

# Key Facts About **Postsecondary Education**



**RI 2024**

## **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
- New England Institute of Technology
- Providence College
- Rhode Island School of Design
- Roger Williams University
- Roger Williams University – School of Law
- Salve Regina University



Shannon W. Gilkey, EdD, Commissioner  
[www.riopc.edu](http://www.riopc.edu)

# INTRODUCTION



The 2022-27 Rhode Island Strategic Plan for Postsecondary Education represents a significant commitment to enhancing the state's educational attainment and economic vitality. The goal is 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 focuses 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.

This strategic plan was developed through extensive collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including 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. The plan's focus on closing equity gaps, increasing affordability, and expanding workforce training opportunities addresses the most pressing challenges in education today. It aims to foster an environment in which all Rhode Islanders have the opportunity to succeed and contribute to a robust economy. Its success depends on a clear understanding of Rhode Island's current educational landscape and the strategic implementation of initiatives that are both ambitious and achievable. By setting a clear course of action the plan lays a solid foundation for meaningful change.

## ABOUT THE OFFICE OF THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSIONER

The mission of the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC) is to ensure, promote, and expand postsecondary attainment among all Rhode Islanders by providing an effective system of postsecondary education and workforce training that is high quality, equitable, accessible, affordable, and aligned to PK–12 education and the economy. Rhode Island's system of postsecondary education should foster the economic, civic, social, and cultural growth of all Rhode Islanders, their communities, and the state. To fulfill its mission, OPC:

- Develops strategic plans to meet broad goals for the state's higher education system that are aligned with the goals of the Board of Education and Council on Elementary and Secondary Education;
- Formulates policy to implement goals and objectives established by the Board of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education;
- Performs data analysis and reporting to provide transparency about all aspects of postsecondary education in Rhode Island;
- Provides leadership on financial planning, budgeting compliance, and other issues related to fiscal policy for public higher education.
- Makes recommendations to the Council on Postsecondary Education regarding system policy and programmatic operations; and
- Administers the policies, rules, and regulations of the Council on Postsecondary Education.



# CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION

## in Rhode Island

Rhode Island’s citizens come from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds. Effectively providing the preparation, access, and resources our students need to achieve their postsecondary goals requires understanding who they are and what challenges they may face.

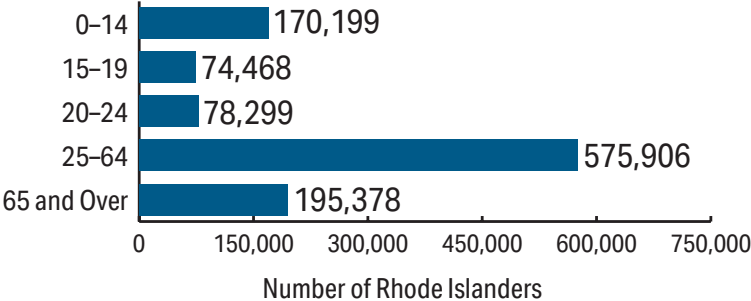
TOTAL POPULATION

**The total population of Rhode Island is 1,094,250.** Since 2017, the proportion of residents ages 25 to 44 has increased 7.5% while the proportion between 45 and 59 has decreased -6.1%. The population appears to be shifting toward older adults, with the largest gain (18.9%) occurring among residents ages 60 to 74.

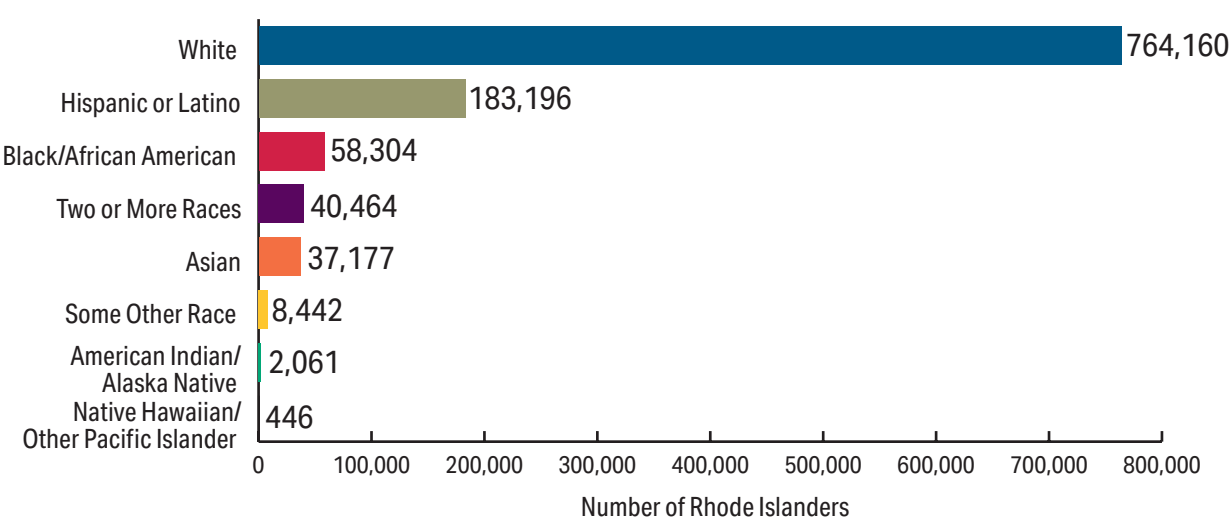
### GENDER



### AGE



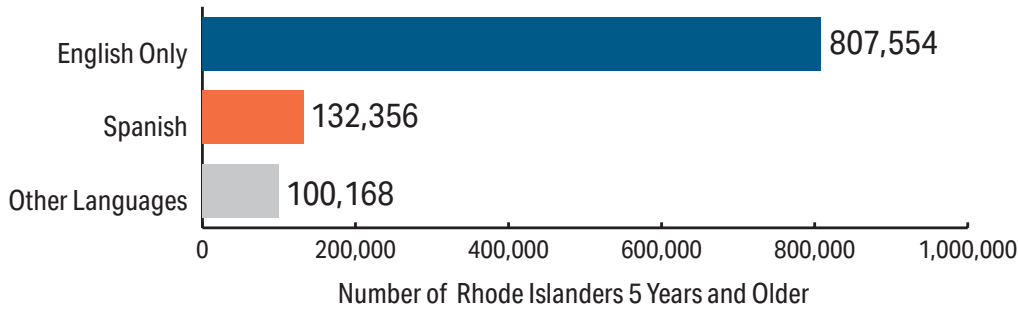
### RACE/ETHNICITY



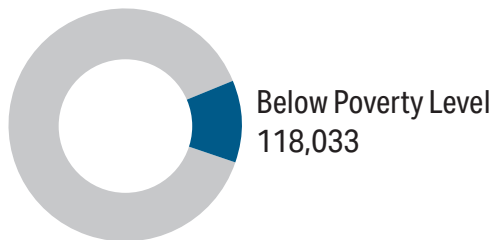
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



