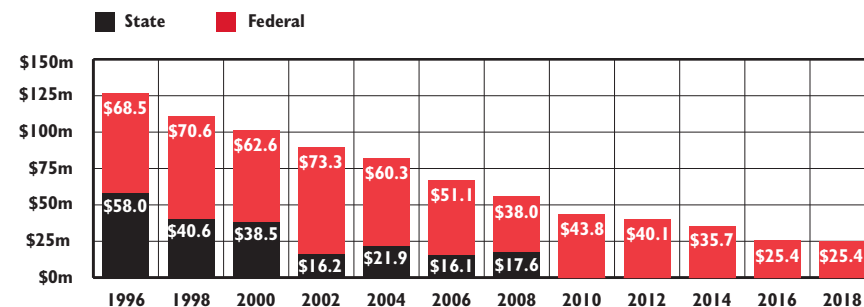
RI Works by Case Type, December 2018

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Child-only cases	1,629	39%
Cases with adults with a work activity	1,647	40%
Cases with adults exempt from a work activity*	356	9%
Unknown status	517	12%
Total RI Works Caseload	4,149	

Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, RI Bridges Database, December 2018.

*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 (197), in third trimester of pregnancy (70), caring for a disabled spouse or child (1), being a victim of domestic violence (15), illness or incapacity (19), or second parent is a non-participant (54).

Rhode Island Cash Assistance Expenditures, State Fiscal Years 1996-2018



Sources: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, *Family Independence Program 2007 annual report*. (FY 1996-2001); House Fiscal Advisory Staff. (2004-2018). *Budget as enacted: Fiscal Years 2005-2019*. (FY 2001-2018). Fiscal years 1996-2017 are funds spent and FY 2018 is final budget.

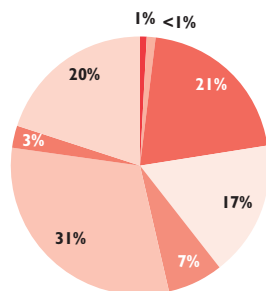
◆ In State Fiscal Year 2018, for the ninth year in a row, no state general revenue was allocated for cash assistance. State general revenue spending for cash assistance decreased steadily from 1996 through 2010. The cash assistance program is now entirely supported by federal Temporary Assistance for 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 2018, from \$126.5 million to \$25.4 million.^{23,24}

Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

Activities of Families Enrolled in the RI Works Program, December 2018*

By Type of Activity

1% (23)	Employed
<1% (1)	Work Experience
21% (353)	Education/Training
17% (286)	Job Search
7% (126)	Job/Work Readiness
31% (534)	Supportive Services
3% (43)	Teen and Family Development
20% (349)	Multiple Activities



n=1,715

Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, RI Bridges Database, December 2018. *Some cases may have a work activity and a work exemption during the same month. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

- ◆ As of December 2018, 1% of families with work activities were employed. Less than 1% were in unpaid work experience.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 2018, 21% of families were participating in education or training programs, up from 15% in December 2017.²⁸
- ◆ Seventeen percent 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, and 7% were participating in other job readiness activities. Another 31% were receiving supportive services, including 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 Teen and Family Development Program, a program for young parents, and 20% 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 2018, there were 77 parents under the age of 20 enrolled in RI Works. Some are parent heads of household, and others may be parts of multi-generational households.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 SSI or SSDI or determined to be 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 2018, 651 families (16% of the total RI Works caseload) had hardship extensions, two for a physical or mental disability, two who were unable to work due to a domestic violence situation, one due to homelessness, and 646 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 2018

CITY/TOWN	# OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18	NUMBER RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE		% OF CHILDREN RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE
		FAMILIES	CHILDREN	
Barrington	4,597	4	4	<1%
Bristol	3,623	30	50	1%
Burrillville	3,576	31	44	1%
Central Falls	5,644	197	351	6%
Charlestown	1,506	2	2	<1%
Coventry	7,770	43	60	1%
Cranston	16,414	193	286	2%
Cumberland	7,535	37	59	1%
East Greenwich	3,436	17	25	1%
East Providence	9,177	119	189	2%
Exeter	1,334	4	6	<1%
Foster	986	3	4	<1%
Glocester	2,098	7	9	<1%
Hopkinton	1,845	5	8	<1%
Jamestown	1,043	4	6	1%
Johnston	5,480	67	120	2%
Lincoln	4,751	32	56	1%
Little Compton	654	2	5	1%
Middletown	3,652	35	62	2%
Narragansett	2,269	7	11	<1%
New Shoreham	163	0	0	0%
Newport	4,083	134	235	6%
North Kingstown	6,322	38	70	1%
North Providence	5,514	76	105	2%
North Smithfield	2,456	7	8	<1%
Pawtucket	16,575	440	783	5%
Portsmouth	3,996	16	21	1%
Providence	41,634	1,816	3,329	8%
Richmond	1,849	2	2	<1%
Scituate	2,272	10	18	1%
Smithfield	3,625	8	13	<1%
South Kingstown	5,416	22	48	1%
Tiverton	2,998	30	48	2%
Warren	1,940	20	30	2%
Warwick	15,825	163	236	1%
West Greenwich	1,477	0	0	0%
West Warwick	5,746	114	183	3%
Westerly	4,787	22	34	1%
Woonsocket	9,888	385	667	7%
Other/Unknown	NA	7	8	NA
Four Core Cities	73,741	2,838	5,130	7%
Remainder of State	150,215	1,304	2,057	1%
Rhode Island	223,956	4,149	7,195	3%

