



# Cities Count



## Urban Indicators Report



An Initiative of the  
Rhode Island Foundation  
and RIPEC.



# Introduction

## Urban Indicators

The Urban Indicators Project of the Cities Count Initiative is an effort to gain new insights into the condition and progress of our urban communities by connecting the information contained within numerous datasets of state administrative agencies, nonprofits, and other data generating organizations. This report – the first in a proposed line of indicators reports – is intended as a reference for city and state administrators and legislators, community organizations, and the public. Data is presented at a municipal level for the ten Rhode Island communities deemed “urban” (see page 2), with the primary objective to inform policy makers and taxpayers.

An *indicator* is a means of transforming *data* into useable *information*. It is a measure that coincides, and hence represents, a broad condition, such as economic competitiveness, housing affordability, or the effectiveness of crime prevention.

Quoting a landmark indicators initiative in Jacksonville, Florida, “perfection in the selection of indicators is not possible; it is a combination of idealism (what we would like to measure) and pragmatism (what we are able to measure).” The Cities Count Initiative determined a set of issue areas which we considered central to the definition of “urban progress”: Jobs and Business Growth, Family Incomes, Public Education, Public Safety, Housing, and Fiscal Health. Within these issue areas, the committee selected an assortment of more specific issues and measures that were closely related to the goals unifying the initiative. (Numbering is for reference only).

**Goal 1** – To sustain and increase strong and effective private and public investment in our cities

**Goal 2** – To finance and maintain essential public investments in water and sewer, electricity, roads and mass transit

**Goal 3** – To build the skills and better tap the resources within immigrant communities

**Goal 4** – To increase economic opportunities and access to good jobs for urban residents

**Goal 5** – To stabilize and strengthen the middle class within our urban centers

**Goal 6** – To increase the overall economic competitiveness of urban Rhode Island

An overarching theme in the advancement of these goals is a maintained and enhanced level of professionalism in local government and the administration of public services.

## Rhode Island's Urban Communities

Rhode Island's ten urban communities were identified according to a set of criteria which includes population density and stability, mixed housing types, ethnic diversity, land use, and economic activity.

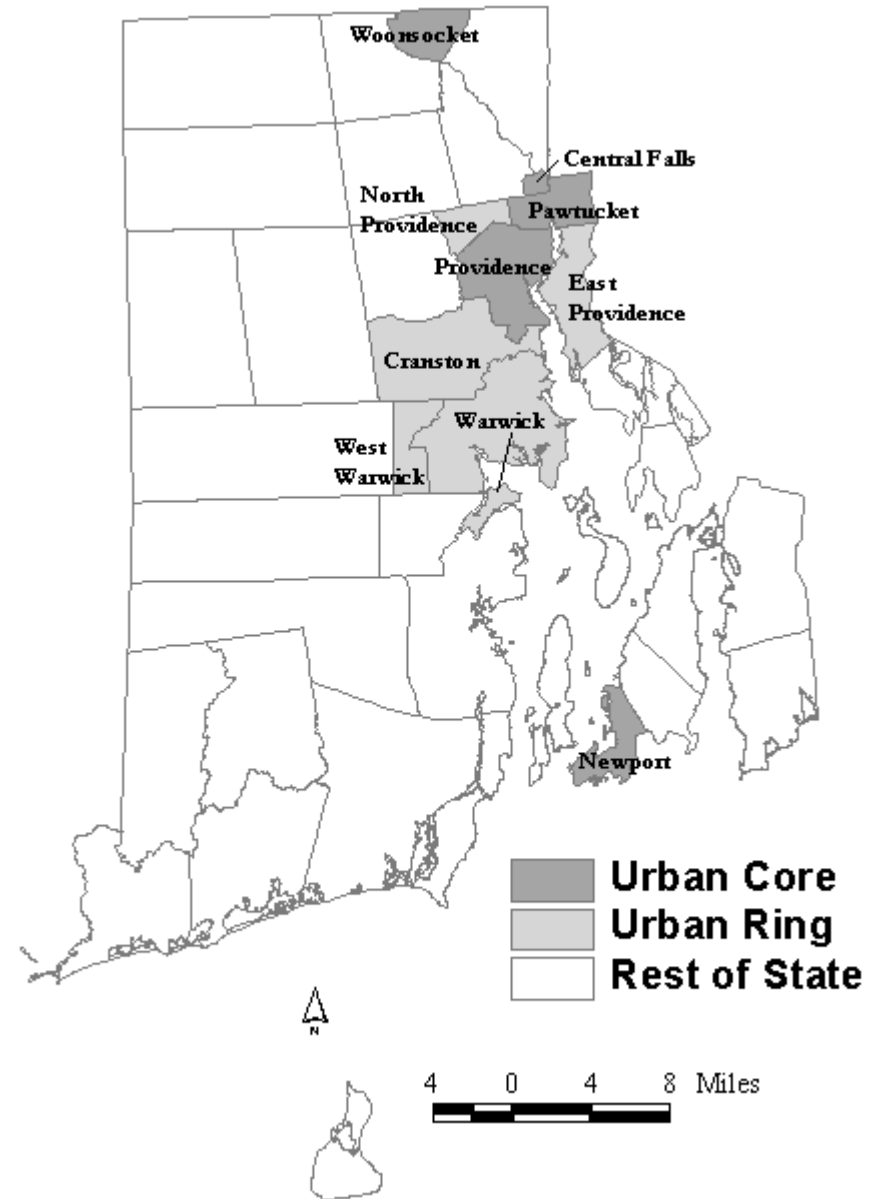
The **urban core** includes Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket. The **urban ring** is Cranston, East Providence, North Providence, Warwick, and West Warwick.

### *Basic Demographics*

These ten communities range in population from about 19,000 in Central Falls (2% of the state) to over 173,000 in Providence (17%), and they range in density from 8 people per residential acre in Warwick to 52 people per residential acre in Central Falls. Since 1990, only Providence, Central Falls, and Cranston have gained more than 1% in population size, while Newport, East Providence, and Woonsocket each lost population.

Age distribution and changes in age group size (see table on opposite page) are important for the planning of municipal and related services planning, such as those applying to school children and senior citizens. Between 1990 and 2000, the school-age population (5-17) grew by at least 14% in half of the urban communities. North Providence was the only urban community with a 5% or more increase in its population age 65 and over, while Providence and Central Falls witnessed this age group shrink by more than 10% over the decade.

In terms of race and Hispanic ethnicity, the urban core communities (with the exception of Newport) are the most diverse in the state. Since 1990, the non-Hispanic White population decreased in every urban community (78,400 decrease overall), while the Hispanic population grew by 62% or more in 9 urban communities, and the state overall. African American and Asian populations also experienced growth statewide.



For extensive demographic data, download the [Urban Profiles Report](#) or individual city profiles at <http://www.RIPEC.org>

**Distribution of Population by Age Group, 2000** (with change since 1990)

	Total Population	Overall change since 1990		Under 5		5 to 17		18 to 24		25 to 64		65 or over	
				% of pop.	chg. in size	% of pop.	chg. in size	% of pop.	chg. in size	% of pop.	chg. in size	% of pop.	chg. in size
Rhode Island	1,048,319	44,855	4%	6%	-5%	18%	16%	10%	-11%	52%	7%	15%	1%
<b>Central Falls</b>	18,928	1,291	7%	9%	1%	21%	22%	12%	9%	47%	10%	12%	-17%
<b>Cranston</b>	79,269	3,209	4%	5%	-4%	16%	25%	8%	-17%	53%	6%	17%	-3%
<b>East Providence</b>	48,688	-1,692	-3%	5%	-15%	16%	5%	7%	-22%	52%	-1%	19%	-3%
<b>Newport</b>	26,475	-1,752	-6%	6%	-16%	14%	-7%	15%	-17%	53%	-1%	13%	-9%
<b>North Providence</b>	32,411	321	1%	4%	-15%	14%	14%	8%	-27%	54%	3%	20%	6%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	72,958	314	<1%	7%	-9%	18%	17%	9%	-12%	51%	2%	15%	-9%
<b>Providence</b>	173,618	12,890	8%	7%	1%	19%	28%	19%	12%	45%	8%	10%	-17%
<b>Warwick</b>	85,808	381	<1%	5%	-10%	16%	7%	7%	-23%	54%	3%	17%	1%
<b>West Warwick</b>	29,581	313	1%	7%	-4%	16%	4%	9%	-13%	54%	4%	14%	2%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	43,224	-653	-1%	8%	-2%	18%	8%	9%	-18%	50%	1%	15%	-8%
Rest of Rhode Island	437,359	30,233	7%	6%	-4%	18%	16%	8%	-21%	54%	10%	14%	14%

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000.

**Distribution of Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2000** (with change since 1990)

	Total Population	No n-Hispanic									
		Hispanic (of Any Race)		White		Black/African American		Asian/ Nat. Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander		Other race alone/ Two or more races	
		% of pop.	chg. in size	% of pop.	chg. in size	% of pop.	chg. in size	% of pop.	chg. in size	% of pop.	chg. in size
Rhode Island	1,048,319	9%	99%	82%	-4%	4%	22%	2%	35%	3%	n/a
<b>Central Falls</b>	18,928	48%	77%	40%	-34%	4%	66%	1%	33%	7%	
<b>Cranston</b>	79,269	5%	136%	87%	-3%	3%	55%	3%	97%	2%	
<b>East Providence</b>	48,688	2%	9%	86%	-9%	5%	11%	1%	101%	7%	
<b>Newport</b>	26,475	6%	86%	82%	-12%	7%	-13%	1%	-4%	4%	
<b>North Providence</b>	32,411	4%	118%	90%	-5%	3%	152%	2%	67%	2%	
<b>Pawtucket</b>	72,958	14%	95%	69%	-19%	7%	109%	1%	38%	9%	
<b>Providence</b>	173,618	30%	109%	46%	-23%	13%	9%	6%	15%	5%	
<b>Warwick</b>	85,808	2%	62%	94%	-3%	1%	42%	2%	85%	2%	
<b>West Warwick</b>	29,581	3%	69%	92%	-3%	1%	40%	1%	52%	2%	
<b>Woonsocket</b>	43,224	9%	249%	80%	-14%	4%	51%	4%	36%	3%	
Rest of Rhode Island	437,359	1%	42%	95%	5%	1%	22%	1%	48%	1%	

# Executive Summary

Rhode Island's economic well being is inextricably linked to the well being of its cities. Nearly 60 percent of Rhode Islanders live and two-thirds of Rhode Island's jobs are located in our urban areas. Cities are the engines of economic growth. Their concentration of services, resources, production and markets generate economic activity.

The analysis developed by *Cities Count* has led to several key conclusions about the importance of Rhode Island's cities:

- Healthy cities are one of the keys to Rhode Island's future prosperity.
- Creating and maintaining a high "quality of place" is essential to keeping our cities viable as residential and business centers.
- The steady decline of manufacturing and continuing influx of immigrants to Rhode Island cities over the past decades present challenges to Rhode Island as a competitor in the new knowledge based economy.
- To be competitive for investment, Rhode Island now must make a major effort to build literacy skills and elevate educational levels. Without this investment, large segments of the urban core population run the risk of falling into permanent poverty and transience and new jobs will go to other states.
- Cities need support. Without a better, more coordinated delivery model to strengthen local capacity, the challenge of improving our cities will be difficult to meet.

Ultimately, a comprehensive urban policy is about the connection of people and place. The majority of people in Rhode Island live in urban areas. Therefore, personalized issues such as sense of safety, neighborhood identity and association, amenities, and attractiveness or “curb appeal” all come into play and impact how citizens feel about their communities and their quality of life.

