

Woonsocket Data in Your Backyard

Using Data to Monitor Child Well-Being:
Findings from the *2025 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook*

Presented by Stephanie Geller

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

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A Children's Policy Organization that:

Provides Information on Children's
Well-Being

Stimulates Dialogue on Children's Issues

Promotes Accountability and Action

2025 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook

31st annual publication

67 indicators across 5 areas

City and town-level information

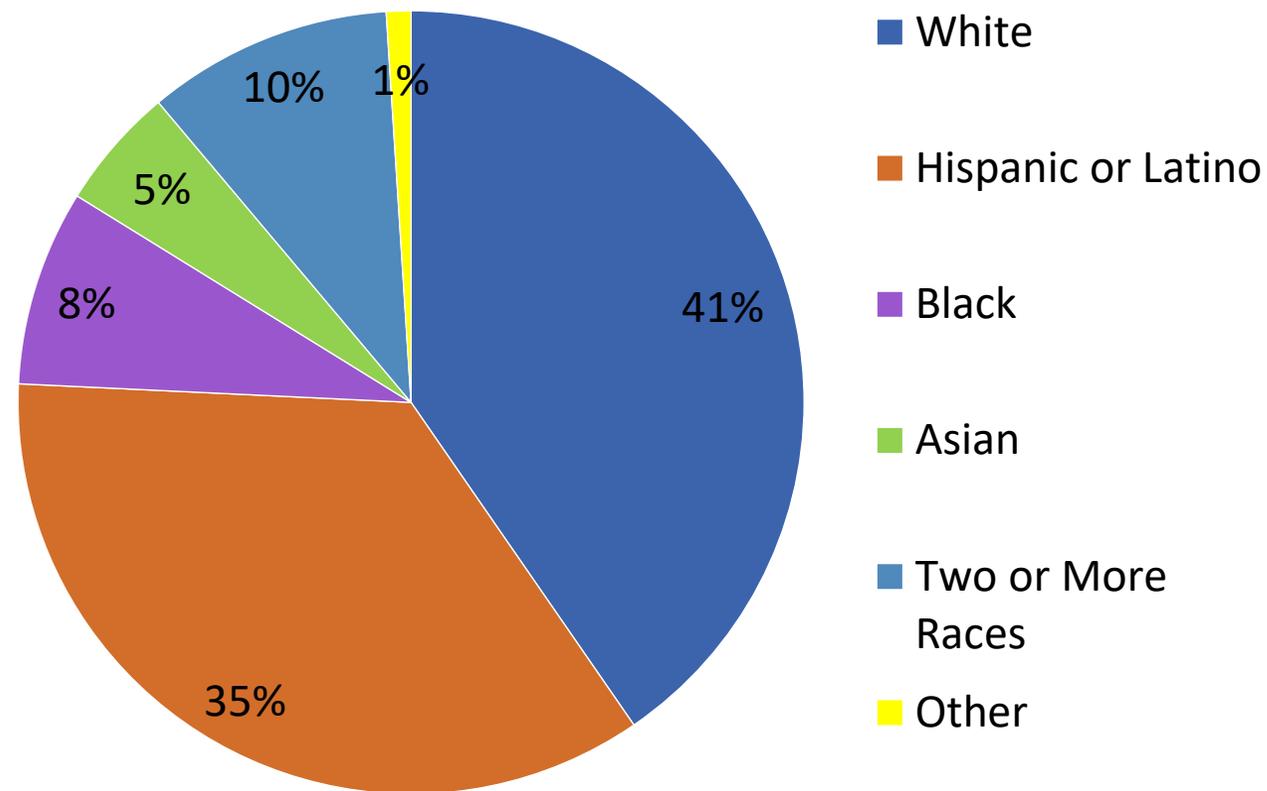


2025 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook



Family and Community

Woonsocket's Child Population, 2020



N=9,467

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020, Tables P2 and P4.



Economic Well-Being

How Do We Define Poverty?

- Poverty threshold in 2024
 - \$26,650 for a family of 3
 - \$32,150 for a family of 4

- Extreme poverty in 2024
 - \$13,325 for a family of 3
 - \$16,075 for a family of 4

- *2024 Rhode Island Standard of Need*
 - Single-parent family with 2 children would need \$83,239 a year to meet its basic needs, which would require a pre-tax income of \$99,418 (or \$47.80 per hour) to meet this budget without governmental subsidies.



Woonsocket Has the Highest Child Poverty Rate in the State



Child Poverty Concentrated in Four Core Cities, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

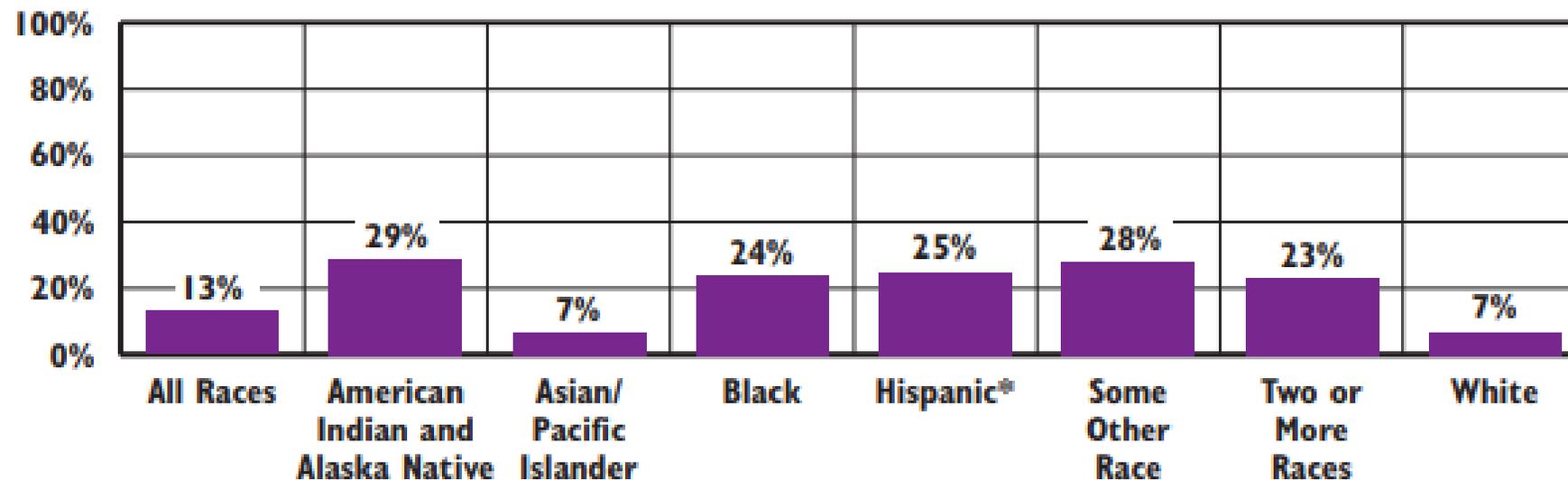
CITY/TOWN	NUMBER IN POVERTY	PERCENTAGE IN POVERTY	NUMBER IN EXTREME POVERTY	PERCENTAGE IN EXTREME POVERTY
Central Falls	1,535	26%	561	9%
Pawtucket	2,982	19%	1,600	10%
Providence	9,733	26%	5,444	15%
Woonsocket	3,211	33%	1,837	19%
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>27,224</i>	<i>13%</i>	<i>14,397</i>	<i>7%</i>

Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2019-2023 American Community Survey data.

