

# Racial and Ethnic Disparities

## DEFINITION

*Racial and ethnic disparities* is the gap that exists in outcomes for children of different racial and ethnic groups in Rhode Island. Child well-being outcome areas include economic well-being, health, safety and education.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Rhode Island's children are diverse in racial and ethnic background. In 2010 in Rhode Island, 72% of children under age 18 were White, 8% were Black or African American, 3% were Asian, 1% were Native American, 9% of children were identified as "Some other race," and 7% as "Two or more races." In 2010, 21% of children living in Rhode Island were Hispanic.<sup>1</sup>

Children who live in poverty, especially those who experience poverty in early childhood and for extended periods of time, are more likely to have health, behavioral, educational and social problems.<sup>2,3</sup> Between 2010 and 2012, 20% of all Rhode Island children lived in poverty, 67% of whom were minorities.<sup>4</sup>

Black and Hispanic children are more likely than White and Asian children to live in neighborhoods that lack the resources needed for them to grow up healthy and successful.<sup>5</sup> In 2010, nearly three-quarters (67%) of Rhode Island's minority children lived in one of the four core cities (those cities with the highest percentage of children living in poverty).

In 2010, more than three-quarters of the children in Providence (84%) and Central Falls (87%) were of minority racial and ethnic backgrounds.<sup>6</sup> Children living in areas of concentrated poverty, who are more likely to be Black or Hispanic, face challenges above and beyond the burdens of individual poverty. The Providence metropolitan area has the 56th highest rate of concentrated poverty in the U.S.<sup>7</sup>

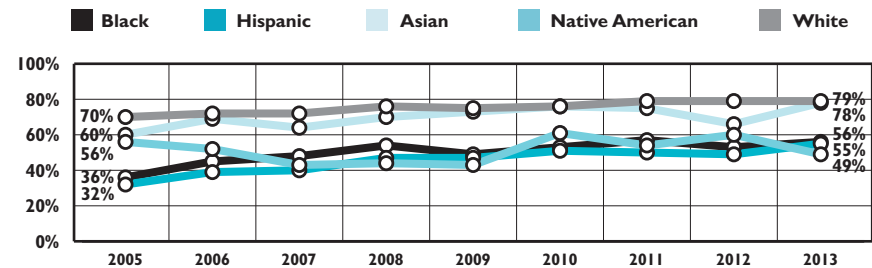
Residential segregation between Whites and Blacks has decreased in the U.S. since the 1970s, but high levels of residential segregation still exist. Hispanics and Asians experience less segregation than Blacks, but the rate of segregation for these groups has been increasing in recent years.<sup>8</sup> The Providence-New Bedford-Fall River metropolitan area was the ninth most segregated metropolitan area in the nation for Hispanics in 2010.<sup>9</sup>

Even in good economic climates, minority families are more likely to be unemployed, have higher poverty rates and receive lower wages than White families. Minority families also face greater negative impacts during economic recessions and their recovery from economic downturns is slower than that of White families. Even when controlling for educational achievement, age and gender, minority workers have consistently higher unemployment rates than White workers.<sup>10,11</sup>

## Residential Segregation and Its Impact on Education

- ◆ In the U.S., Black and Hispanic students are now more segregated from White students than at any point in the past four decades.<sup>12</sup> As a result, White students generally attend schools that are disproportionately White and low-poverty, while Black and Hispanic students attend schools that are disproportionately minority and high-poverty.<sup>13</sup>
- ◆ Many urban communities have high concentrations of poverty, which can be related to unequal educational opportunities. School district boundaries often determine access to challenging curricula, academic expectations, educator quality, facilities quality, adequacy of school funding, access to instructional supports (like technology), and school safety.<sup>14,15</sup>

## Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Fourth Grade Reading Proficiency Rates, Rhode Island, 2005-2013



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, *New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)*, 2005-2013.

