

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 2023, the median family income for Rhode Island families with their own children was \$104,513.¹

Between 2019 and 2023, in Rhode Island, the median family income for married two-parent families (\$138,189) was more than twice that of male-headed single-parent families (\$64,338) and more than three times that of female-headed single-parent families (\$41,026).²

In 2024, Rhode Island's unemployment rate was 4.5%, up from 3.3% in 2023. Unemployment rates in Rhode Island vary by race and ethnicity. While in 2024 the unemployment rate was 5.7% for Hispanic workers and 4.3% for white workers, Black workers had a lower rate at 3.5%.^{3,4}

Even when Rhode Island's unemployment rate is low, many workers are unable to find full-time work and struggle to make ends meet with inadequate and unpredictable income. In 2018, more than 22 million people in the U.S. worked in low-wage jobs (less than \$12 per hour), and job losses during the pandemic disproportionately affected low-wage workers.^{5,6,7} Conditions at low-wage jobs, such as unstable and inadequate 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 for their children.⁸

In the U.S., income inequality has grown substantially since the 1970s.⁹ In 2018 in Rhode Island, the top 1% of households held almost 18% of total income. Rhode Island has the 32nd highest income inequality of the 50 states based on the share of income held by the top 1% of households.¹⁰

Median Family Income	
	2023
RI	\$104,500
US	\$95,700
National Rank*	14 th
New England Rank**	5 th

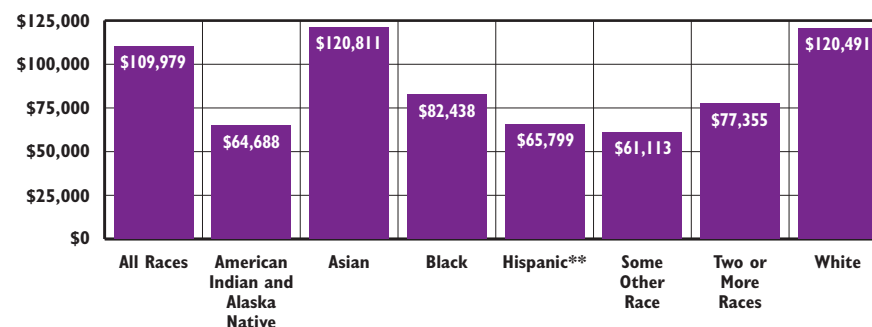
*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

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



Median Family Income, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2019-2023*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019-2023, 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 Asian and white families in Rhode Island is higher than that of Black families and nearly twice as much as for Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native, and families of Some other race or Two or more races.¹¹

◆ Educational attainment is strongly associated with economic well-being. Rhode Islanders who have achieved a bachelor's degree have almost double the median earnings compared to workers who have not completed high school. In Rhode Island, more than one in four Hispanic adults, one in eight Black adults, and one in 12 white adults lack a high school diploma.¹²

◆ According to the 2024 *Rhode Island Standard of Need*, it costs a single-parent family with two young children \$83,239 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 \$99,418 to meet this budget without government subsidies.¹³

◆ An adequate minimum wage and income support programs (including RItE Care health insurance, child care subsidies, SNAP benefits, the Child Tax Credit, and the Earned Income Tax Credit) are critical for helping low-and moderate-income working families in Rhode Island make ends meet, and expanding these programs would help decrease racial and ethnic disparities in meeting basic needs.¹⁴

Median Family Income

Table 5. Median Family Income, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

2019-2023 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18		
CITY/TOWN	ESTIMATES WITH HIGH MARGINS OF ERROR*	ESTIMATES WITH LOWER, ACCEPTABLE MARGINS OF ERROR
Barrington		\$177,878
Bristol		\$137,961
Burrillville		\$120,956
Central Falls		\$48,344
Charlestown		\$107,222
Coventry		\$120,310
Cranston		\$110,351
Cumberland		\$151,056
East Greenwich		\$240,833
East Providence		\$109,612
Exeter		\$118,750
Foster	\$138,125	
Glocester	\$133,558	
Hopkinton	\$101,750	
Jamestown***	\$250,000+	
Johnston	\$91,250	
Lincoln		\$143,992
Little Compton	\$158,646	
Middletown		\$105,781
Narragansett	\$143,992	
New Shoreham		**
Newport	\$105,781	
North Kingstown		\$160,242
North Providence		\$96,761
North Smithfield	\$120,625	
Pawtucket		\$72,938
Portsmouth		\$189,697
Providence		\$67,505
Richmond		\$132,143
Scituate		\$164,769
Smithfield		\$156,340
South Kingstown		\$125,574
Tiverton		\$132,699
Warren		\$124,167
Warwick		\$105,051
West Greenwich	\$175,030	
West Warwick		\$79,394
Westerly		\$117,813
Woonsocket		\$49,975
Four Core Cities		NA
Remainder of State		NA
Rhode Island		\$103,334

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 2019-2023 data come from a Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2019-2023 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 varies 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.

**The estimate or margin of error could not be computed due to an insufficient number of observations.

*** The margin of error could not be computed because the median falls in the lowest interval or highest interval of an open-ended distribution.