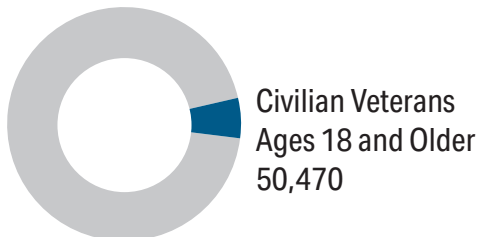
## LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME



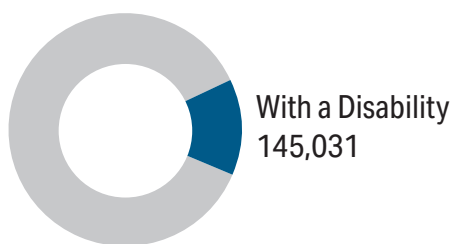
## POVERTY STATUS



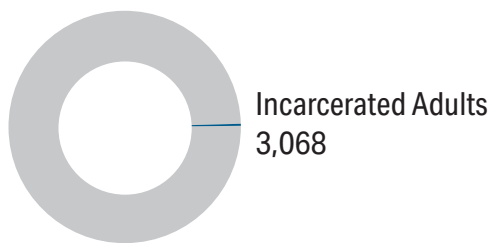
## VETERAN STATUS



## DISABILITY STATUS



## INCARCERATED STATUS



**While all Rhode Islanders need access to educational and workforce opportunities, providing this access is not always possible without the addition of supportive services.**

Addressing and eliminating obstacles such as child care, rental assistance, and food insecurity is crucial to getting students educated, engaged, and employed. The proportion of urban core residents living below the poverty level (19.4%) is significantly higher than that of Rhode Island overall (11.2%). Among those who are incarcerated, one-quarter (24.7%) have less than a high school diploma.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

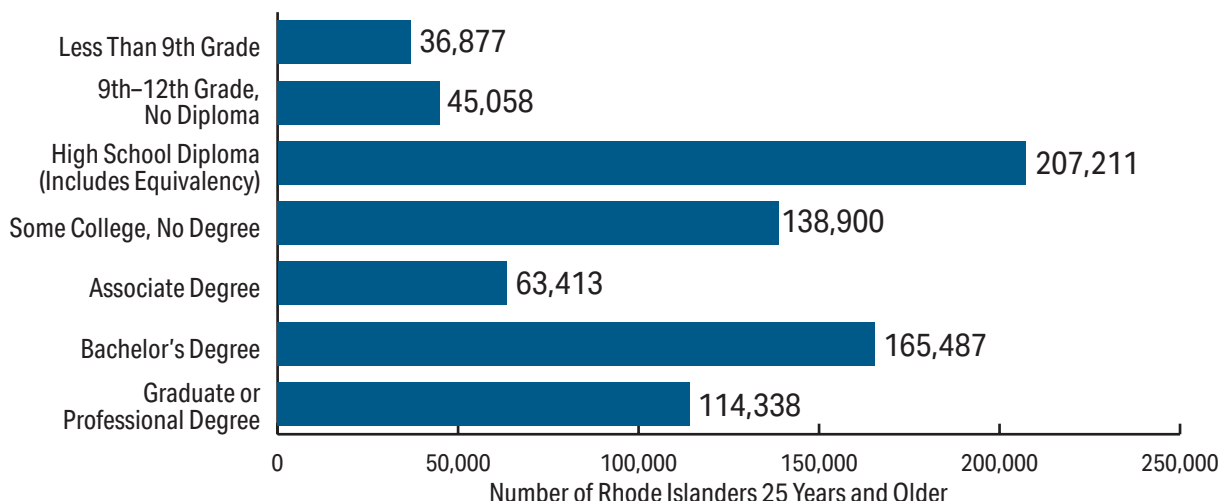
# EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

## in Rhode Island

Rhode Island's attainment goal is for 70% of working-age residents to have a postsecondary degree or credential by 2030. This goal cannot be accomplished by any single agency or institution. Instead, Rhode Island must establish collective ownership and work together to provide resources and supports to Rhode Islanders as they pursue postsecondary education.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

