

HOUSING INSTABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS AMONG RHODE ISLAND CHILDREN

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT**

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#HousingKidsRI





**Blue Cross
Blue Shield**
of Rhode Island

We are very grateful to
Blue Cross & Blue Shield
of Rhode Island for its
support of this publication.

Poor quality, unaffordable housing has a negative impact on:

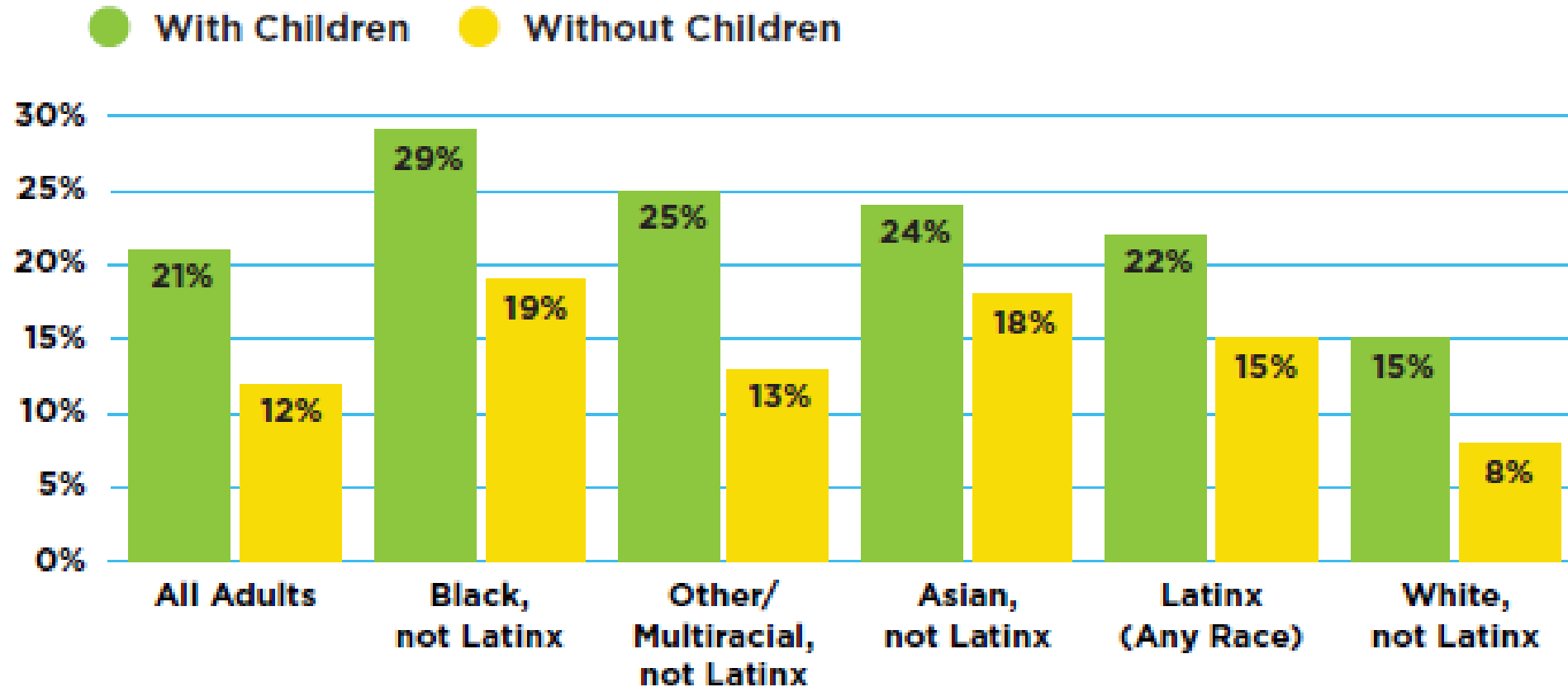
- Children's **physical health**
- Children's **development**
- Children's **emotional well-being**
- Children's **educational achievement**
- Family's ability to meet their child's **basic needs**
- Frequency of **moves**
- Risk of a family becoming **homeless**

For many families living in deep poverty, episodes of homelessness are part of a cycle of housing instability that often includes living in housing that is unaffordable and/or unsafe, doubling up with other families, and being evicted.



THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON HOUSING STABILITY

ADULT RENTERS SAYING THEIR HOUSEHOLD IS NOT CAUGHT UP ON RENT, U.S. HOUSEHOLDS



Federal Aid

- Eviction moratorium – **ended on August 26, 2021**
- *CARES Act*
- *American Rescue Plan Act*
- Rent Relief RI – **accepting applications through September 2022**
 - <http://www.rihousing.com/rentreliefri/>

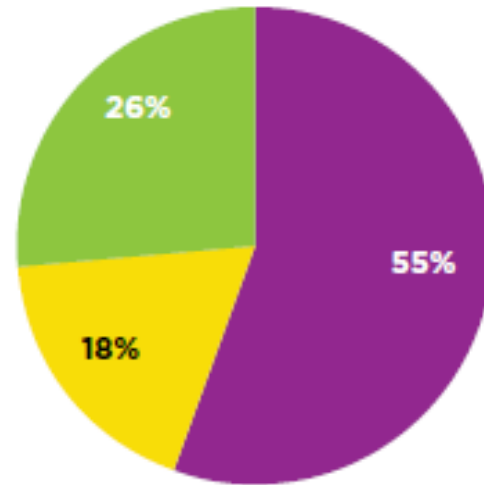
RHODE ISLAND'S COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM

- Process to ensure that people experiencing a housing crisis are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and other assistance
- Designed to provide fair and equal access to housing resources
- Families in need can contact the call center
 - **Call (401) 277-4316**
 - Assistance available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole

Shelter is not guaranteed and often not available due to capacity limits, and Rhode Island is not a right to shelter state.

RHODE ISLAND FAMILIES AWAITING SHELTER

RHODE ISLANDERS IN SHELTER QUEUE, NOVEMBER 16, 2021



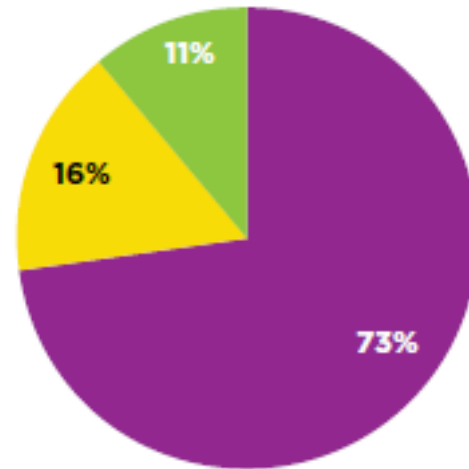
- 55% ● Adults without Children
- 18% ● Adults in Households with Children
- 26% ● Children Under Age 18

N=1,013

- As of November 16, 2021, 1,013 Rhode Islanders were seeking shelter. Almost half (45%) of the people waiting for shelter were in families with children, and 267 or more than one-quarter (26%) were children under the age of 18.^{16,17}

RHODE ISLAND FAMILIES AWAITING SHELTER

RHODE ISLANDERS WHO SLEPT OUTSIDE OR IN THEIR CARS FOR AT LEAST ONE NIGHT, OCTOBER 8 - NOVEMBER 6, 2021



73% ● Adults without Children
 16% ● Adults in Households with Children
 11% ● Children Under Age 18
 N=574

- From October 8 - November 6, 2021, 574 Rhode Islanders slept outside or in their cars for at least one night, and 156 were in families with children. Almost half (44%) of the adults in these families with children had no income. During that 30-day period, 62 children under the age of 18 slept outside or in their family's car for at least one night.¹⁸

RHODE ISLAND CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN SHELTERS

- In 2020, 323 families with 623 children stayed in shelters
 - One quarter of people in shelters were children
 - Length of stays
 - Homeless shelters – 131 days
 - DV shelters – 98 days
 - Transitional housing for homeless – 466 days
 - Transitional housing for DV – 483 days
- 26% increase in families experiencing homelessness from January 2020 to January 2021

Homelessness in the U.S.

- 1 in 30 children homeless each year / 2.5 million children
- Families often include young adults and young children
- Infants more likely to be homeless than any other age group
- Black children and families more likely to experience homelessness
 - Racial discrimination
 - Economic segregation
 - Systemic racism

HOMELESSNESS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Mismatch between incomes and cost of housing is root cause of homelessness for many families, BUT family violence is another major factor
- More than 80% of women with children who experience homelessness have experienced domestic violence
- During 2020, Rhode Island's domestic violence network
 - **Served** 9,259 individuals, including 486 children
 - Provided **shelter** for 147 children and 186 adults
 - Provided **transitional housing** to 73 children and 54 adults
 - Provided **permanent supportive housing** to 10 families
 - Helped 42 families access **Rapid Re-housing**

HOMELESSNESS AND THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

- Parents are at increased risk of maltreating their children if they are overwhelmed by multiple risk factors, including unstable housing
- Lack of stable housing can be a precipitating factor
- Lack of stable housing can delay family reunification
- In 2020, 3% of indicated allegations of child neglect were associated with inadequate food or shelter
- Addressing families' housing needs can reduce child neglect and abuse and help families stay together

THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS OF HOMELESSNESS

- 4 times as many respiratory infections
- 2 times as many ear infections
- 5 times as many gastrointestinal problems
- 2 times as likely to go hungry
- Increased levels of anxiety, poor impulse control, and difficulty developing trusting relationships when exposed to trauma/abuse

