



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**  
 ONE UNION STATION  
 PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903  
 401/351-9400 • 401/351-1758 (FAX)

**Testimony Re: H-7225, RI Department of Human Services FY25 Budget – Child Care and RI Works House Finance Committee**  
**April 3, 2024**  
**Leanne Barrett, Senior Policy Analyst**



Rhode Island KIDS COUNT coordinates the Right from the Start Campaign, a state policy coalition led by eight organizations to advance state policies and budget priorities that help babies and young children get off to the right start.

**Both Rhode Island KIDS COUNT and the Right from the Start Campaign express disappointment that the Department of Human Services October 2023 recommendation to the Governor to expand family income eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program was not included in the Governor’s FY25 budget.**

As DHS staff have pointed out, **a three-person family with two parents working at minimum wage jobs (\$14/hour) makes too much money to qualify for the Child Care Assistance Program at the current family income limit (\$51,640 for a family of three in 2024).**

**In 2023, Rhode Island had the lowest family income eligibility cut off in the Northeast.** Both Vermont and Maine meet or exceed the federal benchmark for family income eligibility. The Massachusetts governor has proposed lifting family income eligibility to the federal benchmark in this year’s budget.

State	Family Income Limit 2023
<b>Vermont*</b>	<b>\$142,945</b>
<b>Maine*</b>	<b>\$103,860</b>
New York	\$89,180
Connecticut	\$69,090
Massachusetts	\$67,124
New Hampshire	\$57,093
Rhode Island	\$49,720

**We also express disappointment that the DHS budget does not include any RI Works proposals** to adjust the cash assistance payments to 50% of the federal poverty level, repeal the full family sanction, or restore eligibility to lawful permanent residents – all of which would help our most vulnerable children and families.

We urge the House Finance Committee to consider legislative proposals to add these priorities to the department’s budget.