Education and Training Supporting Employment

◆ An estimated 75,000 working-age adults (ages 18 to 65) in Rhode Island do not have a high school diploma. Of the 5,500 adults in adult education programs in Rhode Island, 94% entered these programs with a reading or math level lower than the ninth grade.³⁹

◆ By 2020, 71% of jobs in Rhode Island will require post-secondary education beyond high school.⁴⁰ Between 2013 and 2017, the unemployment rate for Rhode Islanders without high school diplomas was 10.6%, compared to 8.7% for those with high school degrees and 2.9% 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-one percent of parents enrolled in RI Works report not finishing high school. Among a recently tested group of parents receiving cash assistance, more than one-third (37%) of those tested in English tested at or below the sixth-grade reading level, while almost two-thirds (66%) 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.⁴²

◆ 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.⁴³ States should explore how to meet their work participation rate while offering beneficiaries a chance to improve job skills and long-term work preparedness.⁴⁴

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Human Services, RI Bridges Database, December 2018. 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 in the final trimester of her pregnancy.

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

References

^{1,2,3,5,8,16,17,19,21,22,26,27,30,33,36} Rhode Island Secretary of State. (2019). *Rhode Island Works Program rules and regulations* 218-RICR-20-00-2. Retrieved January 30, 2019, from sos.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 2018.

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.^{1,2} 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

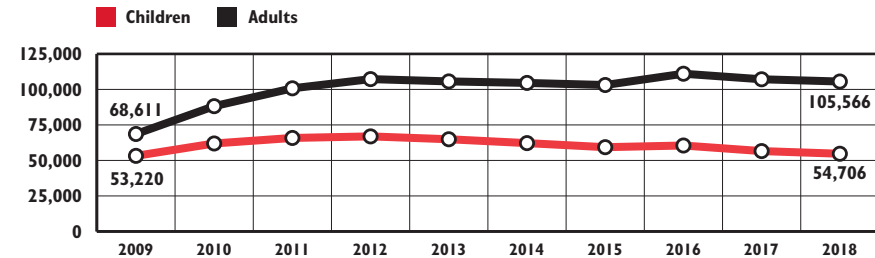
Nationally, SNAP is available to households with gross monthly incomes below 130% of the federal poverty level, net monthly incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level, and no more than \$2,250 in resources.⁵ Rhode Island is one of 40 states that have implemented broad-based categorical eligibility, which allowed Rhode Island to increase the gross income limit and remove the resource limit for most applicants.⁶ The gross monthly income

limit for Rhode Island is 185% of the federal poverty level (\$38,443 per year for a family of three in 2018).^{7,8} 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.⁹

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.¹⁰ In Rhode Island during October 2018, 76% of SNAP recipients had gross incomes below the federal poverty level (\$20,780 for a family of three in 2018).^{11,12} In October 2018, the average monthly SNAP benefit for a family of three in Rhode Island was \$377.¹³

Participation in SNAP has been associated with improvement in both current and long-term health outcomes among low-income or food insecure children.¹⁴ 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 individuals in working families.¹⁵ In addition, SNAP is a quick and effective form of economic stimulus because it moves money directly into the local economy.¹⁶

Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Children and Adults, Rhode Island, 2009-2018



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, 2009–2015 and RI Bridges Database, 2016–2018. Data represent children under age 18 and adults who participated in SNAP during the month of October.

