

Economic Well-Being

Home! You're Where It's Warm Inside

by Jack Prelutsky

Home! You're where it's warm inside,
Where my tears are gently dried,
Where I'm comforted and fed,
Where I'm forced to go to bed,
Where there's always love to spare;
Home! I'm glad that you are there.



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 provides one measure of the ability of Rhode Island's families to meet the costs of food, clothing, housing, health care, transportation, child care and higher education. In 2009, the median family income for Rhode Island families with their own children was \$65,681.¹ Rhode Island had the 10th highest median family income nationally and the 4th highest in New England.²

Between 2007 and 2009, Rhode Island's median income for families with their own children differed significantly by family type. The median family income for two-parent families (\$89,744) was more than twice that of male-headed single-parent families (\$39,646) and more than three times that of female-headed single-parent families (\$24,370).³

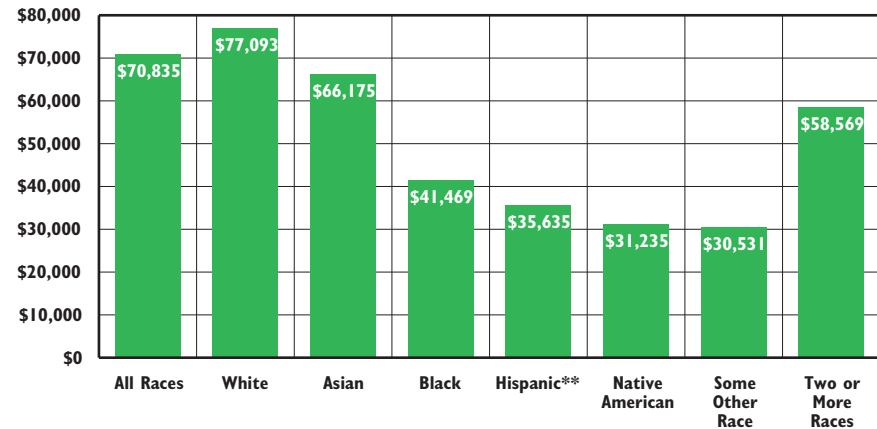
Despite significant increases in worker productivity in the U.S. during

the 2000s, the real incomes of most families remained stagnant or decreased.⁴ Median incomes for working-age households (headed by someone under age 65) decreased by 7.8% between 2000 and 2009.⁵

Over the past 30 years, the income gap between the wealthiest families and low and middle-income families has tripled. The concentration of wealth among the richest 20% of families is now greater than at any time since 1928.⁶ Several factors have contributed to this rising income inequality, including a minimum wage far below historic levels despite recent increases, the general stagnation of wages and compensation, the decline of unionization, high school graduates starting at lower wages and high school degrees bringing less and less value over time.⁷

The gap between the incomes of Rhode Island's richest and poorest families also is growing. In Rhode Island, the average income of the wealthiest 20% of families increased 44% or \$43,438 during the past twenty years, while the average income of the poorest 20% of families remained essentially unchanged. The wealthiest 20% of families in Rhode Island have average incomes that are 7.5 times larger than the average incomes of the poorest 20% of families.⁸ Connecticut is the only state where income inequality is growing faster than in Rhode Island.⁹

Median Family Income by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2007-2009*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007-2009. Tables B19113, B19113A, B19113B, B19113C, B19113D, B19113F, B19113G & 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 White families in Rhode Island is higher than that of Asian families, and much higher than that of Black, Native American and Hispanic families.**¹⁰
- ◆ **Intergenerational income mobility is influenced by race and ethnicity. National research shows that White children are more likely to move up the economic ladder, while middle-income Black children are more likely to fall into lower income brackets than their parents. In addition, 54% of Black children born into poor families stay in the lowest income levels compared to 31% of White children born into poor families.**¹¹
- ◆ **According to the Poverty Institute's 2010 Rhode Island Standard of Need, it costs a single-parent family with two young children \$48,576 a year to pay basic living expenses, including housing, food, clothing, health care, child care and transportation. This family would need an annual income of \$58,200 to meet this budget without government subsidies.**¹²
- ◆ **Income support programs (including RIte Care health insurance, child care subsidies, SNAP/food stamp benefits and the Earned Income Tax Credit) are critical for helping low and moderate-income working families make ends meet.**¹³

Median Family Income

Table 7. Median Family Income, Rhode Island, 1999

CITY/TOWN	ADJUSTED 1989 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME*	1999 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	1999 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18
Barrington	\$69,222	\$74,591	\$88,794
Bristol	\$44,573	\$43,689	\$53,328
Burrillville	\$48,476	\$52,587	\$55,085
Central Falls	\$24,289	\$22,628	\$22,008
Charleston	\$47,020	\$51,491	\$55,080
Coventry	\$48,572	\$51,987	\$61,355
Cranston	\$45,047	\$44,108	\$56,904
Cumberland	\$53,077	\$54,656	\$68,291
East Greenwich	\$66,401	\$70,062	\$108,555
East Providence	\$40,453	\$39,108	\$48,875
Exeter	\$49,810	\$64,452	\$73,239
Foster	\$53,223	\$59,673	\$63,385
Glocester	\$52,186	\$57,537	\$60,938
Hopkinton	\$47,929	\$52,181	\$59,069
Jamestown	\$54,166	\$63,073	\$79,574
Johnston	\$42,526	\$43,514	\$56,641
Lincoln	\$48,379	\$47,815	\$64,470
Little Compton	\$53,735	\$55,368	\$56,679
Middletown	\$45,960	\$51,075	\$55,301
Narragansett	\$46,374	\$50,363	\$68,250
New Shoreham	\$41,059	\$44,779	\$54,844
Newport	\$39,836	\$40,669	\$43,125
North Kingstown	\$52,733	\$60,027	\$66,785
North Providence	\$42,168	\$39,721	\$50,493
North Smithfield	\$54,076	\$58,602	\$71,066
Pawtucket	\$34,627	\$31,775	\$33,562
Portsmouth	\$55,414	\$58,835	\$67,375
Providence	\$28,894	\$26,867	\$24,546
Richmond	\$53,458	\$59,840	\$63,472
Scituate	\$58,931	\$60,788	\$69,135
Smithfield	\$55,478	\$55,621	\$67,050
South Kingstown	\$47,595	\$56,325	\$68,265
Tiverton	\$47,189	\$49,977	\$63,820
Warren	\$41,275	\$41,285	\$53,542
Warwick	\$46,688	\$46,483	\$57,038
West Greenwich	\$53,817	\$65,725	\$70,150
West Warwick	\$41,260	\$39,505	\$41,830
Westerly	\$45,459	\$44,613	\$51,974
Woonsocket	\$33,090	\$30,819	\$34,465
Core Cities	NA	NA	NA
Remainder of State	NA	NA	NA
Rhode Island	\$41,985	\$42,090	\$50,557

*Adjusted to 1999 dollars

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

Median household income data include households with both related and unrelated individuals. 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 household by birth, marriage or adoption. The 1989 median household income data are adjusted to 1999 constant dollars by multiplying 1989 dollar values by 1.304650 as recommended by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

References

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- ^{12,13} *The 2010 Rhode Island standard of need*. (2010). Providence, RI: The Poverty Institute.

Cost of Housing

DEFINITION

Cost of housing is the percentage of income needed by a very low-income family to cover the average cost of rent.¹ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines a very low-income family as family income less than 50% of the median family income. A cost burden exists when more than 30% of a family's monthly income is spent on housing.

SIGNIFICANCE

Inadequate, costly or crowded housing has a negative impact on children's health, safety and emotional well-being and on a family's ability to meet a child's basic needs. Children who live in families with cost burdens are more likely than other children to live in substandard or overcrowded housing and to move frequently, all of which have been linked to lower educational achievement.^{2,3}

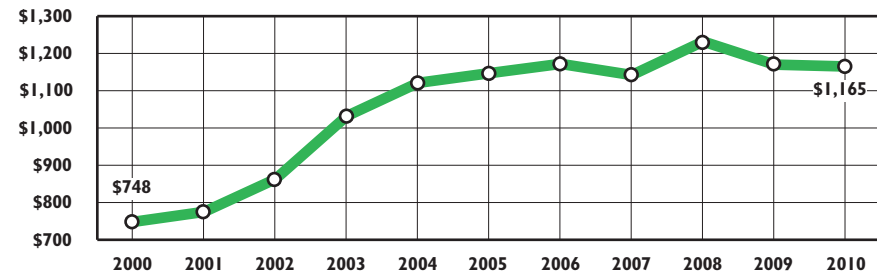
The growth in families' housing expenses has far outpaced income growth, both nationally and in Rhode Island.^{4,5} Between 2005 and 2009, 42% of Rhode Island households (162,442 households) were cost-burdened, making Rhode Island the most housing cost-burdened state in New England.⁶ In 2010, the area median income for families in Rhode Island was \$73,029.⁷ Families with this income can afford a

median-priced, single family home in 24 of the 39 communities in the state.⁸ In 2009, the median selling price of a single family home in Rhode Island was \$199,900, 59% higher than in 1999 but 15% lower than 2008.^{9,10} Between 2000 and 2010, the amount of income required to afford a two-bedroom home in Rhode Island increased by 65.6%, a higher increase than any other state except for Hawaii.¹¹

In 2010, a worker would have to earn \$22.40 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 state's minimum wage of \$7.40 per hour.¹² In 2010, Rhode Island required the 14th highest hourly wage to afford a two-bedroom home of any state.¹³

Federally funded Section 8 rental vouchers help some low-income families afford the high cost of housing; however, there are not enough vouchers to meet the need.¹⁴ In 2006, Rhode Island voters approved a \$50 million bond to create affordable apartments and houses throughout the state. All bond funds will be committed by July 2011, creating over 1,000 affordable homes in 31 communities.¹⁵ Rhode Island is one of only nine states that does not have a dedicated funding source for affordable housing.¹⁶

Average Rent, Two-Bedroom Apartment, Rhode Island, 2000-2010



Source: Rhode Island Housing, Annual Rent Surveys, 2000-2010. The 2003-2010 rents include adjustments for the cost of heat, cooking fuel, electricity and hot water. All prior years' rents include adjustments for the cost of heat and hot water only. Adjustments for utilities for each year vary according to HUD annual utility allowances.

◆ Between 2000 and 2010, the average cost of rent in Rhode Island increased by 56%, from \$748 to \$1,165.¹⁷ The percentage of renters in Rhode Island who spent 30% or more of their household income on rent increased from 40% in 2002 to 50% in 2009. The percentage of homeowners who had a cost burden due to their mortgages also increased between 2002 and 2009, from 30% to 43%.^{18,19}

◆ High energy costs put affordable housing even further out of reach for low-income families. Research shows that children in households experiencing energy shutoffs also are at risk of hunger, health and developmental problems.²⁰ Rhode Island state law prohibits utility shut-offs for protected customers (such as the unemployed and low-income families with children under age two) during the moratorium period from November 1 through April 15.²¹ In 2010, 361 protected residential customers who used electric and 709 who used gas to heat their homes entered the moratorium period with their utilities shut off due to nonpayment, an increase of 35% and 49%, respectively, from 2009.²²

Foreclosures in Rhode Island

◆ Rhode Island continues to have one of the highest foreclosure rates in the nation and the highest foreclosure rate in New England. Over one-third of Rhode Island foreclosures are multi-family rental units. When a multifamily unit is foreclosed, an average of two to three families lose their homes.²³ With the foreclosure crisis affecting millions of households across the country, researchers are beginning to examine the impact of foreclosures on children's emotional health, peer networks, school mobility, school absenteeism and educational achievement.²⁴

Table 8.