#### OVERALL ATTAINMENT

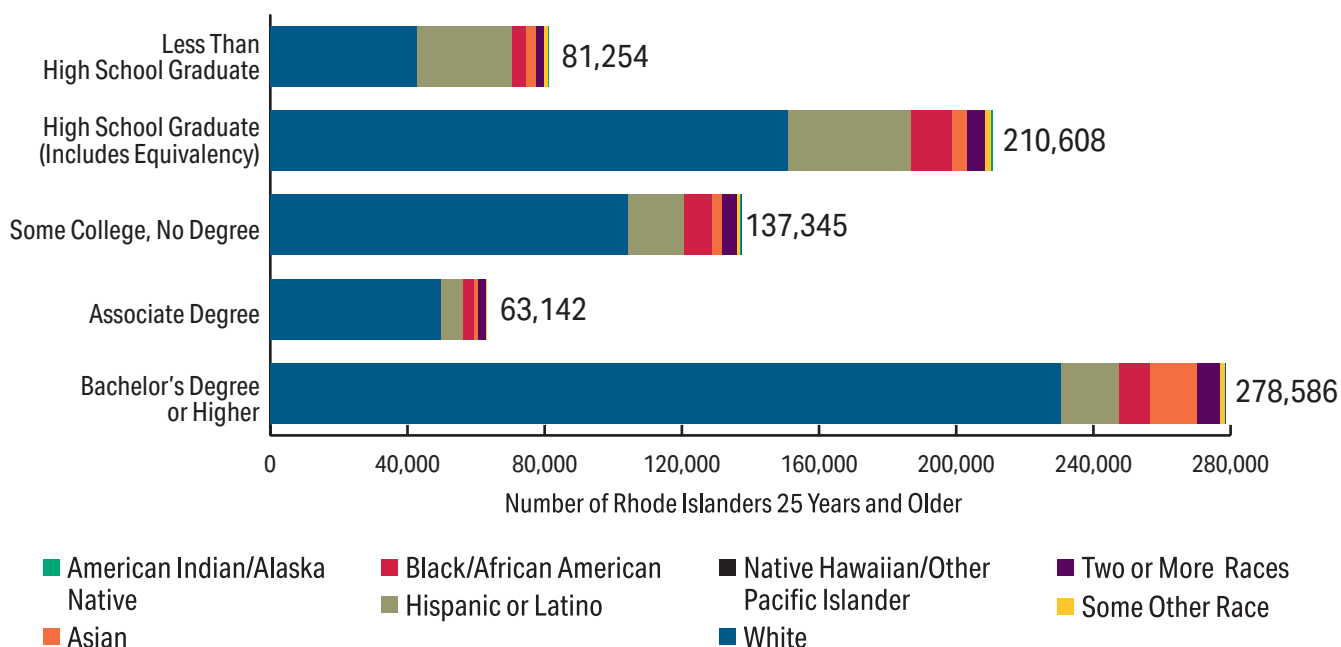


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018–2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

According to the Lumina Foundation's *A Stronger Nation 2024* report, **the proportion of working age Rhode Islanders (25–64) who have a postsecondary degree or credential increased from 53.3% to 56.7%** over the past year. These figures include an estimate for credentials earned and exclude adults ages 65 and over.

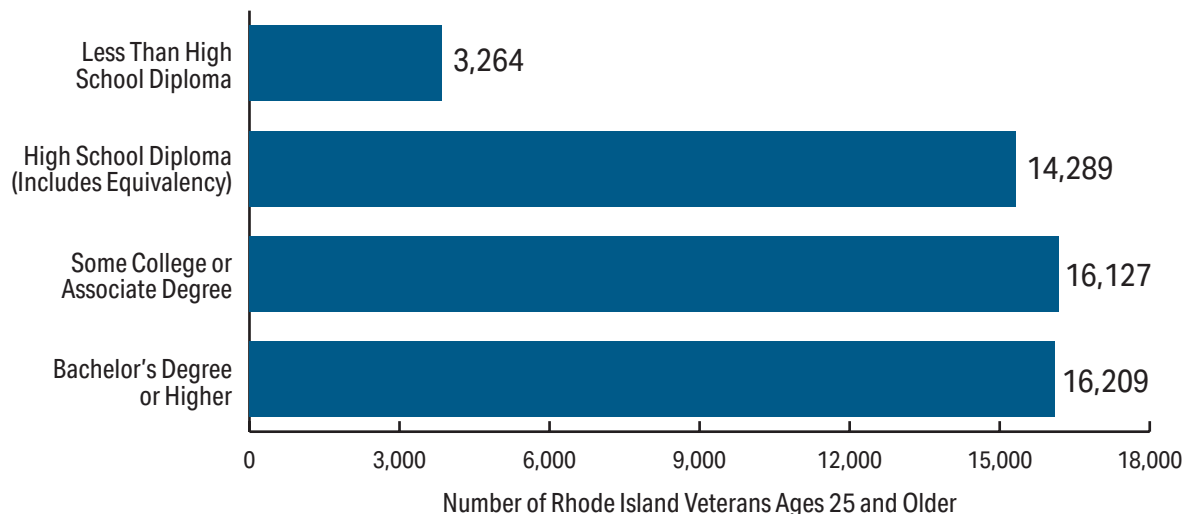


## ATTAINMENT BY RACE/ETHNICITY



Attainment rates vary across different racial and ethnic groups among Rhode Island residents ages 25 and older. **Asian and White adults have the highest rates for those with an associate degree or higher, 59% and 48%, respectively. Black adults have a 34% attainment rate while Hispanic adults are at 23%.**

## ATTAINMENT BY VETERAN STATUS



Nearly 50,000 **veterans ages 25 and over** live in Rhode Island. Of those, **32% have a bachelor's degree or higher.**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018–2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

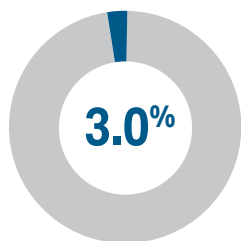


# EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

## in Rhode Island

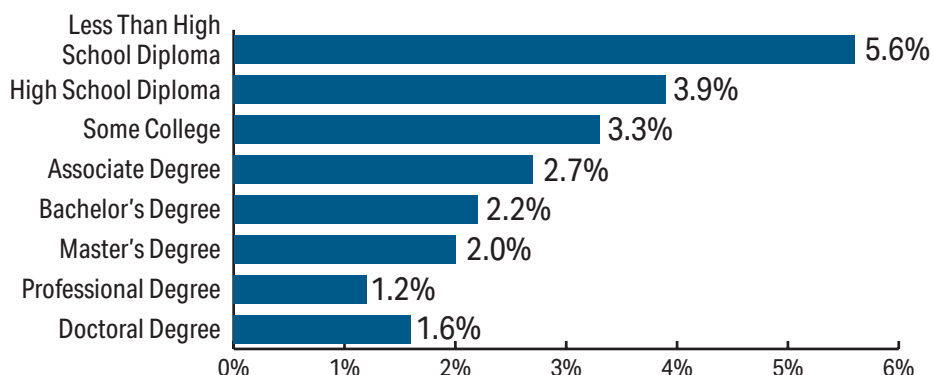
Identifying the state's current and future workforce needs is key to developing and scaling educational, workforce, and industry training programs that will serve Rhode Island's economy and increase incomes to support families.