- ◆ Of the 160,272 Rhode Islanders enrolled in SNAP in October 2018, 66% were adults and 34% were children. Of the children enrolled in SNAP, 34% were under the age of six.¹⁷
- ◆ 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 was due to efforts to avoid denying eligible SNAP recipients during the difficult transition to the RI Bridges/UHIP computer system. Between 2016 and 2018, the number of adults and children receiving SNAP benefits again decreased.^{18,19}

Food Insecurity in Rhode Island

- ◆ The USDA defines food insecurity as not always having access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Between 2015 and 2017, 12.4% of Rhode Island households and 12.3% of U.S. households were food insecure. In 2017, 15.7% of all U.S. households with children were food insecure, while 43.4% of U.S. households with children with incomes below the poverty level experienced food insecurity.²⁰
- ◆ Several federal nutrition programs provide nutrition assistance to children and families, including 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.²¹ In 2018, food pantries and soup kitchens provided emergency food assistance to 53,000 Rhode Islanders each month who needed additional help to meet their nutritional needs.²²

Children Receiving SNAP Benefits

Table 12. Children Under Age 18 Receiving SNAP Benefits, Rhode Island, October 2018

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER PARTICIPATING
Barrington	91
Bristol	406
Burrillville	427
Central Falls	2,867
Charlestown	143
Coventry	828
Cranston	3,009
Cumberland	720
East Greenwich	168
East Providence	1,647
Exeter	73
Foster	90
Glocester	124
Hopkinton	162
Jamestown	41
Johnston	960
Lincoln	601
Little Compton	37
Middletown	466
Narragansett	176
New Shoreham	5
Newport	1,329
North Kingstown	726
North Providence	1,091
North Smithfield	164
Pawtucket	6,235
Portsmouth	222
Providence	20,730
Richmond	119
Scituate	144
Smithfield	192
South Kingstown	474
Tiverton	351
Warren	338
Warwick	2,166
West Greenwich	51
West Warwick	1,706
Westerly	687
Woonsocket	4,806
Unknown	134
Four Core Cities	34,638
Remainder of State	19,934
Rhode Island	54,706

Increasing Access to SNAP Benefits

◆ The decisions that states make about their enrollment and renewal processes for public benefits such as SNAP can help eligible families successfully access benefits and remain enrolled in the program. Rhode Island has implemented a number of strategies to improve access to SNAP benefits, including implementing “expanded categorical eligibility” so more families qualify, developing an online SNAP application, and requiring less frequent certification.^{23,24,25}

◆ Rhode Island could increase access to SNAP benefits for children and families by using a more flexible interview process that accommodates households’ schedules and has different options for conducting interviews and completing renewals. Rhode Island could also consider the use of mobile technology in the enrollment process to increase access to SNAP benefits. Low-income individuals are more likely to be dependent on their cell phones as a means of going online. Mobile technologies would allow the state to more easily reach families that lack access to a personal computer.^{26,27}

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 2018.

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.
- ^{2,4,14} 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 January 28, 2019, from www.frac.org
- ^{5,9} U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2018). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Am I eligible for SNAP?* Retrieved January 25, 2019, from www.fns.usda.gov
- ⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2018). *Broad-based categorical eligibility*. Retrieved January 28, 2019, from www.fns.usda.gov
- ⁷ Rhode Island Department of Human Services. (n.d.). *SNAP eligibility*. Retrieved January 25, 2019, from www.dhs.ri.gov
- ^{8,12} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2018). Annual update of the HHS poverty guidelines. *Federal Register*, 83(12), 2642-2644.
- ^{10,16} *Policy basics: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. (2018). Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

(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 referrals to health care and social services. WIC serves pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under five years of age living in low-income households. Any individual who participates in SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program), RItE Care, Medicaid, or Rhode Island Works is automatically income-eligible for WIC. Participants also must have a specified nutritional risk to qualify. This includes medically-based risks such as anemia or high-risk pregnancy, or dietary risks such as inadequate nutrition.^{1,2,3}

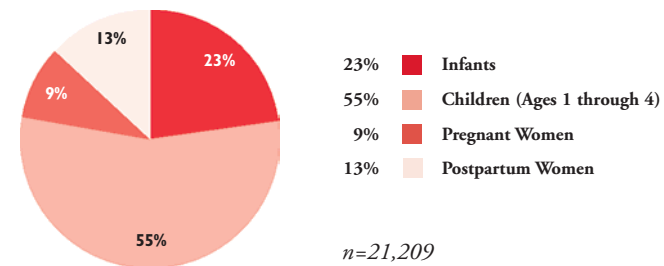
WIC improves the quality of participants' diets and promotes healthy eating habits. Studies have shown that WIC participants access more nutritious foods, including more produce, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. WIC

participation also may decrease household food insecurity (families that do not have regular access to food for an active healthy life).⁴ Food insecurity in early childhood can lead to impaired cognitive, behavioral, and psychosocial development, and can limit academic achievement.⁵ Pregnant women also have special nutritional needs that influence pregnancy outcomes and the health of their children.⁶

