

Facts and Stats: US Census Poverty and Income Data 2016

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September 15, 2017

In 2016, more than one in eight Rhode Islanders (12.8 percent) had income below the poverty level. The Ocean State had the highest rate of its residents living in poverty in the New England states and ranked 22nd among all states.

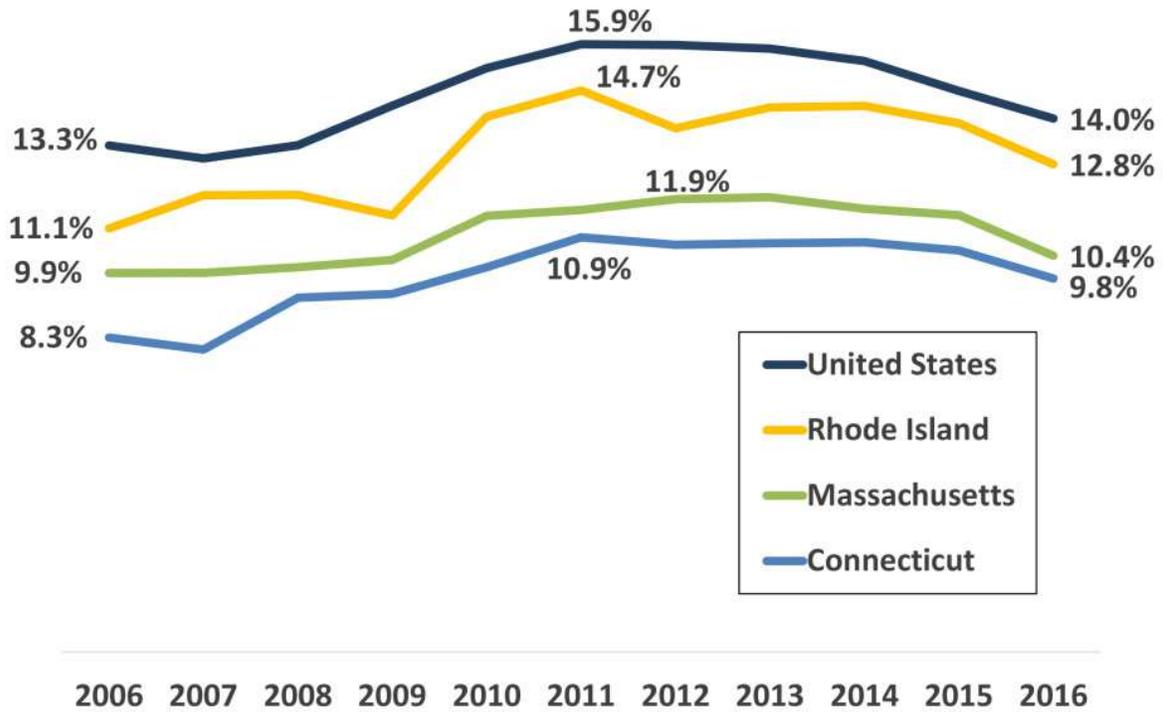
State	# in Poverty	Poverty Rate	US Ranking (1=state with lowest poverty rate)
United States	44,268,996	14.0%	-
New Hampshire	94,289	7.3%	1
Connecticut	339,128	9.8%	4
Massachusetts	686,597	10.4%	8
Vermont	71,329	11.9%	19
Maine	161,749	12.5%	21
Rhode Island	129,932	12.8%	22

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year data.

Poverty

The 12.8 percent overall poverty rate in Rhode Island in 2016 was a significant decline from the peak rate of 15.9 percent in 2011, during the Great Recession. Continued success lifting the nearly 130,000 (129,932) remaining in poverty will help Rhode Island's economy thrive. (The 2016 poverty level for a family of four was \$24,563). The 12.8 percent poverty rate for 2016 compares to a 13.9 percent poverty rate for 2015 (though the two rates are not far enough apart to indicate a statistically significant decline in poverty)[1].

