



# Minority Health Facts 2015



The conditions and environments in which we live, work, and play have an enormous impact on our health, often dictating the availability and quality of resources that help people live healthy lives. Differences in places where we live, work, and play frequently result in inequalities in opportunities like quality childcare and education, access to healthy foods, and safe places to be physically active. Rhode Island's racial and ethnic minority populations often feel the burden of these inequalities. This report presents data on population demographics, socio-economic characteristics, maternal and child health, behavioral risk factors, access to healthcare, infectious disease, and the leading causes of death among Rhode Island's racial and ethnic minorities, compared to white people and the state as a whole. The accurate collection of data on race, ethnicity and social determinants of health like poverty, educational attainment, and employment is the first step in identifying, monitoring, and eventually eliminating health disparities.

For some Rhode Island Department of Health data sets, race and ethnicity are based on self-identification. Because individuals often identify with more than one race or ethnicity, this makes the collection of data on race and ethnicity difficult and complex. The race data presented in Figure 1 and Tables A-C may include data on Hispanic ethnicity. The race data presented in Tables D-H does not include data on Hispanic ethnicity. Additionally, since the population of Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders is very small in Rhode Island, this group was combined with Asians to allow for meaningful statistical analysis. The tables present point estimates, which should not be used to imply statistical significance.



# Population Demographics

The definitions of the different racial and ethnic populations in this report come from the United States Office of Management and Budget.

**Hispanic/Latino:** A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

There are approximately 139,055 Hispanics/Latinos in Rhode Island, making up 13.2% of the population. Hispanics/Latinos have a median age of 25.8 years and 34.2% of them are younger than 18 years of age, while 4.4% of them are older than 65 years. 40.4% of Hispanics/Latinos are foreign born, and 16.8% speak only English at home.

**Black/African American:** A person having origins in areas of the black racial groups of Africa.

There are approximately 67,099 blacks/African Americans living in Rhode Island, making up 6.4% of the population. Blacks/African Americans have a median age of 29.3 years and 28.9% of them are younger than 18 years of age, while 6.2% of them are older than 65 years. 29.3% of blacks/African Americans are foreign born, and 63.9% speak only English at home.

**American Indian or Alaska Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. In this report,

“American Indian or Alaska Native” and “Native American” are synonymous.

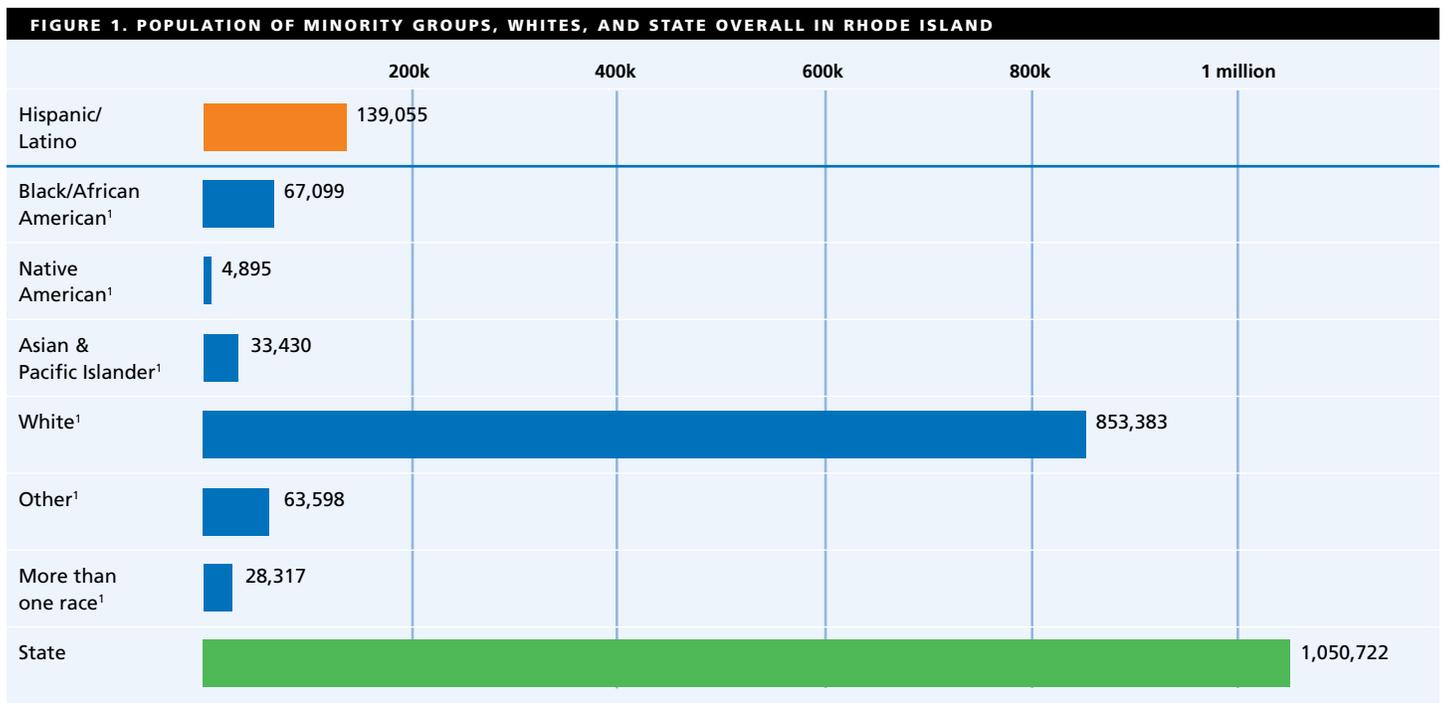
There are approximately 4,895 Native Americans living in Rhode Island, making up 0.5% of the population. Native Americans have a median age 37.2 years and 23.5% of them are younger than 18 years of age, while 11.3% of them are older than 65 years.

