



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

As Rhode Island's economy has changed in recent years, Ocean State workers have often struggled to navigate increasingly choppy economic waters. The erosion of family-supporting jobs has elevated the necessity of attaining additional education to avoid being left adrift in today's economy.

Having committed to having 70 percent of working age Rhode Islanders attain postsecondary education or training by 2025, Rhode Island has started down an ambitious path, requiring a mix of strategies and approaches to make college more affordable, improve completion rates, and increase opportunities for credentials, certificates and apprenticeships. Achieving this goal will require us to remove barriers to success, including financial barriers, barriers based on race and ethnicity, and barriers resulting from a lack of English language skills.

There will continue to be a substantial share of jobs in Rhode Island that are "good jobs" that can be found with education that is more than a high school degree, but less than a Bachelor's degree. And even as we provide opportunities to "skill up" the Rhode Island workforce, there will also continue to be many jobs requiring lower levels of skill. Raising the floor for all workers, through stronger enforcement of labor standards, an increased minimum wage, and policies that place a high priority on the well-being of Rhode Island families, will help make the Ocean State a desirable place to live and work.

Below, we lay out some specific policy proposals to help address the changing needs of our state's current workers and employers.

1. Expand investments **to meet the needs of adults with limited English proficiency and/or literacy and other foundational skills** and support high quality and innovative programs.
2. Promote and **invest in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship** programs.
3. **Expand Rhode Island Promise** to Rhode Islanders who are not recent high school graduates and to cover costs in addition to tuition and fees.
4. Expand programs designed to remove impediments to gainful employment and education, including **child care assistance and transportation**.
5. Maintain programs that **help working families make ends meet** when earnings aren't enough, including child care assistance, Medicaid and the Earned Income Tax Credit.
6. Protect, improve and expand programs that have improved job quality for Rhode Island workers, such as **earned paid sick leave, temporary care giver insurance and temporary disability insurance**.
7. Increase the **minimum wage**, towards \$15.00/hr.
8. **Increase the number of workers eligible for overtime pay** by raising Rhode Island's mandatory overtime threshold, to protect workers, especially those incorrectly classified as exempt employees.

For the full *State of Working Rhode Island 2017: Paving the Way to Good Jobs* report visit:
www.economicprogressri.org/stateofworkingri2017

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