

## Economic Well-Being Indicators

### Children in Poverty

- In 2019, the federal poverty threshold was \$20,598 for a family of three with two children and \$25,926 for a family of four with two children.
- In 2018, more than one in six (18%) children in Rhode Island (a total of 36,135 children) lived in poverty.
- Between 2014 and 2018, almost two-thirds (64%) of Rhode Island’s children living in poverty lived in just four cities - Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.



### Child Poverty Concentrated in Four Core Cities, Rhode Island, 2014-2018

| CITY/TOWN           | NUMBER IN POVERTY | PERCENTAGE IN POVERTY | NUMBER IN EXTREME POVERTY | PERCENTAGE IN EXTREME POVERTY |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Central Falls       | 2,452             | 44.9%                 | 807                       | 14.8%                         |
| Pawtucket           | 4,610             | 30.0%                 | 1,678                     | 10.9%                         |
| Providence          | 13,706            | 34.3%                 | 5,786                     | 14.5%                         |
| Woonsocket          | 3,305             | 37.1%                 | 1,429                     | 16.0%                         |
| <i>Rhode Island</i> | <i>37,402</i>     | <i>18.2%</i>          | <i>15,529</i>             | <i>7.5%</i>                   |

Source: Population Reference Bureau analysis of 2014-2018 American Community Survey data.

- The four core cities also have substantial numbers of children living in extreme poverty, defined as families with incomes below 50% of the federal poverty threshold, or \$10,299 for a family of three with two children and \$12,963 for a family of four with two children in 2019.
- Between 2014 and 2018, 19.7% (12,806) of Rhode Island children under age six lived in poverty. Children under age six are at higher risk of living in poverty than any other age group. Exposure to risk factors associated with poverty, including inadequate nutrition, environmental toxins, crowded and unstable housing, maternal depression, trauma and abuse, lower quality child care, and parental substance abuse interferes with young children’s emotional, physical, and intellectual development.

### Cost of Housing

- The average cost of rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island in 2019 was \$1,651. The percentage of renters in Rhode Island who spent 30% or more of their household income on rent was 47% in 2018, down from 50% in 2009.
- In 2019, a worker would have to earn \$31.75 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 is more than three times the 2019 minimum wage of \$10.50 per hour.

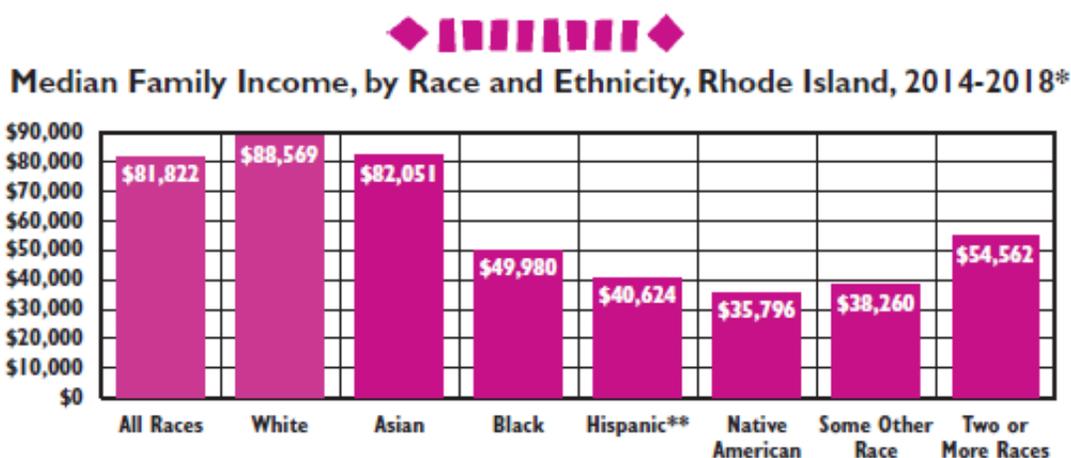
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### Homeless Children

- In 2019, 279 families with 603 children stayed at an emergency homeless shelter, domestic violence shelter, or transitional housing facility in Rhode Island. Children made up 21% of the people who used emergency homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, and transitional housing in 2019. Nearly half (44%) of these children were under age five.
- During the 2018-2019 school year, Rhode Island public school personnel identified 1,475 children as homeless. Of these children, 70% lived with other families (“doubled up”), 16% lived in shelters, 13% lived in hotels or motels, and 1% were unsheltered.
- As of October 30, 2019, there were 88 families on the state’s wait list awaiting shelter.

### Median Family Income

- In 2018, the median family income for Rhode Island families with their own children was \$77,087. Rhode Island had the 19th highest median family income nationally and the fifth highest in New England.
- The median income for White families in Rhode Island is higher than that of Asian families, and much higher than that of Black, Hispanic, and Native American families.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018. 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.