**Asian and Pacific Islander:** Data for Asians and Pacific Islanders are grouped together in this report. They include people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent, or in any of the original peoples of the Pacific Islands including Hawaii.

There are approximately 33,430 Asians and Pacific Islanders living in Rhode Island, making up 3.2% of the population. Asians and Pacific Islanders have a median age of 29.5 years and 22.4% of them are younger than 18 years of age, while 6.2% of them are older than 65 years. 64.9% of Asians and Pacific Islanders are foreign born, and 23.3% speak only English at home.

**White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

There are approximately 853,383 white people in Rhode Island, making up 81.2% of the population. Whites have a median age of 43.1 years and 18.3% of them are younger than 18 years of age, while 17.2% of them are older than 65 years. 7.3% of whites are foreign born, and 87.1% speak only English at home.



Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-year estimates

<sup>1</sup> Hispanic ethnicity may be included in racial category

**TABLE A: POPULATION DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

	HISPANIC/ LATINO	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN <sup>1</sup>	NATIVE AMERICAN <sup>1</sup>	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER <sup>1</sup>	WHITE <sup>1</sup>	STATE
Median age	25.8	29.3	37.2	29.5	43.1	39.7
Percentage of population younger than 18 years	34.2	28.9	23.5	22.4	18.3	20.6
Percentage of population age 65 years or older	4.4	6.2	11.3	6.2	17.2	15.0
Percentage of population born in another country	40.4	29.3	+	64.9	7.3	13.2
Percentage of population speaking only English at home*	16.8	63.9	+	23.3	87.1	78.9

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2011–2013 American Community Survey 3-Year estimates

<sup>1</sup> Hispanic ethnicity may be included in racial category

\*Population 5 years and older

+Sample too small for meaningful analysis

## Socioeconomic Characteristics

The following are socioeconomic characteristics of Rhode Island’s minority populations. These characteristics are among the social determinants that can have a profound effect on an individual’s health.

