



RI Cannabis Act

Identifying Disproportionately Impacted Areas

June 28th, 2024

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Please Note...

- **The data for the current report was provided by the Rhode Island Cannabis Control Commission (CCC).**
- **Please direct data related questions to the CCC.**
- **For questions pertaining to analytic design, please direct questions to EOHHS.**

Definition of a “Disproportionately Impacted Area”

The Cannabis Act defines “**disproportionately impacted area**” as a census tract or geographic area that satisfies at least one of the following criteria:

1. The area has a poverty rate of at least 20%, according to the latest federal decennial census.
2. 75% or more of the children in the area participate in the federal free lunch program according to reported statistics from the Rhode Island Board of Education.
3. At least 20% of the households in the area receive assistance under SNAP.
4. The area has an average unemployment rate, as determined by RIDLT, that is more than 120% of the national unemployment average, as determined by the US Department of Labor, for a period of at least 2 consecutive calendar years preceding the date of the application.
5. The area has disproportionately high rates of arrest, conviction, and incarceration related to the sale, possession, use, cultivation, manufacture, or transportation of cannabis in comparison to other communities, or has a history of arrests, convictions, and other law enforcement practices that reflect a disparate enforcement of cannabis prohibition when compared to the remainder of the state.

Criterion: Poverty Rate

Statute: “The area has a poverty rate of at least 20%, according to the latest federal decennial census”

Source: 2020 United States decennial census¹

Data Limitations: The federal Poverty Line does not consider differences in cost of living by region. This may include costs of housing, transportation, childcare, and medical costs.²

Criterion: Poverty Rate

The Rhode Island municipalities listed below indicate those with a poverty rate of at least 20% in 2020.

