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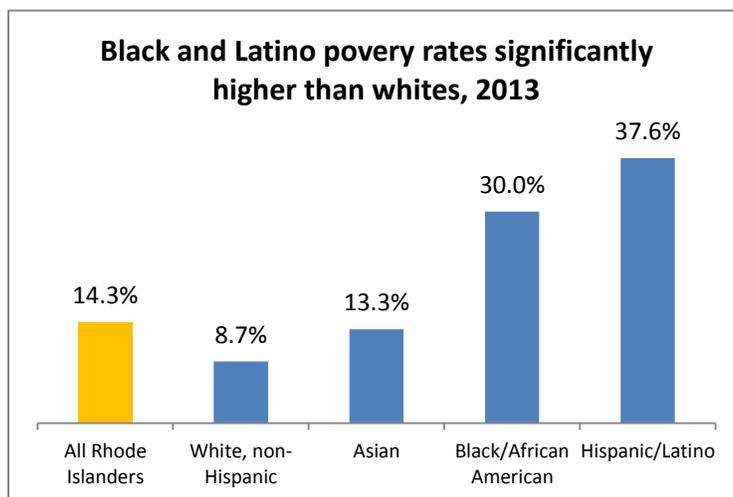
NEW DATA SHOWS TOO MANY RHODE ISLANDERS STRUGGLING TO MEET THE BASICS

Number of Poor Rhode Islanders Remains High, Income Stagnant According to New Census Figures

Providence, RI: Poverty remained high in the Ocean State last year, confirming that the recovery has been too slow for too many Rhode Islanders. The numbers underscore the need for the state to do more to help the one in seven Rhode Islanders who can't afford the basics like decent housing, healthy food, and quality child care.

Just over 14 percent of Rhode Islanders – more than 144,000 in total - lived in poverty in 2013, according to new Census Bureau data released today. The federal poverty level was just under \$11,800 for an individual in 2013. Among the New England states, the Ocean State had the largest share of its residents living in poverty last year.

Rhode Island's communities of color were more likely to be struggling to make ends meet, with 30 percent of Blacks and more than one in three (37.3 percent) Latinos living in poverty last year. White and Asian Rhode Islanders experienced lower rates of poverty, at 8.7 and 13.3 percent respectively.



“To make our state a better place to live, work and grow a business, we need to invest in our people and our communities. Giving Rhode Islanders the tools they need to climb out of poverty not only helps struggling families, but makes our economy stronger for everyone,” said Kate Brewster, executive director of The Economic Progress Institute.

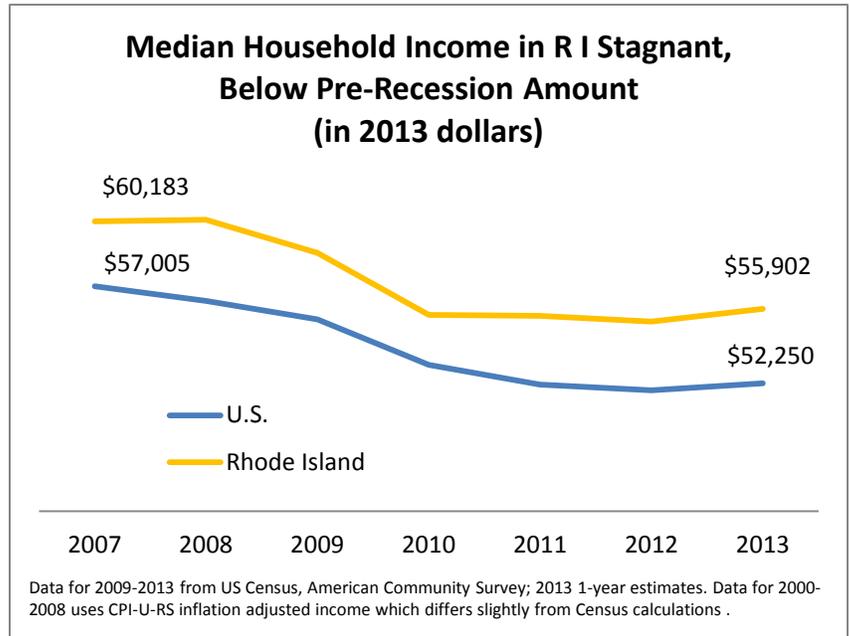
Brewster said that lawmakers should let workers' keep more of their paycheck by

expanding the state's Earned Income Tax Credit and make bolder investments in basic skills

and workforce training so that more Rhode Islanders are able to compete in today’s economy. These policies would boost the purchasing power and skills of struggling families.

The Census also released information about household income and health insurance coverage.

The state’s median annual income, when adjusted for inflation, remained flat at \$55,902 a year, ranking Rhode Island 19th among all states, and in the middle of the pack in New England. This is significantly less than pre-recession median household income of \$60,183.



One in eight (120,000) Rhode Islanders were uninsured last year, which is essentially unchanged from 2012. The number of uninsured is expected to drop this year, however, due to the state’s decision to expand Medicaid to low-income working age adults and because middle income Rhode Islanders are able to receive federal tax credits to help purchase coverage through the state’s health insurance exchange.

“Policy makers made the right choice to expand Medicaid to low-income adults and to create a state health insurance exchange that provides access to coverage for all Rhode Islanders,” said Brewster.

The Economic Progress Institute publishes a biennial study, the Rhode Island Standard of Need, which shows what it actually costs to live and raise a family in the Ocean State. “Our study has generally found that it costs between two and three times the federal poverty level to meet a household’s most basic needs in Rhode Island,” said Brewster. The Institute will be releasing its 2014 study in the fall, which it says will provide a better measure of economic well-being of Rhode Islanders than the federal poverty level.

About The Economic Progress Institute

The Economic Progress Institute is a non-partisan research and policy organization that works to ensure the economic security of low- and modest-income Rhode Islanders.