Large Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Child Poverty



Children in Poverty, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

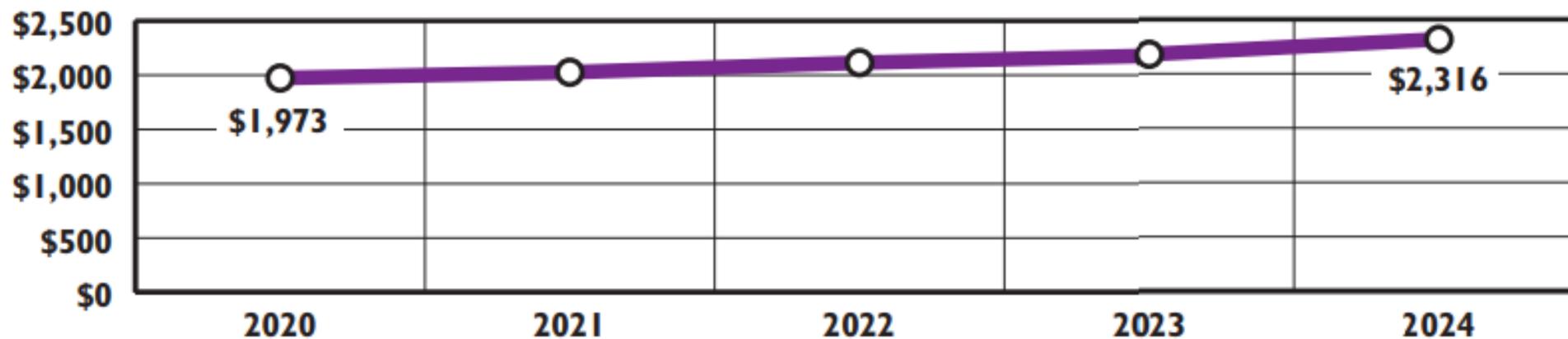


Note: Hispanic children may be included in any race category.

Cost of Housing



Average Rent, Two-Bedroom Apartment, Rhode Island, 2020-2024



- In 2024, the average cost of rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island was \$2,316.
 - **In Woonsocket, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,567, among the lowest in the state, but far out of reach for families living in poverty.**
- In 2024, a worker would have to earn \$44.54 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 was over three times the minimum wage of \$14.00 per hour in 2024.

More Children Experiencing Homelessness

- In 2024, 479 Rhode Island families with 951 children stayed at an emergency homeless shelter, domestic violence shelter, transitional housing facility or hotel paid for by DCYF, up from 363 families with 668 children in 2023.
- During the 2023-2024 school year, Rhode Island public school personnel identified 1,966 children as homeless. Of these children, 65% lived with other families (“doubled up”), 18% lived in hotels or motels, 16% lived in shelters, and 2% were unsheltered.
- **Woonsocket Public Schools personnel identified 272 children as homeless, up from 215 the previous year.**



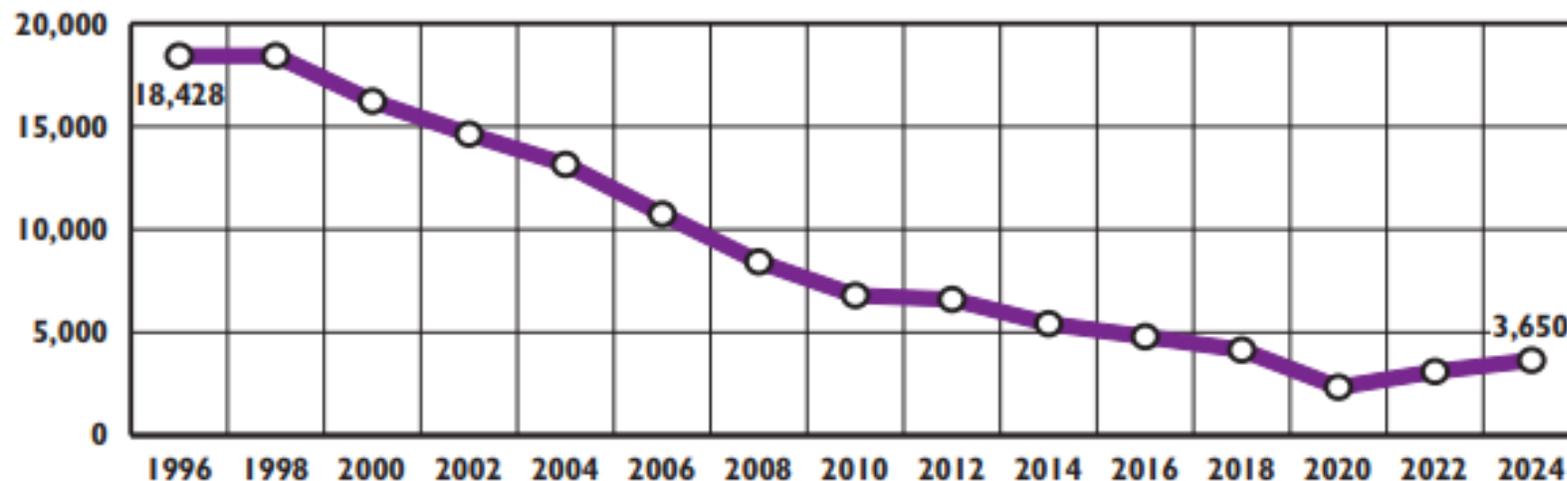
Homeless Children Identified by Public Schools, Rhode Island, 2021-2022 through 2023-2024 School Years



Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance



Cash Assistance Caseload, Rhode Island, 1996–2024*

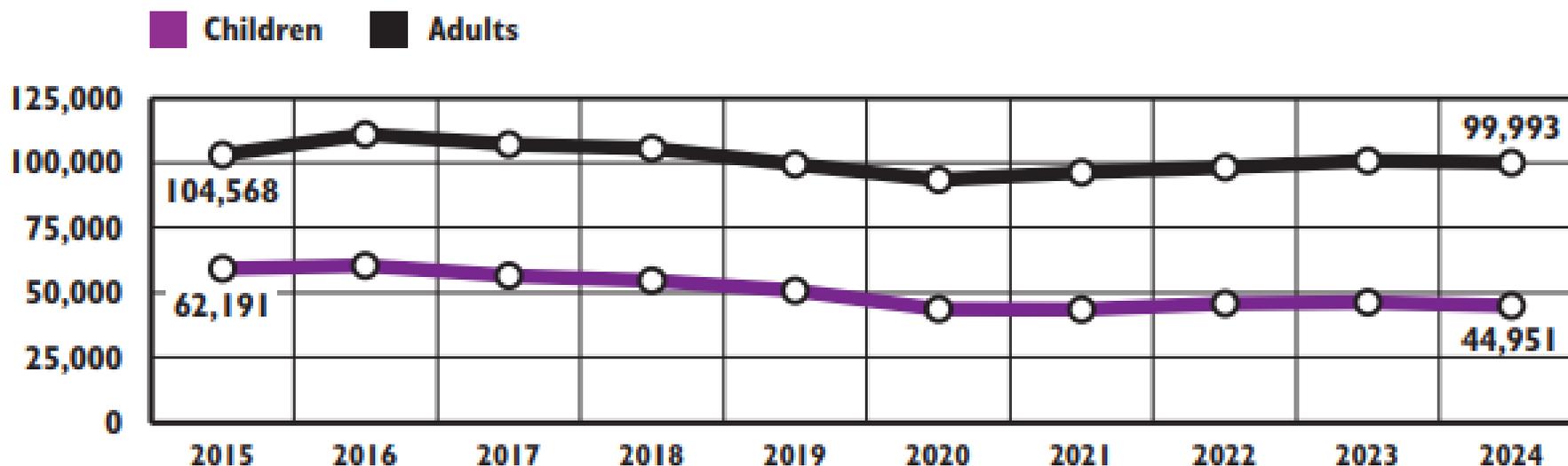


- The goal of the RI Works program is to help very low-income families meet their basic needs by providing cash assistance and work supports, including employment services, SNAP benefits, health insurance, and subsidized child care.
- The maximum monthly benefit for a family of three is \$865 per month. In 2021, benefits were increased for the first time in 30 years, but maximum benefits are 30% of the federal poverty threshold.
- In December 2024:
 - 397 Woonsocket families with 742 children (or 8% of all children in the city) received RI Works benefits

How Can We Ensure that Rhode Island Children Are Fed?



Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Children and Adults, Rhode Island, 2015-2024

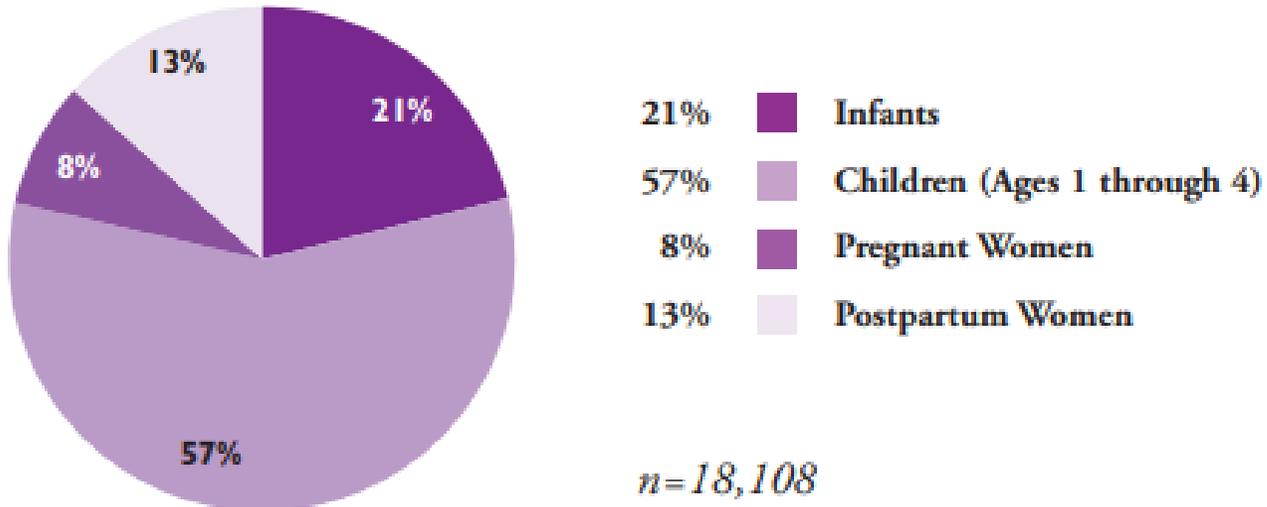


- Of the 144,944 Rhode Islanders enrolled in SNAP in October 2024, 69% were adults and 31% were children.
- In October 2024:
 - 4,104 children in Woonsocket received SNAP benefits

Women and Children Participating in WIC



Women, Infants, and Children Enrolled in WIC, Rhode Island, September 2024



- WIC provides nutritious foods, including produce, whole grains, milk, and formula to pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women and babies and toddlers up through age 4.
- In September 2024:
 - 1,460 Woonsocket women and children were enrolled in WIC

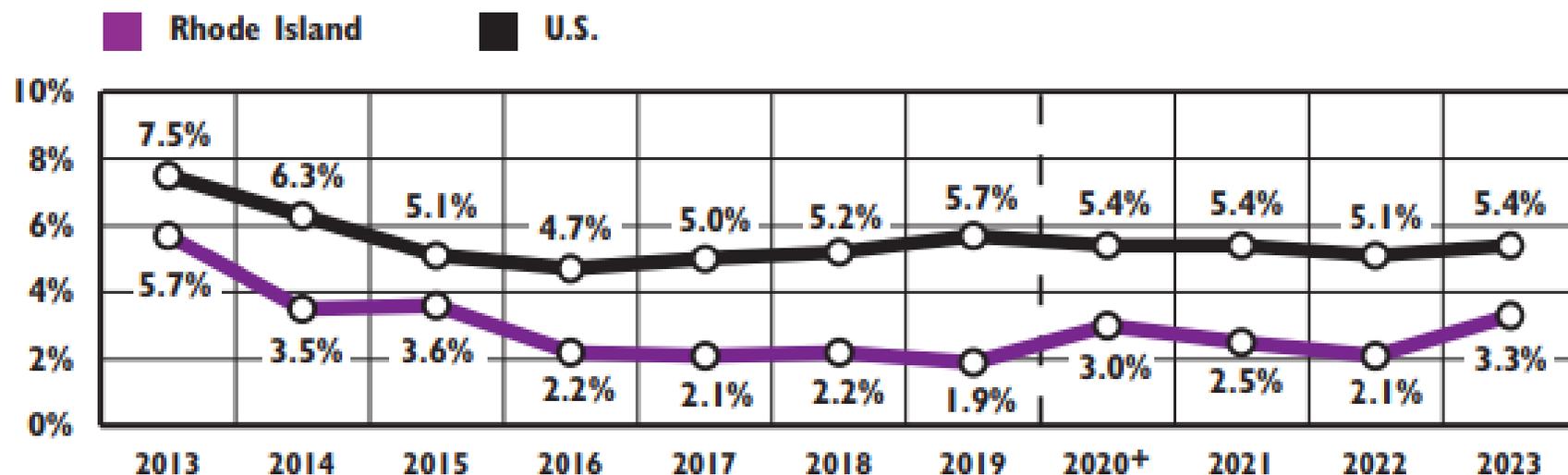


Health

How Can We Ensure that Rhode Island Children Are Insured?



Children Without Health Insurance, Rhode Island, 2013-2023

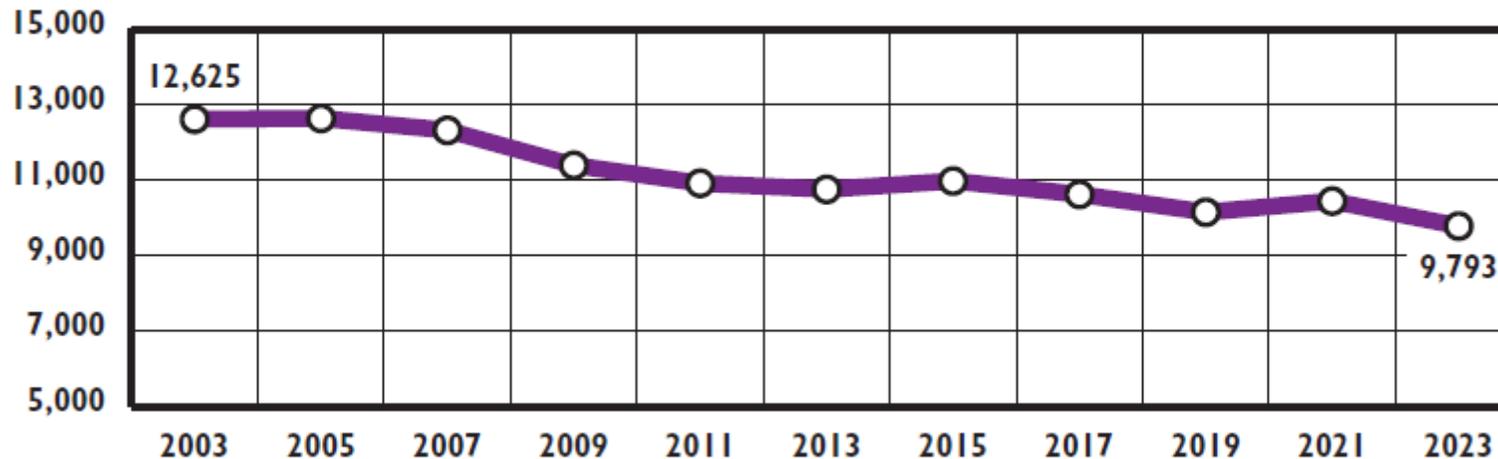


- Recently released data show that in 2024 in Rhode Island
 - ✓ 3.7% of children under age 19 were uninsured
 - ✓ Rhode Island ranks 12th best in the country
- **Cover All Kids** – all low-income kids now covered regardless of immigration status
- 117,890 children are covered by RItE Care
- 2,250 children are covered by HealthSource RI

Babies



Rhode Island Births, 2003-2023



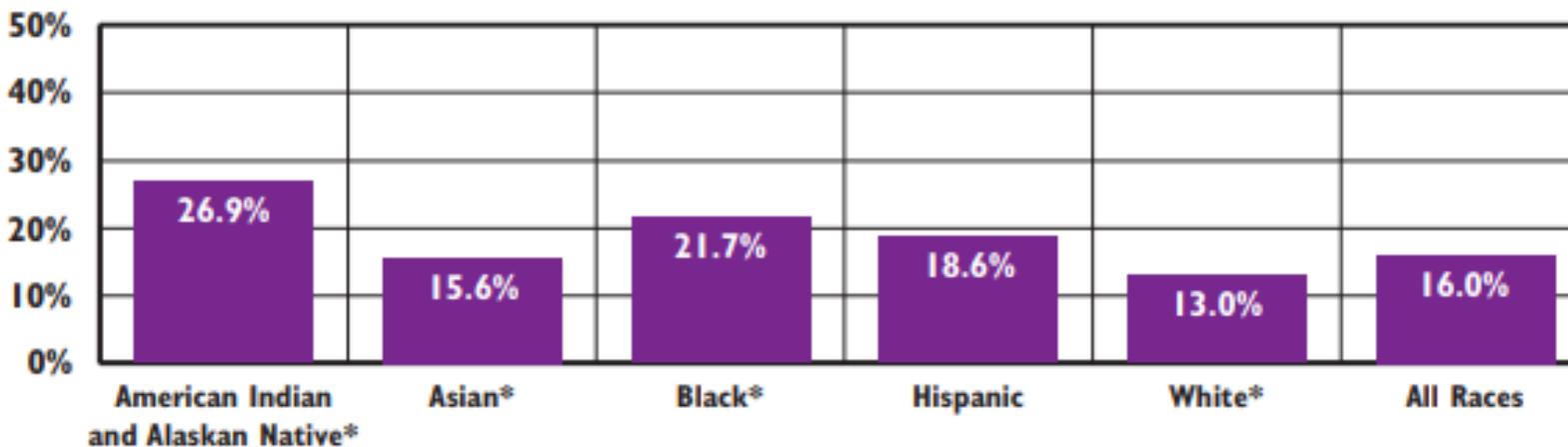
Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Vital Records, Rivers Database 2003-2023. Note: Birth data includes babies born to mothers living in Rhode Island at the time of birth whether the baby was born in Rhode Island or elsewhere.