WIC participation has been shown to reduce infant mortality, improve birth outcomes (including reducing the likelihood of low birthweight and prematurity), improve cognitive development, reduce risk of child abuse and neglect, increase child immunization rates, boost cognitive development, and increase access to preventive medical care.^{7,8}

Revisions made in 2014 to the WIC food package increased access to a wider variety of nutritious foods and strengthened breastfeeding support.⁹ WIC consistently promotes breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding.¹⁰ In Rhode Island in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018, 79% of mothers participating in WIC initiated breastfeeding. Sixteen percent of infants participating in WIC were breastfed at three months of age, and 13% were breastfed at six months of age.¹¹

Women, Infants, and Children Enrolled in WIC, Rhode Island, September 2018



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, WIC Program, September 2018. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

- ◆ **Infants and children ages one through four comprised more than three-quarters (78%) of the population being served by WIC in September 2018 in Rhode Island. Women accounted for over one-fifth (9% pregnant and 13% postpartum) of the population being served.**¹²
- ◆ **In September 2018, 68% of WIC participants in Rhode Island were White, 17% were Black, 3% were Asian, and 12% identified as other races or more than one race. Fifty-two percent of WIC participants identified as Hispanic. Hispanics are included in the racial groups above.**¹³
- ◆ **All four core cities had participation rates exceeding the statewide enrollment rate of 46% in 2018 – Central Falls (54%), Pawtucket (47%), Providence (56%), and Woonsocket (53%).**¹⁴
- ◆ **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.**¹⁵ Rhode Island received \$21.7 million in federal WIC funding during FFY 2018, which was less than the \$22.9 million in funding for FFY 2017.¹⁶
- ◆ **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.**¹⁷ In Rhode Island, 31 farmers' markets provided fresh produce to 12,235 WIC participants through the FMNP in FFY 2018.¹⁸

Women and Children Participating in WIC

Table 13.

Women, Infants, and Children Enrolled in WIC, September 2018

CITY/TOWN	ESTIMATED NUMBER ELIGIBLE	NUMBER ENROLLED	% OF ELIGIBLE ENROLLED
Barrington	154	34	22%
Bristol	429	153	36%
Burrillville	489	169	35%
Central Falls	2194	1182	54%
Charlestown	157	41	26%
Coventry	824	305	37%
Cranston	2953	1374	47%
Cumberland	719	208	29%
East Greenwich	178	47	26%
East Providence	1733	691	40%
Exeter	121	34	28%
Foster	105	24	23%
Glocester	180	38	21%
Hopkinton	224	122	54%
Jamestown	34	5	15%
Johnston	1043	421	40%
Lincoln	553	160	29%
Little Compton	54	11	20%
Middletown	440	206	47%
Narragansett	169	47	28%
New Shoreham	32	2	6%
Newport	905	450	50%
North Kingstown	588	183	31%
North Providence	1145	495	43%
North Smithfield	248	81	33%
Pawtucket	5243	2439	47%
Portsmouth	247	75	30%
Providence	15016	8423	56%
Richmond	131	25	19%
Scituate	216	67	31%
Smithfield	330	102	31%
South Kingstown	522	113	22%
Tiverton	360	105	29%
Warren	340	119	35%
Warwick	2334	774	33%
West Greenwich	101	28	28%
West Warwick	1469	528	36%
Westerly	753	207	27%
Woonsocket	3260	1721	53%
Four Core Cities	25,713	13,765	54%
Remainder of State	20,280	7,444	37%
Rhode Island	45,993	21,209	46%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, WIC Program, September 2018.

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.

References

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- Fortson, B. L., Klevens, J., Merrick, M. T., Gilbert, L. K., & Alexander, S. P. (2016). *Preventing child abuse and neglect: A technical package for policy, norm, and programmatic activities*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(continued on page 177)

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 2017-2018 school year, 12.5 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

