



RAISING RHODE ISLAND

Lifting Children & Families Out of Deep Poverty

FACTSHEET



MARCH 2024

PASS The Rhode Island Works Program S-2337 (MURRAY) AND H-7686 (HANDY)

These bills propose three changes to Rhode Island Works, the state's cash and workforce readiness program, that can help end deep child poverty in Rhode Island. In December, 2023, 70% of RI Works beneficiaries were children, and 41% of these children enrolled in RI Works were under the age of six.

1. Protect Rhode Island's poorest children and families from inflation: Increase the monthly benefit to 50% of the federal poverty level and include a cost-of-living increase.

- The 2021 increase in cash benefits improved the economic well-being of 5,000 children, but inflation has quickly decreased its value.
- In 2023, the RI Works benefit was only 35% of the federal poverty level, with a family of three receiving \$721/month. Increasing the benefits to 50% of the poverty level (\$1,036 for a family of 3) would greatly assist Rhode Island's neediest children. Using funds from the \$96M federal TANF block grant would safeguard Rhode Island's investment.

2. Undo harm to children: Repeal the full family sanction

- If a parent is sanctioned three times during their lifetime, their family loses the RI Works benefit altogether, impacting children too. National studies indicate that sanctions disproportionately affect parents facing significant challenges such as health issues, limited education, and domestic violence, and they do not enhance program compliance. Reopening cases poses an administrative challenge for the Rhode Island Department of Human Services.

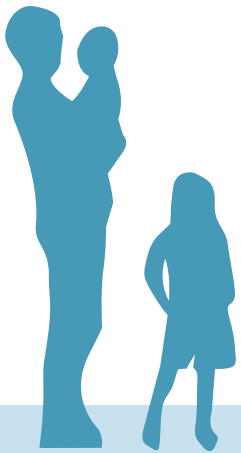


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3. Restore eligibility to immigrants: Eliminate the 5-year waiting period for Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR)

- LPRs are currently eligible for RI works once they have been in that status for five years.
- Before 2007, Rhode Island provided cash assistance to LPRs without this waiting period.
- By providing RI Works benefits to LPR families with no waiting period, Rhode Island would join 13 other states in supporting the well-being of these residents.



Raising RI Coalition Members include: Boys & Girls Club of Newport, Center for Southeast Asians, Community Action Partnership of Providence, Community Care Alliance, Comprehensive Community Action Program, Conexión Latina, Cranston Clergy Association, Crossroads Rhode Island, Direct Action for Rights and Equality, Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County, Dorcas International Institute of RI, The Economic Progress Institute, Equal Exchange, Equus Workforce Solutions, Facilitate Change, Family Service of Rhode Island, Formerly Incarcerated Union of RI, Foster Forward, Genesis Center, Goodwill of Southern New England, House of Hope, Housing Network of RI, The Immigrant Coalition of Rhode Island, Jewish Alliance of Greater Rhode Island, Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale, The Latino Policy Institute, The Milagros Project, National Association of Social Workers Rhode Island Chapter, Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, Newport Partnership for Families, Progreso Latino, Rhode Island AFL-CIO, The Rhode Island Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, The Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, Rhode Island Community Action Association, The Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Rhode Island Health Center Association, The Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, Rhode Island Medical Society, Rhode Island National Organization for Women, Rhode Island Parent Information Center, Rhode Island Organizing Project, Right from the Start Campaign, Scandinavian Church, Sista Fire, Sojourner House, Paul Catholic Church, Temple Sinai Social Action Committee, Tomaquag Museum, Tri-County Community Action Agency, United Way of Rhode Island, URI Feinstein Hunger Center, Washington County Coalition for Children, West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation, Westbay Community Action, Women's Resource Center, The Womxn Project, Woodridge Congregational Church