Currently, no systematic approach exists to improve economic and community development in our cities. A comprehensive urban strategy that focuses on the challenges facing Rhode Island’s cities must be built upon a clearly defined set of goals, targets, and measurements. Indicators and benchmarks in this report are proposed as targets for defining success and measuring progress. These targets will not be easily achieved; however, the targets must be ambitious if they are to engender serious policy discussion that identify barriers and drive the decision-making process.

This report identifies specific indicators and targets in six interrelated areas – jobs and business growth, family income, public education, housing, public safety, and fiscal health. To look at urban issues individually is to ignore the interrelationships among the challenges facing Rhode Island’s cities. For instance, by revising the financing for education, we can offer first class educational opportunities to all children in Rhode Island, so that our workforce can attract new investment. With new investment comes additional employees and a bolstered market for new housing stock. New housing can open opportunities for first time homeownership in existing houses. Homeownership is associated with stable neighborhoods.

These indicators should be considered as an information tool to help:

- Increase understanding and awareness about the urban condition in Rhode Island;
- Shape a comprehensive urban strategy; and
- Establish a clear accountability mechanism to measure performance and address urban issues.

Using the economic and social indicators contained in this report, eleven “Targets” are being suggested to measure progress toward improving the economic well being of Rhode Island’s cities.

## Targets

### I. Jobs and Business Growth

In the interest of creating a concise set of goals for the urban agenda, this report suggests specific targets for 11 indicators of high priority.

#### *Job Growth*

- Create 13,300 additional private sector jobs in urban Rhode Island by 2007. As of 2001, the ten urban communities had two-thirds of the private sector employment in Rhode Island. The target represents a proportionate number of the 20,000 new jobs that the Governor has projected for the State.

#### *Commercial and Industrial Value*

- Increase the value of commercial and industrial (C& I) property in the urban communities by 15% by 2007. Given the year 2001 full value of nearly \$7 billion, a 15% increase equals over \$1 billion dollars. In pursuit of this goal, aim for annual C&I construction valued at 3% or more of the previous fiscal year's C&I full value.

### II. Family Income

#### *Middle Class Presence*

- Raise incomes so that by 2010 a majority of the families in each urban community will have a “middle class” income – defined here as an income at least 2.5 times the poverty rate for a family of four with two children (\$40,000 in 1999).

#### *Poverty*

- Decrease the number of families in poverty in each urban core community by 15% by 2010.

### III. Public Education

#### *School Performance*

- Meet the standards set forth in the ***No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*** by achieving the intermediate goals defined RI Department of Education's Accountability Plan. At a district level, 84.1% of elementary and 78.6% of middle school test takers should score proficiently in English Language Arts by 2008, while the same is true of 74.5% (Elem.) and 64.1% (Middle) on the Mathematics composite. By 2008, high schoolers are expected to reach 75.0% proficiency in English Language Arts and 63.2% in Mathematics.

#### *Graduation Rate*

- Raise the graduation rate to 79% or above in each urban community by the spring of 2010, with a goal of 95% by 2014.

#### **IV. Housing**

##### *Housing Stock*

- Add at least 1000 new housing unit starts per year to the urban communities between 2003 and 2007.

##### *Homeownership*

- Add 2,500 homeowners to the urban communities by 2010.

#### **V. Public Safety**

- Decrease the rate of crime in the ten urban communities, collectively, so that average crime counts (total and violent) for the three-year period 2005-2007 are 15% less than they were for the period 1999-2001. For the urban communities, this represents 2,950 fewer total crimes and 300 fewer violent crimes.

#### **VI. Fiscal Health**

##### *Credit Rating*

- Raise the credit rating of each urban community to at least "Upper Medium Grade," or A3, by 2007.

##### *Tax Effort*

- Improve the tax effort index such that each urban community is between 90% and 150% of the statewide index by 2007.

## **How to Read this Report**

The opening page of each section presents a list of the measures which Cities Count has chosen as indicators, as well as targets for assessing progress. These targets, which are the centerpieces of this inaugural report, include both:

- Quantitative Benchmarks and
- Recommendations for Improved Data Collection.

**The TEMPLATE on the opposite page contains the elements used for presentation of the urban indicators.**

# Issue

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6
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Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)

## What We're Measuring

• Indicators – measures that are indicative of the current condition of a particular issue and that can be used to monitor change over time. The bulleted indicators are, in the opinion of Cities Count, the best *readily* and *regularly* available measures to inform the issue at hand.

## Why We're Measuring It

This segment describes the significance of the selected indicators with respect to how they relate to one or more of the Cities Count goals. Relevant goals are displayed in the upper right hand corner of the page.

## What We Know

This segment provides a brief synopsis of what we have learned through analysis of the indicator data located in the table(s).

### Note on Interpretation

This sidebar recommends, when necessary, appropriate boundaries to employ when drawing conclusions from the data.

### How to Read This Table

Example: City Name  
This box contains a narrative translation of the table for one community.

### Data Sources:

Citations

### Definitions and Explanations:

Information to clarify the table(s)

## Table Number - Table Name

	Current	Change (or Past)	Context
Rhode Island			
<b>Central Falls</b>	The "Current" column contains the most recently available data for the indicator specified in the Table Name.	"Change" columns represent change with respect to the Current Year indicator. In general, both a numeric and a percentage change are displayed for both the short-term (1-2 yrs) and the midterm (4-6 yrs).	Context columns provide data for topics that are potentially correlated with the indicator or give further explanation of the indicator.
<b>Cranston</b>			
<b>East Providence</b>			
<b>Newport</b>			
<b>North Providence</b>			
<b>Pawtucket</b>	A following column, if present, provides scale or other necessary qualifiers for the indicator.	Historical data is sometimes expressed as a "Past" indicator value as opposed to a change in the current value.	

## Section 1: Jobs and Business Growth in Urban Rhode Island

The strength of the economy, whether it be at the neighborhood or national level, is vital to the quality of life for residents. The quantity and quality of jobs, the availability of good jobs for local residents, and the level of private investment in a community are important components of a strong local economy.

Cities Count believes that viable urban economies are of critical importance to the overall economy of the State. Strengthening our local urban economies has the potential to increase the financial self-sufficiency of communities and their residents, while increasing the State's overall competitive advantage within the region. Furthermore, by building on existing hubs of economic activity and existing development in urban areas, the State and its communities can make the most of physical infrastructures that are already in place while preserving undeveloped areas.

Some of the measures we have chosen to gauge the condition of the urban economies of Rhode Island are tied to the locations of employers and businesses making investments in our communities. These **Indicators** of economic growth include:

### *Job Growth*

- Net annual private sector employment

### *Quality of Jobs*

- Percentage of working residents in management or professional occupations
- Annual private sector wages

### *Commercial and Industrial Value*

- Commercial and industrial property wealth
- Investments in commercial and industrial construction

## Targets

### *Job Growth*

- Create 13,300 additional private sector jobs in urban Rhode Island by 2007. As of 2001, the ten urban communities had two-thirds of the private sector employment in Rhode Island. The target represents a proportionate number of the 20,000 new jobs that the Governor has projected for the State.
- Conduct a “build-out” analysis: in particular, a study of how much land in the urban communities is vacant and zoned for commercial and/or industrial construction. We need to answer the question, “Can we house the number and type of businesses we hope to attract?”

### *Quality of Jobs*

- Develop an improved method to estimate the “quality of jobs” in a community, such that employers report employment within occupational and/or income categories. In the interim, establish ongoing data agreement with the Department of Labor and Training whereby the entity responsible for Indicator updates could access city by city employment counts within 4 or 6-digit industry divisions, to which occupational profiles could be applied.

### *Commercial and Industrial Value*

- Increase the value of commercial and industrial (C&I) property in the urban communities by 15% by 2007. Given the year 2001 full value of nearly \$7 billion, a 15% increase equals over \$1 billion dollars. In pursuit of this goal, aim for annual C&I construction valued at 3% or more of the previous fiscal year’s C&I full value.

# Job Growth

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 4	Goal 6
Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)			

## What We're Measuring

- Private sector employment
- Share of statewide private sector employment

## Why We're Measuring It

Successful expansion of employment in urban communities is necessary to maintain their stature as economic hubs. Furthermore, concentrated employment growth in urban Rhode Island would support smart growth principles by utilizing existing infrastructure capacity and conserving land. Increased employment often coincides with financial investment by employers and represents a broadening of economic opportunities for workers.

Job growth also suggests that adequate public investments have been made to the municipal systems which support business.

## What We Know

Between 1996 and 2001, the "nonurban" portion of the state experienced net job growth (18,240) that was nearly twice (190%) that of the urban communities (9,591). In that five-year span, half the urban communities increased average employment by at least 7%, but West Warwick (16%) was the only one to approach the collective "nonurban" employment growth rate (17%). In calendar year 2001, the average private sector employment of Providence fell to one-quarter (24.9%) of the state total, while the share outside the ten urban communities climbed closer to one-third (31.3%). Compared to the previous year, six urban communities had net employment loss, with Newport enjoying the highest percentage gain (6%).

## **Note on Interpretation**

Changes in private sector employment are the culmination of governmental and business decisions, as well as regional and national economic trends, and should be interpreted accordingly.

## **How to Read These Tables**

### Example: East Providence

[Table 1.1A] During calendar year 2001, East Providence had 21,560 private sector employees (indicates place of work, not residence). This number represented a net loss of 1,006 jobs (or 4%) from the annual average of the previous year. Despite the short-term decline, 2001 employment was 1,433 jobs (or 7%) greater than the average private sector employment base of 1996. East Providence had 5.3% of Rhode Island's private sector jobs in 2001, a slightly lesser percentage than five-years ago.

[Table 1.1B] East Providence is a member of the urban ring, which gained nearly 8,200 private sector jobs between 1996 and 2001, including 2,880 in F.I.R.E. and 4,656 in Services. The urban ring lost 2,350 jobs in Manufacturing.

Table 1.1A - Private Sector Employment

and Share of Statewide Total

	Current	Change				Current	Past
	CY 2001	1-Year		5-Year		CY 2001	5 Years Ago
		Persons	Rate	Persons	Rate		
Rhode Island	405,051	331	<1%	30,366	8%	100%	100%
<b>Central Falls</b>	3,344	-446	-12%	-874	-21%	0.8%	1.1%
<b>Cranston</b>	28,224	-119	<1%	2,558	10%	7.0%	6.9%
<b>East Providence</b>	21,560	-1,006	-4%	1,433	7%	5.3%	5.4%
<b>Newport</b>	13,084	687	6%	939	8%	3.2%	3.2%
<b>North Providence</b>	7,327	-42	-1%	-601	-8%	1.8%	2.1%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	27,465	-941	-3%	-68	<1%	6.8%	7.3%
<b>Providence</b>	101,026	-1,085	-1%	1,626	2%	24.9%	26.5%
<b>Warwick</b>	46,567	159	<1%	3,801	9%	11.5%	11.4%
<b>West Warwick</b>	7,344	267	4%	1,002	16%	1.8%	1.7%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	13,363	208	2%	-225	-2%	3.3%	3.6%
Rest of Rhode Island	126,770	1,362	1%	18,240	17%	31.3%	29.0%
Out-of-State / Multiple Locations	8,977	1,287	17%	2,535	39%	2.2%	1.7%

Table 1.1B: Five-Year Job Gain/Loss by Major Industry Division

	Change in Annual Private Sector Employment, 1996-2001					
	All Industries	Manufacturing	Retail Trade	Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	Services	Other Industries
Rhode Island	30,366	-11,824	10,474	6,847	16,374	8,495
<b>Urban Core</b>	1,398	-8,241	5,888	-666	4,839	-422
<b>Urban Ring</b>	8,193	-2,350	224	2,880	4,656	2,783
Rest of Rhode Island	18,240	-1,475	4,437	4,496	6,090	4,692
Out-of-State/Multiple Locations	2,535	242	-75	137	789	1,442

## Data Source:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Covered Employment and Wage Program (ES202), 1996, 2000, 2001. Data query <<http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/es202/sicdata.htm>>

## Definitions and Explanations:

The ES202 Program collects data from quarterly tax reports of employers subject to Rhode Island's Unemployment Insurance law.