Municipality	Poverty Rate
Central Falls	29.9
Providence	23.0
Woonsocket	21.0

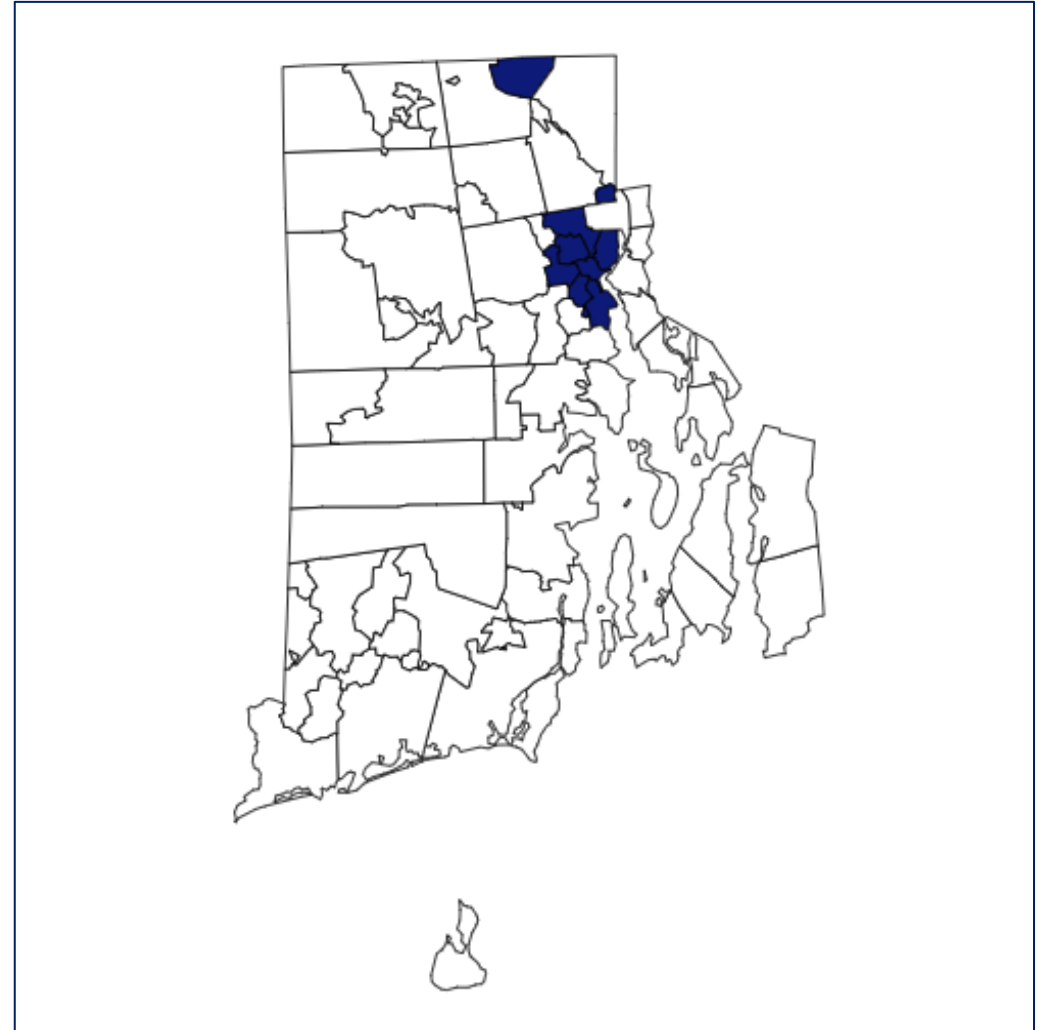


Table: Poverty Rate

Table 1. Poverty Rates by Municipality

Municipality	Poverty Rate	Municipality	Poverty Rate
Barrington	5.43	New Shoreham	8.8
Bristol	7.3	Newport	14.4
Burrillville	6.6	North Kingstown	8.8
Central Falls	29.9	North Providence	11.5
Charlestown	7.5	North Smithfield	7.2
Coventry	9.4	Pawtucket	14.1
Cranston	7.4	Portsmouth	5.0
Cumberland	5.9	Providence	23.0
East Greenwich	4.7	Richmond	1.3
East Providence	9.6	Scituate	3.4
Exeter	3.9	Smithfield	3.6
Foster	5.4	South Kingstown	5.4
Glocester	5.3	Tiverton	5.5
Hopkinton	5.8	Warren	9.2
Jamestown	3.4	Warwick	7.2
Johnston	7.1	West Greenwich	1.7
Lincoln	7.0	West Warwick	12.1
Little Compton	4.2	Westerly	7.6
Middletown	6.2	Woonsocket	21.0
Narragansett	19.3		

The rows highlighted in Table 1 indicate those with a poverty rate of at least 20%.

Criterion: Federal Free Lunch Program

Statute: “75% or more of the children in the area participate in the federal free lunch program according to reported statistics from the Rhode Island Board of Education”

Source: Rhode Island Department of Education³

Data Limitations: This data was limited to public schools in the state who participated in the federal free lunch program. CCC elected to not include private and charter schools in the analysis as they may not represent the eligibility of children living in the area.

Criterion: Federal Free Lunch Program

The following lists Rhode Island municipalities where at least 75% of students in the area were eligible for participation in the USDA's National School Lunch Program in 2023.

