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Child Poverty Rate Declining in Rhode Island; 35,000 Rhode Island Children Still Live in Poverty

17.0% of Rhode Island's children lived in poverty in 2016, compared to 21.5% in 2013

Providence, RI (September 15, 2017) – Rhode Island KIDS COUNT released new data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) yesterday. The ACS provides national and state-level data on poverty and family income. In 2016, 17.0% – an estimated 35,106 – of Rhode Island's children lived in poverty. This is an improvement from 2013, when 21.5% of Rhode Island's children lived in poverty. During this same period from 2013 to 2016, the child poverty rate in the U.S. declined from 22.2% to 19.5%.

Poverty Data

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.

According to the ACS, in 2016:

- 17.0% – an estimated 35,106 – of Rhode Island's children lived in poverty. (In 2013, 21.5% of Rhode Island's children lived in poverty.)
 - The poverty data are based on the federal poverty threshold, which was an annual income of \$19,337 for a family of three with two children and \$24,339 for a family of four with two children in 2016.
- 7.6% – an estimated 15,755 – of Rhode Island's children lived in extreme poverty. (In 2013, 9.9% of Rhode Island's children lived in extreme poverty.)
 - Extreme poverty is defined as families with incomes below 50% of the federal poverty level, or \$9,669 for a family of three with two children and \$12,170 for a family of four with two children in 2016.
- Rhode Island ranks 22nd in the nation — and 5th in New England — for the percentage of children in poverty.

“It’s encouraging that the latest data on Rhode Island’s child poverty rate show a continuing downward trend since 2013,” said Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. “Gradual improvements in the economy, including an increase in median family income, are beginning to have a positive impact on Rhode Island’s child poverty rate. However, the fact that 35,000 children in Rhode Island continue to live in poverty is a stark reminder that there is more work to do.”

“We need to continue to support crucial programs and services, such as SNAP, RItE Care health insurance, and the Child Care Assistance Program, that alleviate the immediate negative impact of poverty for children and families. We also need to focus on long-term strategies for economic success: improving the education levels and job skills of parents so they can qualify for higher paying jobs, while at the same time increasing access to high-quality education for all children and youth from early childhood education through college. Education is the pathway out of poverty.”

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children’s policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, safety, education and development of Rhode Island children.

All Children Under 18 Living Below Poverty: 2015-2016

Source: American Community Survey, 2015 and 2016

	2016	MOE*	2015	MOE*
United States	19.5	0.2	20.7	0.2
Alabama	24.5	1.1	26.6	1.0
Alaska	14.1	2.2	15.2	1.8
Arizona	23.6	0.8	24.7	1.0
Arkansas	23.8	1.3	27.2	1.4
California	19.9	0.4	21.2	0.3
Colorado	13.4	0.8	14.7	0.8
Connecticut	12.9	1.1	14.5	1.1
Delaware	17.4	2.5	19.4	2.7
District of Columbia	25.8	3.9	25.6	3.4
Florida	21.0	0.6	23.1	0.6
Georgia	22.9	0.8	24.5	0.8
Hawaii	10.1	1.4	14.2	1.6
Idaho	17.7	1.8	17.8	1.5
Illinois	17.7	0.6	19.1	0.7
Indiana	19.5	0.8	20.9	0.9
Iowa	14.8	1.0	14.8	0.9
Kansas	14.1	1.0	17.2	1.1
Kentucky	25.0	1.2	25.9	1.1
Louisiana	28.6	1.3	28.4	1.2
Maine	17.2	2.0	17.4	1.9
Maryland	12.7	0.6	13.2	0.8
Massachusetts	13.6	0.7	14.8	0.7
Michigan	20.7	0.6	22.4	0.7
Minnesota	12.7	0.7	13.1	0.7
Mississippi	29.7	1.6	31.3	1.5
Missouri	19.2	0.9	20.2	0.9
Montana	15.1	1.8	19.4	2.4
Nebraska	14.2	1.3	16.8	1.2
Nevada	19.1	1.4	20.9	1.5
New Hampshire	7.9	1.2	10.7	1.3
New Jersey	14.6	0.8	15.6	0.7
New Mexico	30.1	1.8	28.6	1.6
New York	20.7	0.5	22.0	0.6
North Carolina	21.7	0.8	23.5	0.7
North Dakota	12.4	1.6	12.1	1.6
Ohio	20.5	0.7	21.3	0.7
Oklahoma	22.9	0.9	22.2	1.0
Oregon	17.0	1.1	20.3	1.3
Pennsylvania	18.5	0.6	19.4	0.6
Rhode Island	17.0	2.1	19.4	2.3
South Carolina	23.0	1.1	24.0	1.0
South Dakota	16.9	1.7	18.1	1.7
Tennessee	22.6	0.9	24.2	1.0
Texas	22.4	0.4	23.0	0.5
Utah	11.1	0.9	12.9	0.9
Vermont	14.8	2.6	13.3	2.3
Virginia	14.3	0.7	14.8	0.6
Washington	13.7	0.7	15.5	0.8
West Virginia	24.0	1.8	25.2	1.8
Wisconsin	15.7	0.9	16.4	0.8
Wyoming	11.1	1.9	13.2	2.9

* MOE = Margin of Error

Compiled by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, September 2017.

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015 - 2016. Table R1704.