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

References

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023. Table B19125.
- ² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019-2023. Table B19126.
- ³ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. (n.d.). *Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and detailed age, 2023 annual averages – Rhode Island.*
- ⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics. (n.d.). *Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and detailed age, 2024 annual averages – Rhode Island.*
- ⁵ The Economic Progress Institute. (2017). *State of working Rhode Island 2017: Paving the way to good jobs.*
- ⁶ Tucker, J., & Vogtman, J. (2020). *When hard work is not enough: Women in low-paid jobs.* National Women's Law Center.
- ⁷ Gould, E., & Kandra, J. (2021). *Wages grew in 2020 because the bottom fell out of the low-wage labor market: The state of working America 2020 wages report.* Economic Policy Institute.
- ⁸ National Women's Law Center. (2020). *Collateral Damage: Scheduling Challenges for Workers in Low-Paid Jobs and Their Consequences.*
- ⁹ Stone, C., Trisi, D., Sherman, A., & Beltrán. (2020). *A guide to statistics on historical trends in income inequality.* Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.
- ¹⁰ Frank, M. W. (2021). *U.S. state-level income inequality data.* Retrieved January 19, 2024, from www.shsu.edu
- ¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019-2023. Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D, B19113E, B19113F, B19113G, & B19113I.
- ¹² U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019-2023. Table S1501.
- ^{13,14} The Economic Progress Institute. (2024). *The 2024 Rhode Island standard of need.*

pandemic. They did not release all the detailed data tables they normally do, and they recommended caution when using these estimates.

In 2015, the U.S. Census Bureau discontinued publishing three-year estimates of the American Community Survey. Beginning with the *2016 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook*, five-year estimates are used in all indicators that had used three-year estimates in prior Factbooks.

Margins of Error for Median Family Income and Children in Poverty

The 2019-2023 Median Family Income and Child Poverty data are estimates based on the American Community Survey, a sample survey. The reliability of estimates varies by community. In general, estimates for small communities are not as reliable as estimates for larger communities. 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% 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. Margins of Error are provided for all communities in the tables in this section.

Methodology for Children Experiencing Homelessness

The number of homeless children identified by public schools is based on the federal *McKinney-Vento Act* definition of homelessness and includes children living in emergency and

Margins of Error, Median Family Income, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

2019-2023 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18		MARGIN OF ERROR
CITY/TOWN		
Barrington	\$177,878	\$15,306
Bristol	\$137,961	\$19,048
Burrillville	\$120,956	\$11,362
Central Falls	\$48,344	\$9,315
Charlestown	\$107,222	\$25,698
Coventry	\$120,310	\$11,007
Cranston	\$110,351	\$9,297
Cumberland	\$151,056	\$21,977
East Greenwich	\$240,833	\$46,871
East Providence	\$109,612	\$13,401
Exeter	\$118,750	\$25,610
Foster	\$138,125	\$50,474
Glocester	\$133,558	\$34,033
Hopkinton	\$101,750	\$75,773
Jamestown	250,000+	***
Johnston	\$91,250	\$32,948
Lincoln	\$143,992	\$18,956
Little Compton	\$158,646	\$40,137
Middletown	\$105,781	\$17,300
Narragansett	\$143,992	\$55,120
New Shoreham	\$158,646	**
Newport	\$105,781	\$39,141
North Kingstown	\$160,242	\$19,090
North Providence	\$96,761	\$20,791
North Smithfield	\$120,625	\$59,725
Pawtucket	\$72,938	\$10,895
Portsmouth	\$189,697	\$17,891
Providence	\$67,505	\$6,804
Richmond	\$132,143	\$28,723
Scituate	\$164,769	\$5,275
Smithfield	\$156,340	\$21,063
South Kingstown	\$125,574	\$16,971
Tiverton	\$132,699	\$24,064
Warren	\$124,167	\$13,623
Warwick	\$105,051	\$4,791
West Greenwich	\$175,030	\$46,346
West Warwick	\$79,394	\$10,434
Westerly	\$117,813	\$12,106
Woonsocket	\$49,975	\$12,022
Four Core Cities	NA	NA
Remainder of State	NA	NA
Rhode Island	\$103,334	\$1,930

For source information see page 25.

Margins of Error, Children Living Below the Federal Poverty Threshold, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING BELOW POVERTY, 2019-2023			
#	MARGIN OF ERROR	%	MARGIN OF ERROR
165	143	3.5%	3.03%
192	140	6.6%	4.73%
262	283	8.8%	9.31%
1,535	523	25.5%	7.84%
80	83	7.4%	7.45%
520	262	8.0%	3.94%
1,211	371	7.4%	2.20%
328	177	4.1%	2.17%
92	89	2.4%	2.31%
1,118	397	14.3%	4.84%
103	84	8.0%	6.25%
33	63	3.9%	7.49%
-	69	-	3.32%
30	64	2.1%	4.51%
-	60	-	8.22%
563	364	9.9%	6.27%
224	180	4.4%	3.49%
8	42	1.7%	8.85%
449	264	14.1%	8.01%
32	70	1.9%	4.18%
4	42	4.5%	47.59%
917	287	25.1%	6.94%
463	190	9.1%	3.63%
515	299	8.2%	4.64%
112	155	4.7%	6.46%
2,982	636	19.1%	3.85%
173	193	5.1%	5.62%
9,733	1,384	26.0%	3.47%
-	60	-	3.34%
29	64	1.9%	4.20%
17	82	0.5%	2.30%
453	200	9.7%	4.12%
53	87	2.3%	3.68%
51	82	3.5%	5.63%
914	321	6.3%	2.19%
-	60	-	5.24%
502	234	10.3%	4.66%
150	92	4.9%	2.92%
3,211	672	32.8%	6.26%
17,461	1,061	25.4%	1.44%
9,763	695	7.2%	0.50%
27,224	2,105	13.3%	1.01%