Municipality	% Eligible
Central Falls	88.6
Providence	76.4
Woonsocket	82.9

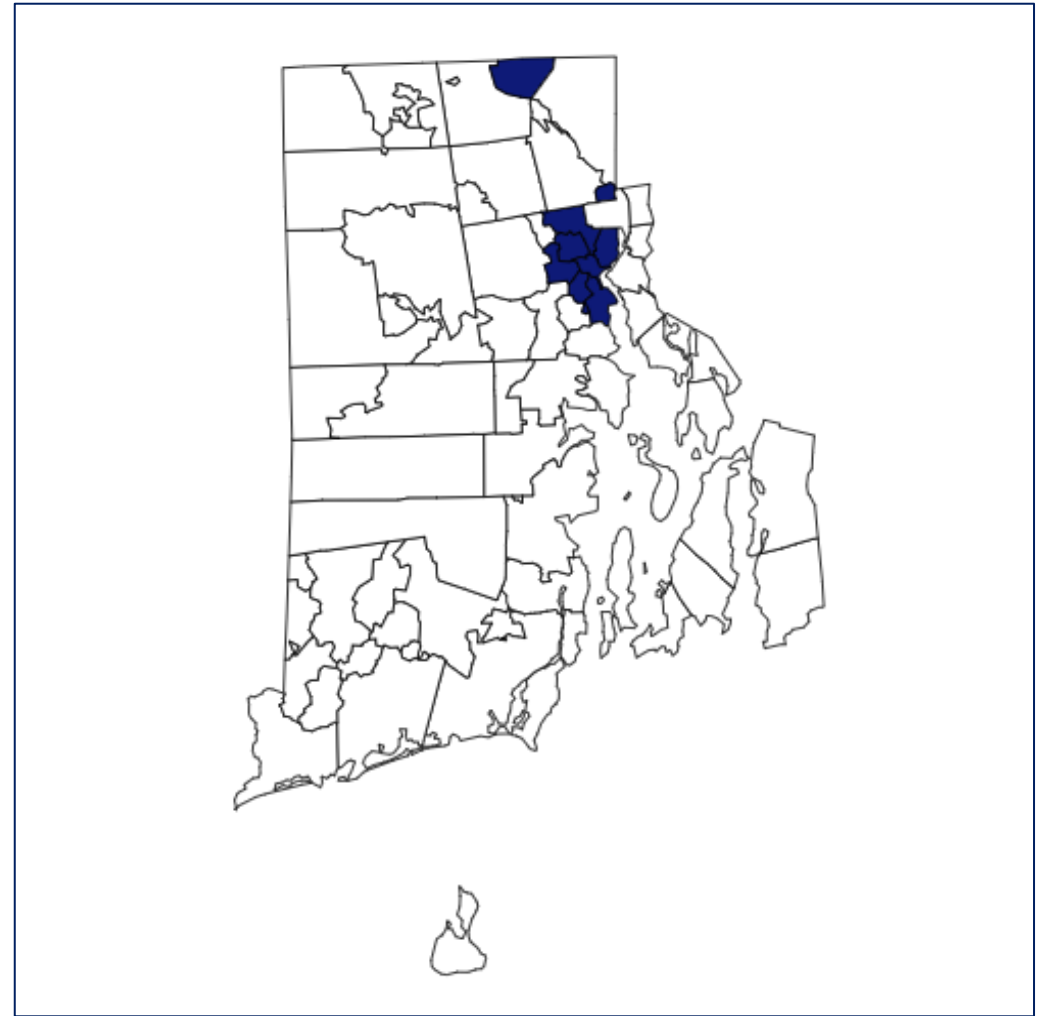


Table: Federal Free Lunch Program

Table 2. Percentage of children eligible for federal free lunch program by Municipality

Municipality	% Eligible	Municipality	% Eligible
Barrington	4.0	New Shoreham	18.1
Bristol	31.6	Newport	58.8
Burrillville	34.1	North Kingstown	19.4
Central Falls	88.6	North Providence	38.3
Charlestown	15.7	North Smithfield	15.9
Coventry	26.2	Pawtucket	70.7
Cranston	39.5	Portsmouth	10.7
Cumberland	18.9	Providence	76.4
East Greenwich	6.0	Richmond	15.7
East Providence	42.1	Scituate	10.9
Exeter	13.2	Smithfield	11.4
Foster	26.0	South Kingstown	14.6
Glocester	13.2	Tiverton	21.2
Hopkinton	15.7	Warren	31.6
Jamestown	5.9	Warwick	30.4
Johnston	36.4	West Greenwich	13.2
Lincoln	26.4	West Warwick	44.1
Little Compton	13.3	Westerly	33.9
Middletown	31.2	Woonsocket	82.9
Narragansett	13.9		

The rows highlighted in Table 2 indicate the municipalities with a percentage of at least 75%.

Criterion: SNAP Benefits

Statute: *“At least 20% of the households in the area receive assistance under SNAP”*

Source: 2020 United States decennial census⁴

Data Limitations: There may be measurement error with consideration to SNAP participation. Specifically, many Americans may be noted as receiving no benefits but do.⁵

Criterion: SNAP Benefits

The following lists Rhode Island municipalities where at least 20% of households in the area received assistance under SNAP benefits in 2020.

Municipality	% Receiving Assistance
Central Falls	37.1
Pawtucket	21.6
Providence	30.1
Woonsocket	25.9

