

Children in Poverty

DEFINITION

Children in poverty is the percentage of related and unrelated children under age 18 living in a household below the federal poverty threshold, as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget. 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 in poverty for extended periods of time, are more likely to have health and behavioral problems, experience difficulty in school, become teen parents, earn less as adults and be unemployed more frequently.^{1,2} Children in low-income communities are more likely to attend schools that lack resources and rigor; have limited access to high quality child care programs; and have fewer opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities after school and on the weekends, such as sports and recreation programs, clubs, and lessons such as music and computers.^{3,4}

Children of color and children of immigrants are more likely to grow up poor.⁵ Single parenthood, low educational attainment, part-time or no employment and low wages of parents place children at risk of being poor.⁶

The 2004 federal poverty threshold for a family of three with two children is \$15,219 while the poverty threshold for a family of four with two children is \$19,157.⁷ Historically, the poverty threshold fails to provide a complete scope of how the cost of basic goods such as food and housing, taxes, work related expenses, medical expenses and child care affect people's economic well-being. The poverty threshold also fails to account for increased expenses that occur as family size increases. According to the 2003 Rhode Island Standard of Need developed by the Poverty Institute, a family of three needs to make \$23,000 a year with the use of child care subsidies and RIte Care to make ends meet. Likewise, a family of four with two children needs to make \$28,080 a year with the use of child care subsidies and RIte Care to meet their basic needs.⁸

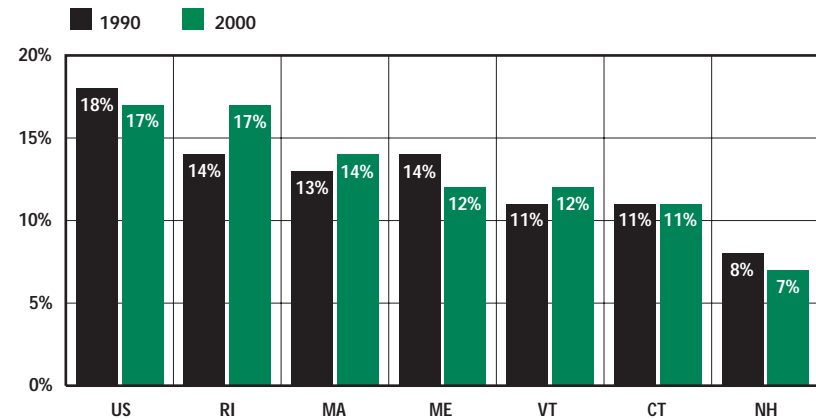
Children in Poverty		
	1990	2000
RI	14%	17%
US	18%	17%
National Rank*		30th
New England Rank**		6th

*1st is best; 50th is worst

**1st is best; 6th is worst

Source: *Children at risk: State trends: 1990-2000*. (2002). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Children Living Below the Federal Poverty Threshold, New England and the U.S., 1990 and 2000



Source: *Children at risk: State trends: 1990-2000*. (2002). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

◆ Between 1990 and 2000 the percentage of children in poverty decreased nationally and in two New England states, Maine and New Hampshire. Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Vermont all experienced increases in the percentage of children living below the poverty threshold, while Connecticut remained constant. The percentage of children below the poverty threshold in Rhode Island increased from 14% in 1990 to 17% in 2000.⁹

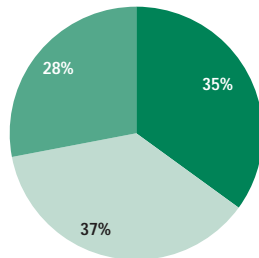
◆ Rhode Island has the largest percentage of Latino children living below the federal poverty threshold (47%), compared to the national rate (28%).¹⁰ Rhode Island has the highest percentage of African American children living below the federal poverty threshold (38%) in New England.¹¹

◆ Family structure continues to be strongly related to whether or not children grow up in poor households. Children in single-parent families are five times more likely than children in two-parent families to be living below the poverty threshold.¹² According to the 2000 Census, compared to the rest of New England, Rhode Island has the highest percentage of families with children headed by a single parent (32%).¹³