The industry divisions are based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. The most varied SIC division, *Services*, includes such sub-industries as Hotels, Auto Repair, Health, Recreation, Social, Legal, Engineering, and Business services. Of note, "Eating and Drinking Places" fall within the *Retail Trade* division.

## Quality of Jobs

Goal 4	Goal 5
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Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)
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### What We're Measuring

- Percentage of working residents in management or professional occupations
- Average annual wages paid by private sector employers

### Why We're Measuring It

Changes in the percentage of residents with management or professional occupations will provide a proxy for the abundance of such occupations that are within reach – in terms of both location and required skill levels – of urban residents.

A higher average wage can be interpreted as a greater proportion of middle to high wage jobs. Jobs offering competitive wages attract skilled and educated workers and provide a vehicle for experienced lower income workers to transition into the middle class. If adequate middle class amenities are in place (safe neighborhoods, good schools, etc.), a significant portion of these middle income workers might choose to live in or near the community where their employment is located.

### What We Know

In 2000, over one-third (34%) of working residents statewide were in management or professional occupations. Half of the urban communities had over 30% of their working residents in these generally well-paying occupations, while Central Falls (12%), Woonsocket (20%), and Pawtucket (23%) lagged in this measure.

In CY 2001, employers in three urban communities – Providence, Woonsocket, and East Providence – paid annual (private sector) wages that were, on average, greater than those paid by employers in "nonurban" areas (\$31,534). The "nonurban" wage held steady between 2000 and 2001. Since 1997, the greatest constant dollar wage increases, among urban communities, occurred in Woonsocket (14%), Warwick (8%) and Cranston (7%).

In 2001, half of the urban communities had at least 20% of their private sector employment in Manufacturing, with Pawtucket at 36% and Central Falls at 46%. Three urban communities – Providence, Newport, and North Providence – had more than 50% of their private sector employment in Services.

**Table 1.2 - Percentage of Working Residents in Management or Professional Occupations**

	Current		Past
	2000		10 Years Ago *
		Count	
Rhode Island	34%	169,994	26%
<b>Central Falls</b>	12%	844	9%
<b>Cranston</b>	35%	13,014	29%
<b>East Providence</b>	28%	6,571	22%
<b>Newport</b>	39%	4,931	32%
<b>North Providence</b>	32%	5,297	27%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	23%	7,699	19%
<b>Providence</b>	33%	22,908	25%
<b>Warwick</b>	34%	14,782	28%
<b>West Warwick</b>	26%	3,942	21%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	20%	3,947	17%
Rest of Rhode Island	39%	86,059	30%

\*1990 and 2000 are **not comparable** due to changes in the SOC.

Table 1.3 - Average Annual Wages Paid by Private Sector Employers

	Current	Change				Context (Percent of Total Jobs by Major Industry, 2001)				
	CY 2001	1-Year		4-Year		Manufacturing	Retail Trade	Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	Services	Other Industries
		Dollars	Rate	Dollars	Rate					
Rhode Island	\$32,187	\$ 107	<1%	\$ 1,880	6%	17%	22%	8%	38%	15%
<b>Central Falls</b>	\$26,221	-\$ 361	-1%	\$ 193	1%	46%	17%	4%	23%	11%
<b>Cranston</b>	\$29,610	\$ 337	1%	\$ 1,892	7%	22%	23%	4%	31%	20%
<b>East Providence</b>	\$33,091	\$ 508	2%	\$ 1,065	3%	20%	15%	12%	34%	18%
<b>Newport</b>	\$25,289	-\$ 474	-2%	-\$ 258	-1%	3%	30%	3%	53%	11%
<b>North Providence</b>	\$27,436	\$ 137	<1%	\$ 252	1%	10%	25%	5%	51%	9%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	\$30,875	\$ 208	1%	\$ 1,207	4%	36%	16%	4%	32%	12%
<b>Providence</b>	\$35,905	\$ 494	1%	\$ 262	1%	11%	14%	10%	56%	9%
<b>Warwick</b>	\$29,215	\$ 293	1%	\$ 2,095	8%	13%	28%	10%	34%	15%
<b>West Warwick</b>	\$29,421	-\$ 1,443	-5%	\$ 1,191	4%	27%	29%	6%	22%	17%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	\$33,098	-\$ 4,118	-11%	\$ 3,958	14%	17%	41%	2%	32%	8%
Rest of Rhode Island	\$31,534	\$ 2	<1%	\$ 3,160	11%	20%	25%	7%	30%	17%

2001 Constant Dollars

### How to Read These Tables

Example: Providence

[Table 1.2] In 2000, 23% of the working residents of Providence were employed in a management or professional occupation.

[Table 1.3] In calendar year 2001, employers in Providence paid an average annual wage of \$35,905, highest among the urban communities and over \$4,300 dollars more than the “nonurban” average. In constant dollars, Providence’s average annual wage rose only \$262 (or 1%) from 1997. During 2001, over half of the jobs in Providence were in the Services Industry, while 14% were in Retail Trade, 11% in Manufacturing, 10% in Finance/Investment/Real Estate, and 9% in other industries.

### Data Source:

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000. (management/professional occupations)

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Covered Employment and Wage Program (ES202), 1996, 2000, 2001. Data query <<http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/es202/sicdata.htm>>

### Definitions and Explanations:

The Management and Professional occupations are defined by the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system.

The ES202 Program collects data from quarterly tax reports of employers subject to Rhode Island’s Unemployment Insurance law.

# Commercial and Industrial Value

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 4	Goal 6
Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)			

## What We're Measuring

- Commercial and industrial property wealth
- Value of commercial and industrial construction

## Why We're Measuring It

Commercial and industrial (C&I) property wealth is a proxy for overall economic vitality, incorporating the amount of land used for such activities, the types and quality of facilities present, and the demand for the location. As the full property value of C&I land uses increases, a local economy's dependence on residential taxes may decrease. (continued on page 18)

## Note on Interpretation

The relevance of these measures depends upon the amount of land open and zoned for commercial or industrial development. However, land that is already "built-out" requires a level of continual investment for upkeep, expansion, and technology improvements. Note that a technology investment may decrease an employer's workforce needs.

**Table 1.4 - Commercial and Industrial Property Wealth**

	Current			Change		Context			
	FY 2001 (in millions)			1-Year		Est. Full Property Value (in millions), FY 2001		Comm. & Industrial % of Full Value, FY 2001	Residential % of Full Value, FY 2001
			% of State	\$ in millions	Rate		% of State		
Rhode Island	\$11,292.3		100%	\$ 162.6	1%	\$61,424.7	100%	18.4%	69.7%
<b>Central Falls</b>	\$70.1		1%	\$ 2.2	3%	\$317.0	1%	22.1%	64.7%
<b>Cranston</b>	\$761.9		7%	\$ 31.6	4%	\$4,163.3	7%	18.3%	70.7%
<b>East Providence</b>	\$751.1		7%	\$ 10.1	1%	\$2,663.5	4%	28.2%	62.7%
<b>Newport</b>	\$493.1		4%	\$ 20.8	4%	\$2,221.1	4%	22.2%	69.6%
<b>North Providence</b>	\$186.7		2%	\$ 0.6	<1%	\$1,505.3	2%	12.4%	74.4%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	\$582.3		5%	-\$ 21.7	-4%	\$2,467.5	4%	23.6%	65.4%
<b>Providence</b>	\$2,037.6		18%	\$ 1.1	<1%	\$6,174.5	10%	33.0%	56.3%
<b>Warwick</b>	\$1,572.2		14%	\$ 59.4	4%	\$5,675.7	9%	27.7%	60.2%
<b>West Warwick</b>	\$250.7		2%	\$ 17.9	8%	\$1,272.5	2%	19.7%	67.1%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	\$261.9		2%	-\$ 142.6	-35%	\$1,423.4	2%	18.4%	67.7%
Rest of Rhode Island	\$4,324.9		38%	\$ 183.4	4%	\$33,540.7	55%	12.9%	40.7%
<b>Rate of Inflation, 2000 to 2001</b>					<b>2.8%</b>				

**Table 1.5 - Value of Commercial and Industrial Construction**

	Current		Past (includes 2001)		Context	
	2001		3-Year Average	6-Year Average	% of Land in Commercial or Industrial Use, 2000	% Share of Statewide C&I Land Use
	<u>% of FY2000 C&amp;I Value</u>					
Rhode Island	\$523,071,300	4.6%	\$293,847,800	\$330,936,600	3%	100%
<b>Central Falls</b>	\$389,500	0.6%	\$129,800	\$419,800	31%	1%
<b>Cranston</b>	\$12,201,000	1.6%	\$4,740,300	\$3,970,800	8%	7%
<b>East Providence</b>	\$9,891,000	1.3%	\$8,253,100	\$6,049,200	13%	5%
<b>Newport</b>	\$5,909,700	1.2%	\$4,654,900	\$6,961,600	6%	1%
<b>North Providence</b>	\$11,096,000	5.9%	\$9,951,600	\$5,523,400	11%	2%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	\$1,350,000	0.2%	\$3,222,600	\$1,982,800	21%	5%
<b>Providence</b>	\$21,987,800	1.1%	\$27,505,900	\$100,026,100	21%	11%
<b>Warwick</b>	\$39,714,100	2.5%	\$19,995,600	\$22,575,900	11%	11%
<b>West Warwick</b>	\$8,262,000	3.3%	\$3,091,800	\$3,964,600	13%	3%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	\$6,587,400	2.5%	\$15,404,300	\$15,986,300	16%	4%
Rest of Rhode Island	\$405,682,800	9.4%	\$196,897,900	\$163,476,200	2%	49%

**How to Read These Tables**

Example: Pawtucket

[Table 1.4] In calendar year 2001, the estimated value of commercial and industrial property in Pawtucket was over \$582 million. This value was \$21.4 million (4%) less than in 2000. In 2001, Pawtucket had 5% of the Rhode Island's C&I property wealth and 4% of the state's overall property value, which includes residences, motor vehicles, and other taxable land types and personal property. In 2001, 23.6% of Pawtucket's full value was classified (for tax purposes) as commercial or industrial, while 65.4% was classified as residential.

[Table 1.5] Pawtucket's commercial and industrial construction value of \$1.35 million in 2001 was equivalent to only 0.2% of the previous year's full value and was also less than the six-year average construction value of \$1.98 million. Just over one-fifth (21%) of the city's land is within C&I use, accounting for 5% of all statewide lands in C&I use.

**Data Sources:**

Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council, *Municipal Fiscal Health Check for Rhode Island's Cities and Towns 2003*, Based on FY 2001 Data. Primary sources: Rhode Island Department of Administration, Office of Municipal Affairs. (FY 2001 property value by land use)

Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, Building Inspector Surveys, 2001. Email correspondence. (construction value)

Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council, *An Analysis of Rhode Island Property Value Trends and Land Use Patterns*, May 2002. Primary source: Rhode Island Department of Administration, Office of Municipal Affairs. (area and property value by land use)

**Definitions and Explanations:**

East Providence's FY 2001 values are based on a 12/31/2000 assessment versus 12/31/1999 for all other municipal assessments.

Commercial and industrial construction data is collected by the Economic Development Corporation in twice-yearly surveys of city and town building inspectors. No guarantee of completeness is made by EDC. Thus, dollar values should be referenced as "at least" the stated amount. *Construction* includes new construction, expansion and rehabilitation.