Cost of Housing for Very Low-Income Families, Rhode Island, 2010

CITY/TOWN	FAMILY INCOME		HOMEOWNERSHIP COSTS		RENTAL COSTS		
	2010 POVERTY LEVEL FAMILY OF THREE	2010 VERY LOW- INCOME FAMILY	TYPICAL MONTHLY HOUSING PAYMENT	% INCOME NEEDED FOR HOUSING PAYMENT, VERY LOW-INCOME FAMILY	AVERAGE RENT 2-BEDROOM	% INCOME NEEDED FOR RENT POVERTY LEVEL FAMILY OF THREE	% INCOME NEEDED FOR RENT VERY LOW- INCOME FAMILY
Barrington	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$2,143	79%	\$1,260	83%	47%
Bristol	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,645	61%	\$1,209	79%	45%
Burrillville	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,439	53%	\$1,276	84%	47%
Central Falls	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$634	23%	\$933	61%	35%
Charlestown*	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,815	67%	\$1,025	67%	38%
Coventry	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,325	49%	\$1,081	71%	40%
Cranston	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,323	49%	\$1,197	78%	44%
Cumberland	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,648	61%	\$1,067	70%	39%
East Greenwich	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$2,976	110%	\$1,165	76%	43%
East Providence	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,345	50%	\$1,119	73%	41%
Exeter*	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,957	72%	\$1,025	67%	38%
Foster*	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,820	67%	\$1,025	67%	38%
Glocester*	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,490	55%	\$1,025	67%	38%
Hopkinton*	\$18,310	\$35,300	\$1,737	59%	\$977	64%	33%
Jamestown	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$3,294	122%	\$1,334	87%	49%
Johnston	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,300	48%	\$1,159	76%	43%
Lincoln	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,732	64%	\$1,133	74%	42%
Little Compton*	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$2,770	102%	\$1,025	67%	38%
Middletown	\$18,310	\$37,800	\$2,001	64%	\$1,265	83%	40%
Narragansett	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$2,146	79%	\$1,285	84%	48%
New Shoreham*	\$18,310	\$35,300	\$3,640	124%	\$977	64%	33%
Newport	\$18,310	\$37,800	\$2,235	71%	\$1,311	86%	42%
North Kingstown	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,999	74%	\$1,256	82%	46%
North Providence	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,319	49%	\$1,119	73%	41%
North Smithfield	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,616	60%	\$1,222	80%	45%
Pawtucket	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,103	41%	\$995	65%	37%
Portsmouth	\$18,310	\$37,800	\$1,856	59%	\$1,441	94%	46%
Providence	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$697	26%	\$1,086	71%	40%
Richmond*	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,841	68%	\$1,025	67%	38%
Scituate*	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,900	70%	\$1,025	67%	38%
Smithfield	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,587	59%	\$1,255	82%	46%
South Kingstown	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,916	71%	\$1,259	83%	47%
Tiverton	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,498	55%	\$920	60%	34%
Warren*	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,617	60%	\$1,025	67%	38%
Warwick	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,178	44%	\$1,130	74%	42%
West Greenwich*	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,864	69%	\$1,025	67%	38%
West Warwick	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,126	42%	\$1,069	70%	40%
Westerly	\$18,310	\$35,300	\$1,812	62%	\$1,109	73%	38%
Woonsocket	\$18,310	\$32,450	\$1,161	43%	\$974	64%	36%
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>\$18,310</i>	<i>\$33,342</i>	<i>\$1,159</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>\$1,061</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>38%</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>\$18,310</i>	<i>\$33,033</i>	<i>\$1,865</i>	<i>68%</i>	<i>\$1,194</i>	<i>78%</i>	<i>43%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>\$18,310</i>	<i>\$33,081</i>	<i>\$1,757</i>	<i>64%</i>	<i>\$1,165</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>42%</i>

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

2010 poverty level for a family of three as reported in: *Federal Register*, 75(148), August 3, 2010. Pages 45628-45629.

A very low-income family as defined by HUD is a three-person family with income 50% of the median family income and is calculated separately for each of the three metropolitan areas comprising Rhode Island. Reported in Rhode Island Housing (June 26, 2010). *2010 Rhode Island income limits for low- and moderate-income households*. Retrieved February 3, 2011, from www.rhodeislandhousing.org/filelibrary/HUD_incomes_2010.pdf

Data on typical monthly housing payments are from: *HousingWorks RI 2010 fact book*. (2010). Providence, RI: HousingWorks RI. They are based on the median selling price of a single-family home using year-end 2009 data and calculated based on a 30-year mortgage at 5.04% with a 5.75% down payment.

Rhode Island Housing, *Rhode Island Rent Survey*, 2010. Average rents are based on a survey of rents in Rhode Island between January and December 2010. 2010 rents have been adjusted using the current U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) utility allowance of \$254 for a two-bedroom apartment (includes heat, cooking fuel, electricity and hot water).

* Rhode Island Housing *2010 Rent Survey* data are not available for these communities. Average rent used for these communities is the HUD 2010 Fair Market Rent for the metropolitan area as reported by Rhode Island Housing.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

The average rent calculated for the state as a whole, for the remainder of state and for the core cities do not include communities for which data from the Rent Survey were not available. Core cities and remainder of state rent averages are calculated using un-weighted community data, consistent with the Rhode Island Housing methodology for the Rhode Island average rent.

References

¹ All rents have been adjusted using the HUD utility allowances to include heat, cooking fuel, electricity and hot water.

(continued on page 161)

Homeless Children

DEFINITION

Homeless children is the number of children under age 18 who stayed at homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters or transitional housing facilities in Rhode Island with their families. This number does not include homeless and runaway youth who are unaccompanied by their families.

SIGNIFICANCE

Lack of affordable housing, unemployment, low-paying jobs, extreme poverty and decreasing government supports all contribute to the problem of family homelessness. Other causes of family homelessness include domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse and the fraying of social support networks.^{1,2,3,4} More than 80% of homeless mothers with children have experienced domestic violence.⁵

Compared to their peers, homeless children are more likely to become ill, develop mental health issues (such as anxiety, depression and withdrawal), experience significant educational disruption, and exhibit delinquent or aggressive behaviors. Homeless children go hungry at twice the rate of other children and are more likely to experience illnesses such as stomach problems, ear infections and asthma.^{6,7}

Families who have experienced homelessness have higher rates of family separation than other low-income families,

with children separated from their parents due to shelter rules, state intervention and parents' desires to protect their children from the homelessness experience.

Homeless children are 12 times more likely to be placed in foster care than other children. Homelessness also can be a barrier to reunification for families. Studies suggest that more than 30% of children in foster care could return home if their parents had adequate housing.⁸

In Rhode Island, 1,150 children in homeless families made up more than one-quarter (27%) of the people who used emergency homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters and transitional housing in 2010. More than one-half (56%) of these children were under age six. Two-thirds (67%) lived in families that listed one of the core cities as their last permanent residence.⁹

In 2010, 688 families with children stayed at an emergency homeless shelter, domestic violence shelter or transitional housing facility. Several forces have contributed to the high number of families experiencing homelessness in Rhode Island.¹⁰ In 2010, Rhode Island had the fourth highest unemployment rate in the country (11.6%) and the highest foreclosure rate in New England.^{11,12} In 2010, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island was \$1,165 or 91% of the monthly earnings of a full-time worker earning the minimum wage.^{13,14}

Neighborhood Opportunities Program

◆ Established in 2001, the Neighborhood Opportunities Program (NOP) was the first state-funded program for affordable housing in Rhode Island. When it began, the program subsidized both the development and operation of affordable housing. Since 2008, NOP funds have been used only to subsidize rents for families with very low incomes. Families generally pay 30% of their income and the subsidy makes up the difference between this amount and the total rent.¹⁵

◆ The Neighborhood Opportunities Program has helped thousands of homeless individuals and families move into affordable housing and prevented others from becoming homeless. Since the program began, NOP has contributed \$44.7 million toward the development and operation of 1,202 homes in 27 cities and towns across Rhode Island.¹⁶

Supporting Homeless Children in Schools

◆ Family residential instability and homelessness contribute to poor educational outcomes for children. Homeless children are more likely to change schools, be absent from school and have lower reading and math scores than children who have housing.¹⁷

◆ The federal *McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act* requires that states identify homeless children, allow them to enroll in school even if they lack required documents, allow them to stay in their "home school," provide transportation when needed and offer services to help them succeed in school.¹⁸

◆ The *McKinney-Vento Act* defines as homeless any child who does not have a "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."¹⁹ During the 2009-2010 school year, Rhode Island public school personnel identified 996 children as homeless. Of these children, 44% (439) were living in shelters, 42% (421) were living with other families ("doubled up"), 10% (95) were living in hotels or motels, and 4% (41) were unsheltered.²⁰

◆ Schools can support homeless families by identifying children and youth experiencing homelessness, ensuring that families and staff are aware of students' rights under the *McKinney-Vento Act*, developing relationships with community agencies serving homeless families, and helping homeless children get clothing, school supplies, tutoring and referrals to other services they may need to succeed in school.²¹

Table 9.

Homeless Children Identified by Public Schools, Rhode Island, 2009-2010 School Year

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	# OF CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS BY PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL
Barrington	3,434	3
Bristol Warren	3,537	3
Burrillville	2,513	28
Central Falls*	2,862	28
Charlho	3,574	31
Coventry	5,401	8
Cranston	10,774	22
Cumberland	5,025	3
East Greenwich	2,393	0
East Providence	5,740	18
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,906	0
Foster	257	0
Foster-Glocester	1,383	2
Glocester	596	0
Jamestown	487	0
Johnston	3,200	0
Lincoln	3,355	6
Little Compton	317	0
Middletown*	2,361	83
Narragansett	1,467	5
New Shoreham	126	0
Newport*	2,106	22
North Kingstown*	4,456	189
North Providence	3,289	11
North Smithfield	1,829	2
Pawtucket*	8,838	34
Portsmouth	2,859	10
Providence*	23,847	203
Scituate	1,656	0
Smithfield	2,508	7
South Kingstown	3,581	24
Tiverton	1,966	2
Warwick*	10,507	66
West Warwick	3,594	49
Westerly	3,193	87
Woonsocket*	6,086	31
<i>Charter Schools</i>	<i>2,331</i>	<i>NA</i>
<i>State-Operated Schools</i>	<i>1,628</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>UCAP</i>	<i>136</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>47,333</i>	<i>367</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>93,690</i>	<i>611</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>145,118</i>	<i>996</i>

Table 10.

Sheltered Homeless Children, Rhode Island, 2010

CITY/TOWN	2000 POPULATION UNDER AGE 18	ESTIMATED # OF HOMELESS CHILDREN BY LAST PERMANENT RESIDENCE**
Barrington	4,745	3
Bristol	4,399	3
Burrillville	4,043	0
Central Falls	5,531	56
Charlestown	1,712	3
Coventry	8,389	14
Cranston	17,098	29
Cumberland	7,690	0
East Greenwich	3,564	0
East Providence	10,546	17
Exeter	1,589	0
Foster	1,105	7
Glocester	2,664	0
Hopkinton	2,011	0
Jamestown	1,238	0
Johnston	5,906	0
Lincoln	5,157	0
Little Compton	780	0
Middletown	4,328	25
Narragansett	2,833	0
New Shoreham	185	0
Newport	5,199	29
North Kingstown	6,848	10
North Providence	5,936	3
North Smithfield	2,379	3
Pawtucket	18,151	121
Portsmouth	4,329	0
Providence	45,277	415
Richmond	2,014	0
Scituate	2,635	7
Smithfield	4,019	14
South Kingstown	6,284	7
Tiverton	3,367	0
Warren	2,454	36
Warwick	18,780	29
West Greenwich	1,444	0
West Warwick	6,632	10
Westerly	5,406	7
Woonsocket	11,155	138
<i>Out of State</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>160</i>
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>91,945</i>	<i>769</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>155,877</i>	<i>219</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>247,822</i>	<i>1,150</i>

Homeless Children

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Table 9.

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Public School Enrollment in grades pre-K to 12 on October 1, 2009.

Number of children identified as homeless by public school personnel includes children in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 who are identified by public school personnel as meeting the *McKinney-Vento* definition of homelessness, which includes any child who does not have a "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."