- Births have been declining for the past decade, both nationally and in Rhode Island.
- Rhode Island has the 3rd lowest fertility rate among states -- 47.5 births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 44.
- There is an increasingly diverse child population both in Rhode Island (46% babies of color) and nationally.
- In 2024:
 - There were 449 babies born in Woonsocket.
 - 67% were born to families with Medicaid/Rlte Care.

Maternal Health



Women With Delayed or No Prenatal Care by Race/Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

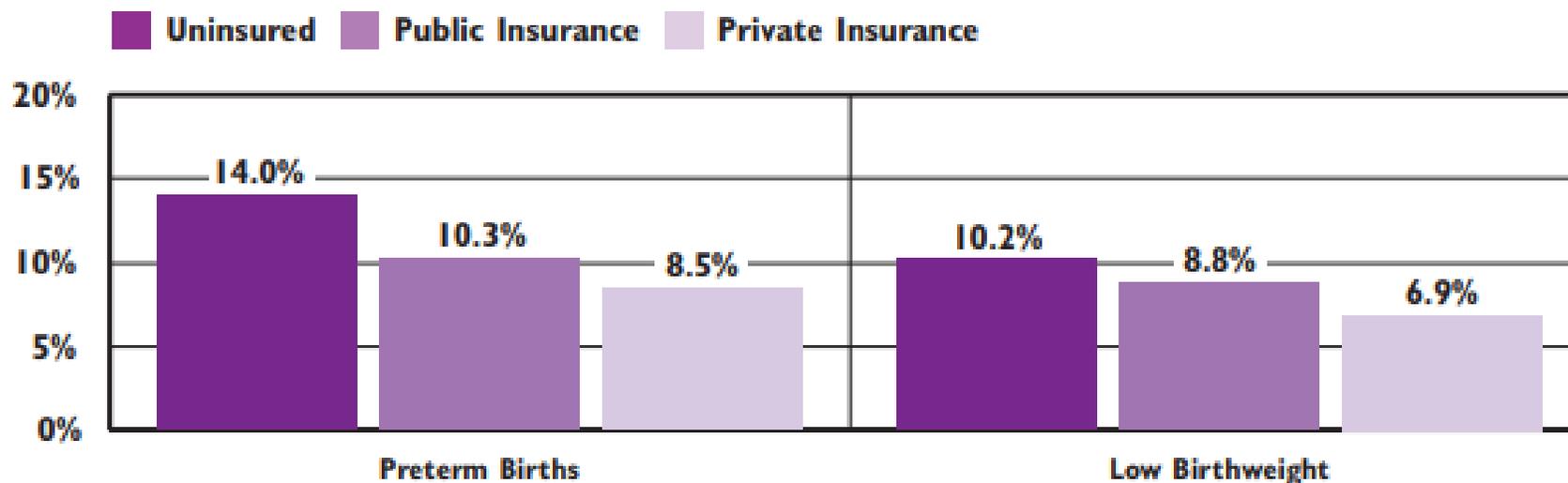


- Between 2019 and 2023 in Rhode Island, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Black, Hispanic, and Asian women were more likely to receive delayed prenatal care than white women.
- From 2019-2023:
 - In Woonsocket, 16.8% of women had delayed prenatal care.
 - Woonsocket's rate has been improving. It was 20.7% during the period from 2014-2018.

Infant Health



Preterm Birth and Low Birthweight by Mother's Insurance Status, Rhode Island, 2019-2023

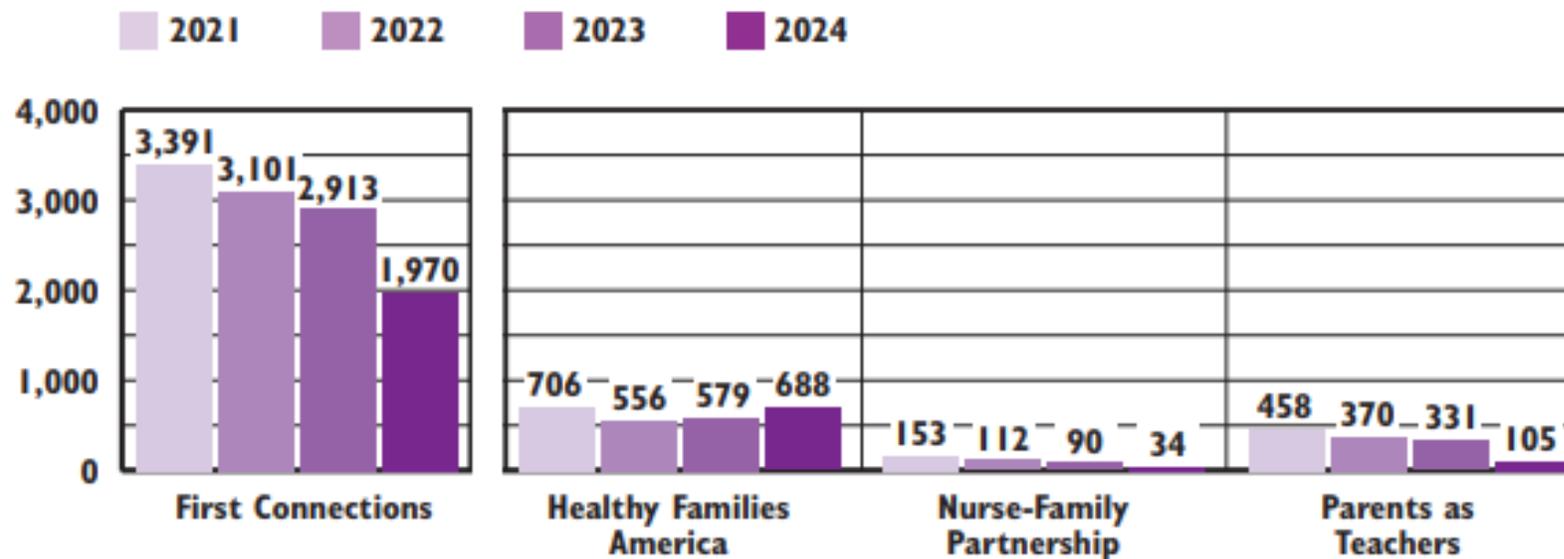


- Social determinants of health, including poverty, racism, and access to care are important factors related to disparities in preterm birth rates.
- From 2019-2023:
 - 10.0% of Woonsocket births were preterm and 8.4% were low birthweight