Rhode Island's Poor Children, 2000

By Age

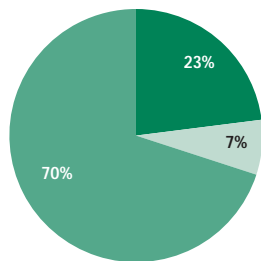
- 35% ■ Ages 5 and younger
- 37% ■ Ages 6 to 11
- 28% ■ Ages 12 to 17



n = 41,162

By Family Structure**

- 23% ■ Married Couple Family
- 7% ■ Male Householder Only
- 70% ■ Female Householder Only

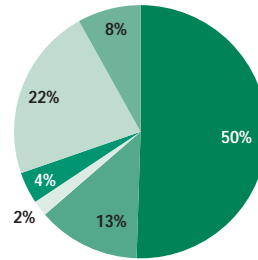


n = 40,117

** Only includes related children living in households.

By Race*

- 50% ■ White
- 13% ■ Black
- 2% ■ American Indian
- 4% ■ Asian
- 22% ■ Some Other Race
- 8% ■ Two or More Races

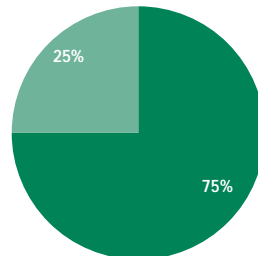


n = 41,162

*Hispanic children may be included in any race category. Of Rhode Island's 41,162 poor children, 16,013 (39%) are Hispanic.

By Residence

- 75% ■ Core Cities
- 25% ■ Remainder of State



n = 41,162

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 3. Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

Children Living in Extreme Poverty

◆ Families with income below 50% of the federal threshold are considered to be living in extreme poverty.¹⁴ The extreme poverty threshold in 2004 was family income below \$7,610 for a family of three with two children and \$9,579 for a family of four with two children.¹⁵

◆ In 2000, of the 41,162 children living below the poverty threshold in Rhode Island, nearly half (48%) lived in extreme poverty. In total, 8% (19,773) of all children in Rhode Island lived in extreme poverty.¹⁶

◆ Children who live in deep, long-term poverty experience poor health outcomes, such as child asthma and malnutrition, as a result of their family's income status.¹⁷

Young Children Under Age 6 in Poverty in Rhode Island

◆ Research shows that increased exposure to risk factors associated with poverty obstruct children's emotional and intellectual development. Risk factors associated with poverty include: inadequate nutrition, environmental toxins, maternal depression, trauma and abuse, lower quality child care and parental substance abuse.¹⁸

◆ In 2000, 19% (14,548) of Rhode Island children under 6 were living below the poverty threshold, compared to 18% nationally.¹⁹ Of these children, 7,230 (10%) were extremely poor.²⁰

◆ In Newport (22.6%), Providence (22.5%), Central Falls (20.6%) and Woonsocket (19.9%), one in five children under age 6 lived in extreme poverty.²¹

◆ As of December 1, 2004 there were 5,468 children under age 3 and 4,470 children ages 3 to 5 in families receiving cash assistance from the Family Independence Program. Of all children under 18 in the Family Independence Program, 47% are age 6 or under.²²

Children in Poverty

Building Blocks of Economic Security

Income Supports

◆ Income supports include: the FIP Earned Income Disregard, Food Stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit, child care subsidies, health care subsidies and Energy Assistance programs. Income supports help to ensure that low-income working families have adequate resources to meet their basic needs.²³

Access to Health Care

◆ Many workers in low-wage jobs are often not offered affordable employer-sponsored health insurance. Access to health insurance improves the likelihood of having a regular and affordable source of health care.²⁴

Affordable Quality Child Care

◆ The quality and stability of the child care setting is critical to a parent's ability to work and to the child's development.²⁵ Child care costs represent a significant part of the budget of low-income families and are associated with a mother's refusal or termination of employment.²⁶