- ◆ In Rhode Island between 2005 and 2012, White fourth-graders were more likely to achieve proficiency on the *NECAP* reading exam than minority fourth-graders.<sup>16</sup>
- ◆ Racial and ethnic disparities in education are evident before children enter kindergarten and persist throughout high school and college. Minority students are much less likely to graduate from high school, go to college, and graduate from college than their White peers.<sup>17,18,19,20</sup>
- ◆ Factors that impact educational achievement gaps include school issues, family participation, and before- and beyond-school concerns (e.g., poor child health or access to out-of-school and early-learning opportunities).<sup>21,22,23</sup>

## Economic Well-Being Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

|  | WHITE    | HISPANIC | BLACK    | ASIAN    | NATIVE AMERICAN | ALL RACES |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Children in Poverty                        | 14%      | 40%      | 39%      | 22%      | 54%             | 20%       |
| Births to Mothers With <12 Years Education | 10%      | 32%      | 19%      | 11%      | 33%             | 15%       |
| Unemployment Rate                          | 9%       | 21%      | 16%      | NA       | NA              | 9%        |
| Median Family Income                       | \$76,948 | \$32,883 | \$37,716 | \$66,595 | \$22,895        | \$71,316  |
| Homeownership                              | 65%      | 27%      | 31%      | 48%      | 20%             | 60%       |

Sources: *Children in Poverty* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010-2012, Tables B17001, 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, 2008-2012. *Unemployment Rate* data are from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, 2013. *Median Family Income* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010-2012, Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D & B19113I. *Homeownership* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010-2012, Tables B25003, B25003A, B25003B, B25003C, B25003D & B25003I. Hispanics also 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 not calculated because the number was too small to calculate a reliable rate.

- ◆ Between 2010 and 2012 in Rhode Island, 20% of all children, 54% of Native American children, 40% of Hispanic children, 39% of Black children, 22% of Asian children, and 14% of White children in Rhode Island lived in families with incomes below the federal poverty level.<sup>24</sup>
- ◆ Between 2010 and 2012 in Rhode Island, White households were the most likely to own their homes while Native American and Hispanic households were the most likely to live in rental units.<sup>25</sup>
- ◆ In 2013 in Rhode Island, the unemployment rate among White people was 9%, compared to 16% for Black people and 21% for Hispanic people. Nationally, the unemployment rate for White people in 2013 was 7%, compared to 13% for Black people, and 9% for Hispanic people.<sup>26</sup>
- ◆ Education is essential for economic success. Adults with less than a high school diploma are at particular risk of living in poverty and other negative outcomes.<sup>27</sup> Hispanic, Black and Native American children in Rhode Island are all more likely than White and Asian children to be born to mothers with less than a high school diploma.<sup>28</sup>

## Health Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

|  | WHITE | HISPANIC | BLACK | ASIAN | NATIVE AMERICAN | ALL RACES |
|--|-------|----------|-------|-------|-----------------|-----------|
| Women With Delayed Prenatal Care             | 11.6% | 18.0%    | 20.2% | 19.4% | NA              | 13.7%     |
| Preterm Births                               | 10.0% | 12.3%    | 14.6% | 11.6% | NA              | 10.9%     |
| Low Birthweight Infants                      | 7.1%  | 7.8%     | 11.2% | 9.5%  | NA              | 7.8%      |
| Infant Mortality (per 1,000 live births)     | 5.9   | 5.7      | 13.3  | 11.2  | NA              | 6.4       |
| Asthma Hospitalizations (per 1,000 children) | 1.6   | 2.7      | 5.8   | 1.5   | NA              | 2.1       |
| Births to Teens Ages 15-19 (per 1,000 teens) | 16.2  | 55.4     | 41.7  | 17.1  | NA              | 23.3      |

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, Maternal and Child Health Database, 2008-2012 unless otherwise specified. Information is based on self-reported race and ethnicity. *Asthma Hospitalizations* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Hospital Discharge Database, 2008-2012 and refer only to hospitalizations due to primary diagnoses of asthma. For *Asthma Hospitalizations* the denominators are the child population under age 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1. For *Births to Teens* the denominators are the female populations ages 15-19 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1. For all indicators other than *Asthma Hospitalizations*, Hispanics also may be included in any of the race categories. NA indicates that the rate was not calculated because the number was too small to calculate a reliable rate.