Family Home Visiting



Family Home Visiting Program Participation, Rhode Island, 2021-2024



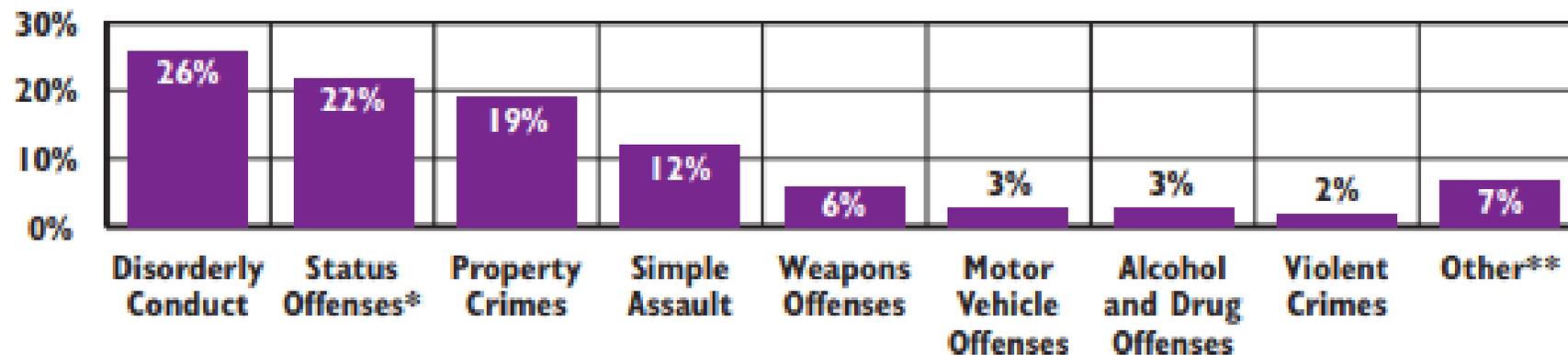
- Family home visiting programs are designed to reach young children and their families at home, providing parenting education to foster healthy, safe, and stimulating environments for young children.
- In 2024:
 - 112 Woonsocket families received a First Connections visit, down from 163 in 2022.
 - 21 Woonsocket families were enrolled in Healthy Families America or the Nurse-Family Partnership Program, down from 163 in 2022.



Safety

Youth Referred to Family Court

Juvenile Offenses, By Type of Offense, 2024



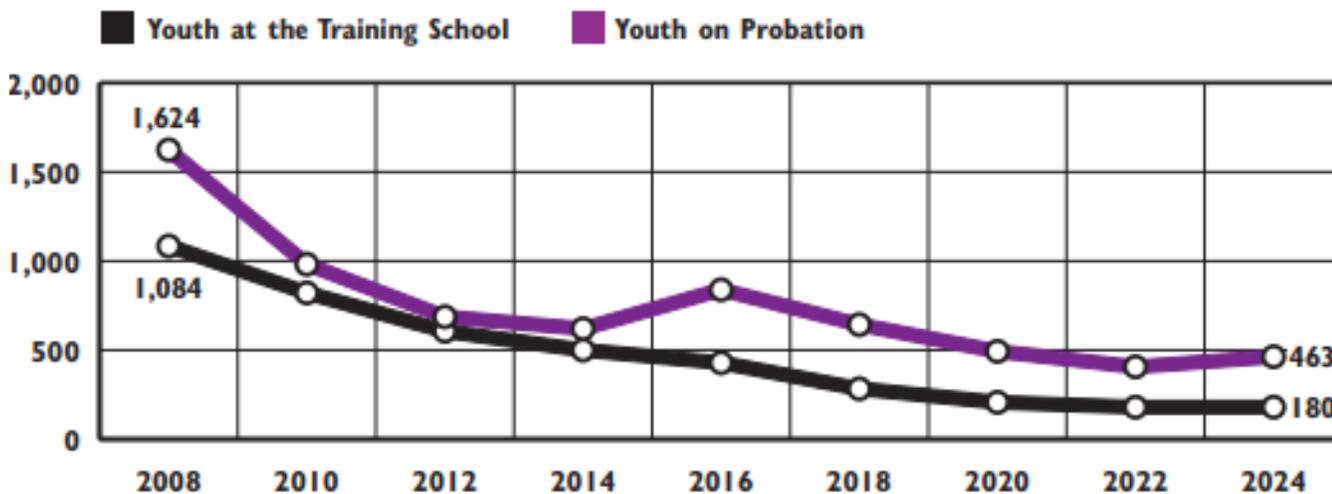
n=4,052

- Of the 4,052 offenses for which Rhode Island youth were referred to Family Court in 2024, 2% were for violent crimes.
- Woonsocket is one of the communities that operates a Juvenile Hearing Board, designed to divert youth from court involvement if they are accused of a less serious offense.

Youth in the Justice System



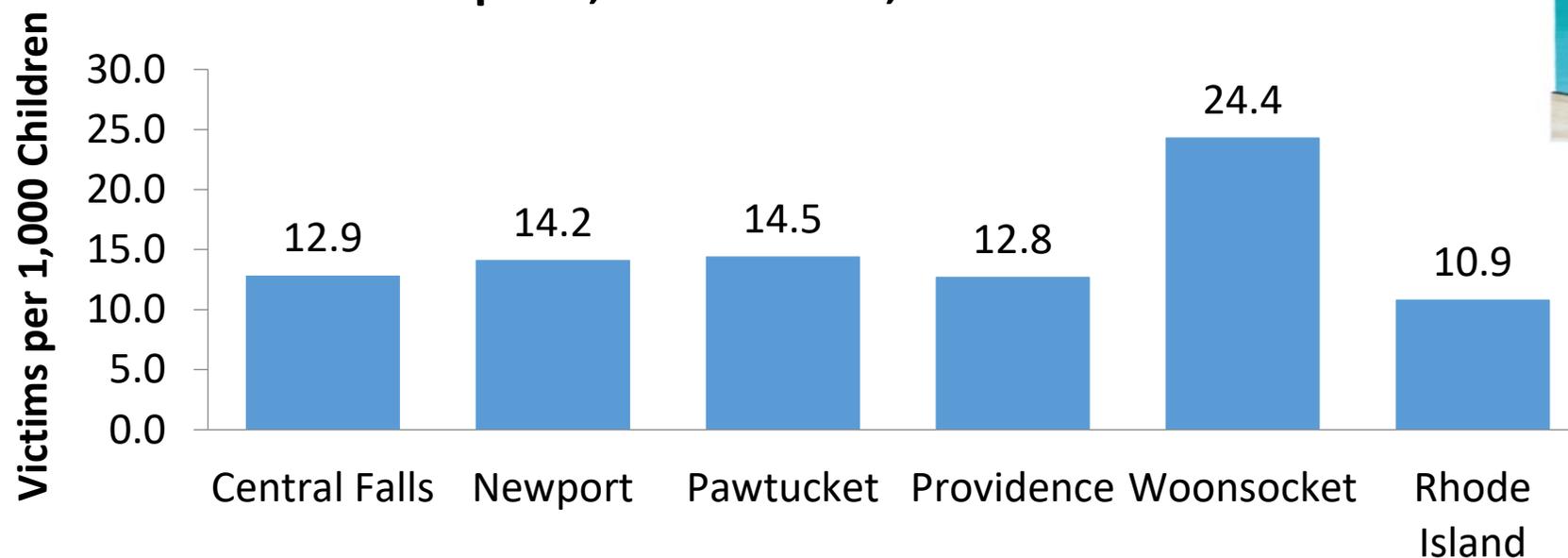
Youth in the Justice System, Calendar Years 2008-2024



- The Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) operates the Rhode Island Training School, the state's secure facility for adjudicated youth and youth in detention awaiting trial.
- Between 2008 and 2024, the annual total number of youth at the Training School at any point during the year declined by 83% from 1,084 to 180.
- In 2024:
 - 50 Woonsocket youth were on probation.
 - 17 Woonsocket youth were at the RI Training School.

Child Neglect and Abuse

Victims of Child Neglect and Abuse
per 1,000 Children, 2024



In 2024, 231 Woonsocket children were reported victims of child neglect and abuse.

Statewide, 80% of all child neglect and abuse cases were due to neglect. In Woonsocket, the large majority of these cases were related to domestic violence or lack of supervision.

