

Situation of low-income working families in Rhode Island remains bleak despite four years of economic recovery

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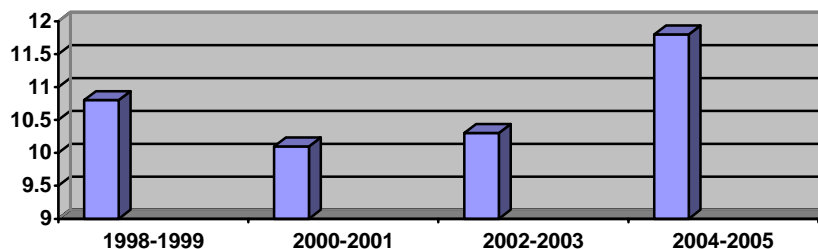
Income and Wages

- According to Census data released on August 29th, median household income was \$49,511 in 2004-2005, a statistically insignificant gain of only \$383 from 2000-2001.¹
- The real median wage fell by a penny, from \$14.90 to \$14.89; Rhode Island was the only New England state where the median wage fell since 2000.
- The percentage of workers earning poverty level wages rose from 19.8 percent in 2000-2002 to 22.0 percent in 2003-2005.

Rhode Islanders in Poverty

- The percentage of children in poverty rose to 18.2 percent in 2004-2005 from 12.4 percent in 2000-2001.
- According to the Current Population Survey, 11.8 percent of all Rhode Islanders had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level in 2005. American Community Survey data indicates that 32 percent of Rhode Islanders in poverty held jobs.

Poverty Rates in RI



Health Insurance

- The percentage of Rhode Islanders without any health insurance coverage rose from 7.6 percent in 2000-2001 to 11.4 percent in 2004-2005, a significant increase since the last economic recession.
- The percent of children lacking health coverage rose from 4.3 percent in 2002 to 6.8 percent in 2005. Rhode Island dropped from 2nd to 11th in the nation in the percentage of children with health insurance.

Employer Benefits

- The percentage of working Rhode Islanders with health coverage provided by an employer dipped from 59.8 percent in 1999-2001 to 56.3 percent in 2003-2005.
- Working Rhode Islanders also lost employer-based pensions since the recession. In 2000-2001, 50.4 percent of workers were enrolled in some type of pension plan, compared to 46.5 percent in 2004-2005.

¹ Note that most data has been averaged over two or three years, to correct for random fluctuations due to small sample size.