



HEALTH IS MORE THAN HEALTHCARE

The 2023 results of the RI Life Index reveal that Rhode Islanders still perceive steep challenges in housing, cost of living, and access to healthcare and nutritious food.

2023 marks the 5th anniversary of the RI Life Index, providing robust trend data on how Rhode Islanders perceive their health and well-being.

Presented in partnership



A TOOL TO ADDRESS HEALTH INEQUITIES

Health is much more than what happens within the healthcare system: It's about meeting basic human needs. The RI Life Index was launched in 2019 to capture Rhode Islanders' perceptions of these social determinants of health and to share them with elected officials, public health advocates, and community leaders. The Index can serve as a driver to build healthier communities throughout Rhode Island and address health inequities.



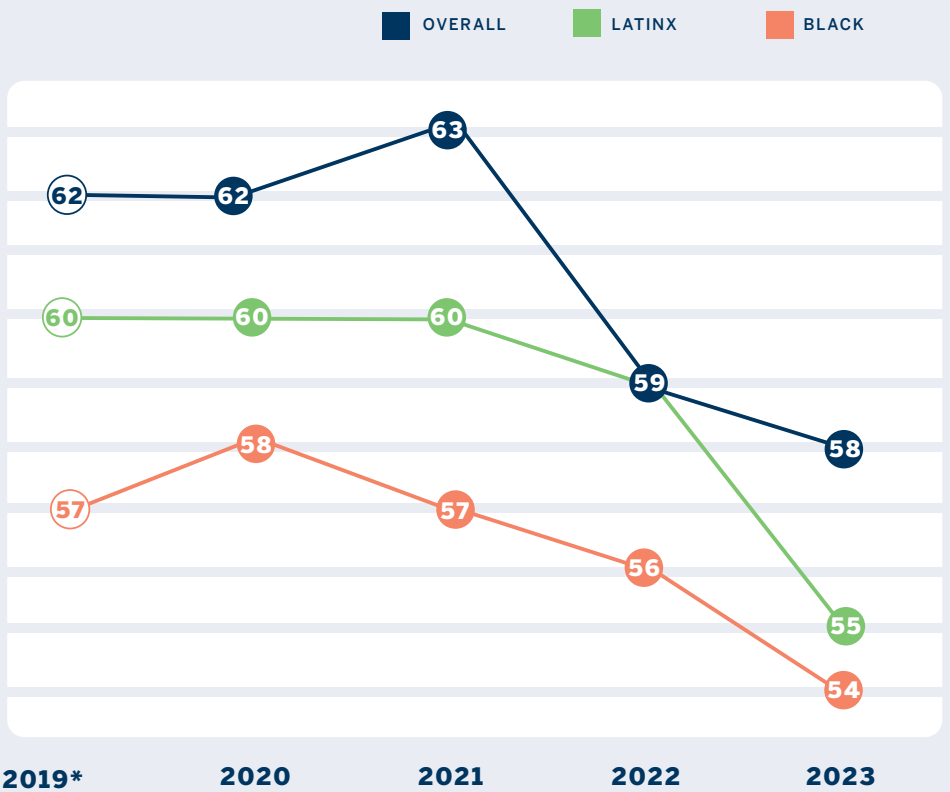
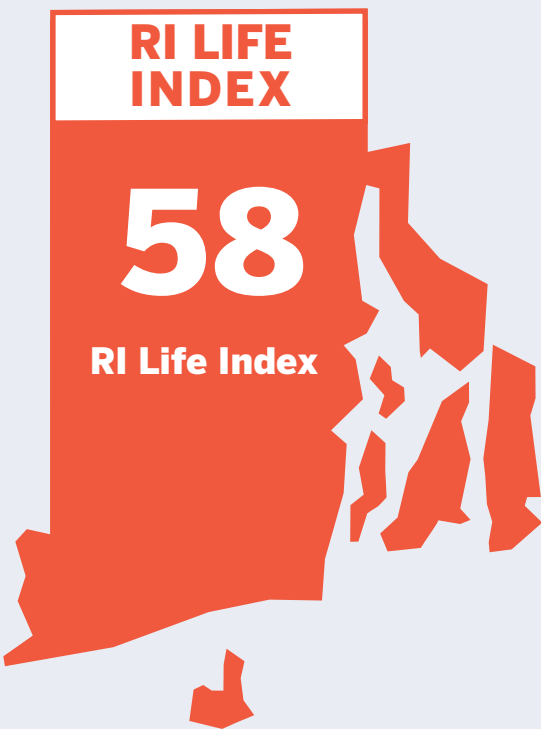
HEARING DIRECTLY FROM RHODE ISLAND'S DIVERSE POPULATIONS

For five consecutive years, researchers at Brown University's School of Public Health, funded by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, have overseen a survey designed to gather perceptions of diverse racial, ethnic, and geographic populations in Rhode Island. For 2023, this involved the completion of 2,317 random digit dial (RDD) interviews conducted by telephone or online.