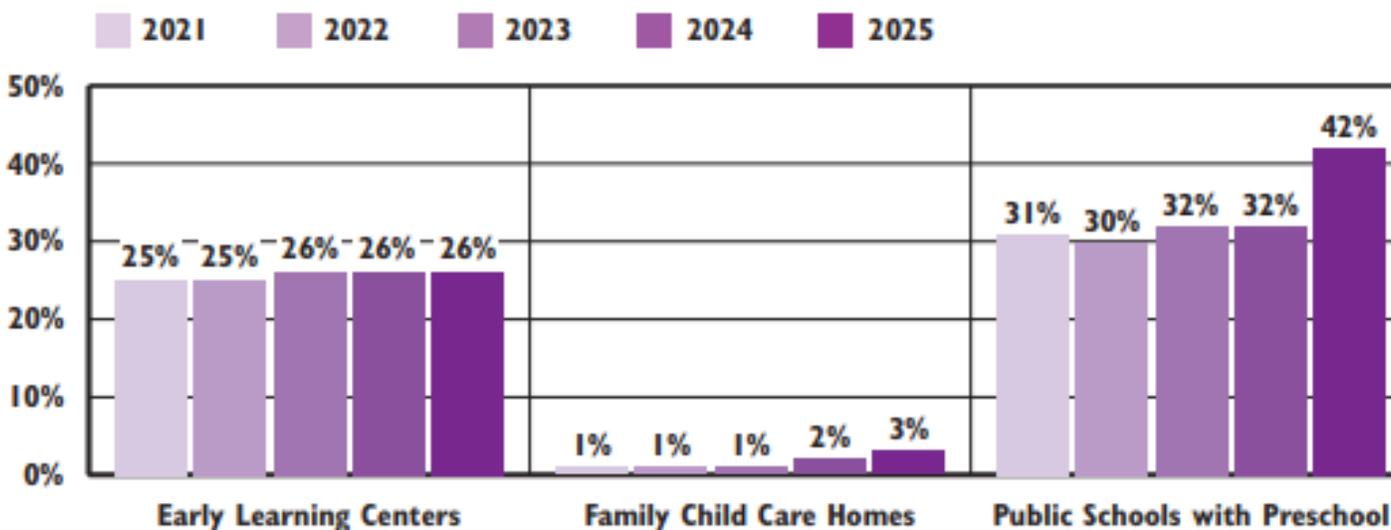


Education

High Quality Early Learning Programs



Percentage of Licensed Early Learning Centers, Family Child Care Programs, and Public Schools with a High-Quality BrightStars Rating (4 or 5 Stars), Rhode Island, 2021-2025

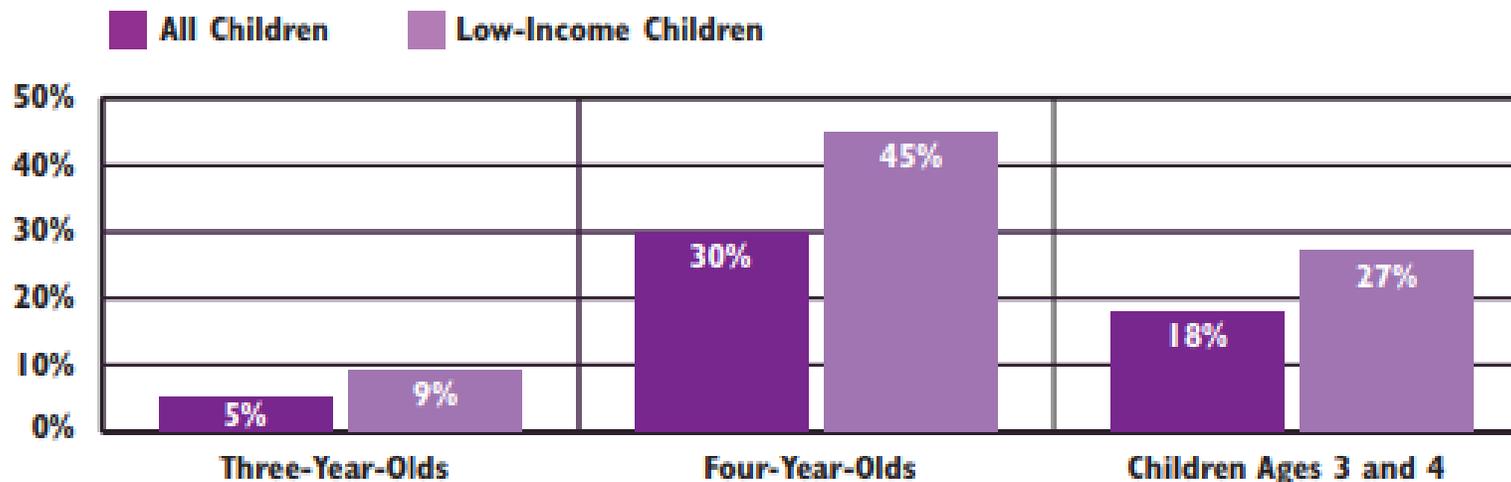


- All programs serving children participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) or the State Pre-K program are required to have a BrightStars rating.
- As of January 2025, **64% of licensed early learning centers in Woonsocket had a high-quality rating of 4 or 5 stars**, but none of the city's licensed family child care homes or public schools had a high-quality rating of 4 or 5 stars.

Opportunities for High-Quality Early Childhood Education in Woonsocket



Percentage of Children Ages 3 and 4 Enrolled in Head Start and/or RI Pre-K, Rhode Island, 2024-2025

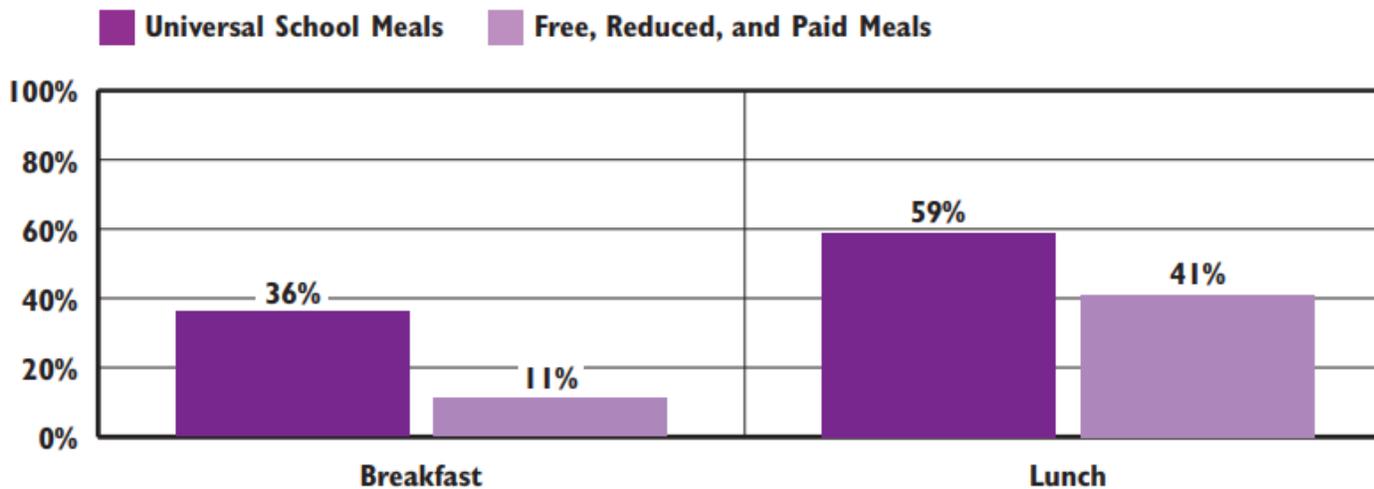


- **37% of all Woonsocket children and 44% of low-income children in Woonsocket who were ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in either Head Start or RI Pre-K.**

Children Participating in School Meals



Percentage of Children Participating in School Meal Programs, Rhode Island, October 2024