Charter schools reporting include Blackstone Valley Prep. State-operated Regional schools reporting include the Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center and the Rhode Island School for the Deaf.

NA indicates that the number was too small to report.

* The Central Falls, Middletown, Newport, North Kingstown, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick and Woonsocket school districts received grants to identify and better serve homeless students.

Table 10.

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1.

Rhode Island Emergency Shelter Information Project, 2010.

**The total number of children in shelters includes all children who stayed at homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters in Rhode Island. Because only homeless shelters that participate in the state's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) provided data on the child's last permanent residence, the count of children by community was calculated by applying the percentage of children from each community reported by these agencies to the total number of homeless children reported by all agencies.

Estimated total number of children by last permanent residence includes children under age 18 who stayed at emergency homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters and transitional housing facilities in Rhode Island with their families in 2010. Data are not comparable with previous Factbooks because the data are for the calendar year and not the fiscal year and include only children physically located at the facilities, not children who resided elsewhere but received supportive services, as in past years.

Additional information on Methodology is on page 158.

References are on page 162.

Secure Parental Employment

DEFINITION

Secure parental employment is the percentage of children living with at least one parent who has full-time, year-round employment.

SIGNIFICANCE

Secure parental employment increases family income and reduces poverty. Children with parents who have steady employment are more likely to have access to health care. Secure parental employment also is likely to improve family functioning by reducing the stress brought on by unemployment and underemployment of parents.¹ Among poor families, children with working parents are less likely to repeat a grade or be suspended or expelled from school than children with non-working parents.²

The U.S. seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate decreased during 2010, starting at 9.7% in January and ending at 9.4% in December. The U.S. unemployment rate in December 2010 was still nearly twice as high as in December 2007, at the start of the recession, when it was 5.0%.^{3,4} Rhode Island's December 2010 unemployment rate was 11.5%, higher than the national level (9.4%).⁵

In 2010, 13% of children in Rhode Island had at least one unemployed parent.⁶ Children with unemployed parents are at increased risk for homelessness, child abuse or neglect

and failure to complete high school or college.⁷

Between 2007 and 2009, 70% of children under age six and 74% of children ages six to 17 in Rhode Island had all parents in the labor force.⁸ In comparison, nationally, 63% of children under age six and 71% of children ages six to 17 had all parents in their family in the labor force.⁹

Even when families have adults with secure parental employment, low wages cause many families to remain in poverty. Nationally, nearly one in three (30%) working families with children is low income (10.0 million working families with a total of 22 million children).¹⁰ Welfare reform aimed to transition welfare recipients to work, yet when these individuals enter the workforce, they tend to earn low wages and have limited benefits. In addition, despite gaining experience and seniority, many low-income workers never move out of low-wage jobs.¹¹

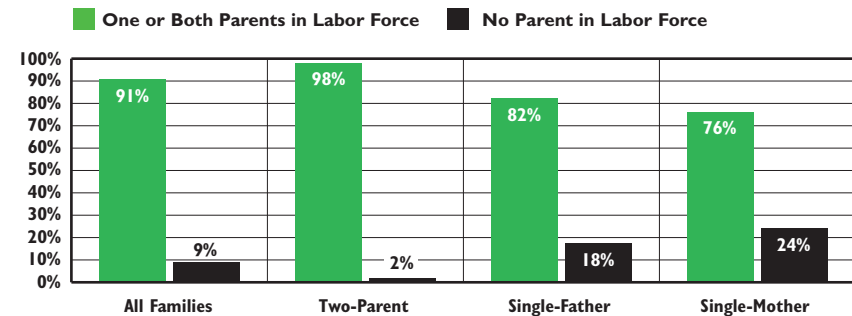
Children Living in Families Where No Parent Has Full-Time, Year-Round Employment, 2009	
	2009
RI	31%
US	31%
National Rank*	25th
New England Rank**	5th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2009). KIDS COUNT Data Center.

Employment Status of Parents by Family Type, Rhode Island, 2007-2009



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007-2009. Table B23008.

- ◆ The majority of children living in Rhode Island between 2007 and 2009 had one or both parents in the labor force. Children living with a single parent were 13 times more likely than children living in a two-parent family to have no parents in the labor force. Of children in two-parent families, 70% had both parents in the labor force.¹²
- ◆ Between 2007 and 2009, there were 20,244 Rhode Island children in families with no parent in the labor force. Children in families with a single parent represented 87% (17,626) of families with no employed parents.¹³
- ◆ Between 2007 and 2009, 13% (2,751) of Rhode Island families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold had at least one adult with full-time, year-round employment.¹⁴ Between 1998 and 2008, the percentage of Rhode Island children living in low-income families (below 200% of the federal poverty threshold) with no employed parents fell from 34% to 25%.¹⁵
- ◆ According to the Poverty Institute's *2010 Rhode Island Standard of Need*, a single parent with two children who works full-time year-round at a minimum wage job and who receives all public benefits for which the family is eligible (SNAP/food stamp benefits, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), child care subsidies and health insurance), will still be \$170 short of affording basic expenses each month.¹⁶

Barriers to Secure Employment for Low-Income Families

- ◆ There are many barriers to employment for those leaving welfare for work. Research shows that welfare leavers who return to welfare after working are much more likely to be in poor health, to have low levels of education and to have young children than those who remain employed.¹⁷
- ◆ Poor health or a disability may make it difficult for parents to secure or sustain employment. One national study found that 13% of low-income working mothers had some type of disability and that 6% had a severe disability. The same study found that 16% of low-income working mothers had a child with a disability and that 9% had a child with a severe disability. The rates for higher income mothers were significantly lower.¹⁸
- ◆ Low-income workers are less likely to have benefits, such as paid time off and flexible work schedules, that would allow them to address the needs of sick children. In the United States, more than half of working parents with below-poverty incomes lack paid leave.¹⁹ Even when they work full-time, year-round, women earn less than male workers and are less likely to have paid time off.²⁰
- ◆ Limited education also can be a barrier to sustained employment. In Rhode Island, 34% of low-income working families include a parent without a high school diploma or GED. Rhode Island ranks 44th (1st is best) in the U.S. on this measure.²¹
- ◆ Having access to work supports, such as health insurance, SNAP/food stamp benefits and child care subsidies can facilitate steady employment over time. People who leave welfare and use these kinds of transitional support services are much less likely to return to welfare.²²

References

¹ Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2009). *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being, 2009*. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

² Wertheimer, R., Moore, K. A., & Burkhauser, M. (2008). *The well-being of children in working poor and other families: 1997 and 2004*. (Child Trends Research Brief Publication #2008-33). Washington, DC: Child Trends.

³ Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2011). *Employment situation summary*. Retrieved January 25, 2011, from www.bls.gov/news.release/empisit.nr0.htm

⁴ Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. Labor Market Information Division. *Local area unemployment statistics: United States labor force statistics, seasonally adjusted 1978-present*. Retrieved January 24, 2011, from www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/pdf/usadj.pdf

(continued on page 162)

Secure Employment and Child Care

- ◆ Research shows a link between adequate child care availability and sustained maternal labor force participation.²³ Low-income working mothers who do not have regular child care arrangements for their preschool children have lower job retention than mothers with regular care arrangements.²⁴
- ◆ Low-income parents are less likely to use paid child care than higher-income parents. When they do pay for child care, they spend a higher proportion of their income than higher-income parents.²⁵
- ◆ In Rhode Island, child care assistance is guaranteed to all income-eligible working families. During the 2007 legislative session, eligibility for child care was rolled back from 225% to 180% of the federal poverty level (\$32,958 for a family of three in 2010).^{26,27}

Rhode Island Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

- ◆ Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs) provide tax reductions and wage supplements for low- and moderate-income working families. EITCs reduce child poverty, decrease taxes and increase work incentives for families struggling to make ends meet. The federal EITC is the nation's most effective antipoverty program for working families, lifting 6.5 million people – roughly half of whom are children – out of poverty each year.²⁸
- ◆ In 2009, the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* (ARRA) expanded the federal EITC, providing an additional estimated \$3.4 billion in benefits to families.²⁹ These expansions were set to expire in December of 2010, but have been extended through 2012 with the federal *Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act of 2010*.^{30,31}
- ◆ State EITCs can supplement the federal EITC to further support working families. Currently, Rhode Island offers a partially-refundable state EITC equal to 25% of the federal EITC, with 15% of this being refundable (i.e., 3.75% of the federal EITC). Of the 24 states offering EITCs, Rhode Island is the only state with a partially refundable credit.³²

Children Receiving Child Support

DEFINITION

Children receiving child support is the percentage of parents who make child support payments on time and in full as indicated in the Rhode Island Office of Child Support Services system. The percentage does not include cases in which paternity has not been established or cases in which the non-custodial parent is not under a court order because he/she cannot be located. Court orders for child support and medical support require establishment of paternity.

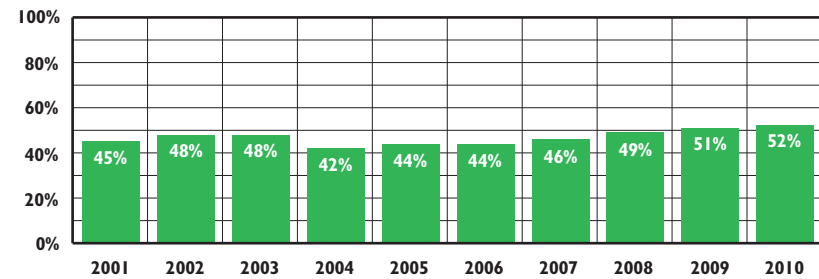
SIGNIFICANCE

Child support is a major part of the safety net for children and families. One in four U.S. children (17 million) receives child support services.¹ Child support provides a mechanism for non-custodial parents (usually fathers) to contribute to the financial and medical support of their children. Child support programs can promote family self-sufficiency and child well-being by helping custodial parents locate the non-custodial parent, establishing paternity, establishing support orders, collecting support payments and providing non-custodial parents with services, such as reviews of their support orders when the non-custodial parent's economic situation changes.²

The receipt of child support payments can significantly improve the economic well-being of a child growing up in a family with a non-resident parent. For poor families that receive child support, these payments represent more than a third (38%) of their income. Custodial parents who receive steady child support payments are less likely to receive cash assistance and more likely to find work more quickly and stay employed longer than those who do not.^{3,4}

For many families, even when a child support order is in place, payments can be unreliable.⁵ Low-income, non-custodial parents often are poor themselves and have limited ability to provide financial support to their children.⁶ Fatherhood programs that target low-income, non-custodial parents and provide a combination of job skills training and employment assistance, parenting skills, and links to the child support system have been shown to increase child support payments.⁷ Non-custodial fathers who pay regular child support are more involved with their children, providing them with emotional and financial support. Research also shows that the receipt of regular child support payments can have a positive effect on children's academic achievement.⁸

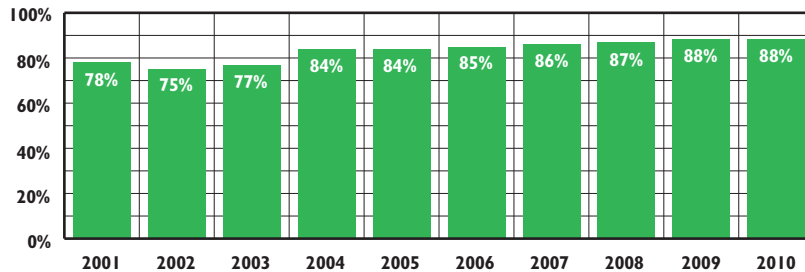
Non-Custodial Parents With Court Orders Who Pay Child Support On-Time and in Full, Rhode Island, 2001–2010



Sources: Rhode Island Department of Administration, Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2001-2004. Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support Services, 2005-2010.