### **Why We're Measuring It** (cont.)

An employer's willingness to commit financial resources in the form of physical plant is a testament to the suitability of a city's business environment. The confidence of an employer to make physical investments could prove influential to current and potential members of the business community. New construction and rehabilitation of C&I facilities may result in the addition of jobs and tax dollars to the local economy, and these new and improved spaces become permanent fixtures in the business infrastructure of a community.

### **What We Know**

While urban communities had 45% of the full statewide property value in fiscal year 2001, urban Rhode Island had 62% of all commercial and industrial value. From fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2001, C&I property wealth grew by 8% in West Warwick; by 4% in Cranston, Newport, and Warwick; and by 3% in Central Falls. Meanwhile, Woonsocket and Pawtucket suffered an overall loss in C&I property value. In 2001, Providence had the highest percentage (33.0%) of its full property value in C&I use, followed by East Providence (28.2%) and Warwick (27.7%). North Providence had the lowest percentage of 12.4%, similar to that of the collective “nonurban” portion of the state (12.9%).

In 2001, the reported value of commercial and industrial construction in urban Rhode Island was over \$117 million, which was more than the three-year average of \$97 million (1999-2001) but less than the six-year average of \$167 million (1996-2001). Approximately half of the land in C&I use is located in the ten urban communities; however, more than three-fourths (77.6%) of the statewide \$523 million spent on C&I construction in 2001 was spent outside the urban communities. While “nonurban” Rhode Island averaged C&I construction value in 2001 equal to 9.4% of its previous year's C&I full property value, North Providence (5.9%) and West Warwick (3.3%) surpassed 3% with respect to this ratio.

## Section 2: Family Incomes in Urban Rhode Island

Improving the economic health of urban residents – at the individual and family level – is at the core of several of Cities Count’s goals. While residents in many ways depend on a strong local and regional economy, it is also true that the economy is affected by residents’ ability to be self-sufficient, productive contributors to the economy as consumers and as members of the work force. Residents need access to economic opportunity, such as employment in jobs that provide incomes sufficient to support themselves or their families, and opportunities for homeownership to help provide economic security. Economic stability of residents is important for the sake of residents, but it is also important for the overall economic strength of communities and the State. Cities Count has selected several **Indicators** to help measure how well residents and families are doing economically:

### *Middle Class Presence*

- Median family income
- Percentage of families with at least a “middle class” income

### *Unemployment*

- Annual average unemployment rate

### *Poverty*

- Family poverty rate

## Targets

### *Middle Class Presence*

- Raise incomes so that by 2010 a majority of the families in each urban community have a “middle class” income – defined here as an income at least 2.5 times the poverty rate for a family of four with two children.
- A significant aspect of workforce development in urban Rhode Island is lingual integration of immigrant communities. For this reason, a standard method should be developed to measure the sufficiency and effectiveness of programs for adult literacy and English language learners.

### *Poverty*

- Decrease the number of families in poverty in each urban core community by 15% by 2010.

# Middle Class Presence

Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
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Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)
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## What We're Measuring

- Median family income (50<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Percentage of families with at least a “middle class” income (\$40,000 in 1999)

## Why We're Measuring It

A high median family income and a large percentage of families with "middle class" incomes indicate both that a significant number of urban residents are in good paying jobs and that urban communities are desirable locations for middle income residents to live. In much of urban Rhode Island, overall improvement in family economics will be stymied without advancement of immigrant and other minority communities.

## What We Know

In 1999, the median family incomes (MFI) of urban Rhode Island ranged from \$26,844 in Central Falls to \$56,225 in Warwick, as compared to a (weighted) median of \$63,884 in the “nonurban” municipalities of the state. Over the decade (1989-1999), the statewide MFI barely kept pace with inflation (34.4%), as Newport (45%) was the only urban community to do so. As of 2000, Newport had the highest percentage (39%) of civilian workers who were in management or professional occupations – the same percentage as the “nonurban” area. In contrast, Central Falls and Woonsocket had only 12% and 20%, respectively, in this generally higher paying occupational division.

**Table 2.1 - Median Family Income**

	Current	Change		Context
	1999	10-Year		% of Workers in Mgmt. or Professional Occupations, 2000
		Dollars	Rate	
Rhode Island	\$52,781	\$ 13,609	35%	34%
<b>Central Falls</b>	\$26,844	\$ 3,429	15%	12%
<b>Cranston</b>	\$55,241	\$ 13,345	32%	35%
<b>East Providence</b>	\$48,463	\$ 10,829	29%	28%
<b>Newport</b>	\$54,116	\$ 16,689	45%	39%
<b>North Providence</b>	\$51,655	\$ 12,099	31%	32%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	\$39,038	\$ 5,359	16%	23%
<b>Providence</b>	\$32,058	\$ 3,716	13%	33%
<b>Warwick</b>	\$56,225	\$ 14,105	33%	34%
<b>West Warwick</b>	\$47,674	\$ 8,323	21%	26%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	\$38,353	\$ 6,694	21%	20%
Rest of Rhode Island (wtd. median)	\$63,884	\$ 19,625	44%	39%
<b>Rate of Inflation, 1989 to 1999:</b>			<b>34.4%</b>	

Table 2.2 - Percentage of Families with at Least a "Middle Class" Income

	Current		Past	Context		
	1999		10 Years Ago	Families with Incomes Below "Middle Class"		% Families with Incomes of \$100,000 or more
	Count			1999	10-Yr Ch.	
Rhode Island	64%	672,626	65%	36%	1 %pt	15%
<b>Central Falls</b>	31%	5,867	38%	69%	7 %pts	4%
<b>Cranston</b>	67%	52,836	69%	33%	3 %pts	15%
<b>East Providence</b>	62%	30,300	65%	38%	3 %pts	9%
<b>Newport</b>	64%	16,824	63%	36%	-1 %pt	17%
<b>North Providence</b>	65%	21,194	66%	35%	1 %pt	13%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	49%	35,663	57%	51%	8 %pts	6%
<b>Providence</b>	41%	71,727	48%	59%	6 %pts	9%
<b>Warwick</b>	71%	60,743	72%	29%	1 %pt	14%
<b>West Warwick</b>	59%	17,587	66%	41%	7 %pts	9%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	48%	20,783	53%	52%	5 %pts	6%
Rest of Rhode Island	75%	327,960	73%	25%	-2 %pts	21%

What We Know (cont.)

While 75% of “nonurban” families had incomes qualifying as “middle class” (or higher) in 1999, four urban communities had fewer than 50% of their families meeting this \$40,000 threshold. Between 1989 and 1999, the percentage of families with middle class incomes fell in all but one of the urban communities. Meanwhile, the share of middle class families rose in the “Rest of Rhode Island.”

**How to Read These Tables**

Example: Pawtucket

[Table 2.1] In 1999, Pawtucket had a median family income of \$39,038 – meaning half of all families had greater income and half had lesser. In real dollars, the city’s median income increased by \$5,359 (or 16%) since 1989, while the rate of inflation during the decade was 34.4%. In the 2000 Census, 23% of all employed civilians age 16 and over worked in Management or Professional occupations. Only two urban places experienced lower rates of such occupations.

[Table 2.2] Between 1989 and 1999, Pawtucket’s proportion of families with at least a “middle class” income fell from 57% to 49%. The proportion of families with incomes below “middle class” rose by 8% points to settle at 51% in 1999, while 6% of Pawtucket families had incomes of \$100,000 or more.

**Data Source:**

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000.

**Definitions and Explanations:**

In the Table 2.2, *middle class family income* is defined as family income above 2.5 times the poverty threshold for a family of four with two children. The poverty limit for this family structure was \$12,575 in 1989 and \$16,895 in 1999. Rounding to the nearest \$5000, the lower threshold for middle class family income was **\$30,000 in 1989 and \$40,000 in 1999.**

The *weighted median* for the Rest of Rhode Island is calculated by multiplying the median family income of each “nonurban” municipality by its total number of families. These 29 dollar values are then summed, and the sum is divided by all “nonurban” families.

# Unemployment

Goal 3	Goal 4
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Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)
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## What We're Measuring

- Annual average unemployment rate

## Why We're Measuring It

The unemployment rate is a measure of the ability of residents who are looking for work to find work. It is largely a reflection of a community's exposure, or susceptibility, to current economic downturns. While many factors influence a community's exposure to economic downturns, Cities Count draws attention to the job readiness of immigrant communities and the educational attainment of the adult population.

## What We Know

The ten urban communities had a collective unemployment rate of 5.6% in calendar year 2002, half a percentage point above the state average. The urban core communities had a collective rate of 6.4%. In calendar year 2002, Newport was the only urban community with an annual average unemployment rate (4.1%) lower than the rate for the collective "nonurban" area. Between 2001 and 2002, Central Falls was the only urban community to decrease its rate of unemployment (from 8.5% to 8.1%). Outside the ten urban places, unemployment dropped from 5.0% to 4.3%. Between 1997 and 2002, the rate of labor force growth was relatively uniform across urban Rhode Island and elsewhere in the state.

Table 2.3 - Annual Average Unemployment Rate

	Current		Past		Context				
	CY 2002		1 Year Ago	5 Years Ago	% of Adult Pop. with HS Diploma, 2000	% of Adult Pop. with Bachelor's Degree, 2000	% of Residents with Limited English Proficiency, 2000	Change in Size of Labor Force, 1997-2002	% of Statewide Labor Force, CY 2002
		<u>Count</u>							
Rhode Island	5.1%	28,217	4.7%	5.3%	78%	26%	8%	11%	100%
<b>Central Falls</b>	8.1%	654	8.6%	7.8%	49%	6%	36%	10%	1.5%
<b>Cranston</b>	4.8%	1,971	4.4%	5.3%	79%	25%	5%	11%	7.4%
<b>East Providence</b>	5.6%	1,532	5.0%	5.5%	71%	18%	11%	10%	4.9%
<b>Newport</b>	4.1%	556	4.0%	5.7%	87%	41%	4%	15%	2.4%
<b>North Providence</b>	4.9%	912	4.4%	4.5%	77%	21%	6%	11%	3.4%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	6.2%	2,435	6.3%	6.3%	66%	14%	18%	9%	7.0%
<b>Providence</b>	6.6%	4,954	6.5%	6.7%	66%	24%	21%	9%	13.5%
<b>Warwick</b>	4.4%	2,153	4.0%	5.0%	85%	25%	2%	9%	8.8%
<b>West Warwick</b>	5.2%	880	4.9%	5.7%	76%	17%	5%	9%	3.0%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	6.8%	1,476	6.1%	6.2%	64%	10%	10%	11%	3.9%
Rest of Rhode Island	4.3%	10,694	5.0%	4.6%	85%	31%	3%	12%	44.2%

### How to Read This Table

Example: Central Falls

In calendar year 2002, Central Falls was home to 654 unemployed job seekers, or 8.1% of its work force. This unemployment rate was an improvement over the previous year's annual average of 8.6%, but worse than the rate in 1997 (7.8%). The city's unemployment rate was more than one percentage point greater than any other urban community. Similarly, the proportion of residents age 5 and over who speak English less than "very well" (36%) was significantly greater than in any other community. Among adults (age 25 and over) living in Central Falls, 6% had attained at least a bachelor's degree, while less than half had attained a high school diploma, or the equivalent.

The workforce of Central Falls grew by 10% between 1997 and 2002, to account for 1.5% of the statewide labor force.

### Data Sources:

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), 1997, 2001, 2002. Data query <<http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/laus/town/town.htm>> (unemployment and labor force)

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000. (English deficiency and car availability)

### Definitions and Explanations:

The LAUS Program data is derived from the Current Population Survey.

The *labor force* includes individuals age 16 or over who are either employed (not including armed forces) or unemployed and actively looking for work.

Further details < <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/laus/concepts.htm>>

In recent years, modifications have been made to the method used to calculate the unemployment rate. The rates in Table 2.3 represent the best information available.