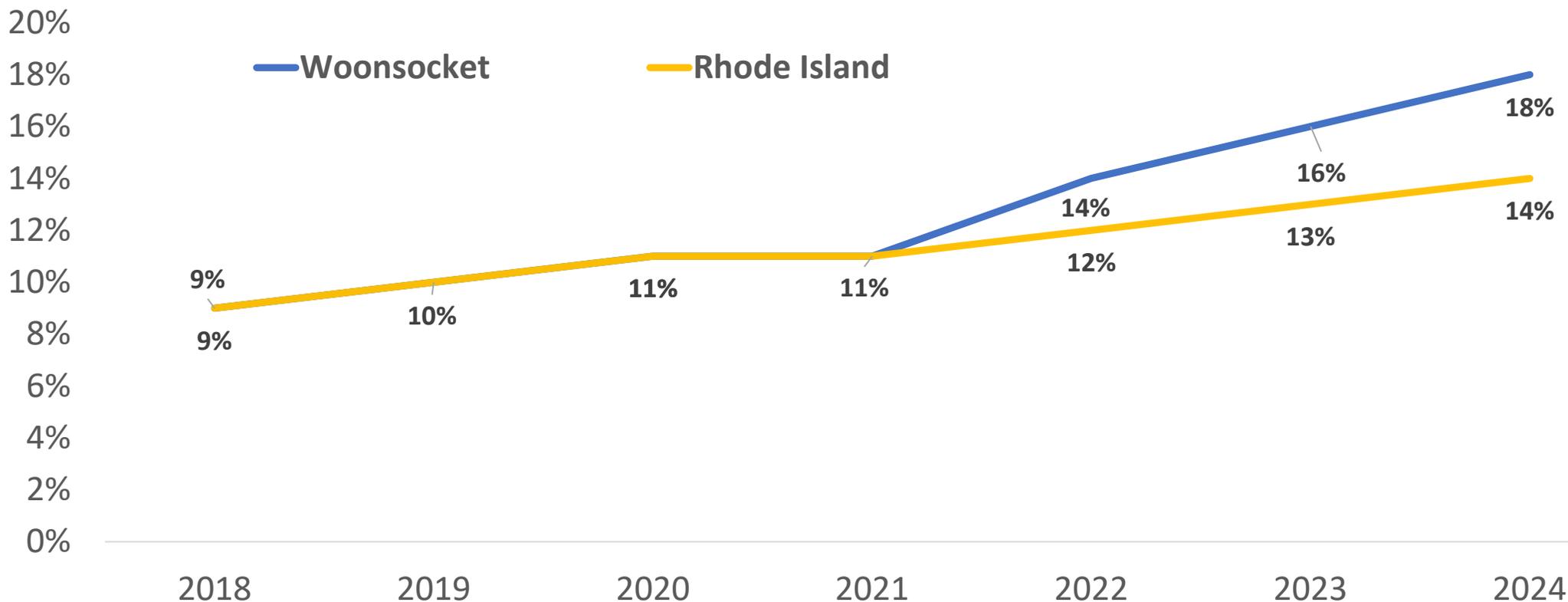


In Woonsocket, 33% of students participate in breakfast and 64% in lunch.

Woonsocket Schools take several measures to improve access to these healthy meals.

- Participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which allows the district to provide free school meals to all students.
- Offers several ways to get meals, including breakfast in the classroom, grab and go meals, and second chance meals at schools across the district.

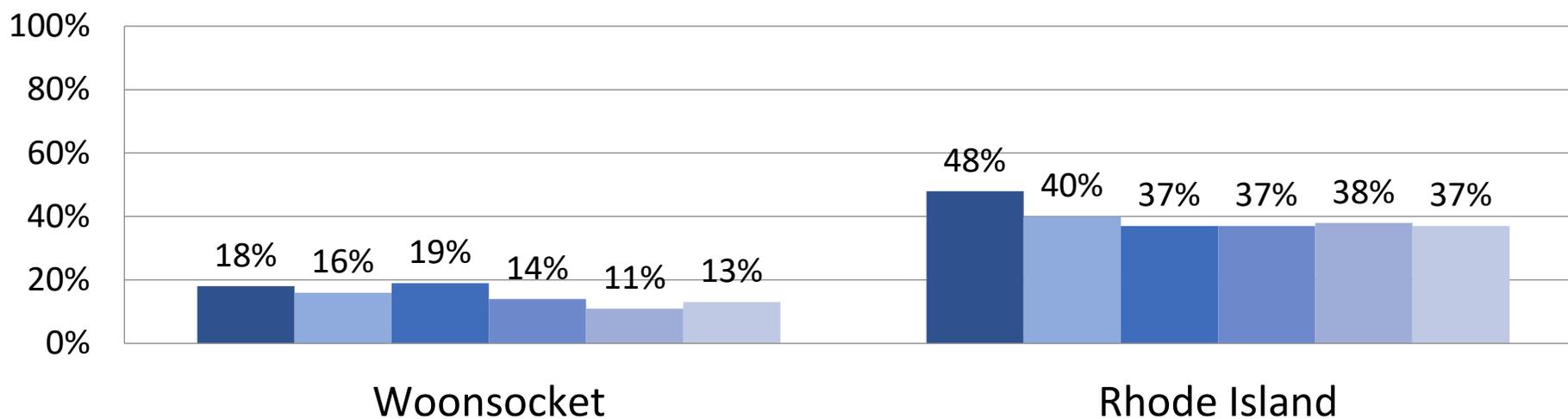
Growing Number of Multilingual Students



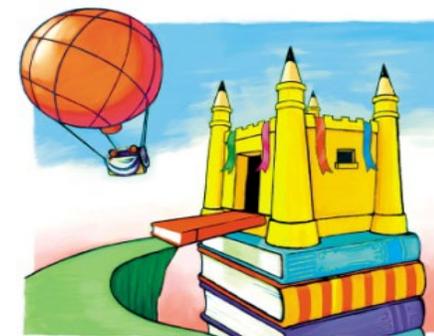
Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, 2017-2018 through 2023-2024 school years.

Third-Grade Reading Skills Before and After Pandemic

Third-Graders Meeting Expectations in Reading 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education,
Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS), 2021-2025.