### Paid Family Leave

- Rhode Island’s Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) program, established in 2014, provides up to four weeks of partial wage replacement benefits to eligible workers who need to take time off from work to bond with a newborn, adopted or foster child, or to care for a seriously ill family member. There were 7,175 approved claims for TCI during 2019 (up from

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6,760 in 2018); 80% (5,766) were to bond with a new child and 20% (1,409) were to care for a seriously ill family member.

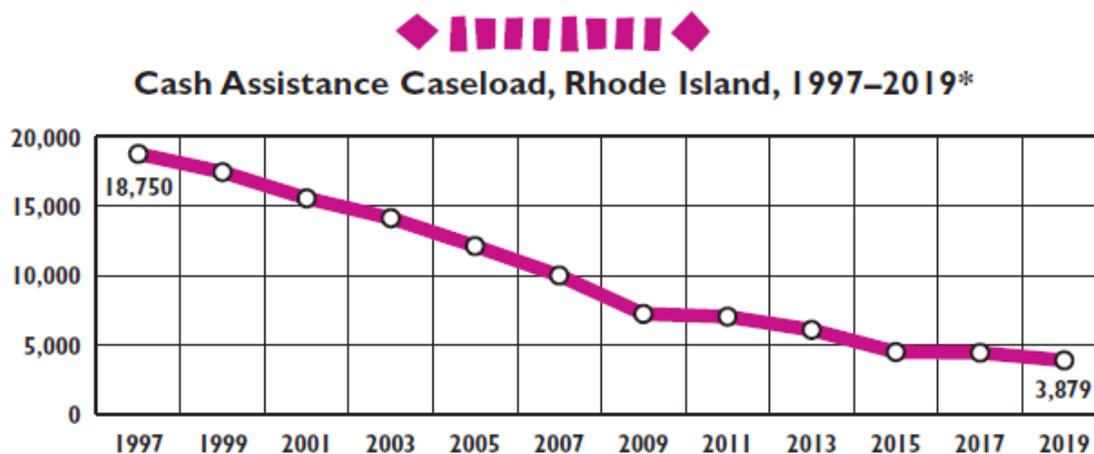
- Forty-six percent of individuals contributing to TDI/TCI earn less than \$20,000, yet only 14% of all approved TCI claims were for an individual with wages in this category.

### Children Receiving Child Support

- As of December 1, 2019, there were 70,916 children in Rhode Island’s Office of Child Support Services system. Among these children, 4,298 were enrolled in Rhode Island Works (RI Works). In Rhode Island, the first \$50 of child support paid on time each month on behalf of a child receiving RI Works cash assistance goes to the custodial parent. The remainder is retained by the federal and state government as reimbursement for assistance received through RI Works.
- Non-custodial parents who pay regular child support are more involved with their children, providing them with emotional support and care, and receipt of regular child support can have a positive effect on children’s economic well-being.

### Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

- Since 1996, when the program began, the Rhode Island cash assistance caseload has declined steadily. Between 1996 and 2019, the Rhode Island cash assistance caseload decreased by 79% from 18,428 cases to 3,879 families.



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, December 1, 1997-2015 and RI Bridges Database, December 2016-2019. Cases can be child-only or whole families and multiple people can be included in one case. \*The Rhode Island Department of Human Services changed the method for calculating the caseload data starting in the 2012 Factbook. This change is reflected in 2010-2019 caseload data. Comparisons to earlier years should be made with caution. Starting in 2016, caseload data are for the month of December and not for a point in time, December 1.

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- In 2018, 16,505 children in Rhode Island lived in extreme poverty (in families with incomes below 50% of the federal poverty threshold), yet only 7,195 children received cash assistance in December 2018.
- The maximum monthly RI Works benefit for a family of three is \$554 per month. This benefit amount provides \$6 per person per day and has not been increased in almost 30 years.
- In State Fiscal Year 2019, for the tenth year in a row, no state general revenue was allocated for cash assistance. The cash assistance program is now entirely supported by federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant funds.



### Rhode Island Cash Assistance Expenditures, State Fiscal Years 1997-2019

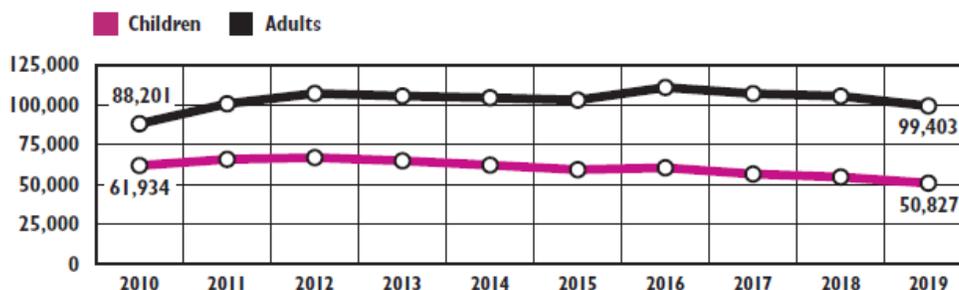


Sources: Rhode Island Department of Human Services. (2007). *Family Independence Program 2007 annual report*. (FY 1996-2001); House Fiscal Advisory Staff. (2004-2019). *Budget as enacted: Fiscal Years 2005-2020*. (FY 2002-2019). Fiscal years 1997-2017 are funds spent and FY 2019 is final budget.

