

THE ECONOMIC PROGRESS INSTITUTE ANNUAL REPORT 2015



The Economic
Progress Institute
www.economicprogressri.org

Dear Friends,

Thanks to your continued support, this past year we were able to make economic progress for thousands of working families in our state.


In this report you will learn how together, we increased the Earned Income Tax Credit, putting more money in the pockets of hard-working families. The Institute also worked to ensure that child care assistance is available for parents who want to improve their skills so they can get back in the workforce.

We know that despite a recovering economy, countless Rhode Islanders work hard every day yet still struggle to make ends meet. Low wages and the high cost of living force too many working families to make choices between housing, heat, and food.

At the same time, choices are being made every day at the State House that profoundly affect families and communities – choices that can create opportunity and prosperity or hold it back.

Together, we inform and influence those choices to improve the quality of life for all our neighbors.

On behalf of the board and staff, we thank you for your commitment to building a bridge to the middle class for more Rhode Islanders.


Kate Brewster
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR


Carmen Diaz-Jusino
BOARD CHAIR



Policy Director **Linda Katz** (R) with **Alexis Stern** of the United Way of RI at the National Skills Coalition Summit



Executive director **Kate Brewster** speaks to Frank Coletta on Channel 10 News Business Lunch about the Earned Income Tax Credit



Institute Board Members with staff at the Raise The Wage Press Conference at UFCW Local 328 (L to R) **Rachel Flum**, **Juan Espinoza**, **Joe Grady**, **Jeff Levy**



Board Chair **Carmen Diaz-Jusino**, **Luis Jusino** (R) and **Walter Callender** (L) at the Institute's Progress Report celebration

Making Work Pay for Working Families

One of the best ways to boost the income of working families is to increase the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). This is just what we achieved with the help of Governor Gina Raimondo, Senator Gayle Goldin, Representative Scott Slater and a long list of community, religious and labor organizations.

Beginning in 2016, the state's EITC will rise from 10 to 12.5 percent of the federal credit, putting an additional \$6 million in the pockets of 80,000 working families. This is increasingly important in a state where many of the fastest growing jobs pay low wages that cannot support a family. Research shows that families receiving the EITC use the extra money to pay bills, pay off debt, and invest in their children's future.

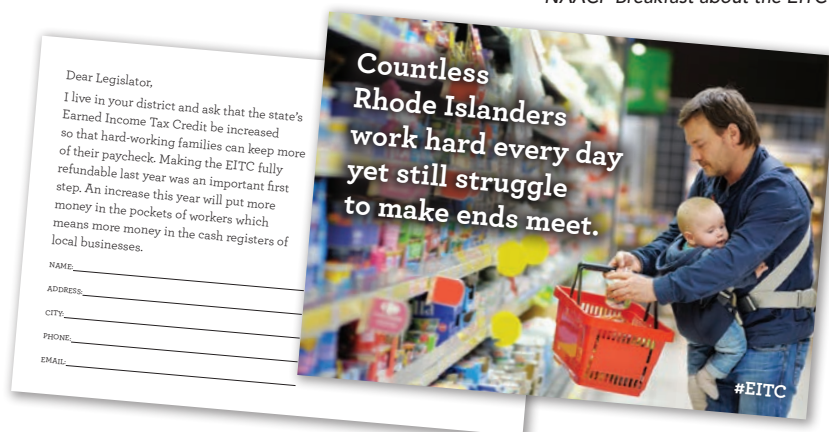
With the help of our newest staff member, Communications and Outreach Associate Juan Espinoza, we collected more than 2,000 signed postcards urging lawmakers to increase the EITC, keeping this issue in the forefront as they decided the budget for the coming year.



North Kingstown resident **Jay Wilson** with Governor **Gina Raimondo** at a press conference for the Earned Income Tax Credit



Communications and Outreach Associate **Juan Espinoza**, speaking to attendees at the NAACP Breakfast about the EITC