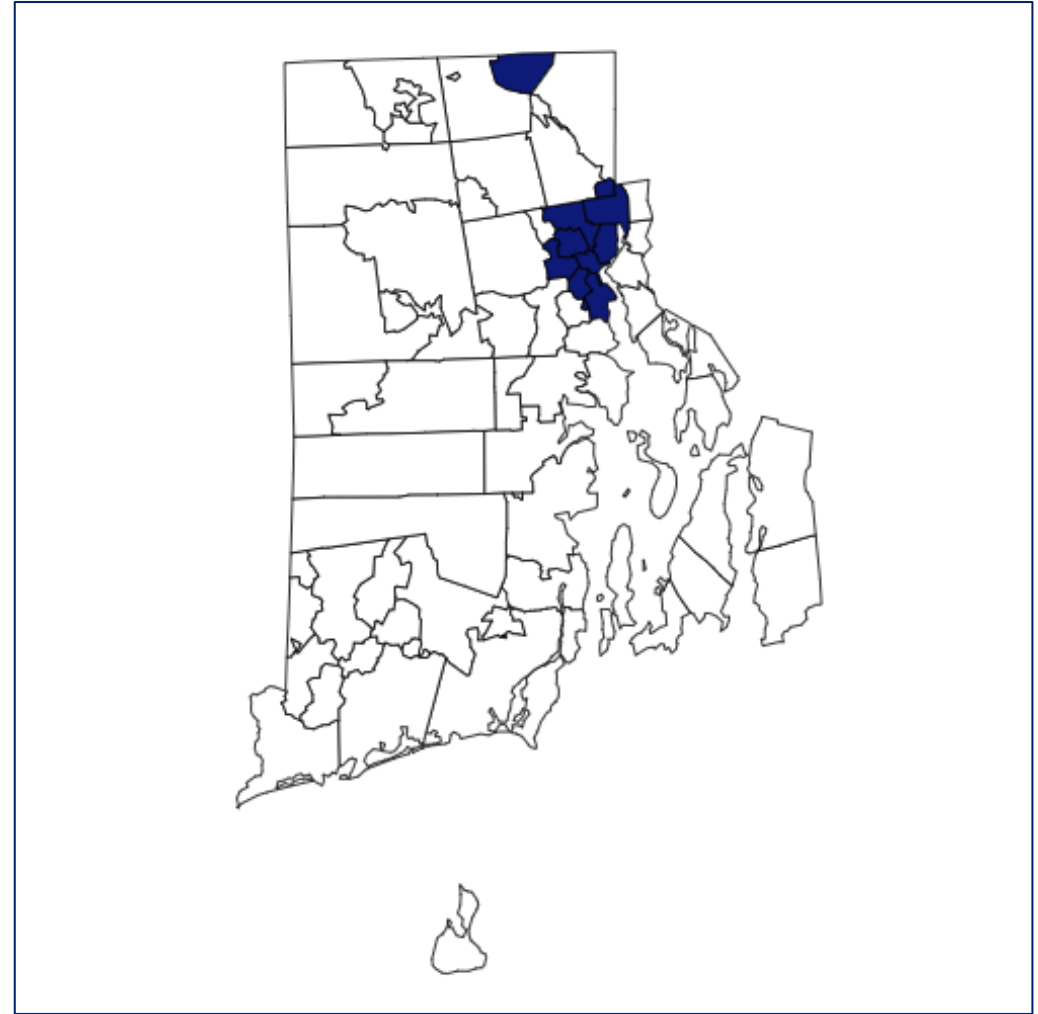


Table: SNAP Benefits

The rows highlighted in Table 2 indicate municipalities with at least 20% of households receiving assistance under SNAP.

Table 3. Percentage of Households Receiving Assistance Under SNAP by Municipality

Municipality	% Receiving Assistance	Municipality	% Receiving Assistance
Barrington	3.4	New Shoreham	5.8
Bristol	7.6	Newport	14.2
Burrillville	8.8	North Kingstown	9.9
Central Falls	37.1	North Providence	12.2
Charlestown	4.1	North Smithfield	5.1
Coventry	11.5	Pawtucket	21.6
Cranston	11	Portsmouth	5
Cumberland	9.3	Providence	30.1
East Greenwich	5.6	Richmond	3.1
East Providence	12.2	Scituate	3.8
Exeter	7.9	Smithfield	7.8
Foster	8.6	South Kingstown	7.1
Glocester	7.4	Tiverton	5.9
Hopkinton	10.8	Warren	9.2
Jamestown	5.9	Warwick	11.8
Johnston	12.2	West Greenwich	9.4
Lincoln	8.3	West Warwick	18.1
Little Compton	5.8	Westerly	6.5
Middletown	6.7	Woonsocket	25.9
Narragansett	5.9		

Criterion: Unemployment

Statute: *“The area has an average unemployment rate, as determined by RIDLT, that is more than 120% of the national unemployment average, as determined by the US Department of Labor, for a period of at least 2 consecutive calendar years preceding the date of the application”*

Source: Rhode Island’s Department of Labor and Training⁶; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics⁷

Data Limitations: New Shoreham (Block Island) meets the criterion for unemployment, though findings must be cautioned due to seasonal employment.

