Getting Our BEARINGS

Key Facts about Postsecondary Education in Rhode Island
RHODE ISLAND INSTITUTIONS
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

PUBLIC
• Community College of Rhode Island
• Rhode Island College
• University of Rhode Island

PRIVATE
• Brown University
• Bryant University
• College Unbound
• Johnson & Wales University – Providence
• New England Institute of Technology
• Providence College
• Rhode Island School of Design
• Roger Williams University
• Roger Williams University – School of Law
• Salve Regina University

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INTRODUCTION

In February 2022, the Rhode Island Council on Postsecondary Education approved the 2022–27 Rhode Island Strategic Plan for Postsecondary Education to help more Rhode Islanders attain credentials that will lead to careers with livable wages, stronger families and communities, and a Rhode Island economy boosted by a trained workforce aligned to industry standards. The plan was developed by the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) after months of engagement with state institutions of higher education, workforce training partners, Board of Education members, students, municipal and state elected leadership, sister state agencies, and nonprofit and business leaders. It lays out an ambitious agenda for the course ahead, focusing on five key priorities:

1. Closing equity gaps;
2. Increasing affordability;
3. Helping more adults attain degrees and certifications;
4. Expanding workforce training opportunities; and
5. Strengthening PK–20 alignment.

Successful implementation of the plan is anchored in understanding where we are as a state and developing a clear set of initiatives and action steps to meet our goals. This report, which is Part 1 of a two-part series, provides an overview of where Rhode Island stands on some key indicators. Over time, OPC will continue to track these and other indicators to ensure that the state is making progress on its priorities. Part 2 will detail the specific initiatives and action steps OPC will take to meet the goal of 70 percent of working-age Rhode Islanders obtaining a postsecondary credential by 2025.
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION in Rhode Island

Rhode Island has a diverse population, with citizens from a wide variety of backgrounds. To ensure that all students have the preparation, access, and resources they need to reach their postsecondary goals, we need to understand who they are and the challenges they may face.

THE TOTAL POPULATION OF RHODE ISLAND IS 1,057,231 — a number that has held relatively steady in recent years.

**GENDER**

- Female: 543,439
- Male: 513,792

**AGE**

- 0-14: 169,882
- 15-19: 73,008
- 20-24: 77,141
- 25 and Over: 737,200

**RACE/ETHNICITY**

- White: 761,432
- Hispanic or Latino (of Any Race): 163,226
- Black/African American: 60,415
- Asian: 35,401
- Two or More Races: 25,194
- Some Other Race: 7,500
- American Indian/Alaska Native: 3,402
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 661

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015–19 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
**Language Spoken at Home**

- **English Only**: 778,000
- **Spanish**: 123,414
- **Other Languages**: 101,145

**Total Population**

- **Number of Rhode Islanders 5 Years and Older**: 778,000

**Poverty Status**

- **Below Poverty Level**: 12.4%

**Disability Status**

- **With a Disability**: 139,446

**Veteran Status**

- **Civilian Veterans**: 54,121

**Incarcerated Status**

- **Incarcerated Adults**: 3,117

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015–19 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Our goal is for 70 percent of working-age Rhode Islanders to have a postsecondary credential by 2025. To reach that goal, we must uncover and dismantle systemic inequities embedded in policies and practices that foster persistent gaps for students in Rhode Island’s postsecondary education system and prevent our students, communities, and state from reaching their full potential.

### OVERALL ATTAINMENT

- **Less Than 9th Grade**: 37,440
- **9th–12th Grade, No Diploma**: 45,027
- **High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)**: 208,387
- **Some College, No Degree**: 132,485
- **Associate Degree**: 61,743
- **Bachelor’s Degree**: 150,150
- **Graduate or Professional Degree**: 101,968

### Source

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015–19 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**60%** of Rhode Islanders currently go on to postsecondary education.
ATTAINMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY

- Less Than High School Graduate: 84,017
- High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency): 207,764
- Some College, No Degree: 132,877
- Associate Degree: 60,583
- Bachelor’s Degree or Higher: 251,987

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015–19 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

ATTAINMENT BY VETERAN STATUS

- Less Than High School Graduate: 4,277
- High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency): 15,988
- Some College or Associate Degree: 16,702
- Bachelor’s Degree or Higher: 16,495

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015–19 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
Understanding the state’s current and future workforce needs is key to developing and scaling the educational, workforce, and industry training programs we need to serve the Rhode Island economy and to create clear pathways to success for many more students, particularly from under-represented communities.