### UNEMPLOYMENT



Average Rhode Island Unemployment Rate, 2023

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization for Rhode Island, 2023

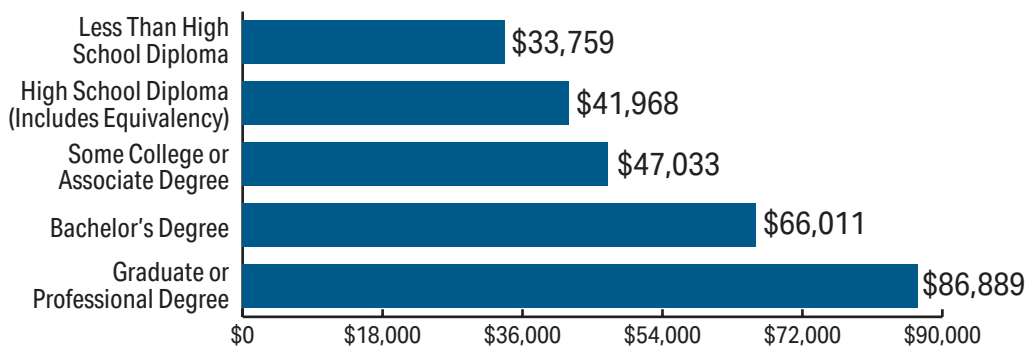


U.S. Unemployment Rate, Ages 25 and Older, 2023

Source: Current Population Survey, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Individuals who have earned a **postsecondary credential** are more likely to experience **lower unemployment rates and higher median earnings.**

### EARNINGS BY ATTAINMENT LEVEL



Median Earnings in the Past 12 Months, Rhode Islanders Ages 25 and Older, 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018–2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

**Of the 614,000 job openings** projected for Rhode Island between 2020 and 2030, **30% will require a postsecondary degree or credential.** Among projected new jobs, **36% will require a degree or postsecondary credential.**

Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, 2022–2023 Rhode Island Employment Trends and Workforce Issues

# PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

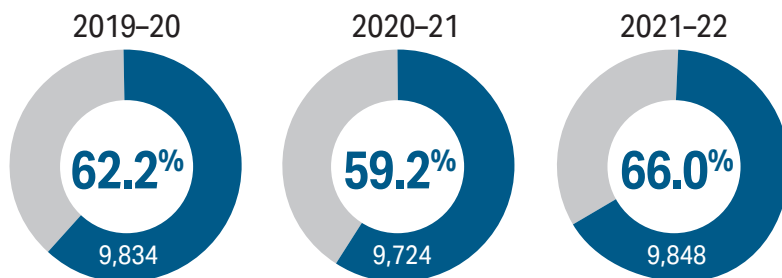
## in Rhode Island

Preparing high school graduates for college along with creating seamless transitions to higher education will smooth the path to earning a postsecondary degree or credential. Rhode Island is taking important steps to meet this goal by offering early access to college-level coursework through dual/concurrent enrollment and ensuring that students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

### POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

Six Months After Graduation From a Rhode Island Public High School

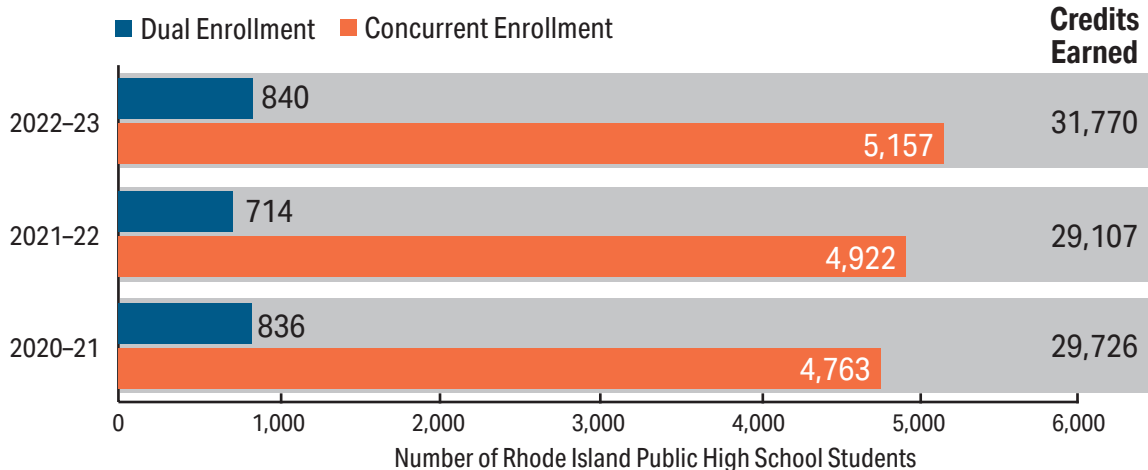


Number/Percentage of Rhode Island Public High School Graduates

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Data and Technology Services

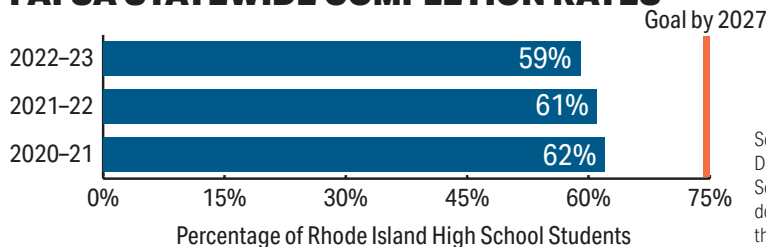
Between 2018-19 and 2031-32, the U.S. Department of Education projects a **12% decrease in the number of public high school graduates** in the state. Having **robust support systems** in place is essential **to ensure that students not only enroll but also stay on course** to complete their education.

### DUAL/CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT



Note: Unique student count within each enrollment type.  
Source: Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner

### FAFSA STATEWIDE COMPLETION RATES



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (Rates do not include alternatives to the FAFSA forms.)