KEY FINDINGS FOR 2023

Below are some highlights from the 2023 survey, as well as trends from five years of RI Life Index data. The Index is on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 representing a perfect score. Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket, which have the greatest number of children living in poverty. For detailed information, go to rilifeindex.org.

OVERALL RI LIFE INDEX



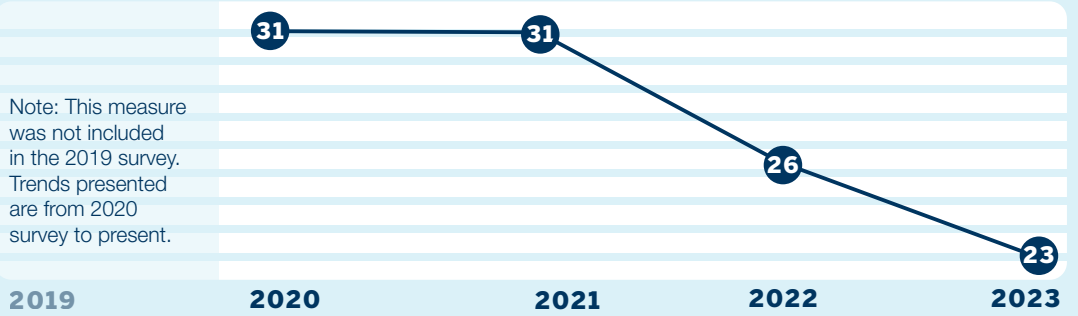
*Items asked in three or more years were included. One core question (access to quality education for children) was not asked in 2019.

The Index's overall (RDD) score factors in responses about housing, jobs, education, medical care, transportation, food security, cost of living, and programs for children and seniors. The 2023 score was essentially unchanged from the previous year, sitting at the lowest level since the Index began. There was a notable decrease in the overall score for those identifying as Latinx and for those identifying as Black. This is consistent with the notable decreases in all scores in the Index for those identifying as Latinx and in almost all scores for those identifying as Black.

COST OF LIVING

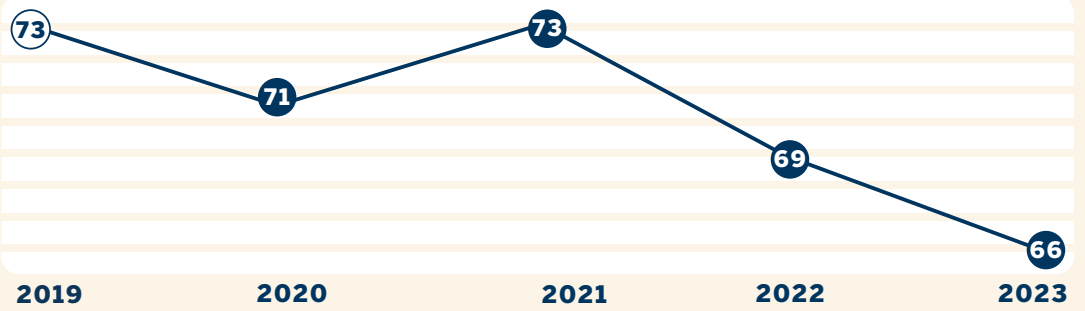


Note: This measure was not included in the 2019 survey. Trends presented are from 2020 survey to present.



As inflation persisted throughout the year, the overall score for cost of living (RDD) was among the lowest in 2023, at 23, down from 31 in 2020, meaning more than three-quarters of respondents perceive the cost of living as a challenge. These scores were low for all subgroups (21 to 27) but lowest for Black residents in core cities (18 for those younger than 55 and 16 for those ages 55+).

ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD

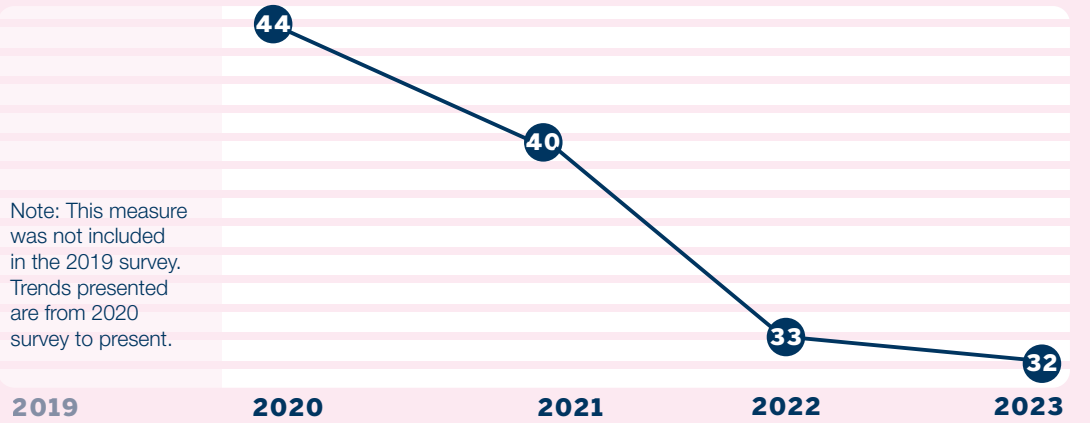


With food prices remaining high, this score fell in 2023 by three points, to 66 (RDD). That's down from 73 in 2019, one of the largest declines in a topic area since the Index began. The scores during that five-year span dropped in both core cities and non-core areas. Food security, a separate category, saw a substantial decline in core cities, down six points since 2020.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

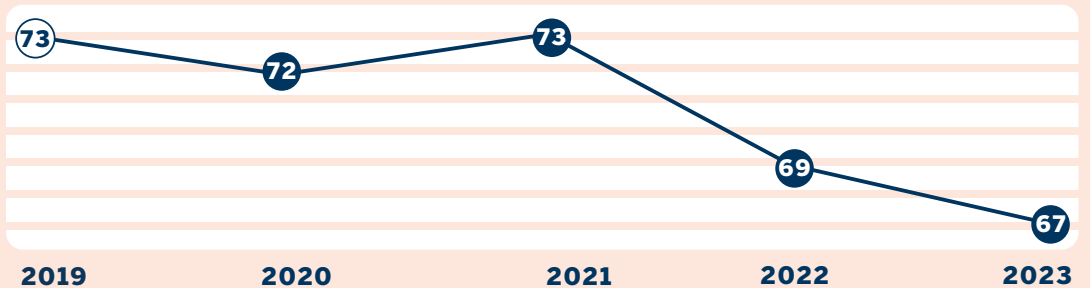
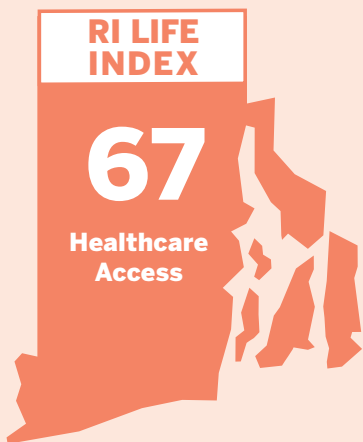


Note: This measure was not included in the 2019 survey. Trends presented are from 2020 survey to present.



Housing affordability and quality have been a chronic concern among Rhode Islanders and a top priority of RI Life Index Coalition members. In 2023, as housing prices continued to soar and mortgages persisted at elevated rates, the score for affordable housing remained unimproved at 32, meaning that more than two-thirds of respondents perceive housing costs as out of reach. This was the second lowest overall score and down from 44 in 2020. All subgroups scored low in 2023 and saw meaningful declines in the four years since this topic was included.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS



As the pandemic disrupted medical services and led to medical staffing shortages, perceptions about healthcare access have been falling. In 2023, they declined another two points overall to 67, down six points since 2019. Some of the largest declines in perceptions were among adults younger than 55 living in core cities.

WHO WE ARE

The RI Life Index Coalition seeks to provide thought leadership on viable solutions to health inequities through its annual survey. Coalition members include BCBSRI, Brown University School of Public Health, AARP Rhode Island, Community Provider Network of Rhode Island, The Economic Progress Institute, HousingWorks RI, Latino Policy Institute, Lifespan Community Health Institute, MLPB, Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Rhode Island Department of Health, Rhode Island Kids Count, Rhode Island Foundation, and United Way of Rhode Island.

Visit rilifeindex.org for more information and to see all 2019-2023 data.