**UNEMPLOYMENT**

5.7%

Average Rhode Island Unemployment Rate, 2021

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization for Rhode Island

**EARNINGS BY ATTAINMENT LEVEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attainment Level</th>
<th>Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months, 2019 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Than High School Graduate</td>
<td>$27,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>$36,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College or Associate Degree</td>
<td>$40,976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>$56,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>$76,777</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015–19 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**626,000 JOB OPENINGS** are projected for Rhode Island between 2018 and 2028. 27.8% will require a postsecondary degree or award.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training. 2019–2020 Rhode Island Employment Trends and Workforce Issues, p. 29
Reaching our postsecondary attainment goal requires ensuring that more students leave high school prepared for college and creating seamless transitions to higher education so that more students go on to earn a postsecondary degree or credential. Among the ways we will meet these priorities is providing early access to college-level coursework and ensuring that students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

**POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT**
Six Months After Graduation From a Rhode Island Public High School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dual Enrollment</th>
<th>Concurrent Enrollment</th>
<th>Credits Earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018–19</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>4,637</td>
<td>26,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019–20</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>4,683</td>
<td>29,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020–21</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>4,763</td>
<td>29,726</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even as the number of high school graduates has held steady, postsecondary enrollment rates have declined.

**DUAL/CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT**

- Dual Enrollment
- Concurrent Enrollment

**FAFSA STATEWIDE COMPLETION RATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage of Rhode Island High School Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018–19</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019–20</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020–21</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Note: Unique student count within each enrollment type.
As it has across the country, the pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on enrollment and completion rates in Rhode Island’s postsecondary education system. The new strategic plan will work to reverse these trends and remove barriers to access and success, including by increasing the affordability of state higher education institutions.

**FALL UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT**

Even prior to the pandemic, fall undergraduate enrollment at Rhode Island’s colleges and universities was declining.

**FALL GRADUATE ENROLLMENT**

Graduate fall enrollment at both private and public institutions has remained relatively stable over the past five years.
Getting Our Bearings: Key Facts about Postsecondary Education in Rhode Island

**CERTIFICATES**

**PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**
- 2018-19: 279 Certificates
- 2019-20: 263 Certificates
- 2020-21: 322 Certificates

**PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS**
- 2018-19: 142 Certificates
- 2019-20: 92 Certificates
- 2020-21: 60 Certificates

**ASSOCIATE DEGREES**

**PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**
- 2018-19: 1,988 Degrees
- 2019-20: 2,106 Degrees
- 2020-21: 2,077 Degrees

**PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS**
- 2018-19: 1,323 Degrees
- 2019-20: 1,100 Degrees
- 2020-21: 1,103 Degrees

Degrees earned by [race/ethnic group] have been increasing, while closing equity gaps.

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**BACHELOR’S DEGREES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Public Institutions</th>
<th>Private Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018–19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019–20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020–21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GRADUATE DEGREES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Public Institutions</th>
<th>Private Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018–19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019–20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020–21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AFFORDABILITY

STUDENT DEBT

$36,791
Average Debt
RI Class of 2020


The state last dollar scholarship program awarded a total of $9,595,000 in 2020–21 to its public and private institutions, serving 8,069 students.

In 2020–21, the RI Promise program awarded a total of $7,030,366 to 1,627 Community College of Rhode Island students.

RHODE ISLAND STATE APPROPRIATIONS, FY21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Appropriations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community College of Rhode Island</td>
<td>$52,258,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island College</td>
<td>$52,172,385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Rhode Island</td>
<td>$76,443,790</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ?

2020–21 IN-STATE TUITION AND FEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Tuition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown University</td>
<td>$60,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island School of Design</td>
<td>$54,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence College</td>
<td>$54,388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryant University</td>
<td>$46,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salve Regina University</td>
<td>$42,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Williams University</td>
<td>$38,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson &amp; Wales University – Providence</td>
<td>$34,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England Institute of Technology</td>
<td>$31,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Rhode Island</td>
<td>$15,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson &amp; Wales University – Online</td>
<td>$13,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island College</td>
<td>$10,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Unbound</td>
<td>$10,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College of Rhode Island</td>
<td>$4,806</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the proportion of state funding increases, the proportion that comes from net tuition decreases. **Rhode Island is on the lower end of the spectrum** in terms of state appropriations.