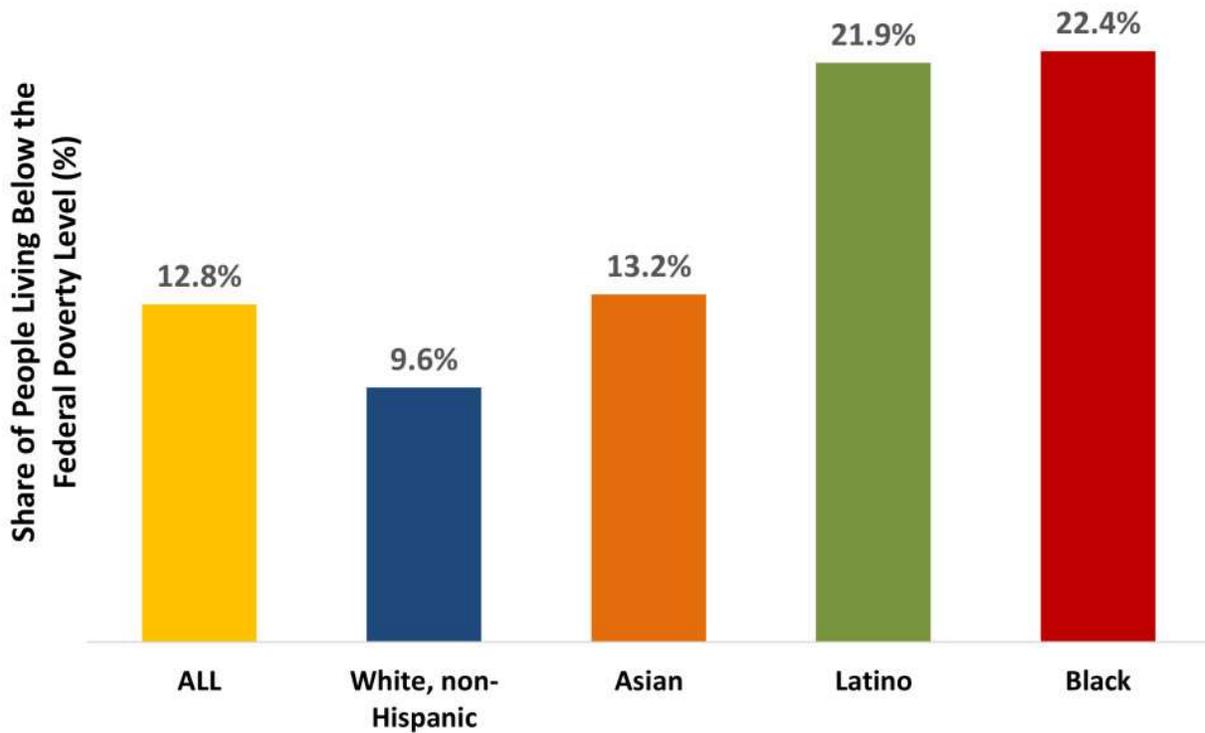
Poverty rates remain higher than pre-recession levels, down slightly from recent (post-recession) peaks



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr data, 2016

The data shows that Rhode Island's communities of color had significantly higher rates of poverty than their White counterparts. More than one in five people who are Black or Latino lived in poverty in 2016, compared with about one in eight people who are Asian, and about one in ten people who are non-Hispanic White.

Black and Latino poverty rates were much higher than White and Asian rates in 2016



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-yr data, 2016

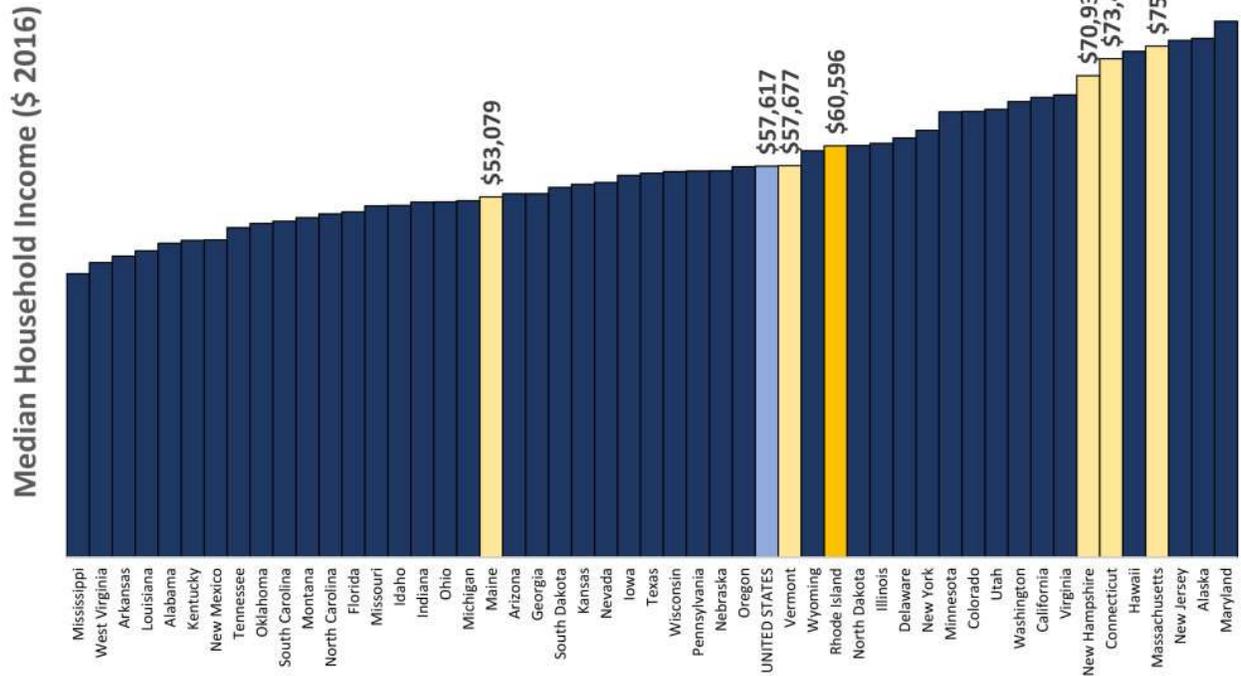
The share of Rhode Islanders living in poverty varies considerably by age. With a child poverty rate of 17.0 percent, more than one in every six Rhode Island children lives in poverty, hampering their ability to be successful. Lower poverty rates among Rhode Islanders 65 years of age and older highlight the success of programs that help seniors, such as Social Security.