# Poverty

Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
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Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)
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## What We're Measuring

- Poverty rate for families

## Why We're Measuring It

Economic self-sufficiency of individual families is fundamental to economic advancement of the community. A high poverty rate for families is a strong indicator that one or more of the goals of Cities Count is far from accomplishment, be it a lack of skill-appropriate jobs with advancement potential or the absence of features that attract and retain middle class families.

## What We Know

In 1999, family poverty rates were high in the urban core communities, with Central Falls and Providence each having about one-quarter (26% and 24%, respectively) of their families living below poverty. Family poverty rates in the urban ring communities were more similar to the rate of the “nonurban” (4%). From 1989 to 1999, the poverty rate increased in every urban community, as well as in the collective “Rest of Rhode Island.”

Similar to poverty rates, family participation in subsidy programs is highest in the urban core communities, less severe in the urban ring, and lowest outside the urban area. This is evident in participation levels in the Family Independence Program (FIP) and the Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRL) Program.

Table 2.4 - Poverty Rate for Families

Financial Assistance for Families

	Current		Past		% of Families Enrolled in the Family Independence Program, March 2002			% of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch, SY 2001-02
	1999		10 Years Ago					
		<u>Count</u>			<u>Count</u>	<u>State Share</u>		
Rhode Island	9%	23,608	7%		11%	14,591	100%	34%
<b>Central Falls</b>	26%	1,147	19%		29%	821	6%	81%
<b>Cranston</b>	6%	1,141	5%		7%	658	5%	20%
<b>East Providence</b>	6%	808	5%		4%	259	2%	30%
<b>Newport</b>	13%	745	10%		16%	450	3%	48%
<b>North Providence</b>	6%	479	4%		6%	222	2%	22%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	15%	2,752	8%		17%	1,636	11%	65%
<b>Providence</b>	24%	8,642	18%		31%	6,829	47%	77%
<b>Warwick</b>	4%	973	3%		4%	464	3%	17%
<b>West Warwick</b>	9%	711	7%		9%	344	2%	32%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	17%	1,803	12%		18%	1,049	7%	66%
Rest of Rhode Island	4%	4,407	3%		3%	1,859	13%	TBA

**Data Sources:**

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000. (family poverty rates)

Rhode Island Department of Human Services. Email correspondence. (FIP caseload)

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Email correspondence. (students enrolled in subsidized lunch program)

**Definitions and Explanations:**

The poverty limit depends upon family structure. For instance, in 1999, the poverty limit was \$13,423 for a single parent with two children and \$16,895 for a two-parent family with two children.

In Table 2.4, *Families Enrolled in the Family Independence Program* are defined as any FIP case in which the primary recipient has any dependent under age 18 or in which the primary recipient, himself, is under age 18. This value is normalized by the number of families with related children as reported in Census 2000.

**How to Read This Table**Example: Woonsocket

As of the 2000 Census (based on 1999 incomes), Woonsocket was home to 1,803 families living below poverty. These households represented 17% of all local families and a higher percentage of families than was the case in the 1990 Census (12%).

In March 2002, 18% of all Woonsocket families with children were participating in the Family Independence Program (FIP), accounting for 7% of statewide FIP enrollment (of similar families). During school year 2001-02, the number of public school students who received free or reduced price lunch was equal to 66% of fall enrollment.



## Section 3: Public Education in Urban Rhode Island

The quality of public education has a direct effect on the economic health of residents, as well as on the strength of the local and State economies. Our public elementary and secondary schools are primary mechanisms through which we prepare our residents to enter the workforce, either directly or by way of higher education. Many employers may make decisions to locate or expand jobs based on the preparedness of the workforce that is available to them, and, if jobs are available, residents must be adequately prepared to be able to compete for those jobs. Our public schools must be of sufficient quality to prepare our children for the jobs that will require ever increasing skill levels. As many jobs require more than a high school education, we must first ensure that more students are successfully completing high school and that the diplomas they receive are true measures of a mastery of the subjects and skills needed to be productive members of our communities.

The measures we have chosen to gauge public education are based on how well schools are doing with respect to student performance on standardized assessments, and how many of our students are completing high school. Specifically, these **Indicators** are:

### *School Performance*

- Number of public schools classified as High Performing, Moderately Performing, and Low Performing
- Number of schools classified as Improving over a three-year time period

### *Graduation Rate*

- High school graduation rate

## Targets

### *School Performance*

- Meet the standards set forth in the **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** by achieving the intermediate goals defined in the RI Department of Education Accountability Plan (download plan at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/CFP/csas/ricsa.pdf>). Cities Count draws attention to the goals of 2008, with an emphasis on measurement by district and performance at the elementary and middle school levels (see page 6).

### *Graduation Rate*

- Raise the graduation rate to 79% or above in each urban community by the spring of 2010, with a goal of 95% by 2014; and
- Institute a method for tracking how many students from the urban communities are enrolling in and graduating from higher education programs.

### What We're Measuring

- Number of public schools classified as High Performing, Moderately Performing, and Low Performing
- Number of schools classified as Improving over a three-year time period

### Why We're Measuring It

The middle class is drawn toward "good" schools and flees from poorly performing schools. Improvement in a school's performance on national and statewide tests may be a sign that public investments in education are producing results. High performing schools, by definition, are comprised of students demonstrating the skills that translate into opportunities for higher education and increased occupational prerogative.

### What We Know

In school year 2001-02, of the 105 *Low* performing Rhode Island public schools, 95 (90.5%) were in an urban school district (55% of all reporting schools were urban). Of the 122 *High* performing public schools in the state, 41 (33.6%) were in an urban district. In comparison to the test results of the previous year, Cranston public school district increased its number of *High* performing schools by five, while Pawtucket and Warwick each gained one *High* performing school. Moreover, no urban school district decreased its number of high performing schools. Between 1998 and 2001, approximately half (60 of 122) of the public schools earning the *Improving* label from the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education were urban schools. Student mobility rates and bilingual needs are two factors to be acknowledged when assessing the performance of a public school district.

### What do the performance ratings mean?

A **High** rating is earned by a school in which 50% or more of students met or exceeded the standard on the *New Standards Reference Examinations* in Mathematics and English Language Arts, and *The Rhode Island Reading Assessment*.

A **Low** rating is assigned to schools in which one-third or more of students scored significantly below standards or did not take the test.

**Moderate** performing schools are those with test results between the defined limits of Low and High performance.

**Improving** schools are those that have increased the percentage of students reaching proficiency by at least 3% AND decreased the percentage of students in the three lowest categories by at least 3% between academic years 1998 and 2001.

Note: The classification system above was in place through 2002. RIDE adopted a new system of school-performance classification in 2003.

### School Expenditures

Average annual per pupil expenditures for 1998-2000 (in 2001 constant dollars) range from \$8,462 in Woonsocket to \$11,456 dollars in Newport.

Among the urban places, these two communities also represent the largest (64% in Woonsocket) and smallest (53% in Newport) percentages of total expenditures that are spent on "Instruction."

During this three-year span, Warwick spent the most (\$6,388) on instruction per pupil, and Pawtucket spent the least (\$5,063).

Table 3.1 - Public School Performance

and Improvement

	Current				Past				From	Context			
	SY 2001-02				1 Year Ago				1998 to 2001	Avg. Annual Per Pupil Expenditures (All Expenditures), 1998-2000	Avg. Annual Per Pupil Expenditures for Instruction, 1998-2000	Mobility Index, SY 2001-02	% of Students in ESL/Bilingual Ed., SY 2001-02
	HIGH	MOD	LOW	n/a	HIGH	MOD	LOW	n/a	IMPROVING:				
Rhode Island	122	75	105	(36)	104	78	113	(44)	122			17%	7%
Central Falls	0	0	6	(2)	0	0	5	(3)	2	\$9,794	\$5,580	40%	30%
Cranston	17	3	4		12	6	6		10	\$8,857	\$5,174	16%	4%
East Providence	2	6	5	(2)	2	5	6	(3)	5	\$9,247	\$5,540	17%	5%
Newport	2	1	6		2	1	6		3	\$11,456	\$6,068	28%	3%
North Providence	2	7	3		2	8	2		3	\$9,501	\$5,942	14%	3%
Pawtucket	1	1	13	(1)	0	1	15		6	\$8,560	\$5,063	30%	12%
Providence	1	1	40	(7)	1	0	36	(17)	16	\$10,418	\$5,778	28%	23%
Warwick	14	7	6		13	9	5		10	\$10,310	\$6,388	15%	1%
West Warwick	2	1	3		2	1	3		2	\$10,645	\$6,114	17%	2%
Woonsocket	0	2	9	(3)	0	2	11	(1)	3	\$8,462	\$5,404	26%	6%
Rest of Rhode Island	81	43	10	(21)	70	45	18	(20)	62			9%	1%

2001 Constant Dollars

### How to Read This Table

Example: [Cranston](#)

In school year 2001-02, 17 schools in the Cranston Public School District earned a “High” performance rating based upon scores on standardized tests. Three schools earned a “Moderate” performance rating and four a “Low” rating. Since the previous school year, Cranston managed to move five additional schools into the “High” classification. Between 1998 and 2001, 10 schools demonstrated improvement worthy of the “Improving” designation – these schools may or may not have climbed in performance rating. Between 1998 and 2000, only one urban public school district spent less than Cranston (\$5,174 in 2001 dollars) on instructional costs per pupil. Within the context of urban Rhode Island, Cranston’s mobility index (16%) is moderate and its proportion of students with special lingual needs (4%) is small.

### Data Sources:

Rhode Island Kids Count, *Kids Count Factbook 2002, 2003*. Primary source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and U.S. Census Bureau.

### Definitions and Explanations:

Parentheses denote the number of schools in a district for which a performance level was not reported.

*Total average annual expenditures* include “other commitments,” such as costs for district students taught outside the district, debt service for facilities repair, capital projects, retiree benefits, and community service operations. *Instruction expenditures* cover classroom teachers, substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, and classroom technology and materials.

The *mobility index* is the sum of all students who either entered or exited a school in the district within the school year divided by fall enrollment for the school district. If a student left one school and entered another in the same district, the child is counted twice in the district’s mobility rate.

# Graduation Rate

Goal 1

Goal 3

Goal 4

Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)

## What We're Measuring

- High school graduation rate

## Why We're Measuring It

The graduation rate is a means of estimating the proportion of high school students who may acquire some form of higher education or otherwise improve their job prospects.

As recent immigrants attain high school diplomas and college degrees at higher rates, they will establish – within their families and communities – traditions and expectations of higher educational achievement. With educational attainment comes higher wages and improved self-sufficiency.

Furthermore, an educated workforce is an attractive workforce to employers.

## What We Know

Among the ten urban communities, only Warwick (93%), North Providence (85%), and Cranston (84%) had 2002 graduation rates that met or surpassed the statewide graduation rate. The lowest spring 2002 graduation rates belonged to Central Falls (69%), Woonsocket (70%), and Providence (72%). Over the previous year, the graduation rate rose in every community except for North Providence and Woonsocket, with the most marked increases in Providence, West Warwick, and Pawtucket (approximately 7 percentage points each).

**Table 3.2 - Graduation Rate**

	Current	Past		Context	
	Spring 2002	1 Year Ago	4 Years Ago	% of Adult Pop. with HS Diploma, 2000	% of Adult Pop. with Bachelor's Degree, 2000
Rhode Island	84%	81%	82%	78%	26%
<b>Central Falls</b>	69%	67%	44%	49%	6%
<b>Cranston</b>	84%	81%	85%	79%	25%
<b>East Providence</b>	80%	78%	83%	71%	18%
<b>Newport</b>	79%	77%	86%	87%	41%
<b>North Providence</b>	85%	89%	99%	77%	21%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	69%	63%	71%	66%	14%
<b>Providence</b>	72%	64%	68%	66%	24%
<b>Warwick</b>	93%	91%	91%	85%	25%
<b>West Warwick</b>	79%	72%	76%	76%	17%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	70%	78%	62%	64%	10%
Rest of Rhode Island (median)	91%	91%	91%	85%	31%

**What is the graduation rate?**

As calculated by RIDE, the graduation rate is the percentage of 9<sup>th</sup> graders expected to graduate based upon the drop-out rates of high school freshman, sophomores, junior, and seniors. It is a four-year cumulative rate and is analogous to the probability of an individual 9<sup>th</sup> grade student receiving a diploma in four years.