- ◆ Although progress has been made on many health indicators across racial and ethnic populations, disparities still exist for a number of maternal and infant health outcomes in Rhode Island. Minority women are more likely than White women to receive delayed or no prenatal care and to have preterm births. Minority children are more likely to die in infancy than White children. Hispanic and Black youth are more likely than White and Asian youth to give birth as teenagers.<sup>29</sup>
- ◆ Black and Hispanic children in Rhode Island are more likely to be hospitalized as a result of asthma than White and Asian children.<sup>30</sup> Nationally, Blacks and Native Americans are the most likely of all racial and ethnic groups to have asthma.<sup>31</sup>
- ◆ Approximately one in eight children in the U.S. does not have health insurance coverage. White non-Hispanic children are much more likely to be insured (93%) than Hispanic children (80%) and Black children (88%). Two-thirds of citizen children with non-citizen parents have health insurance. Approximately two-thirds of uninsured children in the U.S. are eligible for but not enrolled in public health insurance programs.<sup>32</sup>

# Racial and Ethnic Disparities

## Safety Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

|   | WHITE | HISPANIC | BLACK | ASIAN | NATIVE AMERICAN | ALL RACES |
|---|-------|----------|-------|-------|-----------------|-----------|
| Juveniles at the Training School*<br>(per 1,000 males ages 15-19) | 0.8   | 5.3      | 7.7   | 2.3   | 6.6             | 2.4       |
| Children of Incarcerated Parents<br>(per 1,000 children)          | 8.0   | 17.7     | 63.8  | 4.0   | 22.1            | 13.1      |
| Children in Out-of-Home Placement<br>(per 1,000 children)         | 7.8   | 10.6     | 19.6  | 3.0   | 8.2             | 9.0       |

Sources: *Juveniles at the Training School* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Training School, December 31, 2013 (\*includes only male adjudicated youth). *Children of Incarcerated Parents* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, September 30, 2013 and reflect the race of the incarcerated parent (includes only the sentenced population). *Children in Out-of-Home Placement* data are from the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST Database, December 31, 2013. Population denominators used for *Juveniles at the Training School* are the male populations ages 15-19 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1. Population denominators used for *Children of Incarcerated Parents* are the populations under age 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1. Population denominators used for *Children in Out-of-Home Placement* are the populations under age 18 by race from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, SF1, P12A, P12B, P12C, P12D, P12H.

◆ **Racial and ethnic minority youth continue to be disproportionately represented in the U.S. juvenile justice system. Minority youth (especially Latino and Black youth) are treated more harshly than White youth for the same type and severity of offenses, including detention, processing, and incarceration in juvenile and adult correctional facilities.<sup>33</sup> Rhode Island's juvenile justice system has some of the widest residential placement disparities between White and minority youth in the nation.<sup>34</sup>**

◆ **Black and Hispanic children in Rhode Island are more likely than their Native American, White, and Asian peers to be placed out-of-home through the child welfare system.<sup>35</sup> Nationally, minority children experience disparate treatment as they enter the foster care system and while they are in the system. They are more likely than White children under similar circumstances to be placed in foster care, remain in the child welfare system longer, have less contact with child welfare staff, and to have lower reunification rates.<sup>36</sup>**

◆ **Disproportionality in child welfare and juvenile justice systems is in part a reflection of differential poverty rates between minority and White communities. However, while addressing poverty through policies would reduce child maltreatment and juvenile offending rates, policies that work directly to reduce disparities are necessary as well.<sup>37</sup>**

## Education Outcomes, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

|  | WHITE | HISPANIC | BLACK | ASIAN | NATIVE AMERICAN | ALL RACES |
|--|-------|----------|-------|-------|-----------------|-----------|
| 4th Grade Students Reading at or Above Proficiency         | 79%   | 55%      | 56%   | 78%   | 49%             | 71%       |
| 4th Grade Students at or Above Proficiency in Mathematics  | 73%   | 44%      | 42%   | 68%   | 33%             | 63%       |
| Students Attending Schools Identified for Intervention     | 2%    | 35%      | 27%   | 18%   | 16%             | 12%       |
| Four-Year High School Graduation Rates                     | 84%   | 69%      | 72%   | 86%   | 74%             | 80%       |
| % of Adults Over Age 25 With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher | 33%   | 11%      | 17%   | 42%   | 9%              | 31%       |

Sources: All data are from the Rhode Island Department of Education, 2012-2013 school year or the October 2013 *NECAP* unless otherwise noted. *Adult Educational Attainment* data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010-2012, Tables C15002, C15002A, C15002B, C15002C, C15002D & C15002I. All Census data refer only to those individuals who selected one race and Hispanics also may be included in any of the race categories.