- ◆ As of December 1, 2010, there were 84,862 children in Rhode Island's Office of Child Support Services system. Over half (56%) of the children with a known Rhode Island residence lived in the six core cities. Fifty-two percent (52%) of non-custodial parents under court order in Rhode Island were making child support payments on time and in full.⁹
- ◆ In 2010, the Rhode Island Office of Child Support Services collected \$84.0 million in child support, a \$2.5 million increase over the previous year. Collections go towards both child support and medical support. Eighty-six percent (\$72.1 million) of the funds collected were distributed directly to families and the remainder was used to reimburse the state and federal governments for cash assistance (RI Works) and RIte Care costs.¹⁰
- ◆ The Office of Child Support Services is a cost-effective program. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009, the Rhode Island Office of Child Support Services collected \$7.87 for every \$1.00 Rhode Island spent.¹¹
- ◆ During FFY 2010, there were 10,966 court orders for medical insurance and 10,236 orders to pay for medical coverage. A total of \$4.0 million in payments (known as "cash medical") was retained by the state to offset the cost of RIte Care, while approximately \$1.3 million was disbursed directly to families to offset the cost of private health insurance coverage or other medical expenses.¹²

Rhode Island Children in the Office of Child Support Services System With Paternity Established, 2001-2010



Sources: Rhode Island Department of Administration, Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2001-2004. Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support Services, 2005-2010. Includes all children in the child support system -- private, interstate, and IV-D cases (i.e., those cases that received assistance with child support because they were receiving RI Works, RIte Care or child care assistance benefits).

- ◆ The percentage of children in the Rhode Island child support system with paternity established increased from 78% of children in 2001 to 88% of children in 2010.¹³
- ◆ Despite increases in the percentage of children with paternity established, in FFY 2009, Rhode Island had the lowest rate of court orders for child support established in New England (Vermont – 89%; Maine – 89%; New Hampshire – 85%; Massachusetts – 81%; Connecticut – 72%; Rhode Island – 64%).¹⁴
- ◆ In FFY 2009, Rhode Island had the highest case/staff ratio in New England, more than three times that of the lowest state (VT). In recent years, the Office of Child Support Services has faced major staff reductions, losing close to one-third of its staff and affecting the Office’s ability to establish court orders for child support.^{15,16}

References

¹ Turetsky, V. (2009). *Child support funding stimulates an economic recovery*. Retrieved February 7, 2010, from www.clasp.org

² U.S. Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children & Families. (2009). *Fact sheet: Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE)*. Retrieved January 26, 2011, from www.acf.hhs.gov/opa/fact_sheets/cse_factsheet.html

^{3,5} U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2011. Table 566.

^{4,6,8} Turetsky, V. (2005). *The Child Support Enforcement Program: A sound investment in improving children’s chances in life*. Retrieved January 26, 2011, from www.clasp.org

(continued on page 162)

Child Support and Rhode Island Works

- ◆ As of December 1, 2010, Rhode Island’s Office of Child Support Services system included 9,002 children enrolled in Rhode Island Works (RI Works).¹⁷
- ◆ In 2010, the average child support obligation for children enrolled in RI Works was \$256 per month, compared to an average child support obligation of \$362 per month for children in non-RI Works families.¹⁸ Calculations for child support payments are based on both parents’ incomes, so it is expected that the average child support obligation for children enrolled in RI Works would be lower.
- ◆ In 2010, Rhode Island’s Office of Child Support Services collected \$5.0 million in child support for children enrolled in RI Works. The federal and state governments retained \$4.6 million, and the remaining \$477,428 was passed through to families.¹⁹
- ◆ In Rhode Island, only the first \$50 of child support paid on time each month on behalf of a child receiving RI Works cash assistance (called a “pass-through” payment) goes to the custodial parent caring for the child.²⁰ The remainder of the payment is retained by the federal and state governments as reimbursement for assistance received through RI Works. In FFY 2010 in Rhode Island, an average of 825 families received at least one “pass-through” payment each month.²¹
- ◆ In October 2008, a federal policy change went into effect which provides states the option to increase the amount of money passed through to children. States that pass through up to \$100 per month for one child and up to \$200 per month for two or more children and that disregard this income in calculating eligibility for cash assistance do not have to reimburse the federal government for its share of the child support collected.²² Since this federal policy change went into effect, a number of states have increased the amount they pass through to children. Rhode Island has not implemented this option.²³
- ◆ More generous child support “pass-through” policies for families receiving cash assistance would provide a greater incentive for custodial parents to seek child support and for noncustodial parents to make regular payments because more of the child support payment would go to the child. Increased “pass-throughs” could therefore increase total child support collections, increase family income, potentially reduce the amount of other benefits and ultimately decrease costs to federal and state governments.^{24,25}

Children in Poverty

DEFINITION

Children in poverty is the percentage of children under age 18 who are living in households with incomes below the poverty threshold, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. Poverty is determined based on income received during the year prior to the Census.

SIGNIFICANCE

Poverty is related to every KIDS COUNT indicator. Children in poverty, especially those who experience poverty in early childhood and for extended periods of time, are more likely to have health and behavioral problems, experience difficulty in school, become teen parents and earn less or be unemployed as adults.^{1,2,3} Children in low-income communities are more likely to attend schools that lack resources and rigor, are less likely to be enrolled in a preschool, and have fewer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities.^{4,5,6}

Nationally and in Rhode Island, minority children are more likely to grow up poor than White children. Children under age six, who have single parents, whose parents have low educational levels, or whose parents work part-time or are unemployed are all at increased risk of living in poverty.^{7,8}

In 2010, the federal poverty threshold was \$17,607 for a family of three with two children and \$22,162

for a family of four with two children.⁹ The federal poverty threshold underestimates the number of families who struggle to meet basic needs, has not been adjusted to address changes in family spending patterns (e.g., the rising costs of housing, child care, medical care and transportation), and does not consider geographic variations in the cost of living.^{10,11} A new Supplemental Poverty Measure will be released in the fall of 2011. This new measure will not replace the official measure but will provide policy makers with a new way to evaluate the effects of anti-poverty policies.¹²

According to the *2010 Rhode Island Standard of Need*, a single-parent family with two children would need \$48,576 a year to meet their basic living expenses. This is more than twice the federal poverty level for a family of three. Work supports, such as subsidized child care, health care (RIte Care), food assistance and tax credits, can help poor and low-income families meet their basic needs.¹³

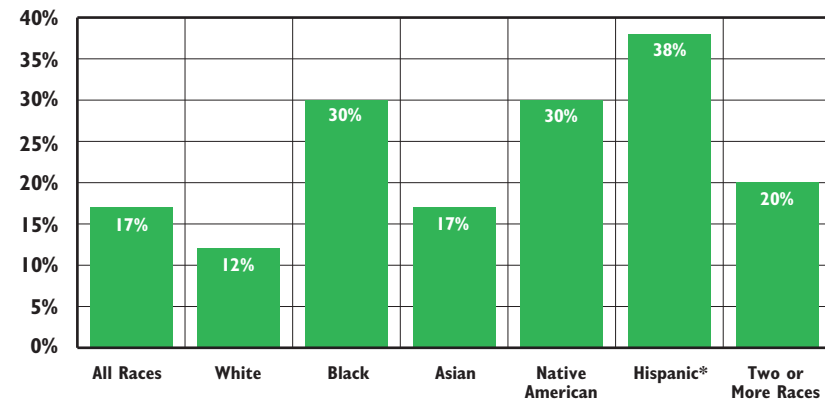
Children in Poverty				
	2006	2007	2008	2009
RI	15.1%	17.5%	15.5%	16.9%
US	18.3%	18.0%	18.2%	20.0%
National Rank*				19th
New England Rank**				5th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2006-2009. Table R1704.

Children in Poverty, by Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island, 2007-2009



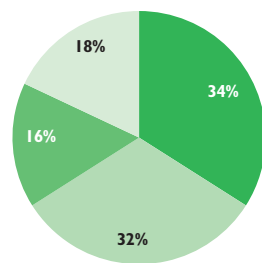
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007-2009. Tables B17001, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020G and B17020I. *Hispanic children may be included in any race category.

- ◆ Between 2007 and 2009, 17.1% (38,604) of Rhode Island's 226,324 children under age 18 with known poverty status lived in households with incomes below the federal poverty threshold.¹⁴
- ◆ In Rhode Island as well as in the United States as a whole, children who are racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to live in families with incomes below the federal poverty threshold. Between 2007 and 2009, about one in three Hispanic (38%), Black (30%) and Native American (30%) children in Rhode Island lived in poverty, compared to 17% of Asian children and 12% of White children.¹⁵
- ◆ While Native American, Black, and Asian children in Rhode Island are more likely to experience poverty than White children, children from these groups represent less than one-fifth (18%) of all children living in poverty in Rhode Island. Between 2007 and 2009, of all children living in poverty in Rhode Island, more than half (51%) were White, 14% were Black, 3% were Asian, 1% were Native American, 26% were Some other race and 5% were Two or more races.¹⁶
- ◆ Between 2007 and 2009, 43% of Rhode Island's poor children were Hispanic. Hispanic children may be included in any race category. The Census Bureau asks about race separately from ethnicity, and the majority of families who identify as Some other race also identify as Hispanic.¹⁷

Rhode Island's Poor Children, 2007-2009

By Age

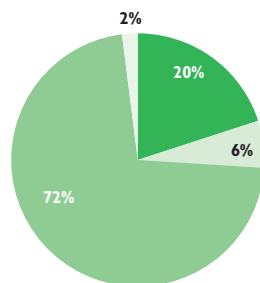
- 34% Ages 5 and Younger
- 32% Ages 6 to 11
- 16% Ages 12 to 14
- 18% Ages 15 to 17



n = 38,604

By Family Structure

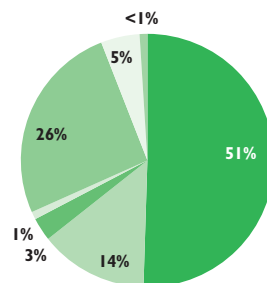
- 20% Married Couple Family
- 6% Unmarried Male Householder
- 72% Unmarried Female Householder
- 2% Not in Related-Family Households



n = 38,604

By Race*

- 51% White
- 14% Black
- 3% Asian
- 1% Native American
- 26% Some Other Race
- 5% Two or More Races
- <1% Unknown



n = 38,604

**Hispanic children may be included in any race category. Between 2007 and 2009, 16,598 (43%) of Rhode Island's 38,604 poor children were Hispanic.*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007-2009. Tables B17001, B17006, B17020A, B17020B, B17020C, B17020D, B17020E, B17020G & B17020I. Population includes children for whom poverty status was determined. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Children Living in Extreme Poverty

◆ Families with incomes below 50% of the federal poverty threshold are considered to be in extreme poverty. In 2010, the extreme poverty level was \$8,804 for a family of three with two children and \$11,081 for a family of four with two children.¹⁸ Of the 38,604 children living below the poverty threshold in Rhode Island from 2007 to 2009, almost half (46%) lived in extreme poverty. In total, an estimated 7.8% (17,598) of all children in Rhode Island lived in extreme poverty.¹⁹

◆ From the start of the recession in December 2007 through December 2009, the percentage of people in extreme poverty in the U.S. grew to its highest level on record. The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program has become less effective as a safety net for very poor families with children. Although Rhode Island's unemployment rate was among the highest in the nation during the recession, the state experienced the largest decline in its TANF caseload (29%) in the U.S. due to new policies implemented when the state's TANF program changed from the Family Independence Program to Rhode Island Works.²⁰

Young Children Under Age Six in Poverty in Rhode Island

◆ Children under age six are at higher risk of living in poverty than any other age group.²¹ Increased exposure to risk factors associated with poverty interferes with young children's emotional and intellectual development. Risk factors associated with poverty include inadequate nutrition, exposure to environmental toxins, unstable housing, maternal depression, trauma and abuse, lower quality child care and parental substance abuse.^{22,23}

◆ Between 2007 and 2009, 18% (13,156) of Rhode Island children under age six lived below the poverty threshold, somewhat lower than the national rate of 22%, and almost half (43%) of Rhode Island children under age six who were living in poverty lived in extreme poverty.²⁴