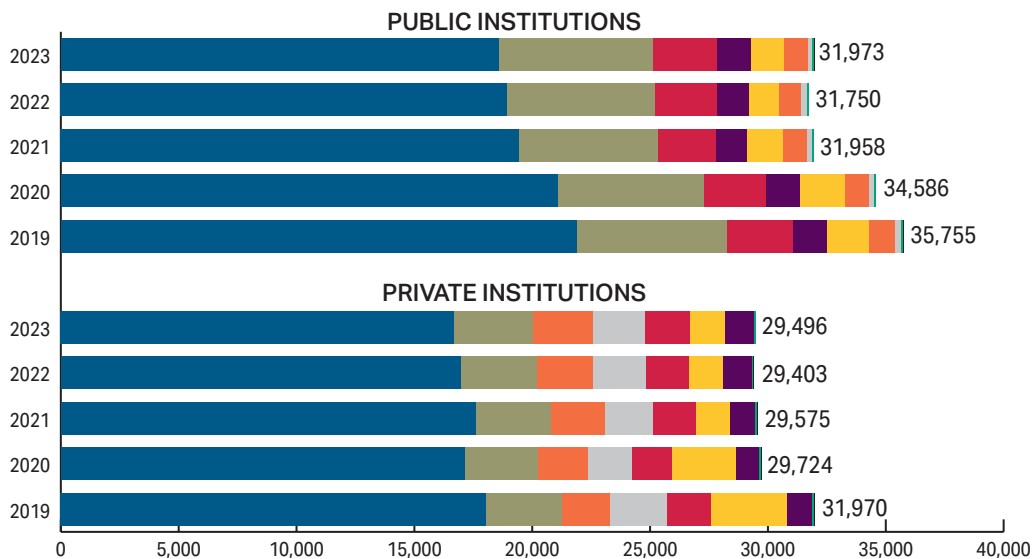
# ENROLLMENT AND COMPLETION

## in Rhode Island Colleges and Universities

The Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner strives to implement solutions that will remove barriers to access, participation, and completion of a postsecondary degree or credential. From administering programs such as Rhode Island Reconnect to the management of a portfolio of state-funded scholarships, we are committed to meeting postsecondary attainment goals and helping all Rhode Islanders prosper.

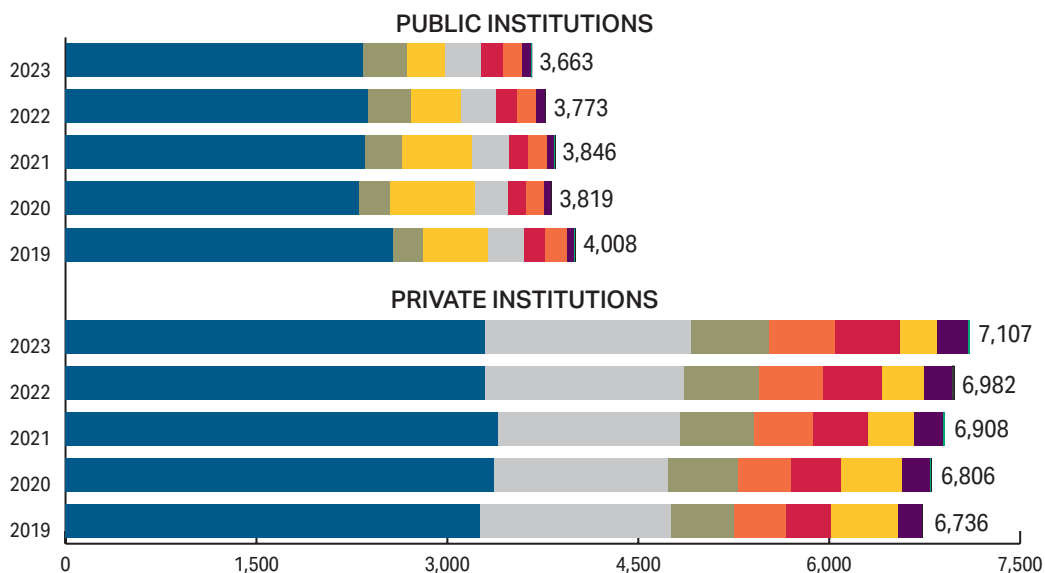
### ENROLLMENT

#### FALL UNDERGRADUATE ENROLLMENT



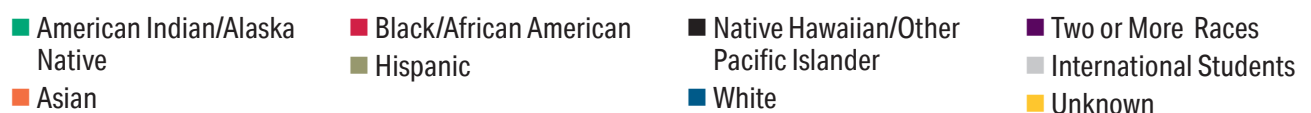
While enrollment is not yet back to pre-pandemic figures, institutions are slowly showing signs of improvement. **Undergraduate enrollment** at both private and public institutions **increased slightly** from fall 2022 to fall 2023.

#### FALL GRADUATE ENROLLMENT



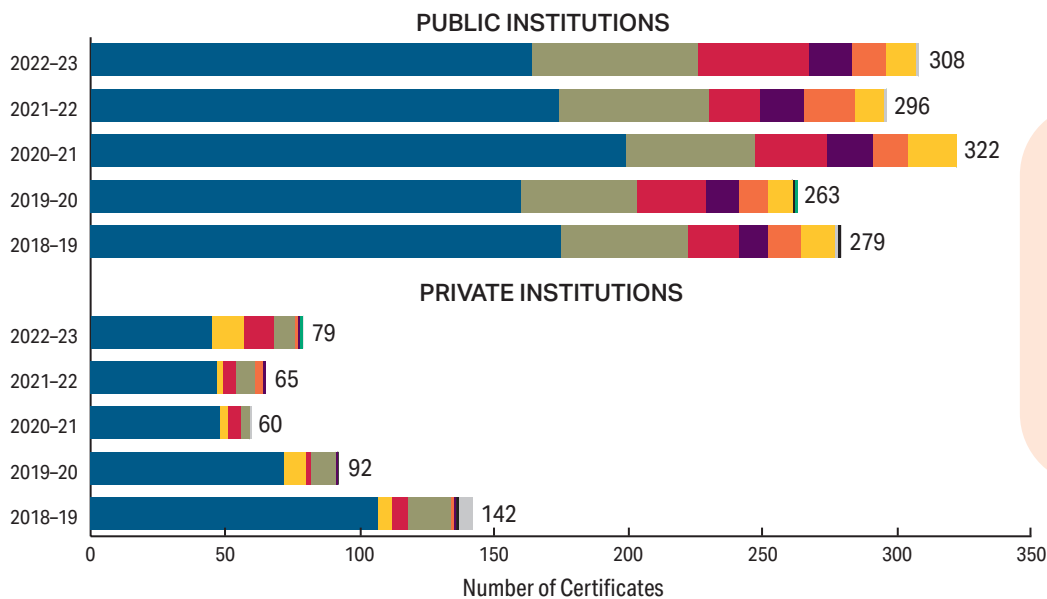
From fall 2022 to fall 2023, **graduate enrollment** at **private institutions increased 2%**, while public institutions experienced a decrease in enrollment (-3%).