**An Important Concession**

When all children of high school age are included in the denominator, RIDE estimates that only 75% of Rhode Islanders currently graduate from high school.

**How to Read This Table**

Example: Providence  
 The 2002 graduation rate for Providence public schools was 72%, representing a better rate than achieved by the district in either 2001 or 1998. The most recent graduation rate for Providence is nearly 20 percentage points below the median graduation rate for the “nonurban” districts. As of the 2000 Census, two-thirds of the adults age 25 and over living in Providence had attained at least a high school diploma (or equivalent) and almost one-quarter (24%) had earned a bachelor’s degree or higher.

**Data Sources:**

Rhode Island Kids Count, *Kids Count Factbook 2003*. Primary source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (Spring 2002 data)

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000. (adults completing high school or college)

**Definitions and Explanations:**

For Rest of Rhode Island, the median of all available (21 of 28) graduation rates for “nonurban” municipalities was determined.

The percent of persons age 25 and over who have completed high school includes adults who have passed a high school equivalency exam.

## Section 4: Housing in Urban Rhode Island

The cost and quality of housing in a community says a lot about the circumstances of the residents who live there. Residents at all income levels need access to housing that is both affordable to them and appropriate to their individual or family needs. There should be sufficient housing options so that households, whatever their income, do not have to pay a disproportionate amount of their income towards housing costs. There needs to be money left, after covering housing costs, to meet other household needs.

Homeownership is the most desirable option, or the ultimate goal, for most households. Owning one's own home is a significant investment that can provide greater access to economic opportunity and lead to increased personal wealth. Furthermore, increased levels of homeownership can add to a community's stability. Rising property values are an important measure to watch over time, as they represent a growth in a homeowner's investment and may reflect an increased desirability of a community. Yet, for those who aspire to become homeowners, their goal becomes harder to attain. Sufficient rental options are needed for those who cannot afford to buy a home, and because renting is sometimes the most appropriate option for a particular stage in life.

To assess the housing market, we have selected the following **Indicators**:

### *Housing Stock*

- Number of authorized new housing starts
- Number of vacant properties

### *Homeownership*

- Percentage of housing units that are occupied by the homeowner

### *Affordability*

- Median sales price for a single-family and multifamily home
- Mean rental costs
- Percentage of households paying 30% or more of their income for housing costs

## Targets

### *Housing Stock*

- Add at least 1000 new housing unit starts per year to the urban communities between 2003 and 2007.
- With benefits to the neighborhood and tax base, an important method for growing the housing stock is reducing the number of vacant and abandoned residential properties. For this reason, encourage all cities and towns to establish a reliable system for updating their residential vacant and abandoned property database and consistent policies to address these properties, as recommended by the Governor's Growth Planning Council in its report, "Vacant and Abandoned Property: Effective Solutions for Rhode Island."
- Encourage all cities and towns to collect building permit activity, to enable tracking of residential rehabilitation by unit. As a critical method of meeting the housing needs of urban communities, RI Housing recommends a target to rehabilitate or convert to residential use at least 500 housing units per year in the ten urban communities between 2003 and 2007.

### *Homeownership*

- Add 2,500 homeowners to the urban communities by 2010.
- Increase the owner-occupancy rate per residential property such that 60% of all urban residential properties have a residing homeowner by 2010.
- In order to track the previous target, encourage municipal Tax Collection/Assessment offices of all urban municipalities to collect and record owner-occupancy data for each residential property. Homeownership per property or parcel differs from the currently available measure of homeownership per unit. For example, Providence's residential properties were 50% owner-occupied according to the 2002 tax roll, as compared to only 35% of the city's overall units as determined by the 2000 U.S. Census.

### *Affordability*

- Housing affordability is a complex issue being confronted across the nation. Given the rate of increase in sales prices in the Providence area, there is need for a Statewide Housing Policy, and municipal strategies, to reduce barriers to housing development.

# Housing Stock

Goal 1	Goal 2		Goal 5	Goal 6
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Cities/Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)				
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## What We're Measuring

- Number of new housing starts
- Percentage of housing units that are vacant

## Why We're Measuring It

New housing units can have a stabilizing influence in urban neighborhoods by balancing supply with demand. Additional and upgraded housing stock is needed in the urban communities, and the urban core in particular, if those communities intend to house the workers in the industries they hope to attract. When existing residents fill newly built housing, their former, and likely lower valued, homes become available. In urban Rhode Island, demand has outstripped supply in the middle class market of recent years, just as it has for all income levels.

Producing new market rate and subsidized housing opportunities will create more housing choices and free up some of the existing housing stock for other residents.

There is a limited amount of land available to accommodate new construction, so equally important is the rehabilitation of existing properties and the conversion of vacant or underutilized commercial properties to residential use. These units, and potential units, are an important resource. If salvaged, they represent additional stock and a support to the home values of the neighborhood. However, if neglected, they are a waste of residential (and tax-producing) space and can become a blight and nuisance to surrounding properties.

## What We Know

Of the nearly 26,000 new housing starts (units) from 1992-2001, less than one-quarter (23.8%) occurred in an urban community. The production over this ten year period was largely single-family (89% statewide), with the exceptions of Pawtucket and Providence, where roughly half of the combined 970 starts were multifamily units.

Between 1990 and 2000, the ratio of vacant to overall housing units dropped statewide and in every urban community. Less than half (48.4%) of all vacant units were located in urban Rhode Island; however, 91.6% of all vacant units with the concern-raising designation of either “rented or sold, not occupied” or “other” were urban domiciles.

**Table 4.1 - Authorized New Housing Starts**

	Current	Past	Context (10-Year Period)	
	2001	10-Year Average	% Single-Family	% Multi-Family
Rhode Island	2,346	2,597	89%	11%
<b>Central Falls</b>	5	1	60%	40%
<b>Cranston</b>	163	161	95%	5%
<b>East Providence</b>	52	51	79%	21%
<b>Newport</b>	15	18	96%	4%
<b>North Providence</b>	97	51	71%	29%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	19	33	49%	51%
<b>Providence</b>	49	64	50%	50%
<b>Warwick</b>	172	170	69%	31%
<b>West Warwick</b>	80	51	91%	9%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	19	18	86%	14%
Rest of Rhode Island	1,675	1,978	93%	7%

Table 4.2 - Vacant Housing Units

	Current		Past	Context				
	2000	Count	10 Years Ago	For Rent	For Sale	Rented or Sold, not occupied	Seasonal Use	Other
Rhode Island	7.1%	31,413	8.8%	8,615	2,400	1,726	12,988	5,684
<b>Central Falls</b>	7.9%	574	9.5%	225	74	40	6	229
<b>Cranston</b>	3.5%	1,114	3.8%	437	185	101	100	291
<b>East Providence</b>	3.7%	779	4.1%	306	89	69	73	242
<b>Newport</b>	12.6%	1,660	14.5%	486	72	72	858	172
<b>North Providence</b>	3.5%	516	6.2%	229	61	44	74	108
<b>Pawtucket</b>	5.6%	1,772	6.0%	964	150	151	71	436
<b>Providence</b>	8.1%	5,526	11.8%	2,661	519	372	343	1,631
<b>Warwick</b>	4.2%	1,568	4.8%	394	300	137	493	244
<b>West Warwick</b>	5.2%	688	6.1%	365	78	55	71	119
<b>Woonsocket</b>	5.4%	1,007	6.2%	621	58	65	31	232
Rest of Rhode Island	8.9%	16,209	10.8%	1,927	814	620	10,868	1,980

### How to Read These Tables

Example: Warwick

[Table 4.1] In 2001, 172 new housing units were started in Warwick, over two-thirds (69%) of which were single-family dwellings. Over the ten year period of 1992 to 2001, Warwick averaged 170 housing starts per year.

[Table 4.2] 1,568 units, or 4.2% of Warwick's housing stock, were vacant at the time of the 2000 Census; 4.8% were vacant in 1990. Of the units labeled "vacant," nearly 700 (44%) were on the market for sale or rent during the census taking, and another 500 were seasonal or recreational units.

### Data Source:

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000. (vacant units)

Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, Economy and Trends tables, 1992-2001. Data query <<http://www.riedc.com/mcdfs/rimcdrame.html>> (housing starts)

# Homeownership

Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
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Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)
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## What We're Measuring

- Owner-occupancy by housing unit

## Why We're Measuring It

A substantial rate of owner-occupancy bodes well for the stability of the middle class and results in a vested interest in the quality of life and physical condition of urban neighborhoods.

## What We Know

According to the 2000 Census, owner-occupancy rates – the percentage of households headed by a homeowner – in the urban core communities were low in 1989 and remained low in 1999. Central Falls had only 22% of its units with a live-in homeowner, while the same is true of 35% in both Providence and Woonsocket, 42% in Newport and 44% in Pawtucket. In contrast, the owner-occupancy rate of “nonurban” Rhode Island was 74%. These rates are not only a function of income levels, but also housing types. Multifamily structures with rental units are a major component of the urban core’s housing stock.

**Table 4.3 - Percentage of Housing that is Homeowner-Occupied**

	Current		Past	Context (Percent of Total Housing Units by Structure Type, 2000)				
	2000	Count	10 Years Ago	Single-Unit, Detached	Single-Unit, Attached	2 to 4 Units	5 to 9 Units	10 or more Units
Rhode Island	60%	245,156	59%	55%	3%	25%	5%	11%
<b>Central Falls</b>	22%	1,460	24%	7%	1%	70%	12%	10%
<b>Cranston</b>	67%	20,703	66%	61%	2%	22%	3%	12%
<b>East Providence</b>	59%	12,096	60%	54%	2%	24%	3%	16%
<b>Newport</b>	42%	4,843	42%	37%	6%	35%	10%	12%
<b>North Providence</b>	60%	8,650	59%	51%	4%	15%	4%	26%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	44%	13,331	46%	31%	1%	45%	9%	11%
<b>Providence</b>	35%	21,588	36%	23%	3%	51%	8%	14%
<b>Warwick</b>	73%	25,805	74%	73%	2%	7%	2%	15%
<b>West Warwick</b>	54%	6,796	55%	45%	5%	26%	7%	16%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	35%	6,214	35%	24%	2%	44%	18%	13%
Rest of Rhode Island	74%	123,670	73%	73%	3%	13%	3%	6%

**How to Read This Table**

Example: Newport  
 As of 2000 Census, 42% of the occupied housing units in Newport had a homeowner as head of household. This owner-occupancy rate was far below that of the “nonurban” portion of the state (74%). Newport had the same rate in 1990. In 2000, a little more than one-third (37%) of Newport’s housing was single-unit detached, while another third (35%) was located in 2 to 4-unit structures. The remaining units were divided among structures with 10 or more units (12%), structures with 5 to 9 units (10%), and single-unit attached housing (6%).

**Data Source:**

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000.

**Definitions and Explanations:**

In Table 4.3, the housing base for calculating homeownership rates does not include vacant units, whereas the housing base for percentage by structure type does include vacant units.