◆ As of December 1, 2010, there were 2,777 children under age three and 1,817 children ages three to five in families receiving cash assistance (RI Works). Children under age six made up 50% of children receiving cash assistance in Rhode Island.²⁵

◆ In 2010, 48% of all child victims of neglect (which is often linked with family poverty) in Rhode Island were children under the age of six.²⁶

Children in Poverty

Financial Asset Building

- ◆ For working poor families, having assets such as checking and savings accounts provides families the ability to conduct basic financial transactions, manage financial emergencies related to unemployment and illness, and invest in education and training.^{27,28}
- ◆ Many low-income families lack knowledge about or access to traditional banks and instead rely on cash transactions or alternative financial services, such as check-cashing stores, payday lenders, rent-to-own stores and refund anticipation loans. These families pay high fees for financial transactions and high interest rates on loans, are more vulnerable to loss or theft, and often struggle to build credit histories and achieve economic security.^{29,30}
- ◆ In Rhode Island, 6.2% of households do not have a checking or savings account. Among the poorest households, those with incomes less than \$15,000, almost one in three households (31.2%) have no bank account, a rate that is higher than the U.S. as a whole (27.1%) and higher than any other state in New England.³¹
- ◆ Improving financial literacy (i.e., the understanding of money, banking, credit and how best to build assets) and encouraging banks to provide affordable services can support low-income families in using traditional banking institutions and increase their savings.³²
- ◆ State and federal policies that protect families from predatory mortgage lending and payday lending and expand cost-effective and safe financial services would allow families to keep more of their earnings, save and invest more and could ultimately promote a more stable workforce and stronger communities.^{33,34,35}
- ◆ Many public assistance programs have eligibility provisions that limit the amount of assets and/or the value of vehicles a family can own. Such policies discourage families from saving and building the assets they need to improve their economic security.³⁶
- ◆ Rhode Island currently has a \$1,000 asset limit to qualify for and retain RI Works cash assistance and is one of only eight states with such a restrictive asset limit. Under Rhode Island law, the value of one vehicle for each adult household member (not to exceed two vehicles per household) does not count toward the family's asset limit.³⁷

Building Blocks of Economic Security

Income Supports

- ◆ During the recession, a combination of existing income support programs and temporary expansions implemented as part of the federal *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*, kept many families from falling into poverty. Income supports can be cash payments, such as Rhode Island Works; tax credits including the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit; and “near-cash” benefits, such as food, child care and housing assistance that are not provided in cash but which are used to pay regular monthly bills.³⁸

Access to Health Care

- ◆ Families with incomes below the poverty level are much less likely to receive health insurance through an employer than higher-income workers. Some low-income workers are ineligible because they work part-time or are recent hires, while others cannot afford to pay their share of the insurance premium.³⁹ Children with health insurance (public or private) are more likely to have a regular and accessible source of health care.⁴⁰

Affordable Quality Child Care

- ◆ High quality, affordable child care helps parents maintain employment and supports children's development.⁴¹ On average, families living below the poverty threshold spend 32% of their monthly income on child care, compared to 7% for families with incomes twice or more than the federal poverty threshold. Child care subsidies can help poor families afford the cost of child care.⁴²

Educational Attainment

- ◆ Seventy-six percent of Rhode Island children whose parents lack a high school diploma and 65% of children whose parents have only a high school diploma live in low-income families.⁴³ The share of jobs that require a college degree has increased in recent decades and is expected to increase further. By 2018, 61% of the jobs in Rhode Island will require postsecondary training beyond high school.⁴⁴

Affordable Housing

- ◆ In 2010, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Rhode Island was \$1,165.⁴⁵ In Rhode Island, a family of three with an income at the federal poverty level would need to spend 76% of its income on rent to pay this amount, well above the recommended percentage of 30%.⁴⁶ Housing vouchers can help families afford the high cost of housing, but there are not enough vouchers to meet the need.⁴⁷

Table 11. Children Living Below the Federal Poverty Threshold, Rhode Island, 2000

CITY/TOWN	CHILDREN UNDER AGE SIX LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY		CHILDREN UNDER AGE SIX LIVING BELOW POVERTY		CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY		CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18 LIVING BELOW POVERTY	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Barrington	0	0%	23	1.9%	41	1%	127	2.7%
Bristol	66	4.8%	157	11.4%	184	4.2%	436	10.0%
Burrillville	54	5.3%	80	7.9%	139	3.5%	236	6.0%
Central Falls	357	20.6%	740	42.7%	1,146	21.2%	2,210	40.9%
Charlestown	2	<1%	18	3.7%	10	1%	78	4.7%
Coventry	32	1.4%	149	6.4%	146	1.8%	481	5.9%
Cranston	161	3.2%	437	8.6%	605	3.7%	1,496	9.1%
Cumberland	41	1.6%	89	3.6%	65	1%	237	3.1%
East Greenwich	39	4.2%	57	6.1%	76	2.1%	147	4.1%
East Providence	214	6.9%	452	14.5%	557	5.4%	1,126	10.8%
Exeter	50	11.8%	69	16.3%	93	6.2%	112	7.5%
Foster	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	32	2.9%
Glocester	17	2.6%	37	5.7%	112	4.2%	178	6.7%
Hopkinton	0	0%	55	8.9%	8	<1%	115	5.9%
Jamestown	0	0%	0	0%	17	1.4%	17	1.4%
Johnston	69	3.6%	183	9.5%	191	3.3%	527	9.0%
Lincoln	39	2.9%	76	5.6%	142	2.8%	329	6.5%
Little Compton	8	3.5%	8	3.5%	8	1.0%	8	1.0%
Middletown	16	1.1%	70	5.0%	128	3.0%	264	6.2%
Narragansett	25	3.3%	50	6.5%	59	2.2%	235	8.6%
New Shoreham	1	1.6%	3	4.8%	12	6.4%	19	10.2%
Newport	413	22.6%	628	34.3%	773	14.9%	1,267	24.4%
North Kingstown	153	7.1%	239	11.1%	375	5.5%	663	9.7%
North Providence	85	4.8%	212	12.0%	271	4.7%	579	10.1%
North Smithfield	45	6.3%	45	6.3%	58	2.5%	72	3.0%
Pawtucket	824	14.1%	1,711	29.2%	2,195	12.2%	4,542	25.3%
Portsmouth	34	2.7%	63	5.0%	49	1.2%	118	2.8%
Providence	3,252	22.5%	6,137	42.5%	8,846	19.9%	18,045	40.5%
Richmond	17	2.4%	17	2.4%	60	3.0%	82	4.2%
Scituate	8	1.1%	30	4.2%	18	1%	113	4.3%
Smithfield	11	1.0%	11	1.0%	47	1.2%	153	3.9%
South Kingstown	5	<1%	82	4.6%	120	2.0%	324	5.3%
Tiverton	14	1.6%	48	5.4%	48	1.4%	92	2.8%
Warren	41	5.2%	60	7.6%	136	5.6%	205	8.4%
Warwick	126	2.2%	386	6.8%	410	2.2%	1,243	6.7%
West Greenwich	0	0%	18	3.7%	0	0%	40	2.7%
West Warwick	239	10.6%	606	26.8%	462	7.0%	1,186	18.1%
Westerly	0	0%	141	8.0%	105	2.0%	534	10.0%
Woonsocket	772	19.9%	1,361	35.0%	2,061	18.8%	3,494	31.8%
Core Cities	5,857	19.5%	11,183	37.3%	15,483	17.1%	30,744	33.9%
Remainder of State	1,373	3.0%	3,365	7.3%	4,290	2.8%	10,418	6.8%
Rhode Island	7,230	9.5%	14,548	19.2%	19,773	8.1%	41,162	16.9%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3, P87 and PCT50. The data include the poverty rate for all children for whom poverty was determined, including "related" children and "unrelated children" living in the household.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

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Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

DEFINITION

Children in families receiving cash assistance is the percentage of children under age 18 who were living in families receiving cash assistance through the Rhode Island Works Program (RI Works). These data measure the number of children and families enrolled in RI Works at a single point in time. Children and families who participated in the program at other points in the year but who were not enrolled on that day are not included.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Rhode Island Works Program (RI Works) replaced the Family Independence Program (FIP), effective July 1, 2008. The goal of RI Works is to help families successfully transition to work by providing cash assistance and work supports, including employment services, SNAP benefits, health insurance and subsidized child care. Children and families qualify for cash assistance based on their income, resources and the number of people in their families.¹

RI Works cash assistance recipients must participate in an employment plan focused on supporting rapid entrance or re-entrance into the workforce, unless they meet specific criteria for an exemption. Most plans begin with job search and placement and job skills development. If the parent is not successful in finding work, plans also

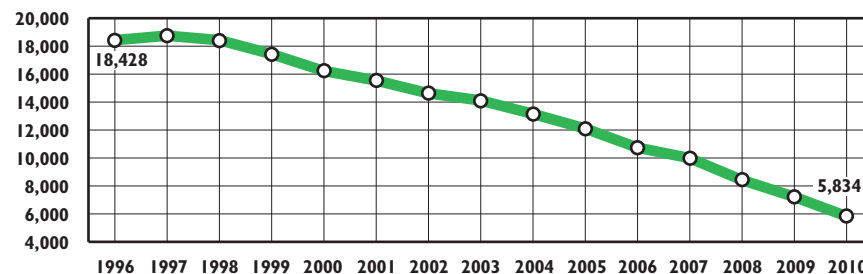
may include work experience, literacy and GED programs, English-language programs or vocational education.²

RI Works provides a safety net for some children whose parents are unable to work due to a disability and can function as an unemployment system for parents who do not have sufficient earnings or work experience to qualify for unemployment benefits. RI Works also provides time-limited supplementary cash assistance to very low-income working families.³ In December 2010, the average hourly wage of parents enrolled in RI Works and working was \$9.37 per hour.⁴

RI Works connects families to the Office of Child Support Services, which assists families in establishing paternity (when applicable), identifying and locating non-custodial parents and obtaining child support payments from non-custodial parents.⁵ In Rhode Island, the first \$50 of child support paid on time each month on behalf of a child enrolled in RI Works goes to the custodial parent caring for the child.⁶ The balance is shared by the state and federal governments as reimbursement for assistance received through RI Works.⁷

The maximum monthly RI Works benefit for a family of three is \$554 per month.⁸ Families receiving the maximum monthly cash benefit have incomes that are less than one-half the federal poverty level and are living in extreme poverty.⁹

Cash Assistance* Caseload, Rhode Island, 1996 – 2010



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, December 1, 1996 – 2010. Cases can be child-only or whole families and multiple people can be included in one case. *The Rhode Island cash assistance program was called Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) until May 1, 1997, then called the Family Independence Program (FIP) until July 1, 2008, when it became the Rhode Island Works Program (RI Works).

- ◆ Between 1996 and 2010, the Rhode Island cash assistance caseload decreased by 68% from 18,428 cases to 5,834 cases. In just one year, from 2009 to 2010, the caseload decreased by 19% or 1,390 cases.¹⁰
- ◆ A large part of the recent decline in the caseload is the result of policies implemented when the program changed from FIP to RI Works in 2008. These policies included new time limits – a 48-month lifetime limit for benefits and a new periodic time limit that limits assistance to no more than 24 months of assistance in any 60-month period. Other policy changes that have resulted in a decreasing caseload include closing child-only cases when parents reach their time limit and limiting eligibility for legal permanent residents to those who have had that status for five years.¹¹
- ◆ During the deepest part of the recession, from December 2007 to December 2009, Rhode Island experienced the nation's largest cash assistance caseload decline (29%) despite having a peak unemployment rate of 12.7%, the third highest in the nation.¹²
- ◆ In December 2010, there were 3,923 adults and 9,155 children under age 18 enrolled in RI Works. More than two-thirds (70%) of RI Works beneficiaries were children, and half (50%) of the children enrolled in RI Works were under the age of six.¹³
- ◆ The high rates of unemployment in Rhode Island coupled with shorter time limits for cash assistance leaves many families with children experiencing deep poverty, hardship and homelessness. There are currently no Rhode Island general revenue funds devoted to a cash assistance safety net for children and families.

Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

RI Works Policies

Work Requirements

◆ Single-parent families must participate in a work activity for a minimum of 20 hours per week if they have a child under age six and a minimum of 30 hours per week if their youngest child is age six or older. Single parents can combine 10 hours of job skills training, education that is directly related to employment, or a GED program with 20 hours of work to reach the 30-hour work requirement.¹⁴

Time Limits

◆ The lifetime limit for RI Works is 48 months. Families also are limited to no more than 24 months of cash assistance in a 60-month period. All cash assistance issued in Rhode Island or any other state since May 1997 counts toward the lifetime limit, while assistance received since July 1, 2008 counts toward the 24-month periodic time limit.¹⁵

Hardship Extensions

◆ Families can apply for hardship extensions that allow them to continue receiving cash assistance after reaching the time limit if the parent has a documented significant disability, is caring for a significantly disabled family member, is unable to pursue employment due to domestic violence, is homeless or is unable to work because of “a critical other condition or circumstance.”¹⁶ There is no limit on the total time a family can receive a hardship extension.^{17,18}

Child-Only Cases

◆ Child-only cases are those that receive assistance for only the children in the family because the child’s parent is ineligible. Child-only cases include children living with a non-parent or a parent who is disabled and receiving Supplemental Security Income.¹⁹

Sanctions

◆ If a parent misses a required appointment, refuses or quits a job or in some other way fails to comply with an employment plan and is not able to establish “good cause” (e.g., lack of child care, illness, a family crisis or other allowed circumstance), the family’s cash benefit is reduced. If benefits are reduced for a total of three months (consecutive or not) due to non-compliance, the family’s case is closed and the entire family loses the RI Works benefit. Benefits can be restored in the month after the parent comes into compliance.²⁰

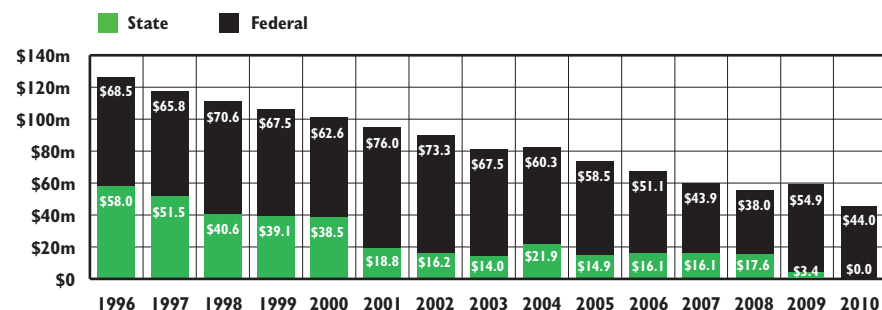
RI Works by Case Type, 2010

	Number	Percentage
Child-only cases	2,318	40%
Cases with adults required to engage in a work activity	2,706	46%
Cases with adults exempt from a work activity*	810	14%
<i>Total RI Works caseload</i>	<i>5,834</i>	

Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, 2010

*RI Works regulations require that all parents and caretaker relatives included in the cash assistance grant participate in a work activity unless they receive a temporary exemption. Exemptions from work activities include: caring for a disabled spouse or child (57), in third trimester of pregnancy (337) and youngest child under age one (416).

Rhode Island Cash Assistance Expenditures, State Fiscal Years 1996-2010

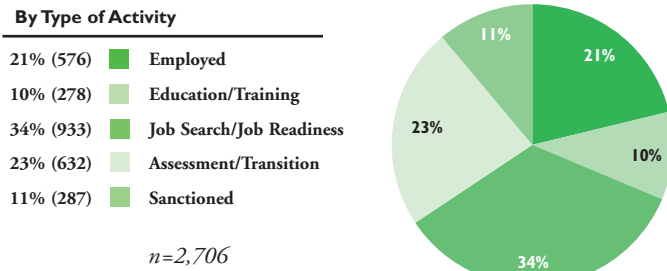


Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, *Family Independence Program 2007 Annual Report*. (FY 1996-2001); House Fiscal Advisory Staff. (2004-2010). *Budget as enacted: Fiscal Years 2005-2011*. (FY 2002-2010). Fiscal years 2002-2009 are funds spent and FY 2010 is final budget.

◆ In State Fiscal Year 2010, for the first time, no general revenue was allocated for cash assistance. State general revenue spending for cash assistance has been decreasing steadily over the past 14 years. The cash assistance program is now entirely supported by federal Temporary Assistance to Need Families (TANF) block grant funds. The total federal TANF expenditures for cash assistance in Rhode Island decreased by 36% between 1996 and 2010, from \$68.5 million to \$44.0 million.^{21,22}

Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

Activities of Families Enrolled in the RI Works Program, December 2010



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, December 2010.

◆ As of December 2010, 21% of families that were required to engage in work-related activities were employed, down from 38% in December 2007, when the recession began.^{23,24} During this same period, from December 2007 through December 2010, the unemployment rate in Rhode Island has grown from 6.0% to 11.5%, though it has moderated somewhat from its December 2009 high of 12.7%.²⁵

◆ Parents with limited literacy or English-language skills can participate in a six-month basic education and work skills program. Parents also can receive up to one year of vocational education.²⁶ As of December 2010, 10% of families were participating in education or training programs.²⁷

◆ One-third (34%) of families were participating in job search/job readiness activities, including job search and job skills development programs delivered in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, primarily through their netWORKri one-stop career center locations, and vocational rehabilitation services delivered by the Office of Rehabilitation Services. Almost one-quarter of families (23%) were in assessment or transition, which includes preparing an employment plan, receiving educational or vocational assessments, or waiting to begin an education program or job.^{28,29}

◆ Slightly more than 1 in 10 families (11%) required to engage in a work-related activity were sanctioned, meaning they lost benefits due to non-compliance with their employment plan.³⁰

Support for Young Parents

◆ A child is nine times more likely to grow up in poverty if that child's mother gave birth as a teen, the parents were unmarried when the child was born and the mother did not receive a high school diploma or GED.³¹

◆ RI Works provides additional support to young parents. Parents who are under age 20 and do not have a high school diploma or GED receive mandatory parenting skills training and are supported in completing their high school education while enrolled in RI Works. In addition, pregnant or parenting teens under the age of 18 are required to live with their parent or relative or in an adult-supervised setting if it is not possible to live at home.³²

◆ In December 2010, there were 444 families with a head of household under the age of 21 enrolled in RI Works, representing 8% of the total caseload and 13% of the caseload when child-only families are excluded. Eight of these families were headed by a teen mother under the age of 18.³³

Support for Individuals with Disabilities and Their Families

◆ Nationally, more than one-quarter (27%) of cash assistance recipients have physical, mental or emotional problems that keep them from working or limit the type or amount of work they can do, compared to 6% of all low-income single mothers.³⁴

◆ Under RI Works, parents with disabilities are not exempt from work requirements. Parents who report having a disability and who are not receiving SSI may be referred to the Office of Rehabilitation Services for further assessment, vocational rehabilitation services and help applying for SSI.³⁵

◆ As of December 1, 2010, 1,047 families had hardship extensions, 206 for a physical or mental disability, 29 to care for a disabled family member, 22 who were unable to work due to a domestic violence situation, 11 for homelessness and 779 for another reason (e.g., because they were unable to find work due to the recession).³⁶

◆ Families that include children with disabilities face special challenges, including difficulty finding appropriate child care. Parents may need to miss work to provide for their children's special needs and missing work puts them at risk of being sanctioned.³⁷

Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance

Education and Training Supporting Employment

◆ Twenty percent of Rhode Island’s adult working age population (ages 16-64) that is not enrolled in school lacks a high school diploma, has limited English-language skills or faces both of these obstacles to success in the labor market.³⁸

◆ Projections suggest that adults who drop out of high school will qualify for only 10% of jobs in 2018, while 63% of jobs in the U.S. and 61% of the jobs in Rhode Island will require postsecondary education, up from 28% in 1973.³⁹ Between 2007 and 2009, the unemployment rate for Rhode Islanders without high school diplomas (11.5%) was one and a half times higher than it was for those with high school degrees (7.7%).⁴⁰

◆ Parents enrolled in RI Works face significant barriers to success in the labor market. Almost one-half of the parents (44%) enrolled in RI Works report not finishing high school.⁴¹ Among a recently tested group of parents receiving cash assistance, almost one-third (29%) tested at or below the 6th grade reading level. More than half (58%) of native Spanish speakers enrolled in RI Works tested at or below the 6th grade reading level on a Spanish-language version of the test.⁴²

◆ Research suggests that cash assistance recipients who receive more than a year of postsecondary education or training increase their chances of obtaining and retaining employment. Helping cash assistance recipients develop career pathways, rather than taking any available job, also can help them become self-sufficient.⁴³

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, December 2010. The denominator is the total number of children under age 18 from U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. Summary File 1, Table P12.

Communities may have more families than children receiving cash assistance because a pregnant woman without children is eligible if in the final trimester of her pregnancy.

Core Cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

References

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^{4,8,10,13,23,27,28,30,33,36,41} Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, December 1996-2010.

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⁷ Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Office of Child Support Services, 2011.

(continued on page 163)

Table 12. Children in Families Receiving Cash Assistance (RI Works), Rhode Island, December 1, 2010

CITY/TOWN	# OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 18	NUMBER RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE		% OF CHILDREN RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE
		FAMILIES	CHILDREN	
Barrington	4,745	6	8	<1%
Bristol	4,399	37	62	1%
Burrillville	4,043	24	35	1%
Central Falls	5,531	271	439	8%
Charlestown	1,712	11	10	1%
Coventry	8,389	60	89	1%
Cranston	17,098	303	449	3%
Cumberland	7,690	61	100	1%
East Greenwich	3,564	24	29	1%
East Providence	10,546	138	187	2%
Exeter	1,589	10	20	1%
Foster	1,105	7	10	1%
Glocester	2,664	13	15	1%
Hopkinton	2,011	11	13	1%
Jamestown	1,238	2	2	<1%
Johnston	5,906	99	136	2%
Lincoln	5,157	38	51	1%
Little Compton	780	2	2	<1%
Middletown	4,328	41	51	1%
Narragansett	2,833	22	40	1%
New Shoreham	185	1	2	1%
Newport	5,199	167	266	5%
North Kingstown	6,848	69	111	2%
North Providence	5,936	117	170	3%
North Smithfield	2,379	21	29	1%
Pawtucket	18,151	547	797	4%
Portsmouth	4,329	23	28	1%
Providence	45,277	2,555	4,262	9%
Richmond	2,014	11	21	1%
Scituate	2,635	14	19	1%
Smithfield	4,019	14	23	1%
South Kingstown	6,284	43	65	1%
Tiverton	3,367	51	71	2%
Warren	2,454	28	39	2%
Warwick	18,780	220	283	2%
West Greenwich	1,444	5	8	1%
West Warwick	6,632	161	222	3%
Westerly	5,406	66	105	2%
Woonsocket	11,155	541	886	8%
Core Cities	91,945	4,242	6,872	7%
Remainder of State	155,877	1,592	2,283	1%
Rhode Island	247,822	5,834	9,155	4%

Children Receiving SNAP Benefits

DEFINITION

Children receiving SNAP benefits is the number of children under age 18 who participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in 2010 and the percentage change between 2005 and 2010 in the number of children under age 18 participating.