Disparities in 3rd Grade Reading and What We Can Do About It

All Woonsocket 3rd Graders
Meeting Expectations, 2025

13%

Female

16%

Male

10%

Students With Disabilities

<5%

Students Without Disabilities

18%

Multilingual Learners

8%

Low-Income Students

12%

Higher-Income Students

17%

Black Students

20%

Hispanic Students

15%

Multiracial Students

11%

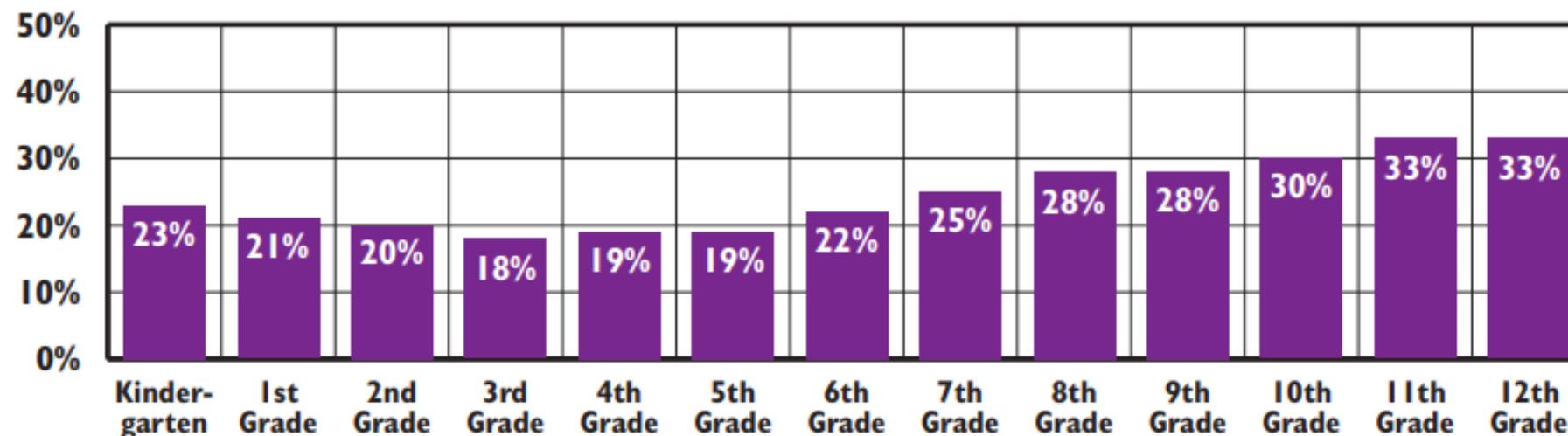
White Students

9%

Chronic Absence Rates Declining Statewide

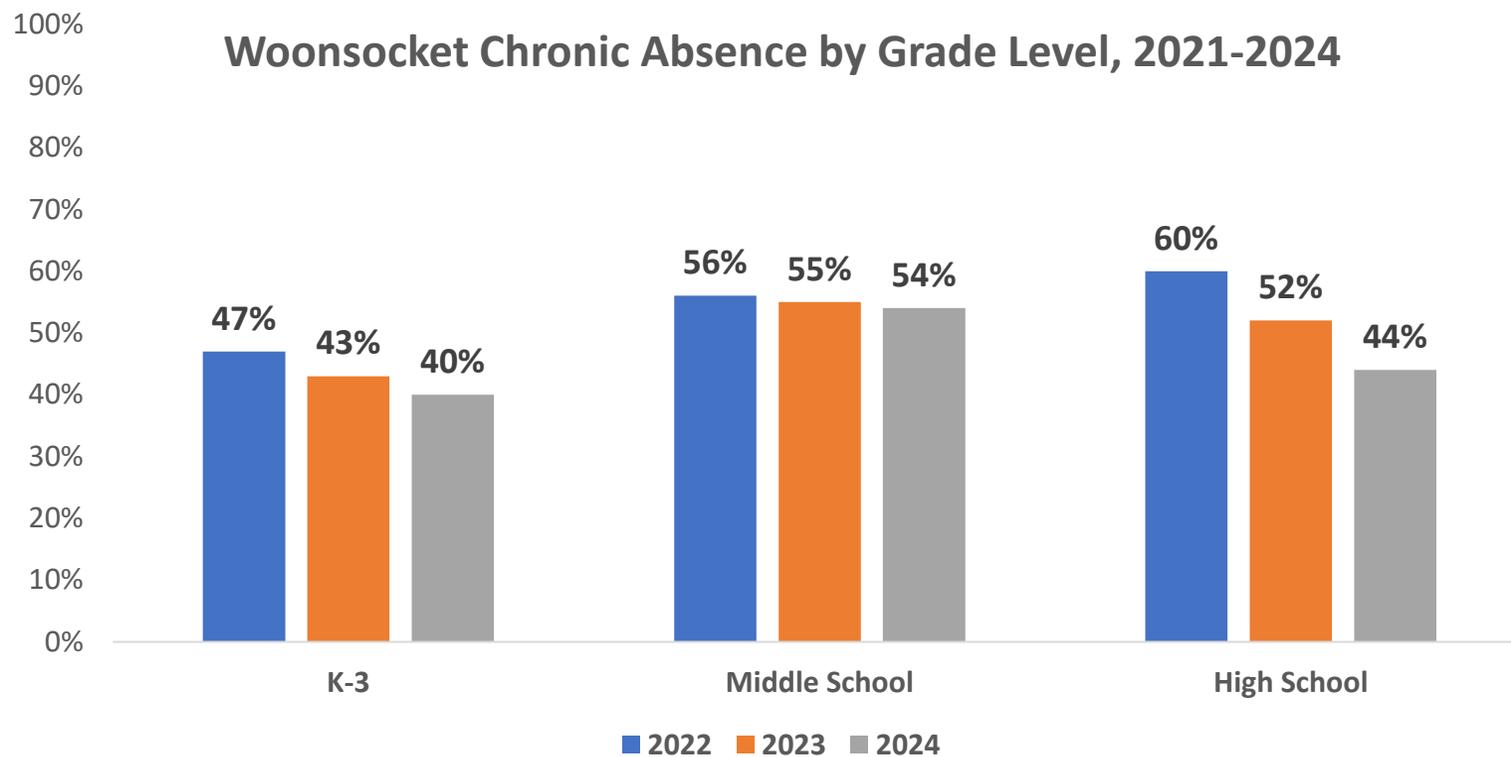


Chronic Absence Rates in Rhode Island by Grade, 2023-2024 School Year



- Chronic absence is the percentage of students who have missed at least 10% of the school year (i.e., 18 days or more), including excused and unexcused absences.

Chronic Absence Continues to Be a Problem in Woonsocket, but Some Progress Is Being Made



School Suspensions



Out-of-School Suspensions by Infraction, Rhode Island, 2023-2024

TYPE OF INFRACTION*	#	%	TYPE OF INFRACTION	#	%
Fighting	2,204	24%	Obscene/Abusive Language	386	4%
Disorderly Conduct	1,580	17%	Weapon Possession	244	3%
Insubordination/Disrespect	1,337	15%	Arson/Larceny/Robbery/Vandalism	184	2%
Assault of Student or Teacher	1,274	14%	Electronic Devices/Technology	99	1%
Alcohol/Drug/Tobacco Offenses	1,117	12%	Other Offenses	55	1%
Harassment/Intimidation/Threat	728	8%	Attendance Offenses	0	0%

- In 2016, the Rhode Island General Assembly passed a law that restricts the use of out-of-school suspensions to situations when a child's behavior poses a demonstrable threat that cannot be dealt with by other means.
- During the 2023-2024 school year:
 - Woonsocket gave 2,436 in-school suspensions to students and 846 out-of-school suspensions to students.

High School Graduation Rate, 2024

All Woonsocket Students	62%
CTE Concentrators	81%
Non-CTE Concentrators	55%
Students Receiving Special Education Services	52%
Students Not Receiving Special Education Services	66%
Multilingual Learners	53%
Low-Income Students	59%
Higher-Income Students	77%
White Students	66%
Black Students	67%
Hispanic Students	55%
Asian Students	71%

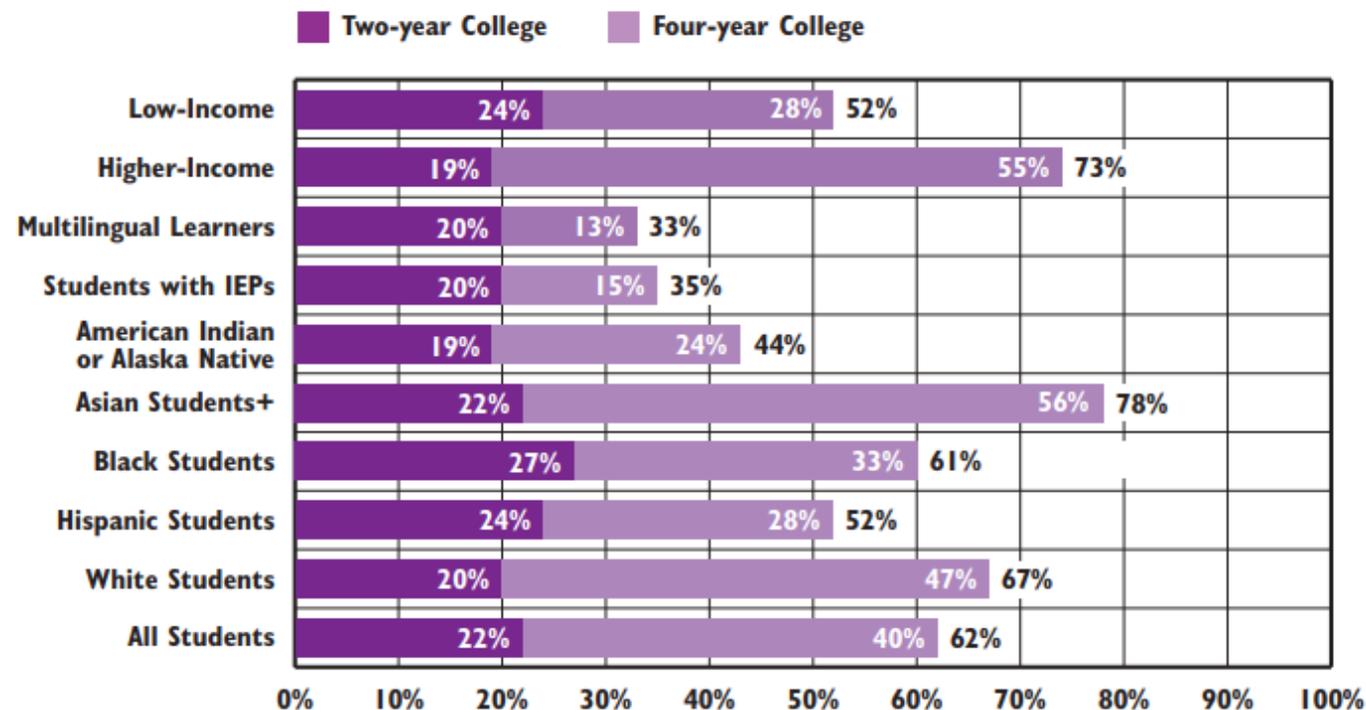


Of the 369 Woonsocket students who entered 9th grade in the 2020-2021 school year and were expected to graduate in 2024, **62% graduated in 4 years**, 16% dropped out, 3% obtained a GED, and 19% were still in school.

College Enrollment



Immediate College Enrollment by Family Income, Race, Ethnicity, and Type of College, Class of 2024, Rhode Island



- 62% percent of Rhode Island students and 47% of Woonsocket students who graduated from high school in the Class of 2024 immediately enrolled in college.
- There are large gaps in college access, particularly four-year college enrollment, between low- and higher-income students as well as by race and ethnicity.

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