# Affordability (Homeowners)

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6
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Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)

## What We're Measuring

- Median sales price of a single-family home
- Median sales price of a two to four-family home
- Percentage of homeowners paying 30% or more of income on housing costs

## Why We're Measuring It

Housing appreciation is desirable in that it is a sign of an attractive investment environment, which also tends to be an attractive place to live. When appreciation is captured in municipal assessments, the increased tax capacity may provide for more and better infrastructure investment, resources to enhance municipal services, and the ability to hold tax rates steady. However, appreciation and affordability can work against one another. Market prices can drive up property taxes and potentially drive out homeowners, particularly those on a fixed budget.

Table 4.4A - Median Sales Price of Single-Family Home

	Current		Change				Context		
	CY 2002		1-Year		5-Year		% Homeowner-Occupied Units, 2000	% Single-Family Units, 2000	Change in Median Family Income, 1989-99
	<u>Sales</u>		<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Dollars</u>	<u>Rate</u>			
Rhode Island	\$188,150	9,069	\$32,150	21%	\$70,150	59%	60%	55%	35%
<b>Central Falls</b>	\$122,000	20	\$35,750	41%	\$54,500	81%	22%	7%	15%
<b>Cranston</b>	\$161,000	807	\$21,000	15%	\$56,000	53%	67%	61%	32%
<b>East Providence</b>	\$160,000	337	\$25,000	19%	\$59,000	58%	59%	54%	29%
<b>Newport</b>	\$278,000	223	\$48,000	21%	\$143,000	106%	42%	37%	45%
<b>North Providence</b>	\$165,000	236	\$32,300	24%	\$59,900	57%	60%	51%	31%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	\$150,000	408	\$23,050	18%	\$65,000	76%	44%	31%	16%
<b>Providence, excl. East Side</b>	\$121,354	594	\$23,429	24%	\$52,354	76%	34%	22%	13%
<b>East Side of Providence</b>	\$385,000	221	\$25,500	7%	\$180,000	88%	38%	27%	
<b>Warwick</b>	\$150,000	1,126	\$24,000	19%	\$53,300	55%	73%	73%	33%
<b>West Warwick</b>	\$157,500	308	\$29,900	23%	\$68,500	77%	54%	45%	21%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	\$152,500	160	\$22,250	17%	\$60,000	65%	35%	24%	21%
Rest of Rhode Island (median)	\$237,500	4,629	\$42,550	22%	\$101,525	75%	74%	73%	44%

Table 4.4B - Median Sales Price of Two to Four-Family Home

	Current		Change				Context
	CY 2002		1-Year		5-Year		% of Units in 2 to 4-Unit Structures, 2000
	Sales		Dollars	Rate	Dollars	Rate	
Rhode Island	\$153,000	2,284	\$28,000	22%	\$70,350	85%	25%
<b>Central Falls</b>	\$149,500	112	\$43,100	41%	\$82,500	123%	70%
<b>Cranston</b>	\$159,750	154	\$29,800	23%	\$64,850	68%	22%
<b>East Providence</b>	\$164,000	57	\$25,500	18%	\$44,500	37%	24%
<b>Newport</b>	\$311,600	94	\$69,150	29%	\$171,600	123%	35%
<b>North Providence</b>	\$160,250	44	\$41,250	35%	\$63,250	65%	15%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	\$160,000	352	\$30,000	23%	\$73,000	84%	45%
<b>Providence, excl. East Side</b>	\$129,000	834	\$29,000	29%	\$69,000	115%	42%
<b>East Side of Providence</b>	\$286,000	98	\$31,000	12%	\$146,000	104%	54%
<b>Warwick</b>	\$154,950	40	\$29,950	24%	\$64,825	72%	7%
<b>West Warwick</b>	\$141,950	70	\$28,950	26%	\$61,950	77%	26%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	\$150,500	150	\$27,500	22%	\$71,050	89%	44%
Rest of Rhode Island (median)	\$184,750	279	\$30,250	20%	\$69,250	60%	13%

### How to Read These Tables

Example: North Providence

[Table 4.4A] In calendar year 2002, 236 single-family homes in North Providence sold at a median value of \$165,000 - meaning half sold for more and half sold for less. This sale value is \$32,300 (or 24%) greater than the median of 2001 and \$59,900 (or 57%) greater than the 1997 median. In comparison, the median family income of North Providence rose 31% in the ten years between 1989-99. In 2000, 60% of all occupied units had a homeowner as head of household, and 51% were single-family (detached) structures.

[Table 4.4B] In 2002, 44 multifamily homes were sold, with a median sales price (\$160,250) similar to that of single-family units. Only 15% of all North Providence housing units were within 2 to 4-unit structures.

### Data Sources:

Rhode Island Association of Realtors, Multiple Listing Service, 1997, 2001, 2002.  
Data downloads <<http://www.riliving.com/oceanstate/SalesStats/default.asp>>  
(home sales statistics)

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000.  
(median income, homeownership, and housing type)

### Definitions and Explanations:

The Multiple Listing Service presents separate median sales statistics for the "East Side" of Providence and (the rest of) Providence. The East Side generally includes the following neighborhoods: Blackstone, College Hill, Fox Point, Hope, Mount Hope, and Wayland.

The *percentage of single-family units* includes only detached (versus attached/"Condo") units.

For Rest of Rhode Island, the median of all "nonurban" median sales prices was determined.

### What We Know

Nearly half (49%) of the 9,069 single-family homes sold in calendar year 2002 were located in an urban community. Only Newport (\$278,000) and the East Side of Providence (\$385,000) had median sales prices greater than the nonurban median.

In every urban community, the median of 2002 was at least \$21,000 more than the previous year. Since 1997, the median sales price grew by at least 53% in every urban community.

Nearly 90% of multifamily (2-to-4-families) homes sold during 2002 were located in urban Rhode Island. Over a five-year period, Newport and Central Falls experienced the greatest appreciation.

From 1989 and 1999, the percentage of owners paying 30% or more of income for housing costs increased by more than 3 percentage points in three urban communities. Urban places are similar to the rest of the state on this measure of affordability.

## Affordability (Renters)

### What We're Measuring

- Average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment
- Percentage of renters paying 30% or more of income on housing costs

### Why We're Measuring It

Fast-increasing rental prices may force renters to move often, raising school district mobility rates and disturbing the educational process of students. In terms of the low income adult population, it is assuredly difficult to concentrate on building skills and acquiring education when confronted with difficulty in maintaining a roof overhead. The availability of low and moderate income housing can alleviate some of this burden.

### What We Know

From 1996 and 2002, the average rent grew at a low of 25% in Warwick and a high of 60% in both Newport and Providence. The average rent for calendar year 2002 ranged from \$682 in Central Falls to \$1,132 in Newport, with six communities at or above \$800 per month. For the "Rest of Rhode Island," the average rent was \$886. Statewide, and in every urban community, there was an improvement over the decade in the percentage of renters paying 30% or more for housing costs. However, the percentage remains particularly high in Providence, where 45% of renters faced this cost burden in 1999.

**Table 4.5 - Average Rent for Two-Bedroom Apartment**

	Current	Change				Context	
	CY 2002	1-Year		6-Year			% Renter-Occupied, 2000
		Dollars	Rate	Dollars	Rate		
Rhode Island	\$863	\$88	11%	\$273	46%	40%	
<b>Central Falls</b>	\$682	\$93	16%	\$207	44%	78%	
<b>Cranston</b>	\$851	\$107	14%	\$255	43%	33%	
<b>East Providence</b>	\$800	\$78	11%	\$231	41%	41%	
<b>Newport</b>	\$1,132	\$142	14%	\$452	66%	58%	
<b>North Providence</b>	\$768	\$48	7%	\$184	32%	40%	
<b>Pawtucket</b>	\$736	\$61	9%	\$233	46%	56%	
<b>Providence</b>	\$884	\$115	15%	\$330	60%	65%	
<b>Warwick</b>	\$841	\$84	11%	\$167	25%	27%	
<b>West Warwick</b>	\$799	\$92	13%	\$192	32%	46%	
<b>Woonsocket</b>	\$749	\$96	15%	\$254	51%	65%	
Rest of Rhode Island (median)	\$886	\$104	13%	\$249	39%	26%	

Table 4.6 - Percentage of Households Paying 30% or More of Income on Housing Costs

	Owners		Renters		Combined	
	Current	Past	Current	Past	Current	Past
	1999	10 Years Ago	1999	10 Years Ago	1999	10 Years Ago
	<u>Count</u>		<u>Count</u>			
Rhode Island	25% 49,474	24%	39% 59,467	43%	31%	32%
Central Falls	26% 100	30%	41% 2,024	45%	40%	44%
Cranston	27% 4,760	24%	37% 3,551	42%	30%	30%
East Providence	22% 2,284	22%	37% 2,958	38%	29%	29%
Newport	28% 977	29%	37% 2,307	42%	34%	37%
North Providence	25% 1,845	24%	36% 1,978	38%	30%	30%
Pawtucket	25% 2,176	23%	38% 6,009	38%	33%	33%
Providence	27% 3,523	23%	45% 17,442	50%	41%	43%
Warwick	26% 6,114	24%	36% 3,333	41%	29%	28%
West Warwick	28% 1,515	25%	35% 1,873	38%	32%	32%
Woonsocket	24% 922	22%	35% 3,840	39%	32%	34%
Rest of Rhode Island	24% 25,258	24%	37% 14,152	41%	27%	29%

### How to Read These Tables

Example: Cranston

[Table 4.5] In calendar year 2002, the mean advertised rent (plus heating costs) for a 2-bedroom apartment in Cranston was \$851. This value is \$107 (or 14%) more than the mean rent of the previous year and \$255 (or 43%) more than the mean rent of 1996. According to Census 2000, one-third of the occupied housing units in Cranston had a renter as head of household, and 37% of renters were paying 30% or more of their household income on gross rent.

[Table 4.6] In 1999, 27% of owners and 37% of renters paid 30% or more of their household income to cover housing costs. In 1989, the percentage of homeowners with this level or cost burden was 3 points lower while the the percentage of renters with this cost burden was 5 points higher.

### Data Sources:

Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, Rent Survey 1996, 2001, 2002. Email correspondence. (average rent)

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1990, 2000. (30%+ burden)

### Definitions and Explanations:

RI Housing incorporates a HUD heating allowance for rental advertisements that do not explicitly mention the inclusion of heating costs.

The average rent for Rest of Rhode Island is the median of all “nonurban” municipalities which had available an average 2-bedroom rent based upon at least four advertisements during the year.



## Section 5: Public Safety in Urban Rhode Island

People form impressions of communities and their desirability as places to live, do business, or visit based on what they know, or think they know, about crime. News reports of the occurrence of crime in a community, and whether crime rates are going up or down, provide daily reminders of the challenges and problems that many urban communities face. Public safety, and the perception thereof, is tied to homeownership, job growth, and commerce: residents want to feel secure in their homes and neighborhoods; business owners want customers and employees to feel comfortable in their establishments and want their investments to be safe; and visitors want to feel safe in public places.

High levels of crime also speak to the circumstances that drive people to commit crimes, such as limited access to economic opportunity.

The measures we have selected as **Indicators** of public safety include:

- Total crimes, with rate per 1000 residents
- Violent crimes, with rate per 1000 residents

### Targets

- Decrease the rate of crime in the ten urban communities, collectively, so that average crime counts (total and violent) for the three-year period 2005-2007 are 15% less than they were for the period 1999-2001. For the urban communities, this represents 2,950 fewer total crimes and 300 fewer violent crimes.

# Crime Occurrence

Goal 1

Goal 3

Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)

## What We're Measuring

- Overall number of crimes
- Number of violent crimes

## Why We're Measuring It

Crimes rates are often reported by and associated with an entire municipality regardless of how discrete in location the crimes may be. For this reason, actual exposure to crime may differ greatly from perceived exposure. However, the perception of crime exposure can deter businesses, particularly those that rely on walk-in customers. Moreover, crime rates can influence potential homebuyers, impacting the housing market.