SIGNIFICANCE

Hunger and lack of regular access to sufficient food are linked to serious physical, psychological, emotional and academic problems in children and can interfere with their growth and development.^{1,2,3} The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp Program, helps low-income individuals and families obtain better nutrition through monthly benefits they can use to purchase food at retail stores and some farmers' markets.⁴ Children who receive SNAP benefits are 26% less likely to go hungry than eligible children who are not enrolled.⁵

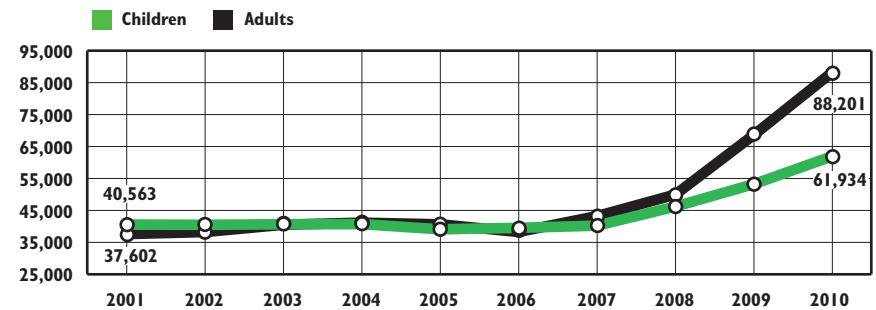
In the past, SNAP had been available to households with gross incomes below 130% of the federal poverty level, net incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level and no more than \$2,000 in resources.⁶ In April 2009, Rhode Island implemented expanded categorical eligibility, an option encouraged by the U.S. Department of

Agriculture (USDA), which allowed Rhode Island to increase the gross income limit and remove the resource limit for most applicants.^{7,8} The gross income limit for Rhode Island is now 185% of the federal poverty level (\$2,823 per month for a family of three). Households must still meet the net income limit of 100% of the federal poverty level after allowable deductions, which include deductions for housing costs and child care.^{9,10}

Purchasing food using SNAP benefits helps many low-income families bridge the gap between what they earn and their basic living expenses. In 2010, a Rhode Island family of three with one full-time, year-round worker making the minimum wage had only 76% of the income needed to meet basic expenses. If the same family received SNAP benefits, they would be able to meet 93% of their basic needs.¹¹ In 2010, the average monthly SNAP benefit for a family of three in Rhode Island was \$383.¹²

SNAP is an important anti-hunger program that helps individuals and families purchase food when they have limited income, face unemployment or reduced work hours, or experience a crisis. SNAP is one of the fastest and most effective forms of economic stimulus because it moves money into the local economy quickly.¹³

Participation in the Supplementary Nutrition Assistance Program, Children and Adults, Rhode Island, 2001-2010



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, 2001–2010. Data represent children under age 18 and adults who participated in SNAP during the month of October.

- ◆ In October 2010, in Rhode Island, there were 88,201 adults and 61,934 children enrolled in SNAP. More than one-third (38%) of the children enrolled in SNAP were under the age of six.¹⁴
- ◆ Since 2005, the number of Rhode Island children receiving SNAP benefits during the month of October has increased by almost 23,000 from 39,087 in 2005 to 61,934 in 2010, while the number of participating adults has more than doubled from 40,637 in 2005 to 88,201 in 2010.¹⁵

Food Insecurity in Rhode Island

- ◆ The USDA defines food insecurity as not always having access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Between 2007 and 2009, 13.7% of Rhode Island households and 13.5% of United States households were food insecure. In 2009, more than one in every five (21.3%) U.S. households with children were food insecure, while one-half (50.7%) of U.S. households with children with incomes below the poverty level experienced food insecurity.¹⁶
- ◆ Over the past three years, the number of Rhode Islanders who receive emergency food assistance from food pantries and soup kitchens each month has grown by 17,000. These programs now feed 55,000 people each month, and four out of 10 of the households served include children. In 2009, over one-half (57%) of Rhode Islanders who accessed emergency food assistance also received SNAP benefits, up from 35% in 2006.¹⁷

Table 13. Children Under Age 18 Receiving SNAP Benefits, Rhode Island, October 1, 2005, 2009 and 2010

CITY/TOWN	NUMBER PARTICIPATING IN 2005	NUMBER PARTICIPATING IN 2009	NUMBER PARTICIPATING IN 2010	% CHANGE IN NUMBER PARTICIPATING FROM 2005 TO 2010
Barrington	28	85	113	304%
Bristol	160	363	456	185%
Burrillville	186	456	458	146%
Central Falls	2,038	2,917	3,270	60%
Charlestown	99	152	206	108%
Coventry	381	772	1,006	164%
Cranston	1,547	2,857	3,418	121%
Cumberland	253	617	788	211%
East Greenwich	81	190	185	128%
East Providence	914	1,688	1,971	116%
Exeter	44	86	106	141%
Foster	34	79	79	132%
Glocester	61	158	159	161%
Hopkinton	84	209	235	180%
Jamestown	21	40	35	67%
Johnston	398	839	1,008	153%
Lincoln	195	551	585	200%
Little Compton	9	46	42	367%
Middletown	149	392	436	193%
Narragansett	87	218	278	220%
New Shoreham	3	5	7	133%
Newport	884	1,202	1,386	57%
North Kingstown	385	634	798	107%
North Providence	420	907	1,169	178%
North Smithfield	51	213	187	267%
Pawtucket	3,795	5,790	6,396	69%
Portsmouth	91	237	277	204%
Providence	16,767	20,771	22,933	37%
Richmond	51	125	138	171%
Scituate	39	149	162	315%
Smithfield	52	210	229	340%
South Kingstown	270	457	498	84%
Tiverton	108	321	373	245%
Warren	258	373	430	67%
Warwick	1,136	2,295	2,367	108%
West Greenwich	22	79	74	236%
West Warwick	851	1,472	1,699	100%
Westerly	383	815	848	121%
Woonsocket	2,833	4,696	4,847	71%
Core Cities	27,168	36,848	40,531	49%
Remainder of State	8,000	16,618	19,121	139%
Rhode Island	35,168	53,466	59,652	70%

SNAP Participation in Rhode Island

◆ Between October 1, 2005 and October 1, 2010, the number of Rhode Island children receiving SNAP benefits increased by 70% from 35,168 to 59,652. SNAP participation rates among children increased by 49% in the core cities and more than doubled in the remainder of the state.¹⁸

◆ Since 2005, Rhode Island has implemented a number of strategies to improve access to SNAP benefits including implementing “expanded categorical eligibility” so more families qualify, developing a web-based screening tool and an on-line SNAP application, conducting telephone interviews so applicants do not need to apply in person, and requiring less frequent recertification.^{19,20}

◆ Simplifying applications, reducing documentation requirements, improving communication (i.e., phone systems and notices), extending hours of operation, and hiring more workers so that caseloads are reduced and applications can be processed in a timely fashion are additional strategies that could be implemented to further increase access.²¹

Note to Table

In 2008, the Food Stamp Program was renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) data are from the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, InRhodes Database, October 1, 2005, 2009 and 2010.

The data in the city/town table may differ from the data on the previous page as this table uses point-in-time data for October 1st, rather than data based on participation for the entire month.

Due to changes in Rhode Island’s SNAP eligibility criteria (e.g., implementation of expanded categorical eligibility) many children in families with gross incomes up to 185% of the federal poverty level are now eligible for SNAP. For this reason, 2000 Census data on the number of children in families with incomes below 130% of the federal poverty level no longer provides an accurate estimate of the number of income-eligible children, and this year’s Factbook does not present participation rates. Instead, the number of children participating in 2005 is presented as a baseline and data for 2009 and 2010 are presented for comparison. Due to this change in methodology, *Children Receiving SNAP Benefits* cannot be compared with Factbooks prior to 2010.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

References

- ¹ *Reading, writing and hungry: The consequences of food insecurity on children, and on our nation’s economic success: Issue brief #8.* (2008). Washington, DC: Partnership for America’s Economic Success.
- ² Cook, J. T., March, E. L., & Ettinger de Cuba, S. (2009). *Even very low levels of food insecurity found to harm children’s health: Children’s Health Watch policy action brief.* Boston, MA: Children’s Health Watch.
- ³ National Anti-Hunger Organizations. (2009). *NAHO roadmap to end childhood hunger in America by 2015.* Retrieved January 22, 2010, from www.hungersolutions.org

(continued on page 164)

Women and Children Participating in WIC

DEFINITION

Women and children participating in WIC is the percentage of eligible women, infants and children enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

SIGNIFICANCE

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a preventive program that provides participants with nutritious food, nutrition education, screening and referrals to health care and social services. WIC is a federally-funded program that serves pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under five years of age with household incomes below 185% of the federal poverty level. In addition, any individual who participates in SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program), RIte Care, Medicaid, or the Rhode Island Works Program or who is a member of a family in which a pregnant woman or infant receives Medicaid benefits, is automatically income-eligible for WIC. Participants must have a specified nutritional risk, such as anemia, high-risk pregnancy, abnormal growth, or be in need of supplemental foods for their diet.^{1,2}

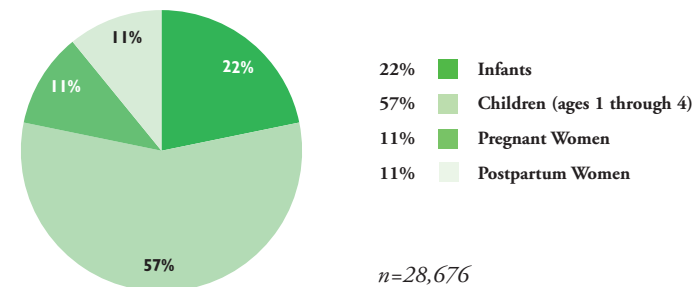
Compared to children who receive WIC benefits, young children who are

eligible for WIC but not enrolled are more likely to be in poor health, have developmental delays and experience food insecurity (i.e., live in families that do not always have enough food for an active, healthy life).³ Food insecurity in early childhood can lead to impaired cognitive and social-emotional development, limiting school achievement.⁴ Pregnant women also have special nutritional needs that influence pregnancy outcomes and the health of their children.⁵

WIC participation has been shown to reduce infant mortality, improve birth outcomes (including reducing the likelihood of low birthweight and prematurity), protect against underweight and poor nutrition in infants, increase immunization rates, improve cognitive development, and increase the likelihood of having a source of regular medical care. WIC promotes breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding.⁶ In Rhode Island, 19% of WIC infants were breastfed in Federal Fiscal Year 2010.⁷

In 2009, Congress revised appropriations to enhance the WIC food package by improving the health and nutritional value of the foods in the program and increasing participants' access to a wider variety of fruits, vegetables and other foods.⁸

Women, Infants and Children Enrolled in WIC, Rhode Island, July 2010



Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, WIC Program, July 2010. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

◆ **Infants and children ages one through four comprised more than three-quarters of the population being served by WIC in July 2010 in Rhode Island. Women accounted for 22% (11% pregnant and 11% postpartum) of the population being served.⁹**

◆ **In July 2010, 68% of WIC participants in Rhode Island were White, 17% were Black or African American, 3% were Asian, and 11% identified as other races or more than one race. Thirty-nine percent of WIC participants identified as Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics are included in the racial groups above.¹⁰**

◆ **Four of the six core cities – Central Falls (79%), Pawtucket (75%), Providence (78%) and Woonsocket (74%) – had WIC participation rates equal to or exceeding the statewide enrollment rate of 72% in 2010.¹¹**

◆ **WIC is not an entitlement program. Congress determines funding annually and WIC is not funded at a level that is sufficient to serve all eligible women, infants, and children.^{12,13} Rhode Island received \$25.1 million dollars in federal funding for WIC during Federal Fiscal Year 2010.¹⁴**

◆ **The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program improves participants' intake of fresh fruits and vegetables by enabling participants to purchase produce at authorized local farmers' markets using WIC benefits.¹⁵ In Rhode Island, 68 farmers' markets provided fresh produce to 18,100 WIC participants during the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program during Federal Fiscal Year 2010.¹⁶**

Women and Children Participating in WIC

Table 14.