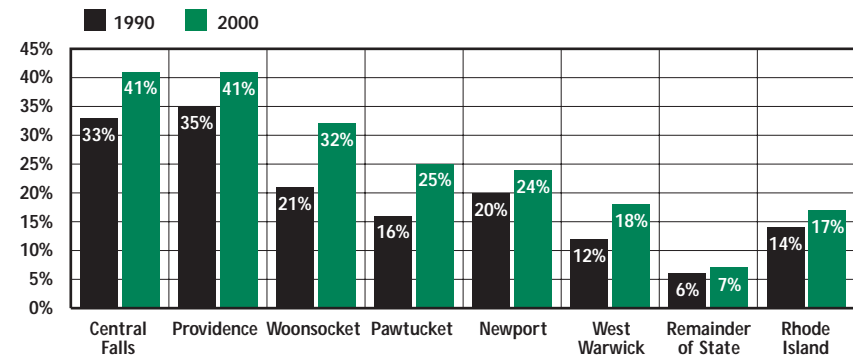
Affordable Housing

◆ Stable housing is a critical requirement for job retention and performance.²⁷ In 2003, the average rent for a two bedroom apartment in Rhode Island was \$1,032 more than double the amount that is considered affordable for a poor family of three.²⁸ The high cost of utilities can make finding and keeping affordable housing more difficult.

Educational Attainment

◆ Low-income workers are nearly three times more likely not to have finished high school.²⁹ Individuals with higher education generally have more job opportunities, higher wages and greater job security than those with lower levels of education.³⁰

Child Poverty Rates, 1990 and 2000,
Core Cities, Remainder of State and Rhode Island



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 1990 and 2000, Summary File 3.

- ◆ Rhode Island's child poverty rate increased from 14% to 17% over the decade of the 1990s. The child poverty rate increased in each of the core cities between 1990 and 2000.³¹
- ◆ Rhode Island KIDS COUNT defines core cities as those communities in which 15% or more of the children live in families with income below the federal poverty threshold. Three-quarters (75%) of Rhode Island's poor children live in one of the six core cities.³²
- ◆ Because of increases in child poverty between 1990 and 2000, West Warwick is now a core city, with 18% of children living in poverty.³³ Providence now has the third highest child poverty rate (41%) in the U.S. among cities with a population of 100,000 or more.³⁴

Children Living Below the Federal Poverty Threshold, Rhode Island, 2000

Table 8.

CITY/TOWN	CHILDREN UNDER 6 LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY		CHILDREN UNDER 6 LIVING BELOW POVERTY		CHILDREN UNDER 18 LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY		CHILDREN UNDER 18 LIVING BELOW POVERTY	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
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	NA	0	NA	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	NA	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	NA	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. Bureau of the Census, Census 2000, Summary File 3, P87 and PCT.50. The data include the poverty rate for all children for whom poverty was determined, including related children and unrelated children living in the household. In the past this table has reflected the poverty rate for only related children under 18 from Census 2000, Summary File 3, PCT.52.

Children under 18 living in extreme poverty are those living in households with income below 50% of the federal poverty threshold.

References for Indicator

^{1,14} U.S. Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. (2003). *America's children: Key national indicators of well-being*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

^{2,3,12,17} Moore, K. & Redd, Z. (2002). *Children in poverty: Trends, consequences, and policy options*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

⁴ Lugaila, T. A. (2003). *A child's day: 2000 (Selected indicators of child well-being)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, Household Economic Studies.

⁵ National Center for Children in Poverty. (2002). *Children of immigrants: A statistical profile*. New York, NY: Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health.

⁶ Children's Defense Fund. *Child poverty: Characteristics of poor children in America - 2000*. Retrieved February 2003 from www.childrensdefense.org.

^{7,15} U.S. Census Bureau, Thresholds for 2004 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years. Retrieved February 2005 from www.census.gov.

⁸ The Poverty Institute. (2004). *The 2003 Rhode Island standard of need*. Providence, RI: Rhode Island College School of Social Work, The Poverty Institute.

^{9,13} *Children at risk: State trends: 1990-2000*. (2002). Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

¹⁰ *Latino children: State level measures of child well-being from the 2000 Census* (2003). Baltimore, MD: Population Reference Bureau for The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

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