## What We Know

In calendar year 2001, 77% of the 39,027 reported crimes in Rhode Island occurred in an urban community, including more than one-third (36%) in Providence. In comparison to the three-year average, there were over 1,800 more crimes committed in urban Rhode Island during 2001 and about 200 more committed in the balance of the state. When standardized by population, Providence and Newport had the highest rates, at 81.7 and 61.6 crimes per 1000 residents, respectively. East Providence (21.3) and North Providence (21.6) had rates resembling that of “nonurban” Rhode Island (20.4).

**Table 5.1 - Total Crimes Reported**

	Current		Past	Context
	CY 2001		3-Year Average	Full-Time Sworn Officers per 1000 P op., CY 2001
		<u>Per 1000 P op.</u>		
Rhode Island	39,027	37.2	36,993	2.3
<b>Central Falls</b>	713	37.7	766	2.0
<b>Cranston</b>	2,511	31.7	2,284	1.9
<b>East Providence</b>	1,035	21.3	1,024	1.9
<b>Newport</b>	1,630	61.6	1,602	3.3
<b>North Providence</b>	700	21.6	608	2.1
<b>Pawtucket</b>	2,994	41.0	2,993	1.9
<b>Providence</b>	14,185	81.7	13,060	2.6
<b>Warwick</b>	3,050	35.5	2,869	1.9
<b>West Warwick</b>	741	25.0	758	1.9
<b>Woonsocket</b>	1,482	34.3	1,255	2.3
Rest of Rhode Island	8,932	20.4	8,712	1.8

Table 5.2 - Violent Crimes Reported

	Current		Past
	CY 2001		3-Year Average
		<u>Per 1000 Pop.</u>	
Rhode Island	3,285	3.1	3,082
<b>Central Falls</b>	113	6.0	132
<b>Cranston</b>	161	2.0	146
<b>East Providence</b>	116	2.4	106
<b>Newport</b>	167	6.3	156
<b>North Providence</b>	53	1.6	52
<b>Pawtucket</b>	295	4.0	317
<b>Providence</b>	1,443	8.3	1,251
<b>Warwick</b>	134	1.6	155
<b>West Warwick</b>	48	1.6	59
<b>Woonsocket</b>	237	5.5	171
Rest of Rhode Island	455	1.0	454

**What We Know** (cont.)

In calendar year 2001, 86% of the 3,285 reported violent crimes happened in urban Rhode Island, including 44% in Providence. Statewide, there were about 200 more violent crimes reported in 2001 as compared to the three-year average; nevertheless, four urban communities – Central Falls, Pawtucket, Warwick, and West Warwick – improved upon their three-year violent crime averages. Every urban community had at least 1.6 violent crimes per 1000 residents, whereas the “nonurban” rate was 1.0.

Newport and Providence had the highest number of sworn officers per 1000 residents (3.3 and 2.6, respectively), and all urban communities employed more sworn officers per capita than the collective “nonurban” rate of 1.8 per 1000 residents.

**How to Read These Tables**

Example: Newport

[Table 5.1] In calendar year 2001, there were 1,630 crimes reported in Newport (or 41 crimes per every 1,000 residents). This number was similar to the city’s three-year average. In 2001, Newport had 3.3 officers per every 1,000 of its 26,475 residents.

[Table 5.2] In 2001, about 10% of all crimes in Newport were violent crimes – murder, assault, robbery, or rape. The figure of 167 reported violent crimes (6.3 per 1,000 residents) was slightly worse than the city’s three-year average.

**Data Sources:**

Rhode Island State Police, Uniform Crime Reports 1996, 2000, and 2001. (crimes and officers)

U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 2000. (total population)

**Definitions and Explanations:**

Crime counts and sworn officers for the Department of Environmental Management, the University of Rhode Island, Brown University, and State Police are not included in Tables 5.1 or 5.2.



## Section 6: Fiscal Health of Urban Rhode Island

Property tax burdens can influence decisions by firms deciding to establish or relocate, as well as the affordability of a family home. Improving urban competitiveness will require that high property tax burdens in the State's urban communities be addressed. When measured by effective property tax rates – the effort property tax levies as a percentage of market value – urban communities tend to evidence the highest property tax burdens in the Ocean State.

Decisions concerning public services and facilities affect the quality of urban life. Sound professional management and fiscally healthy urban governments are indispensable in providing quality schools, safe streets and maintaining urban assets, such as roads and playgrounds at competitive costs that taxpayers can afford.

The selected **Indicators** of Fiscal Health include:

### *Credit Rating*

- Moody's municipal bond rating

### *Tax Effort*

- Tax effort index

## Targets

### *Credit Rating*

- Raise the credit rating of each urban community to at least "Upper Medium Grade," or A3, by 2007.

### *Tax Effort*

- Improve the tax effort index such that each urban community is between 90% and 150% of the statewide index by 2007.

## What We're Measuring

- Moody's municipal bond rating

## Why We're Measuring It

In order to assess a city or town's financial condition, credit rating agencies focus on measuring a municipality's available resources to meet existing and projected obligations. Therefore, fund balance, pension fund obligation, tax burden, and outstanding debt are some of the factors reviewed in order to determine municipal credit worthiness. Bond rating, therefore, is a priority for fiscal health.

A poor bond rating increases a municipality's costs that are associated with borrowing money. This, in and of itself, impairs the economic competitiveness of a community and may provide political incentive to neglect physical infrastructure assets in need of repair.

## What We Know

The highest Moody's municipal bond rating in urban Rhode Island belongs (as of February 2003) to Newport, which has a "High Grade, High Quality" rating of *Aa3*. East Providence and Warwick follow close behind with an *A1* rating, which is an "Upper Medium Grade." Six of the remaining seven urban communities have "Medium Grade" ratings, while Cranston's municipal bond is currently considered "Non-Investment Grade, Speculative."

For fiscal year 2001, Providence and Central Falls had the most debt per capita (\$4,001 and \$3,281, respectively). East Providence (\$784) and West Warwick (\$886) had the least. In terms of debt as a percentage of full value, Central Falls and Providence were highest at 19.6% and 11.3%, respectively, while the other eight communities were at 4.5% or less.

Table 6.1 - Moody's Municipal Bond Rating

	Current	Context			
	Feb. 2003	Fitch Bond Rating	Standard and Poor's Bond Rating	Long-Term Debt per Capita, FY 2001	Debt as % of Est. Full Value, FY 2001
Rhode Island	n/a	n/a	n/a	\$1,912	3.3%
Central Falls	Baa3	n/a	BBB	\$3,281	19.6%
Cranston	Ba1	BB-	B	\$2,265	4.3%
East Providence	A1	n/a	n/a	\$784	1.4%
Newport	Aa3	n/a	n/a	\$1,306	1.6%
North Providence	Baa3	n/a	BBB+	\$1,350	2.9%
Pawtucket	Baa1	A-	n/a	\$1,194	3.5%
Providence	Baa1	A-	n/a	\$4,001	11.3%
Warwick	A1	n/a	A+	\$2,045	3.1%
West Warwick	Baa1	BBB	n/a	\$886	2.1%
Woonsocket	Baa1	A	n/a	\$1,469	4.5%

**Data Sources:**

Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council, *Municipal Fiscal Health Check for Rhode Island's Cities and Towns 2003*, Based on FY 2001 Data. Primary sources: First Southwest Company (bond ratings) and Equity Analytics, Ltd (definitions).

**Definitions and Explanations:**

In Table 6.1, total debt (used for *long-term debt per capita* and *per full value*) includes interest on debt but excludes debt for enterprise funds.

**How to Read This Table**

Example: Woonsocket

As of February 2003, Woonsocket's most recent municipal bond rating from Moody's was "Baa1," which corresponds to "medium grade." As of the same date, Fitch's service had rated the city's bond as an "upper medium grade." No rating had been prepared by Standard and Poor's. In fiscal year 2001, Woonsocket had long-term debt of \$1,469 per capita or 4.5% of the estimated full property value.

**Definitions for Long-Term Bond Ratings**

Moody's	Fitch	Standard & Poor's	
Aaa	AAA	AAA	Prime. Maximum Safety
Aa1	AA+	AA+	High Grade. High Quality
Aa2	AA	AA	
Aa3	AA-	AA-	
A1	A+	A+	Upper Medium Grade
A2	A	A	
A3	A-	A-	
Baa1	BBB+	BBB+	Medium Grade
Baa2	BBB	BBB	
Baa3	BBB-	BBB-	
Ba1	BB+	BB+	Non Investment Grade, Speculative
Ba2	BB	BB	
Ba3	BB-	BB-	
B1	B+	B+	Highly Speculative
B2	B	B	
B3	B-	B-	
Caa	CCC	CCC+	Substantial Risk, in Poor Standing
		CCC	
		CCC-	
Ca			Extremely Speculative
C			May be in Default
	DDD		Default
	DD		
	D	D	

# Tax Effort

Goal 2

Goal 6

Cities Count Goals Associated with Indicator(s)

## What We're Measuring

- Tax effort index

## Why We're Measuring It

Tax effort measures the extent to which a city or town utilizes its available property tax base. If a community's tax effort is out of proportion with other municipalities, the result is higher property taxes and a less economically competitive community. On average, the tax effort in urban Rhode Island is 60% higher than the State's average.

## What We Know

Among the ten urban communities, only Newport had a tax effort index (78) less than the statewide tax effort index of 100, while East Providence (108) and Warwick (106) were close to the State. The Capital City's tax effort (298) is nearly three times that of the State, and Central Falls (266) is more than two and half times the State. Between 1998 and 2003, the tax effort index rose in 8 of the 10 urban communities. In terms of the 2003 tax capacity index, only two urban communities – Newport and Warwick – are in more advantageous positions than the State as a whole. Newport, again, is one of only two urban communities, along with East Providence, with a tax levy that is equal to or less than 2.2% (statewide median) of its full value.

Table 6.2 - Tax Effort Index

	Current	Past	Context	
	FY 2003	5 Years Ago	Tax Capacity Index, FY 2003	Tax Levy as % of Full Value
Rhode Island	100	100	100	2.2% (Median)
<b>Central Falls</b>	266	229	13	2.8%
<b>Cranston</b>	132	115	88	2.5%
<b>East Providence</b>	108	100	80	2.2%
<b>Newport</b>	78	107	145	2.1%
<b>North Providence</b>	134	115	72	2.7%
<b>Pawtucket</b>	159	138	39	2.6%
<b>Providence</b>	298	214	35	3.4%
<b>Warwick</b>	106	107	111	2.5%
<b>West Warwick</b>	132	124	61	2.8%
<b>Woonsocket</b>	181	157	34	2.4%

### How to Read This Table

Example: West Warwick

For fiscal year 2003, West Warwick has a tax *effort* index of 132, meaning that, per capita, the town taxes itself 32% harder than the statewide tax effort. The town's tax effort in 2003 is more aggressive than its effort in 1998, as measured in relation to the effort of all Rhode Island municipalities. West Warwick's tax *capacity* index (61) is 39% less than the statewide capacity. The fiscal year 2001 tax levy in West Warwick equaled 2.8% of the estimated full value of all property wealth.

### Data Source:

Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council, *Results: Education in Rhode Island 2003*.

### Definitions and Explanations:

*Tax Capacity* is the amount of taxable property wealth available to a municipality per capita. The tax capacity of each city and town is divided by the statewide capacity and then multiplied by 100 to achieve the index.

*Tax Effort* is the property tax levy of a municipality per capita. The tax effort of each city and town is divided by the statewide effort and then multiplied by 100 to achieve the index.

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### Project Staff

The Providence Plan

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**Urban Indicators Report**  
for Rhode Island and Its Urban Communities

**Jobs and Business Growth**

**Family Incomes**

**Public Education**

**Housing**

**Public Safety**

**Fiscal Health**