### Children Receiving SNAP Benefits



### Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Children and Adults, Rhode Island, 2010-2019



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, 2010–2015 and RI Bridges Database, 2016-2019. Data represent children under age 18 and adults who participated in SNAP during the month of October.

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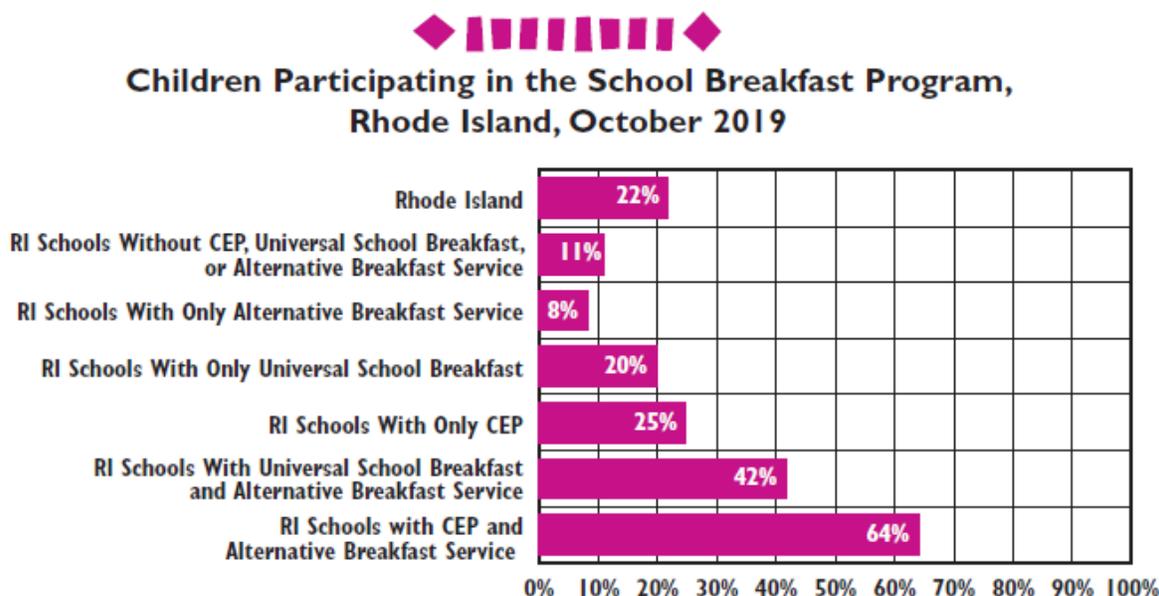
- The number of children and adults receiving SNAP benefits decreased slowly between 2012 and 2015, then increased in 2016. It is possible that the 2016 increase was due to efforts to avoid denying eligible SNAP recipients during the difficult transition to the RI Bridges/UHIP computer system. Between 2016 and 2019, the number of adults and children receiving SNAP benefits again decreased.
- In Rhode Island during October 2019, 75% of SNAP households had gross incomes below the federal poverty level (\$21,330 for a family of three in 2019).
- In October 2019, the average monthly SNAP benefit for a family of three in Rhode Island was \$393.

## Women and Children Participating in WIC

- In June 2019, 20,507 women, infants, and children in Rhode Island were enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). The program served 47% of eligible women, infants, and children.
- WIC participation has been shown to reduce infant mortality, improve birth outcomes (including reducing the likelihood of low birthweight and prematurity), improve cognitive development, reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect, increase child immunization rates, and increase access to preventive medical care.

## Children Participating in School Breakfast

- During the 2018-2019 school year in Rhode Island, 54 low-income students participated in the School Breakfast Program for every 100 low-income students who participated in the School Lunch Program.



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, Office of Statewide Efficiencies, October 2019.

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- The federal Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows schools and districts with 40% or more students identified as low-income (e.g., enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or at-risk (i.e., homeless or in foster care) to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students and offers higher reimbursements.
- Universal School Breakfast Programs, which provide free breakfast to all children regardless of income, increase school breakfast participation by removing the stigma often associated with school breakfast and can reduce the administrative burden for schools.
- Making breakfast part of the school day is another proven strategy for increasing breakfast participation, reducing stigma, and increasing convenience.

### Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Economic Well-Being

- In Rhode Island, a number of measures show that the economic well-being of children and families differs substantially by race and ethnicity.



### 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.