

# Racial and Ethnic Disparities

## DEFINITION

*Racial and ethnic disparities* is the gap that exists in outcomes for children of different racial and ethnic groups in Rhode Island. Child well-being outcome areas include economic well-being, health, safety, and education.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Rhode Island's children are diverse in racial and ethnic background. In 2010 in Rhode Island, 72% of children under age 18 were White, 8% were Black or African American, 3% were Asian, 1% were Native American, 9% of children were identified as Some other race, and 7% as Two or more races. In 2010, 21% of children living in Rhode Island were Hispanic.<sup>1</sup>

Children who live in poverty, especially those who experience deep poverty in early childhood, are more likely to have health, behavioral, educational, economic, and social problems.<sup>2,3</sup> Between 2014 and 2018, 18% of all Rhode Island children lived in poverty, 70% of whom were children of color.<sup>4</sup>

Black, Latino, and Native American children are more likely than White and Asian children to live in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and face challenges above and beyond the burdens of individual poverty.<sup>5</sup> In Rhode Island, almost one-third (32%) of Latino children live in concentrated poverty, higher than any other state

except Pennsylvania (35%).<sup>6</sup>

In 2010, two-thirds (67%) of Rhode Island's children of color lived in one of the four core cities (those cities with the highest percentage of children living in poverty), and more than three quarters of the children in Providence (84%) and Central Falls (87%) were children of color.<sup>7</sup>

Residential segregation between Whites and Blacks has decreased in the U.S. since the 1970s, but high levels of residential segregation still exist. Hispanics and Asians experience less segregation than Blacks, but the rate of segregation for these groups has been increasing in recent years.<sup>8</sup> The Providence-New Bedford-Fall River metropolitan area was the ninth most segregated metropolitan area in the nation for Hispanics in 2010.<sup>9</sup>

Black and Hispanic families were disproportionately impacted by the economic recession. The median net worth of Black and Hispanic families fell more than White families from 2007 through 2013. While the net worth of all families increased from 2013 through 2016, the median net worth of White households was almost 10 times greater than Black families and eight times higher than Hispanic families in 2016.<sup>10</sup> In Rhode Island, Black and Latino families have higher rates of unemployment and earn lower wages than White families.<sup>11</sup>

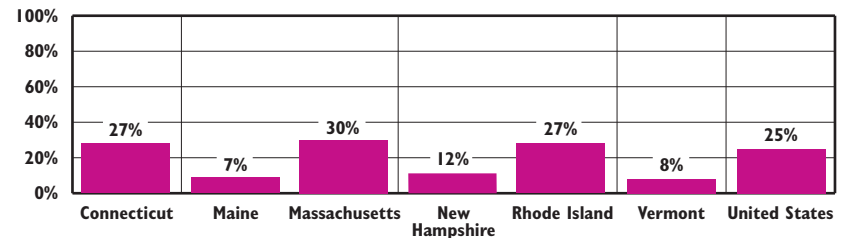


## Residential Segregation and Its Impact on Education

- ◆ In the U.S., Black and Latino students have become increasingly segregated from White students over the last 30 years. White students generally attend schools that are disproportionately White and low-poverty, while Black and Latino students attend schools that are disproportionately students of color and high-poverty.<sup>12,13</sup>
- ◆ Students in schools with high concentrations of low-income students and students of color have unequal educational opportunities, with classmates who generally have more absences and lower graduation rates and teachers who have less teaching experience and are more likely to teach outside their subject area of expertise. Students living in poverty often face a host of challenges outside the classroom that can negatively impact academic performance, including inadequate housing, less access to health care, lower parental educational levels, and fewer opportunities for enriching after-school and summer activities.<sup>14,15</sup>



## Percentage of Children Living in Immigrant Families\*, New England and United States, 2017-2018



Source: The Urban Institute Children of Immigrants Data Tool, Data from 2017-2018, [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)

\*Percentage reported represents children living in a family with at least one foreign-born parent.

- ◆ Children in immigrant families are defined as children under age 18 living in a family with at least one foreign-born parent. In 2017-2018, 27% (55,000) of Rhode Island children were living in immigrant families.<sup>16</sup>
- ◆ More than half (53%) of Rhode Island's Hispanic children live in an immigrant family.<sup>17</sup>



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

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
Children in Poverty	14%	35%	26%	12%	63%	18%
Births to Mothers with <12 Years Education	6%	25%	13%	7%	23%	11%
Unemployment Rate	3.3%	6.1%	4.6%	NA	NA	3.5%
Median Family Income	\$88,569	\$40,624	\$49,980	\$82,051	\$35,796	\$81,822
Homeownership	65%	28%	32%	49%	20%	60%

Sources: *Children in Poverty* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018. Tables S1701, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D & B17020I. *Maternal Education* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2014-2018 (race data is non-Hispanic). *Unemployment Rate* data are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2019. *Median Family Income* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018, Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D & B19113I. *Homeownership* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018, Tables B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D & B25003I. For U.S. Census Bureau data, Hispanics may be included in any of the race categories. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race. NA indicates that the rate was suppressed because the number was too small to calculate a reliable rate.