- Native Americans have the highest percentages of children living in poverty, compared to all other groups.
- All minority groups have higher poverty rates than whites and the state as a whole.
- Hispanics/Latinos, blacks/African Americans, and Native Americans have higher unemployment rates than Asians and Pacific Islanders, whites, and the state as a whole.
- Hispanics/Latinos, blacks/African Americans, and Native Americans have lower median household incomes than Asians and Pacific Islanders, whites, and the state as a whole.
- All minority groups have lower percentages of home ownership and are more likely to rent their housing than whites and the state as a whole. 51.3% of renters in Rhode Island face a housing cost burden,<sup>1</sup> compared to only 33.7% of homeowners. Housing cost burdens lead to household cuts in spending on food, transportation, and healthcare.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup>Spend 30% or more of their income on housing costs

<sup>2</sup>[www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/jchs\\_americas\\_rental\\_housing\\_2013\\_1\\_0.pdf](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/jchs_americas_rental_housing_2013_1_0.pdf)

**TABLE B: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA**

	HISPANIC/ LATINO <sup>1</sup>	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN <sup>1</sup>	NATIVE AMERICAN <sup>1</sup>	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER <sup>1</sup>	WHITE <sup>1</sup>	STATE
Percentage of children living in poverty (<18 years old) <sup>3</sup>	40.0	39.0	54.0	22.0	14.0	20.2
Percentage of population living in poverty <sup>2</sup>	35.8	28.4	42.2	19.2	11.3	14.4
Percentage of population that is unemployed <sup>2</sup>	17.8	13.5	26.0	8.0	8.6	9.7
Median household income <sup>2</sup>	\$29,859	\$34,893	\$21,476	\$51,443	\$60,140	\$55,675
Percentage of population that owns their housing unit <sup>2</sup>	26.3	31.1	18.6	48.0	64.7	60.2

Sources: <sup>2</sup>US Bureau of the Census, 2011–2013 American Community Survey 3-year estimates

<sup>3</sup>2014 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook

<sup>1</sup> Hispanic ethnicity may be included in racial category

**TABLE C: MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH INDICATORS**

	HISPANIC/ LATINO	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN <sup>1</sup>	NATIVE AMERICAN <sup>1</sup>	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER <sup>1</sup>	WHITE <sup>1</sup>	STATE
Percentage of pregnant women with delayed prenatal care <sup>2a</sup>	16.2	18.7	16.7*	16.3	10.5	12.8
Percentage of births to mothers with less than 12 years of education <sup>2</sup>	29.5	17.3	31.7*	9.9	8.6	13.8
Percentage of infants with low birth weight <sup>2b</sup>	7.7	11.4	10.6*	9.4	6.8	7.6
Rate of births to teens ages 15-19 (per 1,000 teens) <sup>2</sup>	50.8	34.4	123.1*	14.4	13.4	21.4
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) <sup>2c</sup>	5.8	11.2	+	6.3	5.3	6.6
Rate of children with incarcerated parents (per 1,000 children) <sup>3</sup>	17.7	63.8	22.1*	4.0	8.0	13.1

Sources: <sup>2</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2009-2013

<sup>3</sup>2014 Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Factbook

<sup>a</sup>Delayed prenatal care is defined as care received after the first trimester or no prenatal care received

<sup>b</sup>Low birth weight is defined as less than 2,500 grams or 5.5 pounds

<sup>c</sup>Infant mortality rate is defined as the number of infants who died before their first birthday per 1,000 live births

+Sample too small for meaningful analysis

\*Use caution in interpreting result; estimate is considered statistically unreliable due to small sample size

<sup>1</sup> Hispanic ethnicity may be included in racial category

**TABLE D: YOUTH BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR INDICATORS (YOUTH IN GRADES 9-12)**

	HISPANIC/ LATINO	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	WHITE	STATE
Percent of youth who used marijuana in past 30 days <sup>1</sup>	23.2	25.5	30.2*	18.6	26.6	25.6
Percent of youth who engaged in binge-drinking in past 30 days <sup>1</sup>	17.0	12.6	25.2*	12.1	18.5	17.5
Percent of youth who have ever had sexual intercourse <sup>1</sup>	48.1	49.9	+	32.4	38.6	41.3
Percent of youth who smoked cigarettes in past 30 days <sup>1</sup>	6.5	6.3	17.5*	7.2	12.9	11.0
Percent of youth who did not get the recommended physical activity <sup>1y</sup>	81.8	76.3	84.1	83.9	73.3	75.5
Percent of youth who never/rarely wore seatbelt with other driver(s) <sup>1</sup>	16.0	16.9	13.1	9.5	7.0	9.8
Percent of youth who got in a physical fight in the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	28.7	28.8	38.1*	19.0	19.7	22.6
Percent of youth who were bullied on school property in past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	14.1	13.7	19.6	11.2	19.5	17.8
Percent of youth who ever took prescription drugs without having a prescription for the drug <sup>1</sup>	13.0	11.9	20.4	9.9	15.8	15.0
Percent of high school seniors that graduated high school <sup>2</sup>	69.0	72.1	73.9	85.3	83.9	79.7