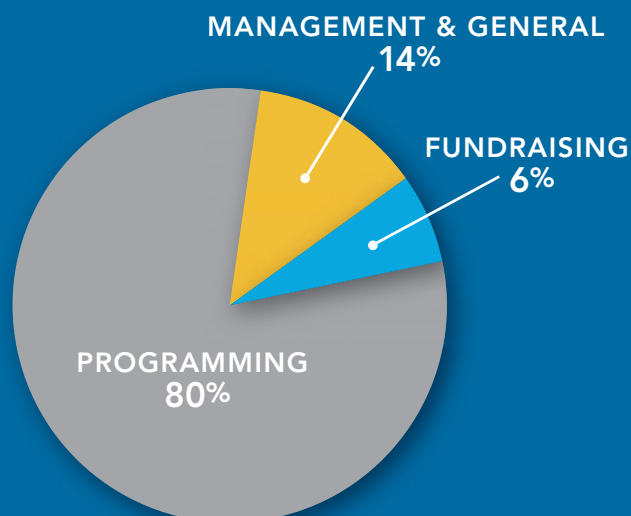


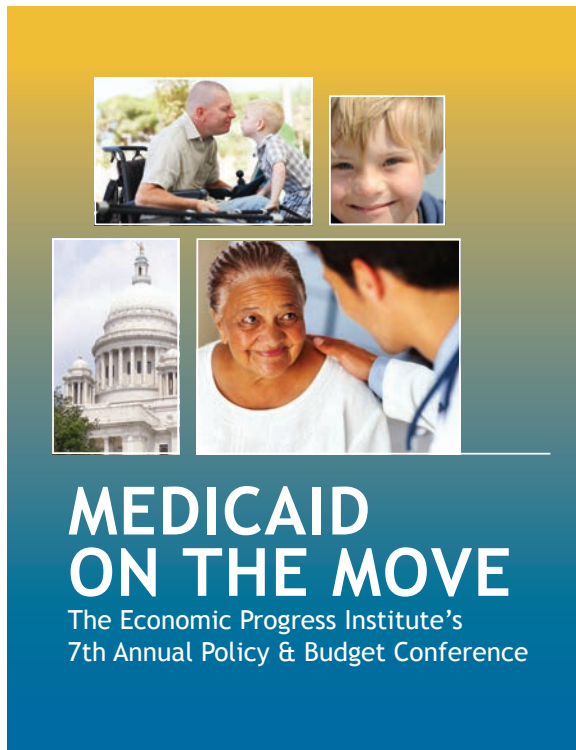
More than 2,000 signed postcards were sent to lawmakers calling for an increase in the state's Earned Income Tax Credit

FY2014 Expenditures*

Programming	\$406,909
Management & General	71,522
Fundraising	32,735
TOTAL	\$511,166

*Most recent audited financial statements





Medicaid on the Move

The Institute hosted its 7th annual policy and budget conference this year. Appropriately titled "Medicaid on the Move," the conference addressed Medicaid reform,



Cindy Mann, former Medicaid Director for the Obama Administration speaking at the Institute's annual conference "Medicaid on the Move"

a topic that dominated the headlines this year. Currently, one in four Rhode Islanders receives affordable health insurance and/or long-term services and supports through Medicaid.

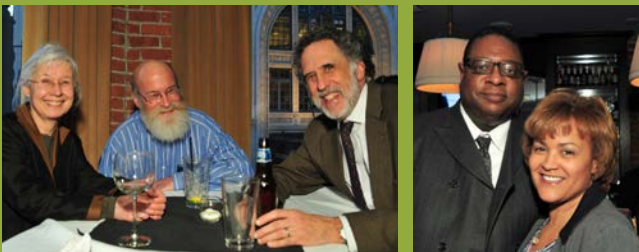
Governor Raimondo kicked off the conference, thanking her appointed "Reinventing Medicaid" Workgroup for working to develop proposals to reform the state's Medicaid program.

Cindy Mann, former Medicaid Director for the Obama Administration, spoke about the role that Medicaid plays in the states and the innovative policies that some states are enacting to curb costs while maintaining quality care. Rhode Island's Secretary of Health and Human Services Elizabeth Roberts presented the major recommendations from the Reinvent Medicaid Workgroup before answering questions from the audience of more than 200 attendees. The Institute's Linda Katz provided background about Medicaid spending and services in Rhode Island.

Child Care Assistance Expanded

Everyone agrees that to grow our state's economy, we must improve the skills of our workers. This year lawmakers made permanent a pilot program that allows income eligible, unemployed parents to use subsidized child care while in short-term job training programs. Previously only parents working 20 hours a week or more could access child care assistance. Parents who want to improve their job skills now have access to quality, affordable child care.

PROGRESS REPORT Our 15th Anniversary Celebration!



Friends, family, board members and staff came out to the Bravo Brasserie in Providence to help us honor our founders, celebrate our accomplishments and share our goals for the future.

Clockwise from top left: Bobbie Hunger, David Karoff and Rick Brooks; Jason and Patricia Fowler; Linda Katz celebrates with co-founder Nancy Gewirtz's daughter Rebekah Gewirtz and Nancy's grandchildren Nina, Julian and Gabriel; Linda Katz, Sally Strachan and Alan Flam



The Economic
Progress Institute
www.economicprogressri.org

The Economic Progress Institute works for policies that improve economic security and opportunity for Rhode Islanders.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carmen R. Diaz-Jusino
CHAIR

Nzinga Misgana*
VICE CHAIR

Rabbi Alan Flam
SECRETARY

Deborah S. Linnell
TREASURER

Lisa Roth Blackman

Joseph Grady

Gowri J. Krishna*

Jeff Levy

Deborah Linnell

Rich Streitfeld

*Retiring

STAFF

Kate Brewster, MSW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Linda Katz, JD
POLICY DIRECTOR

Rachel Price Flum, JD
SENIOR POLICY ANALYST

Juan Espinoza, MS
COMMUNICATIONS &
OUTREACH ASSOCIATE

Kerri Frattarelli
OFFICE MANAGER

THE RISING TIDE SOCIETY

We count on our generous donors who believe in us, engage with us, and invest in us. Members of our Rising Tide Society generously give a minimum gift of \$500, demonstrating their commitment to ensuring that the choices made at the State House support our families, our communities and a strong economy in which prosperity is shared by all Rhode Islanders.

*To learn more about the Rising Tide Society and see current members visit
www.economicprogressri.org/risingtide.*



/economicprogressri

www.economicprogressri.org



@econprogressri

600 Mount Pleasant Avenue, Building 9, Providence, RI 02908 | p 401-456-8512 | f 401-456-9550