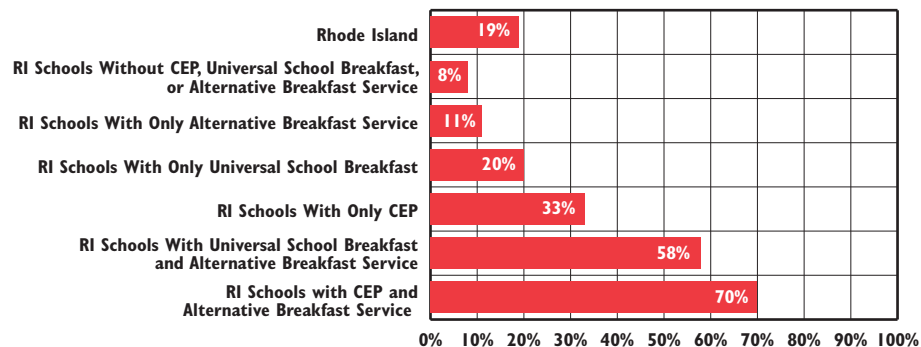
Food-insecure families often do not have sufficient food to provide nutritious breakfasts every morning, and children in these families are at risk of falling behind their peers physically, cognitively, academically, emotionally, and socially. Children who are

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 2017-2018 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 33rd in the U.S. for participation in the School Breakfast Program, down from 31st 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 2018



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Office of Statewide Efficiencies, October 2018.

- ◆ **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 2016-2017 school year, 20,721 schools (55% of all eligible schools nationally) participated in CEP. Rhode Island's participation rate was among the lowest with 19% of eligible schools participating.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 2018-2019 school year, all schools in Cranston and Woonsocket, selected schools in five other districts, and three charter schools 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 alternative breakfast service.^{15,16} During the 2018-2019 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 2018

SCHOOL DISTRICT	OCTOBER 2018 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	3,357	44	1%	157	13	8%
Bristol Warren	3,383	354	10%	1,161	214	18%
Burrillville	2,368	156	7%	814	116	14%
Central Falls	2,774	1,318	48%	NA	NA	NA
Charlho	3,364	176	5%	704	116	16%
Coventry	9,462	390	4%	2,970	286	10%
Cranston	11,224	2,469	22%	4,590	1,420	31%
Cumberland	4,837	428	9%	1,029	250	24%
East Greenwich	2,544	69	3%	170	34	20%
East Providence	5,890	1,055	18%	2,975	734	25%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,628	87	5%	285	49	17%
Foster	270	31	11%	64	26	40%
Foster-Glocester	1,344	98	7%	244	51	21%
Glocester	556	64	11%	74	27	37%
Jamestown	486	14	3%	44	*	17%
Johnston	3,409	370	11%	1,458	272	19%
Lincoln	3,214	224	7%	853	159	19%
Little Compton	253	*	1%	41	*	3%
Middletown	2,487	128	5%	732	99	13%
Narragansett	1,332	75	6%	284	42	15%
New Shoreham	136	11	8%	23	*	31%
Newport	2,338	516	22%	1,442	436	30%
North Kingstown	4,264	273	6%	1,031	218	21%
North Providence	4,027	624	15%	1,569	392	25%
North Smithfield	1,730	62	4%	320	40	12%
Pawtucket	10,325	2,470	24%	NA	NA	NA
Portsmouth	2,500	93	4%	398	55	14%
Providence	27,141	11,065	41%	NA	NA	NA
Scituate	1,245	29	2%	221	19	8%
Smithfield	2,699	130	5%	414	73	18%
South Kingstown	3,050	209	7%	568	154	27%
Tiverton	3,550	112	3%	864	74	9%
Warwick	9,334	657	7%	3,187	456	14%
West Warwick	3,993	579	15%	2,120	465	22%
Westerly	2,740	278	10%	970	234	24%
Woonsocket	6,734	2,257	34%	4,674	1,859	40%
<i>Charter Schools</i>	<i>8,892</i>	<i>3,006</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>State-Operated Schools</i>	<i>1,842</i>	<i>507</i>	<i>28%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>UCAP</i>	<i>137</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>125</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>18%</i>
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	<i>46,974</i>	<i>17,110</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>103,014</i>	<i>9,808</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>31,776</i>	<i>6,541</i>	<i>21%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>160,859</i>	<i>30,454</i>	<i>19%</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Office of Statewide Efficiencies, October 2018.

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. During the 2018-2019 school year, Central Falls, all elementary schools in Providence, some schools in Pawtucket, Highlander Charter School, Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College Charter School, and the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center were using CEP.

*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 state, and state totals.

Charter schools include: Achievement First Rhode Island, Beacon Charter High School for the Arts, Blackstone Academy, Blackstone Valley Prep, Charette Charter School, 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 2018 enrollment and number of low-income students are for the full month of October and are not comparable with the October 1, 2018 enrollment numbers reported elsewhere in the Factbook.

(Sources and References are continued on page 177)