SUPPORTING HOMELESS CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS

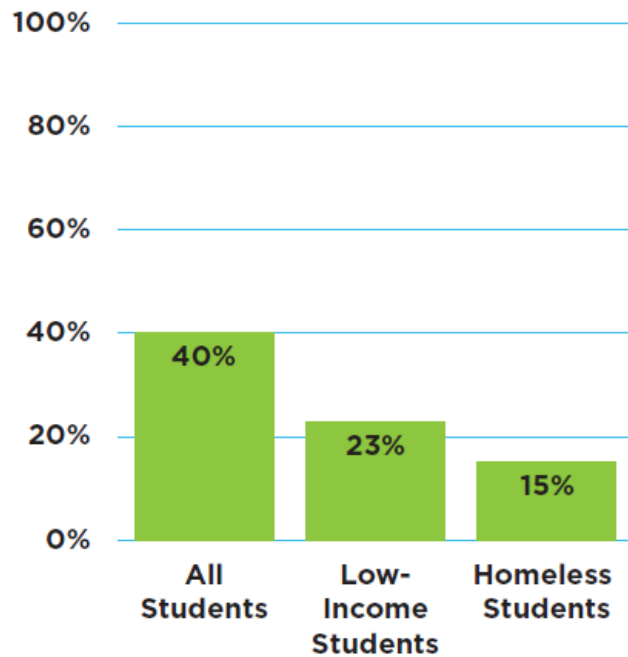
- *McKinney-Vento Act*

- Defines a child as homeless if he or she does not have a “fixed, regular and adequate night-time residence”
- Requires that states identify homeless children, allow them to enroll even if they lack required documents, allow them to stay in their “home school,” provide transportation when needed, and provide access to all services and programs for which child is eligible

- *Every Student Succeeds Act*

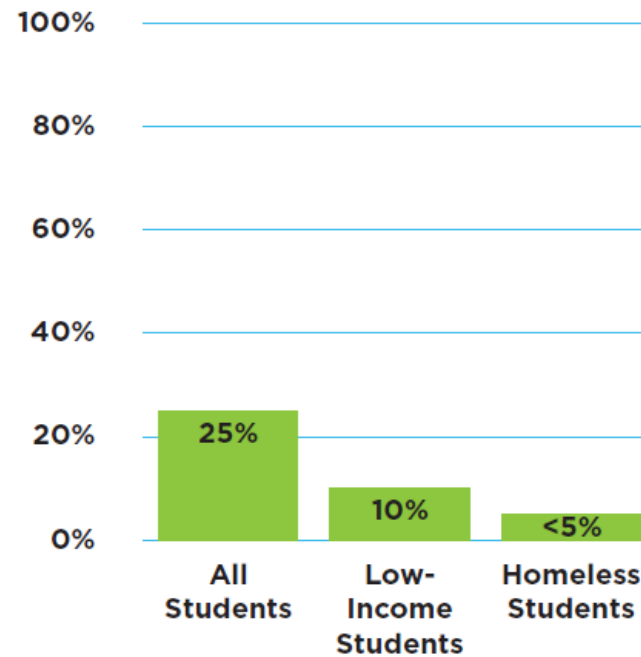
- Strengthens existing provisions
- Guarantees stability starting in preschool
- Requires reporting on student achievement and graduation rates

Third Graders Meeting Expectations on the RICAS English Language Arts Assessment, Rhode Island, 2020-2021 School Year



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education. *Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)*, 2020-2021 school year. Student performance may have been influenced by disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

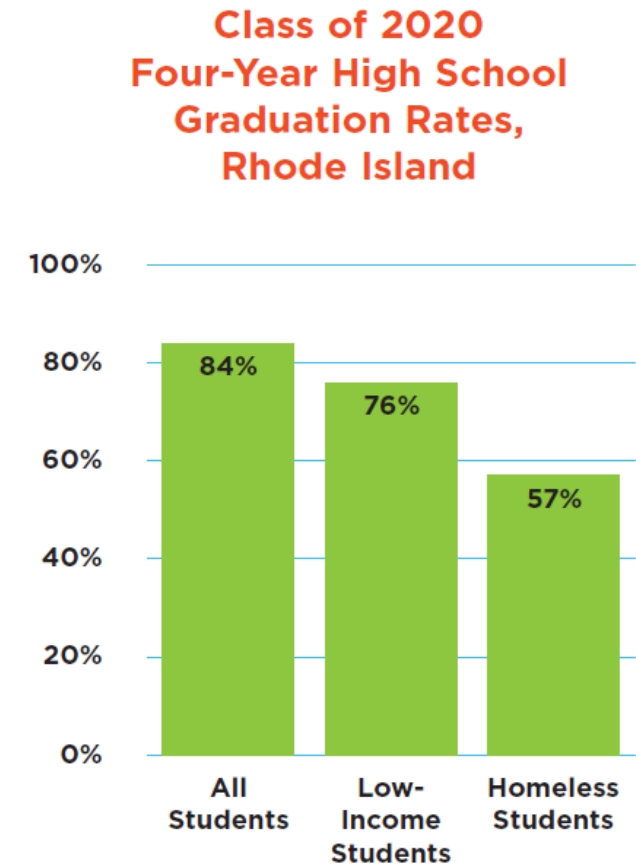
Third Graders Meeting Expectations on the RICAS Math Assessment, Rhode Island, 2020-2021 School Year