◆ **In Rhode Island, Hispanic, Native American, and Black children are less likely to be proficient in reading and mathematics in fourth grade than White or Asian children.<sup>38</sup> Native American, Hispanic, and Black adults living in Rhode Island are less likely to have a bachelor's degree than White or Asian adults.<sup>39</sup>**

◆ **Nationally, Black, Hispanic, and Native American students are more likely than White and Asian students to be disciplined in school. Schools' disproportionate use of disciplinary techniques that remove children from the classroom, such as out-of-school suspension or expulsion, may contribute to racial and ethnic gaps in school achievement and drop-out rates. Rhode Island has one of the highest rates in the U.S. for disciplinary out-of-school suspensions among Black students with disabilities.<sup>40</sup> In Rhode Island during the 2012-2013 school year, minority students received 52% of all disciplinary actions, although they made up only 38% of the student population.<sup>41</sup>**

◆ **During the 2012-2013 school year, Rhode Island's Hispanic and Black children were more than 14 times as likely as White children to attend schools identified for intervention.<sup>42</sup>**

## Rhode Island's Hispanic Children and Youth

◆ In 2010, there were 45,940 Hispanic children under age 18 living in Rhode Island, up from 35,326 in 2000. Hispanic children made up 21% of Rhode Island's child population in 2010, compared with 14% in 2000.<sup>43</sup>

◆ In 2010, three-quarters (75%) of the Hispanic children in Rhode Island lived in the four core cities of Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.<sup>44</sup> While Providence has the largest Hispanic child population overall, Central Falls has the highest percentage of Hispanic children.<sup>45</sup>

### Economics

◆ Forty-two percent of Rhode Island's Hispanic children were living in poverty between 2010 and 2012, compared to the national rate of 34%.<sup>46</sup> The median family income for Hispanics in Rhode Island is \$32,883, compared to \$71,316 overall in Rhode Island.<sup>47</sup>

### Health

◆ In Rhode Island between 2008 and 2012, 18.0% percent of Hispanic babies were born to women who received delayed or no prenatal care, compared with 13.7% of all babies in the state.<sup>48</sup>

◆ Hispanic female teens between the ages of 15 and 19 in Rhode Island have a birth rate that is almost two times higher than the overall teen birth rate in Rhode Island (55.4 per 1,000 Hispanic teens ages 15 to 19 compared to 23.3 per 1,000 for all teens).<sup>49,50</sup>

### Education

◆ The four-year high school graduation rate among Hispanic youth in the class of 2013 was 69%, lower than Rhode Island's four-year high school graduation rate of 80%.<sup>51</sup>

◆ The achievement gap between White and Latino students in Rhode Island is among the largest in the U.S.<sup>52</sup>

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- <sup>26</sup> *Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by sex, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and detailed age, 2013 annual averages - Rhode Island and United States*. (2014). U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics.
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# Methodology & References

## Family Income Levels Based on the Federal Poverty Measures

The poverty thresholds are the original version of the federal poverty measure. They are updated each year by the Census Bureau. The thresholds are used mainly for statistical purposes — for instance, estimating the number of children in Rhode Island living in poor families. The poverty threshold is adjusted upward based on family size and whether or not household members are children, adults, or 65 years and over. The 2013 federal poverty threshold for a family of three with two children is \$18,769 and \$23,624 for a family of four with two children.

The poverty guidelines are the other version of the federal poverty measure. They are issued each year in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The guidelines are a simplification of the poverty thresholds for use for administrative purposes such as determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs. Often, government assistance programs, including many of those administered by Rhode Island, use the federal poverty guidelines to determine income eligibility for public programs. The figures are adjusted upward for larger family sizes.

The phrases "Federal Poverty Level" and "Federal Poverty Line" (often abbreviated FPL) are used interchangeably and can refer to either the poverty thresholds or the poverty guidelines.

## Family Income Levels Based on the Federal Poverty Guidelines

| 2014 FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES | ANNUAL INCOME FAMILY OF THREE | ANNUAL INCOME FAMILY OF FOUR |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 50%                             | \$9,895                       | \$11,925                     |
| 100%                            | \$19,790                      | \$23,850                     |
| 130%                            | \$25,727                      | \$31,005                     |
| 175%                            | \$34,633                      | \$41,738                     |
| 180%                            | \$35,622                      | \$42,930                     |
| 185%                            | \$36,612                      | \$44,123                     |
| 200%                            | \$39,580                      | \$47,700                     |
| 225%                            | \$44,528                      | \$53,663                     |
| 250%                            | \$49,475                      | \$59,625                     |

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