Criterion: Unemployment

The Rhode Island municipalities listed below indicate the areas with an unemployment rate of at least 120% of the national average for both 2022 (3.6%) & 2023 (3.6%).

Municipality	Unemployment Rate - 2022	Unemployment Rate - 2023
New Shoreham	6.8	8.2
Woonsocket	4.3	4.3

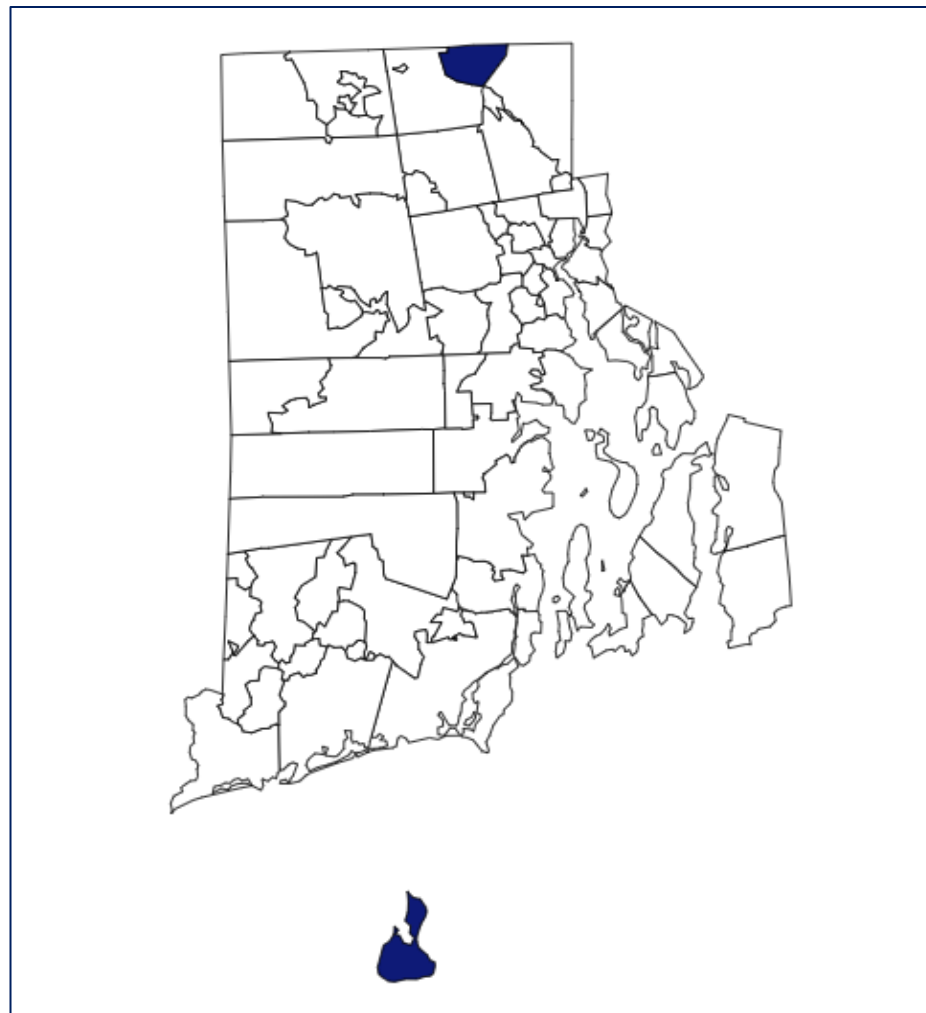


Table: Unemployment

Table 4. Rates of Unemployment for 2022 & 2023 by Municipality

Municipality	Unemployment Rate - 2022	Unemployment Rate - 2023	Municipality	Unemployment Rate - 2022	Unemployment Rate - 2023
Barrington	2.1	2.1	New Shoreham	6.8	8.2
Bristol	2.8	2.7	Newport	2.7	2.6
Burrillville	3.1	3.0	North Kingstown	2.5	2.4
Central Falls	3.9	3.6	North Providence	3.2	3.0
Charlestown	3.7	3.4	North Smithfield	2.7	2.5
Coventry	3.0	2.8	Pawtucket	3.8	3.7
Cranston	3.2	3.0	Portsmouth	2.8	2.7
Cumberland	2.7	2.5	Providence	4.0	3.9
East Greenwich	2.6	2.6	Richmond	1.8	1.7
East Providence	3.4	3.0	Scituate	2.9	2.6
Exeter	2.8	2.5	Smithfield	2.8	2.5
Foster	3.1	2.9	South Kingstown	2.8	2.5
Glocester	2.5	2.3	Tiverton	3.1	2.9
Hopkinton	2.9	2.4	Warren	3.0	2.9
Jamestown	2.2	2.0	Warwick	2.7	2.6
Johnston	3.5	3.3	West Greenwich	3.0	2.8
Lincoln	2.6	2.6	West Warwick	3.4	3.2
Little Compton	2.9	2.6	Westerly	3.3	2.9
Middletown	2.8	2.8	Woonsocket	4.3	4.3
Narragansett	2.1	2.1			

The rows highlighted in Table 4 indicate the areas with an unemployment rate of at least 120% the national average for both 2022 & 2023.

Municipalities with an average unemployment rate that is 120% the national average over 2 consecutive years: A Lookback over the previous decade

2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Burrillville	Central Falls	Central Falls	Central Falls	Central Falls	Central Falls	Central Falls	Central Falls	New Shoreham	New Shoreham
Central Falls	Charlestown	New Shoreham	New Shoreham	New Shoreham	New Shoreham	New Shoreham	New Shoreham	Woonsocket	Woonsocket
Charlestown	East Providence	Pawtucket	Pawtucket	Providence	Providence	Providence	Pawtucket		
Coventry	Hopkinton	Providence	Providence	Woonsocket	Woonsocket	Woonsocket	Providence		
Cranston	New Shoreham	Westerly	Woonsocket				Woonsocket		
East Providence	Pawtucket	Woonsocket							
Foster	Providence								
Hopkinton	West Warwick								
Johnston	Westerly								
New Shoreham	Woonsocket								
North									
Providence									
Pawtucket									
Providence									
Tiverton									
Warren									
West Warwick									
Westerly									
Woonsocket									

The above table outlines the municipalities that met the criteria for unemployment for two consecutive years in the previous decade. For example, those in the column 2018-2019 met this criterion for both calendar years.