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Fall 2019 through Fall 2023, Fall Enrollment survey



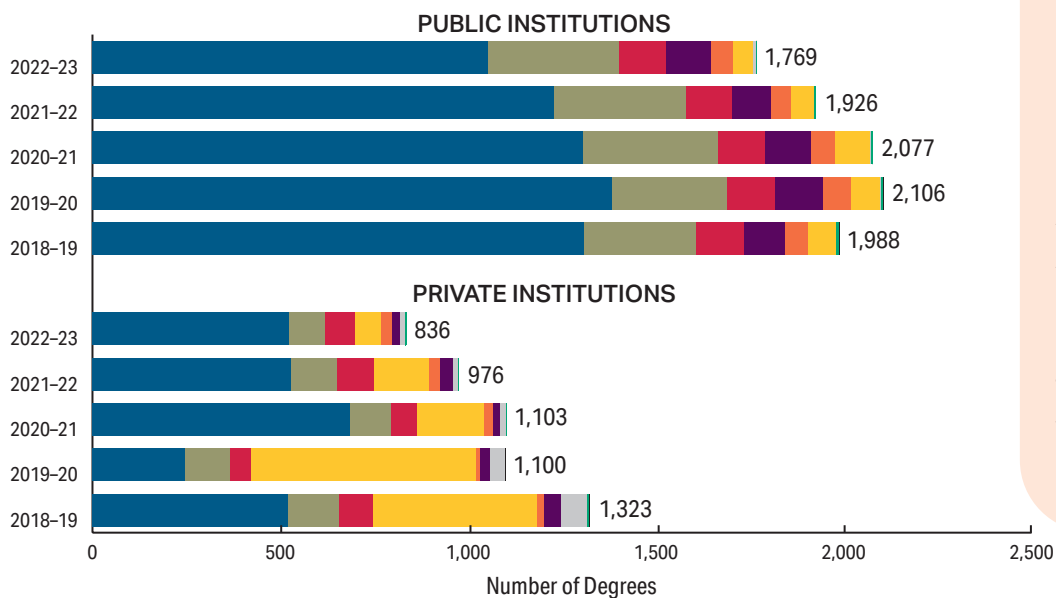


## CERTIFICATES



**Certificates** are awards conferred at the completion of a **credit-bearing** program of study below the baccalaureate level.

## ASSOCIATE DEGREES

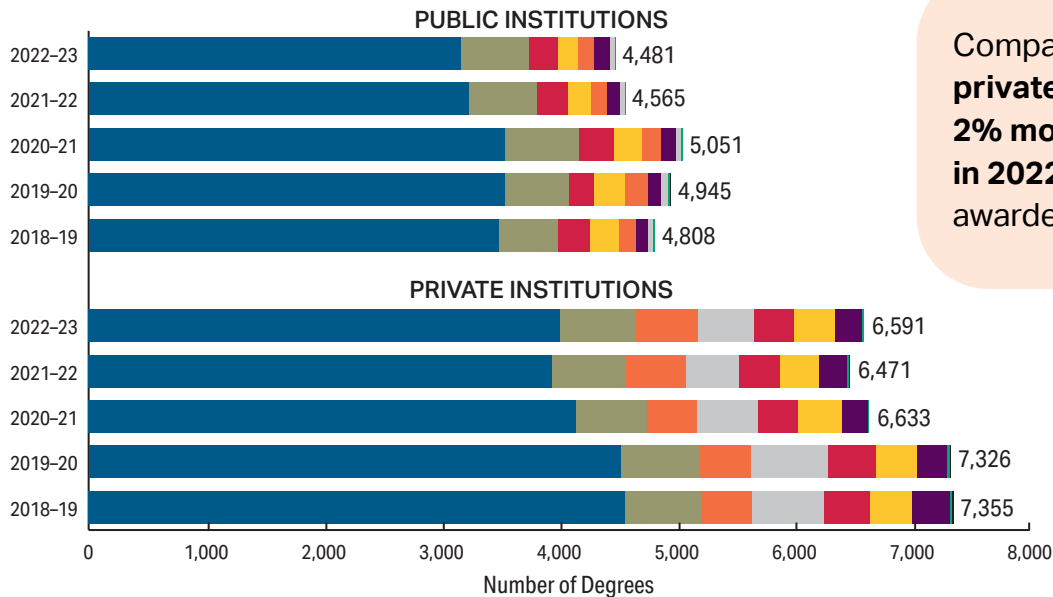


Over the past five years, the **number of associate degrees** at both public and private institutions has decreased. The proportions of awards to **Asian and Black/African American students at public institutions increased** in 2022-23 from the previous year (14% and 3%, respectively).