Sources: <sup>1</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009, 2011 and 2013

<sup>2</sup> Rhode Island Department of Education, Cohort Graduation Rates, 4-Year Cohort for 2013

<sup>y</sup> Recommended physical activity is 60 minutes, 7 days per week

\*Use caution in interpreting result; estimate is considered statistically unreliable due to small sample size

+Sample too small for meaningful analysis

## Maternal and Child Health

In general, whites and Asians and Pacific Islanders have better maternal and child health outcomes than other individual groups in the state and the state as a whole.

- A higher percentage of all minority mothers receive delayed prenatal care, compared to white mothers and mothers in the state as a whole.
- Blacks/African Americans have the highest percentage of infants with low birth weight, compared to all other groups.
- Black/African American babies have the highest rate of infant mortality, compared to all other groups.
- A higher rate of black/African American children have incarcerated parents, compared to all other groups.

## Youth Behavioral Risk

- Hispanic/Latino and Asian and Pacific Island youth are less likely to use marijuana, compared to white youth and youth in the state as a whole.
- Lower percentages of black/African American and Asian and Pacific Island youth binge drink, compared to white youth and youth in the state as a whole.
- Higher percentages of Hispanic/Latino and black/African American youth engage in sexual intercourse, compared to white youth and youth in the state as a whole.
- Minority youth are more likely to never or rarely use a seatbelt when in a vehicle driven by someone else, compared to white youth.
- Higher percentages of Hispanic/Latino and black/African American youth reported getting into a physical fight in the past 12 months, compared to youth in the state as a whole.
- Hispanics/Latinos, blacks/African Americans, and Native Americans have lower graduation rates than Asians and Pacific Islanders, whites, and the state as a whole.



**TABLE E: ADULT BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR INDICATORS (ADULTS 18 YEARS AND OLDER)**

	HISPANIC/ LATINO	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	WHITE	STATE
Percent of adult population who meets physical activity guidelines <sup>1</sup> [2011 & 2013 only]	36.6	41.6	43.3*	44.7*	51.7	49.0
Percent of adult population (age 20+) who is overweight/obese <sup>2</sup>	68.0	67.1	71.4*	50.0	64.2	64.7
Percent of adult population (age 20+) who is obese <sup>3</sup>	28.6	32.3	33.7*	10.9	26.4	26.8
Percent of adult population who consumes 5+ servings of fruit/vegetables daily (2011 & 2013 only)	15.3	17.3	15.5	26.4	17.4	17.5
Percent of adult population who is a current smoker	16.3	19.2	35.0*	9.3	18.4	18.4
Percent of adult population who binge-drank in the last month <sup>4</sup>	17.7	13.4	12.7	14.6	18.8	18.3

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2011-2013

<sup>1</sup> Physical activity guidelines are 150 minutes per week

<sup>2</sup> Overweight /obese defined as body mass index (BMI) ≥ 25

<sup>3</sup> Obesity defined as BMI ≥ 30

<sup>4</sup> Binge-drinking defined as 5+ drinks for men and 4+ drinks for women

\*Use caution in interpreting result; estimate is considered statistically unreliable due to small sample size

## Adult Behavioral Risk

- Hispanic/Latino adults have the lowest rate of physical activity, compared to all other groups.
- Black/African American adults 20 years and older have a higher obesity rate than adults in the state as whole. Asians and Pacific Islanders have the lowest obesity rates.
- Asian and Pacific Island adults have the highest percentage of fruit and vegetable consumption. Native Americans and Hispanics/Latinos have the lowest percentage of adults who consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- The percentage of blacks/African Americans who smoke cigarettes is higher than the state average, while the percentages of Hispanics/Latinos and Asians and Pacific Islanders who smoke are lower than the state average.
- Adults in all minority groups have lower rates of binge-drinking, compared to white adults and adults in the state as a whole.