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education. *Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)*, 2020-2021 school year. Student performance may have been influenced by disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

High School Graduation Rates

- Of the 197 RI students identified as homeless who enrolled in 9th grade in 2016:
 - 57% graduated in 4 years
 - 21% dropped out
 - 3% completed a GED
 - 19% were still in school



Source: Rhode Island Department of Education.
Class of 2020.

SUPPORTING HOMELESS CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS

- *American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)*
 - Dedicated \$800M to identification, enrollment, and school success of children and youth experiencing homelessness
- *ESSER Fund*
 - Includes funds to support the needs of students disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including students experiencing homelessness

Stability rates measure the number of children who attended the same school the entire school year in a school district. The stability rate is calculated by dividing the number of children who enrolled the whole year at the same school in the school district by total enrollment for that school district.

Mobility rates are calculated by adding all children who enrolled after September 30 to all children who withdrew before June 1 and dividing by the total enrollment number for that district over the course of the year.



STUDENT STABILITY AND MOBILITY RATES AND STUDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS, BY DISTRICT, 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	# ENROLLED AFTER SEPT. 30	# EXITED BEFORE JUNE 1	STABILITY RATE	MOBILITY RATE	# OF CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS HOMELESS BY PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL
<i>Charter Schools</i>	9,014	251	419	93%	7%	62
<i>State-Operated Schools</i>	1,786	49	89	93%	8%	16
<i>UCAP</i>	128	14	10	84%	17%	0
<i>Four Core Cities</i>	41,525	3,149	4,289	84%	17%	669
<i>Remainder of State</i>	91,104	3,086	4,124	93%	8%	784
<i>Rhode Island</i>	143,557	6,549	8,931	90%	10%	1,531

SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- Many homeless families include young, single mothers with young children
- 40% of children who stayed at shelters and TH facilities were under the age of 5
- CDBG regulations prioritize homeless children for child care
- Children experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible for Early Head Start and Head Start. In 2020:
 - RI Early Head Start programs served 21 homeless children
 - RI Head Start programs served 12 homeless children

SUPPORTING YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

3 major causes of homeless among youth and young adults

1. **Family conflict** – LGBTQ youth overrepresented
2. Residential instability resulting from **foster care** – one-third of young adults who had experienced homelessness had been in foster care
3. **Economic problems**

SUPPORTING YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- **Rhode Island 2018 Youth Point in Time Count**

- 173 youth and young adults ages 14 to 24 experiencing current, former, or potential housing instability
- 67 currently homeless

- **2020 shelter stays in Rhode Island**

- 150 youth and young adults ages 18 to 24, including 42 parenting youth, 31 unaccompanied youth, and 77 sheltered with their parents
- 95 youth ages 13 to 17 with their parents

- **Sleeping outside**

- From October 8 – November 6, 2021, 53 youth and young adults ages 18 to 24 slept outside for at least one night

Family Service of Rhode Island operates a Basic Center Program designed to meet the needs of homeless and runaway youth through host homes, food, clothing, and counseling services for youth up to age 18 for up to 21 days.

YOUTH HOMELESS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

- In 2021, HUD awarded Rhode Island \$3.4M
- Designed to support Rhode Island in developing and implementing a coordinated approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness that **centers the voice, vision, and agency of youth.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prevent evictions
- Reduce the effects of evictions
- Address systemic racism and enforce laws barring housing discrimination
- Reduce unnecessary barriers to subsidized housing
- Continue to connect families to rent and utility assistance
- Offer more housing vouchers and target them effectively
- Build more affordable housing
- Address barriers to affordable housing development in local building codes

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Guarantee immediate access to emergency shelter or funds for brief hotel stays for families in crisis
- Provide support to young children and students experiencing homelessness in school and prioritize them for supportive and academic services
- Provide housing and other economic supports to youth over age 18 exiting the foster care system
- Center the voices of youth and parents experiencing homelessness in policy decisions
- Fill the position of Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Housing
- Address the state's long-term underinvestment in affordable housing

Reflections from the Community and the Field

Donna Wood, *Parent*

Ehren Hunt, *Tri-County Community Action Agency*

Benji Chaplin, *Youth Action Board*

Denise DeBarros, *Central Falls High School*



Questions?

Ideas?

Comments?