- ◆ Between 2014 and 2018 in Rhode Island, 18% of all children, 63% of Native American children, 35% of Hispanic children, 26% of Black children, 14% of White children, and 12% of Asian children in Rhode Island lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold.<sup>18</sup>
- ◆ Between 2014 and 2018 in Rhode Island, White households were the most likely to own their homes while Native American, Hispanic, and Black households were the most likely to live in rental units.<sup>19</sup>
- ◆ In 2019 in Rhode Island, the unemployment rate among White workers was 3.3%, compared to 4.6% for Black workers and 6.1% for Hispanic workers. Nationally, the unemployment rate for White workers in 2019 was 3.3%, compared to 6.1% for Black workers and 4.3% for Hispanic workers.<sup>20</sup>
- ◆ Education is essential for economic success. Adults with less than a high school diploma are at particular risk of living in poverty and other negative outcomes.<sup>21</sup> Hispanic, Native American, and Black children in Rhode Island are all more likely than White and Asian children to be born to mothers with less than a high school diploma.<sup>22</sup>



## Health Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
Children Without Health Insurance	2.4%	2.3%	1.4%	4.9%	NA	2.2%
Women With Delayed or No Prenatal Care	13.4%	18.2%	22.3%	16.4%	21.2%	15.9%
Preterm Births	8.1%	9.3%	11.2%	7.5%	13.2%	8.7%
Low Birthweight Infants	6.6%	8.0%	11.1%	7.5%	12.5	7.5%
Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)	3.3	5.5	10.6	5.2^	*	5.2
Births to Teens Ages 15-19 (per 1,000 teens)	7.5	31.7	16.6	3.3	26.7	14.0

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2014-2018 unless otherwise specified. Race and ethnicity is self-reported. Race data is non-Hispanic, except for *Infant Mortality* where Hispanic can be of any race. *Children Without Health Insurance* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018, Tables B27001, B27001A, B27001B, B27001D & B27001I. For U.S. Census Bureau data, Hispanic also may be included in any of the race categories. For *Births to Teens* the denominator is the female population ages 15 to 19 by race and ethnicity from CDC Wonder. Note that the All Races total for *Births to Teens* does not match the Rhode Island total presented by city and town in the *Births to Teens* indicator, which uses American Community Survey data by city and town as the denominator.

\*The data are statistically unreliable and rates are not reported and should not be calculated.  
 ^The data are statistically unstable and rates or percentages should be interpreted with caution..

- ◆ Although progress has been made on many health indicators across racial and ethnic populations, disparities still exist for a number of maternal and infant health outcomes in Rhode Island. Women of color are more likely than White women to receive delayed or no prenatal care and to have infants with low birthweight. Native American, Black, and Hispanic women are also more likely to have preterm births than White and Asian women. Black children are more likely to die in infancy than White, Hispanic, or Asian children. Hispanic, Native American, and Black youth are more likely than White and Asian youth to give birth as teenagers.<sup>23</sup>
- ◆ Black and Hispanic children in Rhode Island are more likely to go to the Emergency Department as a result of asthma than White children.<sup>24</sup> Nationally, children of Two or more races and Black children are the most likely of all racial and ethnic groups to have asthma.<sup>25</sup>
- ◆ In 2018, 95% of U.S. children had health insurance coverage. Hispanic (92%) and Native American (87%) children had the lowest rates of coverage.<sup>26</sup>

# Racial and Ethnic Disparities



## Safety Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
Youth at the Training School (per 1,000 youth ages 13-18)	1.1	5.9	14.7	0.8	5.0	3.0
Children of Incarcerated Parents (per 1,000 children)	6.7	15.3	46.6	1.7	33.1	12.2
Children in Out-of-Home Placement (per 1,000 children)	6.1	12.7	17.9	2.3	6.4	7.2

Sources: Youth at the Training School data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Training School, Calendar Year 2019. Children of Incarcerated Parents data are from the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, September 30, 2019 and reflect the race of the incarcerated parent (includes only the sentenced population). Children in Out-of-Home Placement data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST Database, December 31, 2019. Population denominators used for Youth at the Training School are youth ages 13 to 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1. Population denominators used for Children of Incarcerated Parents and Children in Out-of-Home Placement are the populations under age 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1.