## Access to Healthcare

- A higher percentage of Hispanic/Latino adults under 65 years report having no health insurance, compared to all other groups.

- A higher percentage of Asians and Pacific Islanders report having no routine checkups within the past year, compared to all other groups.
- Higher percentages of Hispanic/Latino and Native American adults report being unable to see a doctor because of cost in the past year, compared to other groups.

## Infectious Disease

- The rates of gonorrhea, chlamydia, and HIV/AIDS are higher for blacks/African Americans than all other groups. While not nearly as high as the rates of blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos have higher rates for these infectious diseases than whites and the state as a whole.
- From 2009 to 2013, Asians and Pacific Islanders had the highest rate of tuberculosis.

## Leading Causes of Death

The top five causes of death in Rhode Island are heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, stroke, and Alzheimer's disease. For some racial and ethnic minority groups, diabetes mellitus, unintentional injuries, and overdoses are among the top five causes of death.

# Chronic Disease

Although not mentioned in this report, racial and ethnic disparities exist in health outcomes related to chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. For more information on the burden of these chronic diseases on Rhode Island residents and the disproportionate

impact on the state's minorities, see the Rhode Island Commission for Health Advocacy and Equity Legislative Report 2015:

[www.health.ri.gov/publications/reports/2015CommissionOnHealthAdvocacyAndEquityLegislativeReport.pdf](http://www.health.ri.gov/publications/reports/2015CommissionOnHealthAdvocacyAndEquityLegislativeReport.pdf)

**TABLE F: ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE AND SCREENING INDICATORS (ADULTS 18 YEARS AND OLDER)**

	HISPANIC/ LATINO	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	WHITE	STATE
Percent of adults (<65) years old who reported having no health insurance	41.2	25.9	21.4*	20.2	13.0	17.9
Percent of adults who reported having no person they thought of as their personal healthcare provider(s)	32.3	20.8	21.1	29.7	10.8	14.4
Percent of adults who had no routine checkup within the past year	33.3	21.1	23.7	36.1	20.4	22.4
Percent of adults who reported being unable to afford to see a doctor when needed at least once in the past year	31.3	17.3	21.6	18.0	11.5	14.6

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2011-2013  
 \*Use caution in interpreting result; estimate is considered statistically unreliable due to small sample size  
 +Sample too small for meaningful analysis

**TABLE E: SELECTED INCIDENCE RATES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES: CASES PER 100,000 POPULATION**

	HISPANIC/ LATINO	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	WHITE	STATE
Gonorrhea <sup>1</sup>	73.1	241.7	+	24.5	19.1	36.8
Chlamydia <sup>1</sup>	994.1	1587.8	+	315.3	214.7	377.4
Tuberculosis <sup>2</sup>	5.4	10.9	0	28.4	1.4	2.4
HIV/AIDS <sup>3</sup>	18.6	30.5	+	+	4.6	9.1

Sources: Rhode Island Department of Health, Division of Infectious Disease and Epidemiology, 2009-2013  
<sup>1</sup> Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Surveillance Data, 2009-2013  
<sup>2</sup> Tuberculosis Surveillance Data, 2009-2013  
<sup>3</sup> HIV/AIDS Surveillance Data, 2009-2013  
 + Sample too small for meaningful analysis

**TABLE H: LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH**

RANK	HISPANIC/ LATINO	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	WHITE	STATE
1	Cancer	Heart Disease	Cancer	Cancer	Heart Disease	Heart Disease
2	Heart Disease	Cancer	Heart Disease	Heart Disease	Cancer	Cancer
3	Unintentional Injuries	Stroke	+	Stroke	Chronic Respiratory Diseases	Chronic Respiratory Diseases
4	Stroke Conditions	Unintentional Injuries	+	+	Stroke	Stroke
5	All Overdoses	Diabetes Mellitus	+	+	Alzheimer's	Alzheimer's

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Vital Records, RI Resident Deaths, ICD-10 Codes, 2009-2013  
 + Data too small for meaningful analysis



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[www.health.ri.gov/programs/minorityhealth](http://www.health.ri.gov/programs/minorityhealth)



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