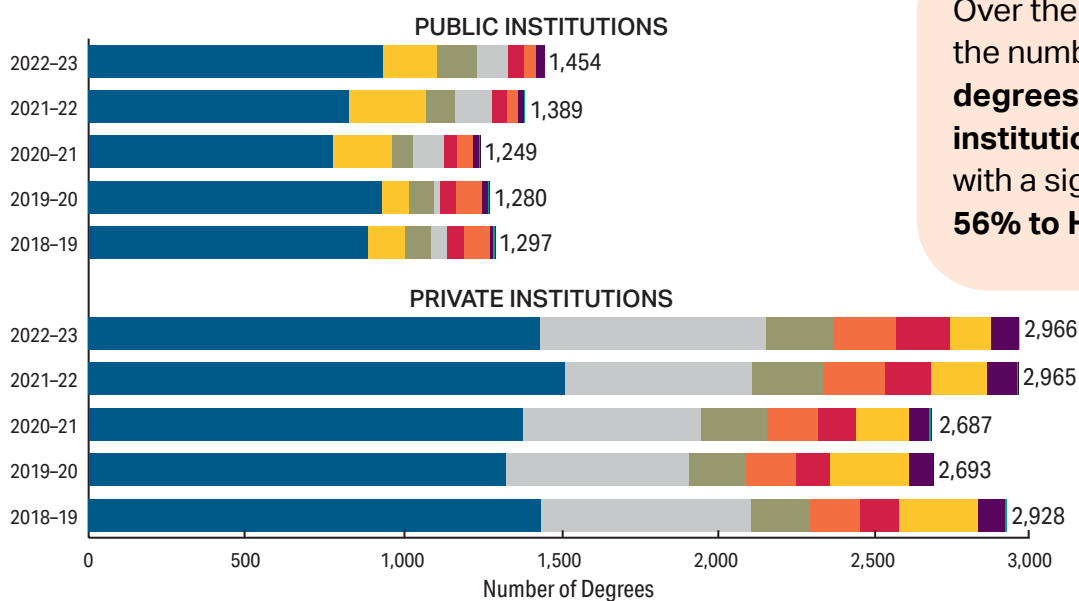
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2018-19 through 2022-23, Completions survey

## BACHELOR'S DEGREES

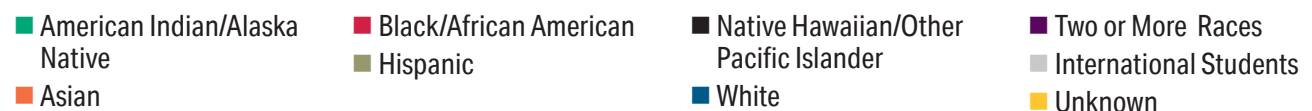


Compared to 2021–22, **private institutions awarded 2% more bachelor's degrees in 2022–23**; public institutions awarded 2% fewer degrees.

## GRADUATE DEGREES



Over the past five years, the number of **graduate degrees awarded at public institutions** has risen 12%, with a significant increase of **56% to Hispanic students**.

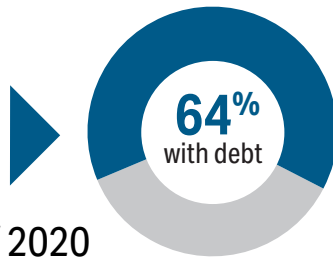


Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2018–19 through 2022–23, Completions survey

## STUDENT DEBT

**\$36,791**

Average Debt  
Rhode Island Class of 2020



Source: The Institute for College Access & Success, November 2021, Student Debt and the Class of 2020

**\$9,075,937**

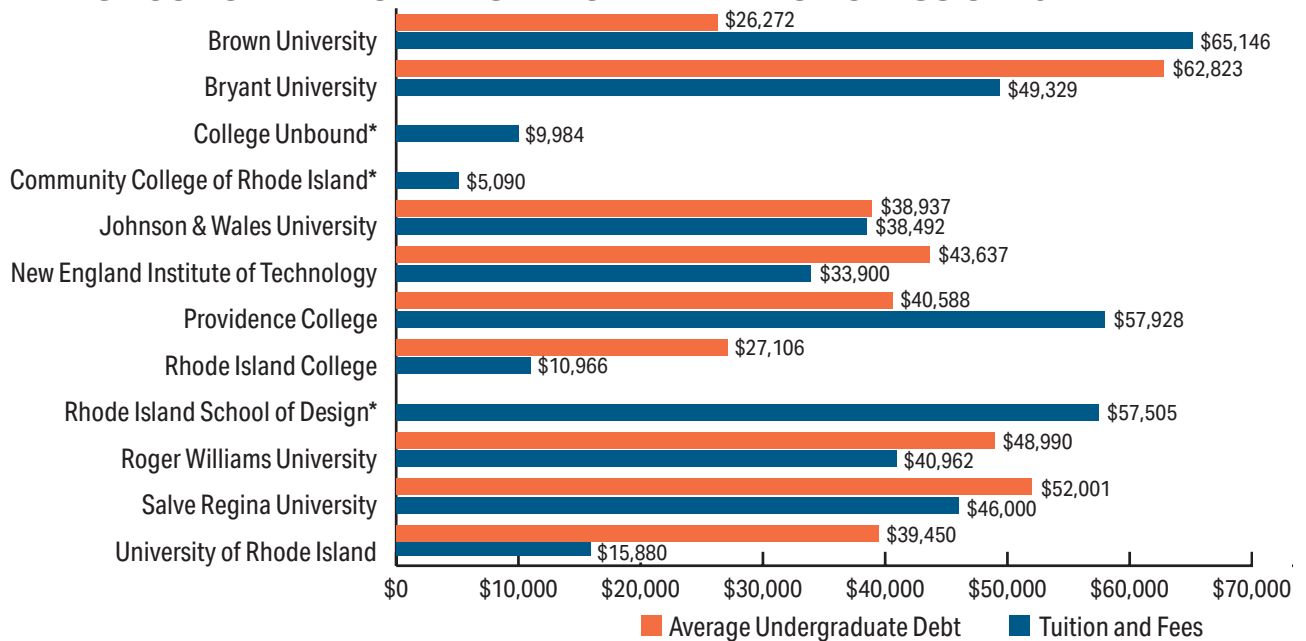
Amount Rhode Island's high school Class of 2023 left on the table in Pell Grants as a result of not completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid

Source: National College Attainment Network

In 2022–23, the Community College of Rhode Island's RI Promise program awarded approximately **\$6.6 million** to **2,571** of its students.