◆ Youth of color continue to be disproportionately represented in the U.S. juvenile justice system. Youth of color (especially Latino and Black youth) are treated more harshly than White youth for the same type and severity of offenses, including detention, processing, and incarceration in juvenile and adult correctional facilities.<sup>27</sup> Rhode Island's juvenile justice system continues to have a higher rate of disparity between White youth and youth of color than the nation.<sup>28</sup>

◆ Black and Hispanic children in Rhode Island are more likely than their White, Asian or Native American peers to be placed out-of-home through the child welfare system.<sup>29</sup> Nationally, children of color experience disparate treatment as they enter the foster care system and while they are in the system. They are more likely than White children under similar circumstances to be placed in foster care, remain in the child welfare system longer, have less contact with child welfare staff, and have lower reunification rates.<sup>30</sup>

◆ Racial and ethnic disproportionality in child welfare and juvenile justice systems is in part a reflection of differential poverty rates between communities of color and White communities. However, while addressing poverty through policies would reduce out-of-home placement rates and juvenile incarceration rates, policies that work directly to reduce racial and ethnic disparities are necessary as well.<sup>31</sup>



## Education Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

	WHITE	HISPANIC	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ALL RACES
3rd Grade Students Meeting Expectations in Reading	57%	33%	33%	58%	23%	48%
3rd Grade Students Meeting Expectations in Math	45%	21%	24%	52%	16%	36%
Four-Year High School Graduation Rates	88%	76%	81%	88%	70%	84%
Immediate College Enrollment Rates	72%	56%	61%	76%	59%	67%
% of Adults Over Age 25 With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher	35%	14%	21%	49%	17%	33%

Sources: Third Grade Students Meeting Expectations in Reading and Math data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS), 2019. Four-Year High School Graduation Rates data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2019. Immediate College Enrollment Rates data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Class of 2018. Adult Educational Attainment data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018, Tables B15003, C15002A, C15002B, C15002C, C15002D & C15002I. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race and Hispanics also may be included in any of the race categories.

◆ In Rhode Island, Native American, Black, and Hispanic children are less likely to meet expectations in reading and mathematics in third grade than White or Asian children.<sup>32</sup>

◆ Nationally and in Rhode Island, Native American, Hispanic, and Black students are less likely to graduate from high school within four years and are less likely to immediately enroll in college than White or Asian students. Gaps in college enrollment are particularly large for four-year college enrollment.<sup>33,34</sup>

◆ Nationally, Black, Hispanic, and Native American students are more likely than White and Asian students to be disciplined in school. Schools' disproportionate use of disciplinary techniques that remove children from the classroom, such as out-of-school suspension or expulsion, may contribute to racial and ethnic gaps in school achievement and drop-out rates.<sup>35,36</sup> In Rhode Island during the 2018-2019 school year, students of color received 56% of all disciplinary actions, although they made up only 45% of the student population.<sup>37</sup>



## Rhode Island's Hispanic Children and Youth

- ◆ In 2010, there were 45,940 Hispanic children under age 18 living in Rhode Island, up from 35,326 in 2000. Hispanic children made up 21% of Rhode Island's child population in 2010, compared with 14% in 2000.<sup>38</sup>
  - ◆ In 2010, three-quarters (75%) of the Hispanic children in Rhode Island lived in the four core cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket. While Providence has the largest Hispanic child population overall, Central Falls has the highest percentage of Hispanic children.<sup>39</sup>
  - ◆ Rhode Island's Latino children are ranked lowest in the nation on the Race for Results Opportunity Index that measures indicators of child opportunity, including health, education, and economic well-being.<sup>40</sup>
- ### Economics
- ◆ Between 2014 and 2018, 35% of Rhode Island's Hispanic children were living in poverty, compared to 28% of Hispanic children nationally. During that same time period, the median family income for Hispanics in Rhode Island was \$40,624, compared to \$81,822 overall in Rhode Island.<sup>41</sup>
- ### Health
- ◆ In Rhode Island between 2014 and 2018, 18.2% of Hispanic babies were born to women who received delayed or no prenatal care, compared with 15.9% of all babies in the state.<sup>42</sup>
  - ◆ Between 2014 and 2018, Hispanic teens ages 15 to 19 in Rhode Island had a birth rate that was more than twice as high as the overall teen birth rate (31.7 per 1,000 Hispanic teens ages 15 to 19 compared to 14.0 per 1,000 for all teens).<sup>43</sup>
- ### Education
- ◆ The four-year high school graduation rate among Hispanic youth in the class of 2019 was 76%, compared to Rhode Island's four-year high school graduation rate for all students of 84%.<sup>44</sup>
  - ◆ The achievement gap between White and Latino students in Rhode Island is among the largest in the U.S.<sup>45</sup>

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