Poverty differs by age group		
Age	Percent	Number
Birth to 17	17.0%	35,106
18-54	13.2%	65,553
65+	9.1%	15,184
75+	9.0%	6,334

Median Income

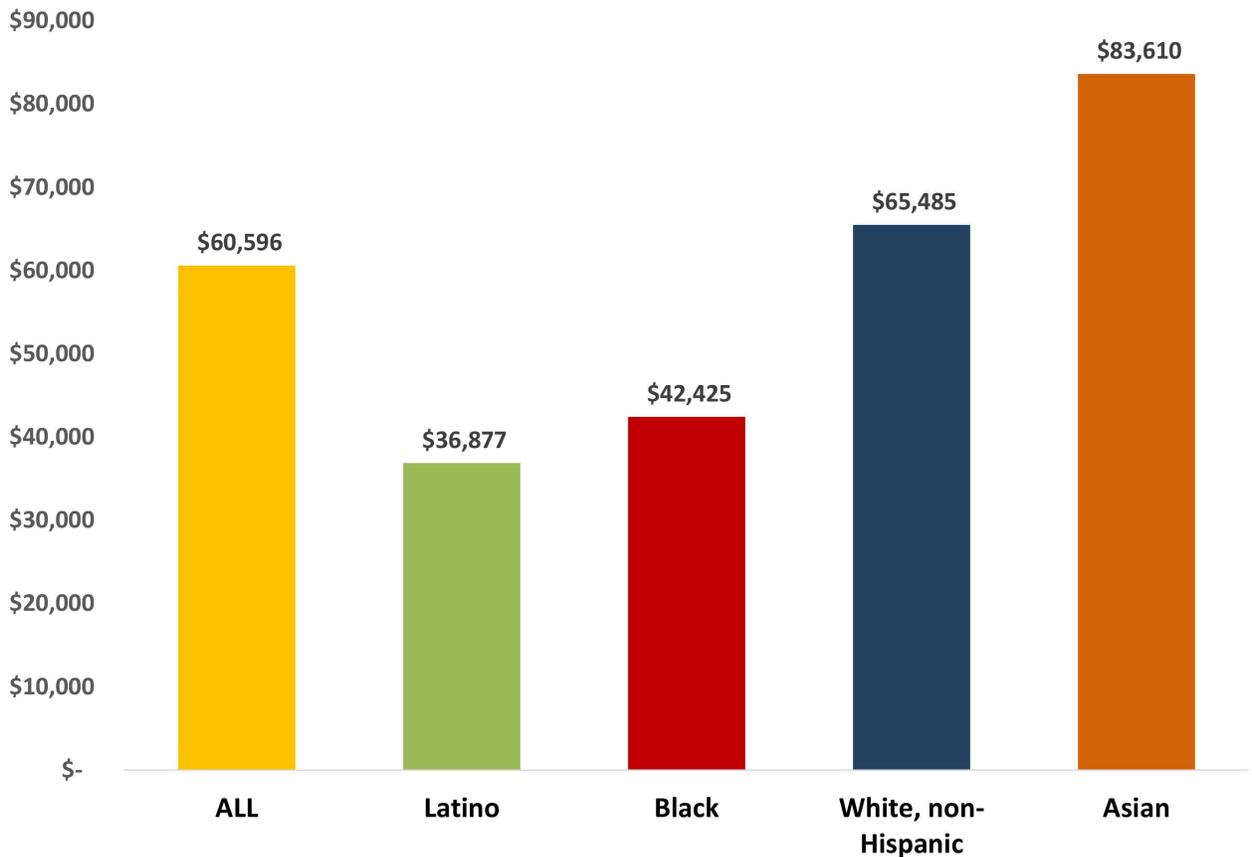
Rhode Island ranked 4th highest in New England with overall median income of \$60,596; similar to the national median income. Latino (\$36,877) and Black (\$42,425) median incomes trail the overall by a wide margin, while the median income in households headed by non-Hispanic Whites (\$65,485) was slightly higher, and the median income in households headed by Asian Rhode Islanders (\$83,610) was much higher than the statewide average, though this high median masks differences within Rhode Island’s Asian community[2].

Rhode Island's median household income 4th highest in New England, similar to the national median



Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-year data, 2016.

Black and Latino median incomes trail White and Asian median incomes



[1] The decline in the overall poverty rate between 2014 (14.3 percent) and 2016 (12.8 percent) is statistically significant, as is the decline between 2011 (14.7 percent) and 2016.

[2] The sample size in the American Community Survey is not sufficient to know how sub-populations of the Asian community are faring. We know from other recent studies that Southeast Asian Rhode Islanders normally do not share in the relative prosperity of the overall Asian community.