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**U.S. Census Bureau Releases New Data on
Childhood Poverty in Rhode Island**

**Almost one in five (19.5%) Rhode Island children
lived in poverty in 2012**

Child poverty rate in Rhode Island stabilizes, but remains high

Providence, RI (September 19, 2013) – Rhode Island KIDS COUNT released new data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) detailing the extent of poverty among children in Rhode Island, New England, and each of the 50 states.

According to the new Census data, almost one in five (19.5%) of Rhode Island’s children was living in poverty in 2012. Rhode Island’s childhood poverty rate had been steadily increasing since the recession, increasing from 15.5% in 2008 to 21.9% in 2011, but now seems to be stabilizing. The latest data, released today, reveals that 41,635 Rhode Island children lived in poverty in 2012. The child poverty rate for the United States was 22.6% in 2012, up from 18.2% in 2008.

“Children who live in poverty face the most challenges, during childhood and later in life” stated Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. “They are more likely to have health and behavioral issues, to lack access to high-quality educational opportunities, to become parents as teens, and to earn less or be unemployed as adults.”

The new data show that in 2012, Rhode Island ranked 5th of the six New England states and 22nd nationally for child poverty (where 1st is best). This compares to 2011 when Rhode Island’s child poverty rate was ranked 6th in New England and 27th nationally. The poverty data are based on the federal poverty threshold which is defined for 2012 as an income of \$18,498 a year for a family of three with two children and \$23,283 for a family of four with two children.

According to the Census data released today, in 2012, 9.4% (20,220) of Rhode Island children were living in extreme poverty. Extreme poverty is defined as one-half of the federal poverty level, or \$9,249 a year for a family of three with two children and \$11,642 for a family of four with two children in 2012.

“Rhode Island and its families are still struggling to recover from the effects of the recession,” noted Bryant. “Reducing child poverty in Rhode Island will require a two-generation approach, including 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 so they will have the education and skills to compete when they are adults. It is also important that families have access to high-quality, affordable child care and health care for their children which can help reduce the negative effects of poverty on children and ensure that children get a strong start in life.”

Child poverty data is available for Rhode Island’s cities and towns in the *2013 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook*, which can be found at www.rikidscount.org.

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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.