Women, Infants and Children Participating in WIC, Rhode Island, July 2010

CITY/TOWN	ESTIMATED NUMBER ELIGIBLE	NUMBER PARTICIPATING	% OF ELIGIBLE PARTICIPATING
Barrington	117	53	45%
Bristol	385	258	67%
Burrillville	368	233	63%
Central Falls	2,089	1,660	79%
Charlestown	142	71	50%
Coventry	721	426	59%
Cranston	2,239	1,651	74%
Cumberland	539	320	59%
East Greenwich	149	96	64%
East Providence	1,471	1,069	73%
Exeter	97	58	60%
Foster	82	49	60%
Glocester	130	64	49%
Hopkinton	200	128	64%
Jamestown	26	10	38%
Johnston	670	530	79%
Lincoln	436	148	34%
Little Compton	40	22	55%
Middletown	392	307	78%
Narragansett	196	108	55%
New Shoreham	19	7	37%
Newport	934	631	68%
North Kingstown	507	261	51%
North Providence	835	511	61%
North Smithfield	157	112	71%
Pawtucket	4,518	3,380	75%
Portsmouth	199	121	61%
Providence	13,715	10,759	78%
Richmond	114	58	51%
Scituate	109	71	65%
Smithfield	153	84	55%
South Kingstown	435	271	62%
Tiverton	293	181	62%
Warren	300	209	70%
Warwick	1,734	1,135	65%
West Greenwich	79	71	90%
West Warwick	1,235	808	65%
Westerly	662	369	56%
Woonsocket	3,012	2,237	74%
Unknown	579	139	NA
Core Cities	25,503	19,475	76%
Remainder of State	13,996	9,062	65%
Rhode Island	40,078	28,676	72%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Health, WIC Program, July 2010.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

Note: Due to a change in methodology, WIC participation rates in this Factbook cannot be compared with previous Factbooks. Data are now reported for a single day in July rather than September 30 as they had been previously. Additionally, since 2007, the “estimated number eligible” is based on calculations done by the Rhode Island Department of Health to determine the number of pregnant and postpartum women, infants and children under age five who live in families with an income less than 185% of the federal poverty level. In previous years, the “estimated number eligible” was based on 2000 Census data (2005 and 2006 Factbooks) and 1990 Census data (all Factbooks prior to 2005).

References

- ¹¹² Food and Nutrition Service. (2009). *WIC: The special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children (Nutrition Program Facts)*. Retrieved January 4, 2011, from www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-fact-sheet.pdf
- ²¹³ Food Research & Action Center. (n.d.) *Child nutrition fact sheet: Women, Infants and Children (WIC)*. Retrieved January 4, 2011, from frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/cnwic.pdf
- ³ Jeng, K., March, E., Cook, J., & Ertinger de Cuba, S. (2009). *Feeding our future: Growing up healthy with WIC*. Boston, MA: Children's Health Watch.
- ⁴ *Reading, writing and hungry: The consequences of food insecurity on children, and on our nation's economic success*. (2008). Washington, DC: Partnership for America's Economic Success.
- ⁵ The National Women's Health Information Center. *Frequently asked questions about pregnancy and a healthy diet*. (2005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health.
- ⁶ Food and Nutrition Service. (2009). *How WIC helps*. Retrieved December 14, 2010, from www.fns.usda.gov/wic/aboutwic/howwichelps.htm

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Children Participating in School Breakfast

DEFINITION

Children participating in school breakfast is the percentage of low-income children who participate in the School Breakfast Program. Children are counted as low-income if they are eligible for and enrolled in the Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program.

SIGNIFICANCE

The School Breakfast program is a key component of eliminating child hunger, and has been an important resource for children in unemployed and low-income working families during the recession.¹ School breakfast programs offer nutritious meals and large proportions of the daily dietary intake of participating children.² Students who participate in breakfast programs have higher standardized test scores, fewer absences, reduced tardiness, improved attentiveness, better behavior and lower risks of obesity.³

Food-insecure families often do not have sufficient food to provide nutritious breakfasts every morning, and children in these families are at risk of falling behind their peers physically, cognitively, academically, emotionally and socially.^{4,5} Children who suffer from under-nutrition or food insecurity are more likely than their peers to have poor health, be absent from school, be overweight or obese, show aggression and anxiety, and need special education services.^{6,7} Nationally,

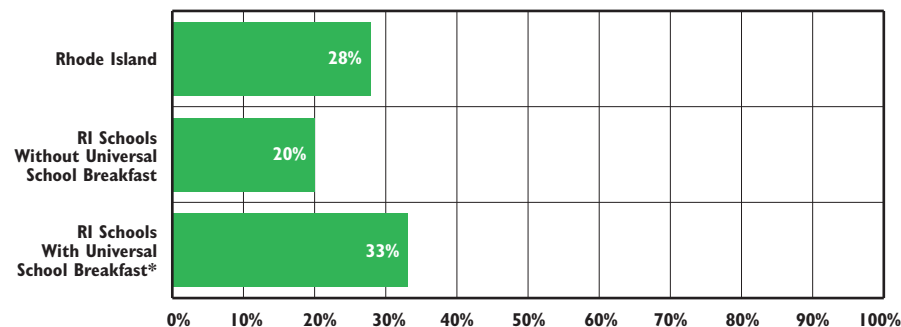
kindergartners in households experiencing food insecurity are more likely to be chronically absent than their peers in food-secure households.⁸ Risk factors for food insecurity in Rhode Island include being unemployed, living in poverty, being of Hispanic ethnicity, having children under age six, being a single parent and not finishing high school.⁹

Rhode Island state law requires all public schools to provide students with access to school breakfast, although higher-income parents may be required to pay for some share of the costs. Rhode Island receives more than \$5.5 million annually in federal funds for the School Breakfast Program, which flow directly into the state's economy.¹⁰

If Rhode Island increased low-income student participation in the School Breakfast Program from 39% to 60% of School Lunch Program Participation, the state would receive \$2.6 million additional federal funds to support the School Breakfast Program.¹¹

During the 2009-2010 school year, 39 low-income students participated in the School Breakfast Program for every 100 low-income students that participated in the School Lunch Program. Rhode Island ranks 40th in the U.S. for participation in the School Breakfast Program when participation is analyzed as the ratio of low-income students in the School Breakfast Program to low-income students in the School Lunch Program, up from 41st last year.¹²

Low-Income Children Participating in the School Breakfast Program, Rhode Island, October 2010



* Includes all schools in Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket that offer universal breakfast throughout the district, as well as selected schools in East Providence and Newport.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of School Food Services, Office of Finance and Office of Network & Information Systems, October 2010.

◆ In 2010, the percentage of low-income students participating in School Breakfast Programs in schools offering universal school breakfast in Rhode Island was 33%, compared with 20% of low-income students participating in non-universal programs in the remainder of the state.¹³

◆ Universal School Breakfast Programs, which provide free breakfast to all children regardless of income, increase school breakfast participation and can reduce administrative costs. When schools offer breakfast in the classroom at the start of the school day, participation rates increase even more.¹⁴

◆ During the 2010-2011 school year, 16 of the 22 school districts in Rhode Island with severe need schools (schools in which 40% or more of students qualify for free or reduced price schools meals) did not offer universal school breakfast.¹⁵ Universal classroom breakfast programs are key to increasing school breakfast participation among low-income students.¹⁶

◆ Each day a low-income student does not participate in the School Breakfast Program in a severe-needs school, the district loses \$1.76 in federal nutrition funding for each student who would have received a free breakfast and \$1.46 for each student who would have received a reduced-price breakfast.¹⁷

Children Participating in School Breakfast

Table 15.

Children Participating in School Breakfast, Rhode Island, October 2010

SCHOOL DISTRICT	OCTOBER 2010 ENROLLMENT	DISTRICT-WIDE AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN BREAKFAST	% OF ALL CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN BREAKFAST	# OF LOW-INCOME STUDENTS	LOW-INCOME AVERAGE DAILY PARTICIPATION IN BREAKFAST	% OF ALL LOW-INCOME CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL BREAKFAST
Barrington	3,477	15	<1%	154	8	5%
Bristol Warren	3,622	314	9%	1,155	175	15%
Burrillville	2,498	223	9%	940	156	17%
Central Falls	3,579	1,480	41%	2,448	1,058	43%
Charlho	3,647	156	4%	799	117	15%
Coventry	5,425	457	8%	1,409	328	23%
Cranston	11,234	1,275	11%	4,212	884	21%
Cumberland	4,988	325	7%	1,114	261	23%
East Greenwich	2,466	37	2%	167	25	15%
East Providence	5,410	469	9%	2,360	399	17%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,800	65	4%	265	45	17%
Foster	225	22	10%	46	17	37%
Foster-Glocester	1,429	31	2%	207	16	7%
Glocester	541	73	14%	113	68	60%
Jamestown	485	2	<1%	26	2	8%
Johnston	3,301	286	9%	1,334	246	18%
Lincoln	3,363	269	8%	886	247	28%
Little Compton	311	46	15%	48	17	34%
Middletown	2,429	142	6%	632	115	18%
Narragansett	1,412	58	4%	271	45	17%
New Shoreham	128	16	13%	16	8	52%
Newport	2,322	488	21%	1,435	472	33%
North Kingstown	4,438	263	6%	822	239	29%
North Providence	3,762	341	9%	1,438	246	17%
North Smithfield	1,775	91	5%	281	50	18%
Pawtucket	9,620	2,045	21%	6,778	1,690	25%
Portsmouth	2,585	88	3%	362	48	13%
Providence	28,204	8,926	32%	22,962	7,780	34%
Scituate	1,657	16	1%	248	10	4%
Smithfield	2,516	87	4%	351	54	15%
South Kingstown	3,475	141	4%	657	116	18%
Tiverton	1,918	102	5%	443	71	16%
Warwick	10,252	493	5%	3,235	437	14%
West Warwick	3,874	532	14%	1,612	456	28%
Westerly	3,211	440	14%	1,069	335	31%
Woonsocket	6,401	1,926	30%	4,155	1,495	36%
<i>Charter Schools</i>	<i>3,708</i>	<i>1,208</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>2,164</i>	<i>894</i>	<i>41%</i>
<i>State-Operated Schools</i>	<i>3,043</i>	<i>1,005</i>	<i>33%</i>	<i>1,547</i>	<i>639</i>	<i>41%</i>
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>54,000</i>	<i>15,396</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>39,390</i>	<i>13,373</i>	<i>34%</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>93,780</i>	<i>6,345</i>	<i>7%</i>	<i>25,060</i>	<i>4,362</i>	<i>17%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>154,531</i>	<i>23,955</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>68,170</i>	<i>19,268</i>	<i>28%</i>

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of School Food Services, Office of Finance and Office of Network & Information Systems, October 2010.

Charter schools include Beacon Charter School, Blackstone Academy Charter School, The Compass School, Highlander Charter School, Blackstone Valley Prep, International Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, The Learning Community Charter School, NEL/CPS Construction Career Academy, Paul Cuffee Charter School, the Segue Institute for Learning, Textron Chamber of Commerce Academy and Times2 Academy. State-operated schools include The Rhode Island Training School operated by DCYF, Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, Rhode Island School for the Deaf and William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

“District-Wide Average Daily Participation in Breakfast” is the average number of students who ate breakfast in school per school day during October 2010.

“Number of Low-Income Students” is the number of students eligible for and enrolled in free or reduced-price meals during October 2010. “Low-Income Average Daily Participation in Breakfast” is the average number of students eligible for and enrolled in free or reduced-price meals who ate breakfast in school per school day during October 2010.

To participate in the Reduced-Price Breakfast Program, students’ household income must fall between 130% and 185% of the federal poverty guideline. For the Free Breakfast Program, household income must fall below 130% of the federal poverty guideline. Children in foster care, households receiving Food Stamp/SNAP Benefits and households participating in the Rhode Island Works Program are automatically eligible for free meals.

References

^{1,3,4,11,12,17} School breakfast scorecard: School year 2009-2010. (2011). Washington, DC: Food Research and Action Center.

² Potamites, E. & Gordon, A. (2010). *Children’s food security and intakes from school meals*. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.

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