The state need-based grant program awarded a total of **\$9,595,000** in 2022–23 to its public and private institutions, serving **7,167** students.

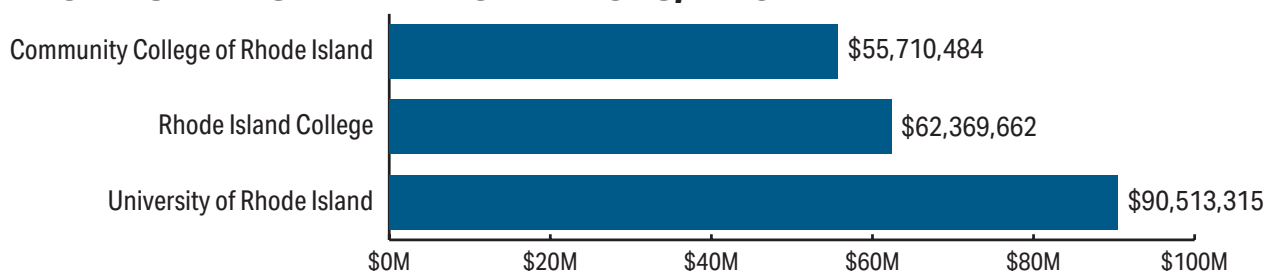
## 2022–23 IN-STATE FULL-TIME ACADEMIC YEAR TUITION AND FEES AND AVERAGE CUMULATIVE UNDERGRADUATE DEBT FOR CLASS OF 2022



\*Undergraduate debt not available.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2022 Institutional Characteristics survey and 2022–23 Common Data Set

## RHODE ISLAND STATE APPROPRIATIONS, FY23

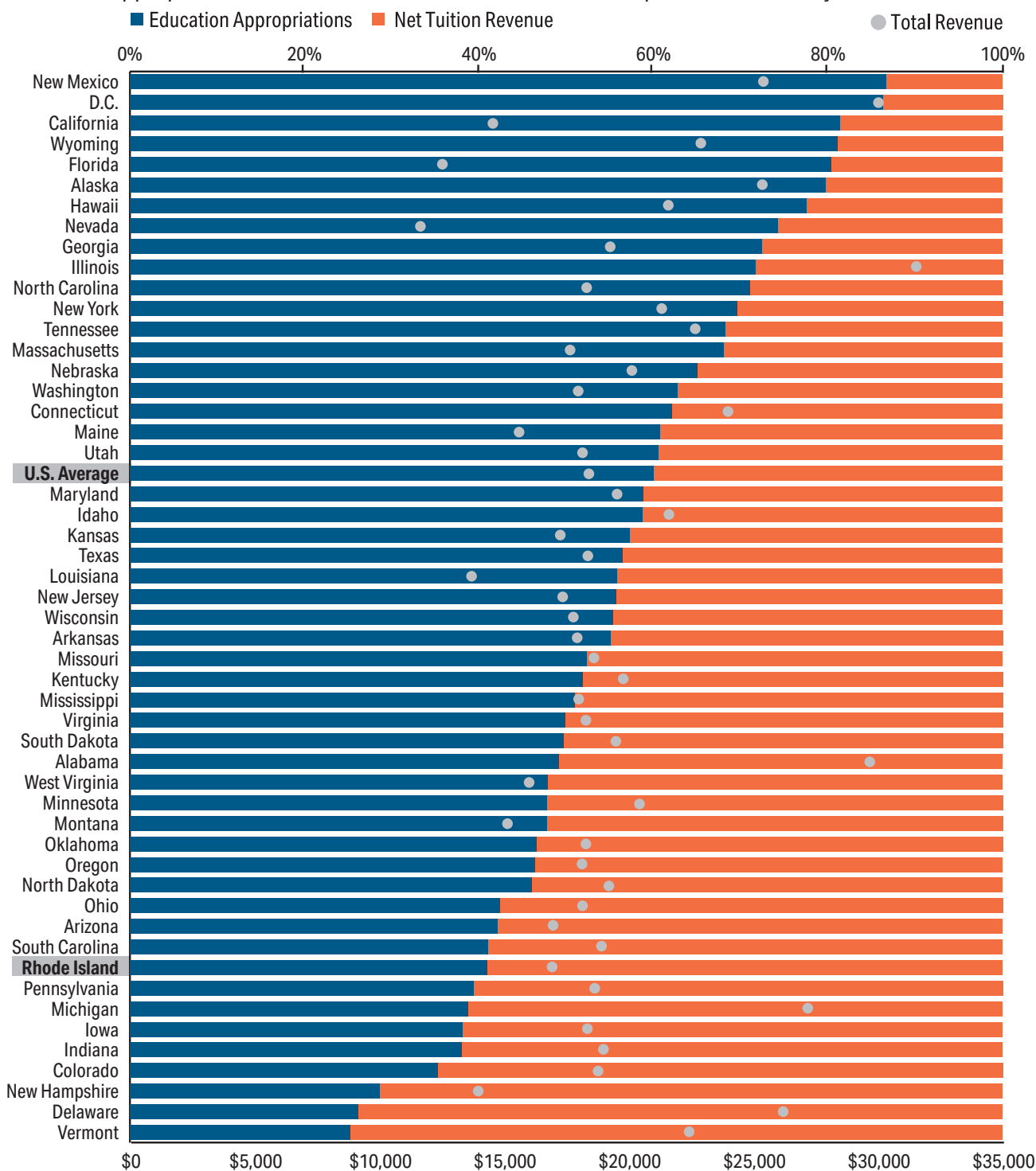


Source: Rhode Island Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner



## TOTAL REVENUE

Education Appropriations and Net Tuition Revenue Per Full-Time Equivalent Student by State



Note: To account for interstate differences, the following adjustment factors were applied: the Council for Community and Economic Research's Cost of Living Index (COLI) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association's Enrollment Mix Index (EMI).

Source: State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. (2024). State Higher Education Finance: FY 2023

When looking at total revenue as the sum of state funding and net tuition, as one increases, the other decreases. Rhode Island has a combined revenue of **\$16,891 per FTE**, **40.9%** of which came from **education appropriations** while **59.1%** came from **net tuition revenue**.



