

OVERALL RANKING

👉 48th United States 👉 6th New England

SUB-INDEXES

Economics

👉 43rd United States 👉 5th New England

- » Private sector share (%) of personal income
👉 34th United States 🖐️ 4th New England
- » Real per household personal income (mean):
🖐️ 19th United States 🖐️ 4th New England
- » Cost of living:
🖐️ 28th United States 👍 2nd New England
- » Entrepreneurship (*new establishments as % of all establishments and new jobs as % of all jobs*):
👉 44th United States 👉 6th New England
- » Unemployment (*U1, U2, U4, U5, U6 = 50% weight and U3 = 50% weight*):
👉 50th United States 👉 6th New England

Demographics

👉 46th United States 🖐️ 3rd New England

- » % Population under 18:
👉 47th United States 🖐️ 3rd New England
- » % Population over 65:
👉 37th United States 🖐️ 3rd New England
- » Net natural population growth (births and deaths):
👉 42nd United States 👍 2nd New England
- » Domestic Migration:
👉 36th United States 🖐️ 4th New England
- » Fertility rate for women aged 15-44:
👉 49th United States 👉 5th New England

Family Structure

👉 46th United States 👉 6th New England

- » Marriages as % of population:
🖐️ 19th United States 🖐️ 4th New England
- » Divorces as % of population:
👍 11th United States 👍 2nd New England
- » % of Children in Married-Couple Households:
👉 46th United States 👉 6th New England
- » % Families with Related Children Below Poverty:
👉 36th United States 👉 6th New England
- » State of Households (*% married, filing jointly and exemptions per taxpayer*):
👉 49th United States 👉 6th New England

Family Self-Sufficiency

👉 42nd United States 👉 6th New England

- » State prisoners as percent of population:
👍 15th United States 👉 5th New England
- » Per capita Medicaid spending:
👉 48th United States 👉 5th New England
- » Welfare (*EITC amount per recipient, EITC % of all taxpayers, SNAP amount per recipient, and SNAP % of all taxpayers*):
🖐️ 29th United States 👉 6th New England
- » Government burden (*state & local taxes as % of private income, and state & local expenditures as % of private income*):
👉 37th United States 🖐️ 4th New England
- » Charity:
👉 42nd United States 🖐️ 4th New England

Family Culture

🖐️ 25th United States 👉 6th New England

- » Violent Crime per 100k population:
👍 5th United States 🖐️ 3rd New England
- » Property Crime per 100k population:
👍 17th United States 👉 6th New England
- » Births to unwed mothers (% of all births):
👉 43rd United States 👉 6th New England
- » Religious attendance (*% population who regularly attends church*):
👉 35th United States 👍 1st New England
- » Educational attainment (*% less than HS diploma over age 25, % High school graduate over age 25, % some college or Associates degree over age 25, and % Bachelor's or higher over age 25*):
🖐️ 29th United States 👉 6th New England

Family Health

👉 50th United States 👉 6th New England

- » Tobacco (8th), alcohol (48th), and obesity (8th):
🖐️ 29th United States 🖐️ 4th New England
- » Illicit drug use:
👉 50th United States 👉 6th New England
- » Sexually transmitted diseases:
🖐️ 26th United States 👉 6th New England
- » Infant mortality/survival:
👉 41st United States 👉 5th New England
- » Self-mortality (*suicides per 100k population [7th] and drug-induced deaths per 100k population [45th]*):
🖐️ 18th United States 🖐️ 3rd New England

POLICY APPROACH

What if we were to realize that the long-held public policy approach that seeks to address only the material hardships of our state's residents has actually led to the unintended consequence of weakening overall family prosperity by ignoring cultural and familial needs? Clearly, the FPI research indicates that a new policy approach is required in Rhode Island.

To improve the Ocean State's dismal 48th place ranking on the, a broad national measure of well-being, the RI Center for Freedom & Prosperity suggests a reformed public policy culture. The status quo has favored special interests and agendas, often at the expense of families, taxpayers, and businesses.

Rhode Islanders deserve increased opportunity to earn a livelihood, educate their children, and keep Rhode Island as their families' home. To increase hope for a bright and prosperous future — and restore confidence in government — legislative activity must focus on the specific problems identified in the index. We must dare to change our focus from government to families.

Research by the Family Prosperity Initiative (FPI) shows that *families and the economy are codependent*. Empirical evidence from government data confirms that states prosper when families are stronger and that stronger families produce a stronger economy.

Many on the political left view disadvantaged people as incapable of fending for themselves. Many on the right view welfare as a growing expense in taxpayer-funded budgets. Both perspectives imply a burden. A pro-family approach sees the productive value in every individual to be encouraged through policies that promote work, increase opportunity, and promote a healthy family environment.

The most certain path to upward mobility, a sense of self-purpose, and an improved quality of life for families involves meaningful work and marriage. In advancing a culture that will improve Rhode Island's Index standing, lawmakers and community leaders must join together and consider the familial and social consequences of public policy and public advocacy, as opposed to merely attempting to meet arbitrary material standards, an approach that has failed.

PATH TO UPWARD MOBILITY

1. Keep families whole by reforming incarceration, drug, or marriage penalties that drive couples apart
 2. Encourage family members to live a more self-sufficient and independent lifestyle via reforms to public welfare programs so as to encourage work
 3. Reduce educational achievement gaps now by empowering parents with expanded school choice
 4. Increase prospects for meaningful work by fostering economic growth and natural wage increases
 5. Aid families' health security with increased access to affordable private health insurance
 6. Keep money in working-poor and middle-class pockets with reduced taxes and fees and an earned income tax credit (EITC) increase for families
 7. Protect workplace freedom by allowing employees a choice whether to be represented by labor unions
 8. Create equal opportunities for all by ending oppressive licensing and regulation that inhibit entrepreneurial job creation
 9. Ensure corporations and wealthy Rhode Islanders remain or move here with reduction or elimination of the estate tax and corporate tax
 10. Give favoritism to none by opposing government hand-outs to corporations, unions, and other powerful insiders
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