Criterion: Criminal Justice Enforcement

Statute: “The area has disproportionately high rates of arrest, conviction, and incarceration related to the sale, possession, use, cultivation, manufacture, or transportation of cannabis in comparison to other communities, or has a history of arrests, convictions, and other law enforcement practices that reflect a disparate enforcement of cannabis prohibition when compared to the remainder of the state.”

Source: Rhode Island Judiciary

Limitations:

1. Exeter does not have a Police Department, and thus has no records of cannabis-related charges.
2. Due to low population, New Shoreham (“Block Island”) has been removed from consideration as their charge rate may appear inflated.
3. Charges regarding certain serious marijuana offenses (e.g., offenses related to large quantities of manufacturing and distribution) were also not provided when it was not possible to isolate charges specific to marijuana versus other Schedule I drugs.
4. Charges which stemmed from arrests by the RI State Police were not included as these incidents could not be attributed to specific jurisdictions across the state.
5. The data provided may include data entry errors given changes in the data processing and storage system with the RI Judiciary over the period of study.
6. Charge data is aggregated at the jurisdiction (e.g., city) level because more granular geographic data were not available.

Criterion: Criminal Justice Enforcement (Methodology)

1. Cannabis-related charge counts ranging between 1980 – 2023, by municipality, were provided by the Rhode Island Judiciary.
2. Due to COVID and the eventual legalization of cannabis in the state of Rhode Island, records from 2020 onward were not used. Data prior to 2000 were excluded in an effort to focus on the current era similar to the previous criteria. Furthermore, given high rates of crime and violence nationally during the 1980s and 1990s, cannabis enforcement may have differed considerably. Additionally, due to changes to reporting systems around the year 2000, the CCC elected to begin the analysis in 2000. Finally, focusing on 2000-present is in line with the years other states have included to identify disproportionately impacted areas (see Massachusetts). **Thus, charge data between 2000 – 2019 were retained in the analyses.**
3. The 20 years were broken down into 5-year sections (i.e., 2000-2004, 2005-2009, 2010-2014, 2015-2019) in order to calculate a charge rate using the most accurate population estimate for each length of time.
 - a) For example, for each municipality, the charge counts for 2000-2004 were averaged over the population for that municipality recorded in the 2000 census, then multiplied by 100,000 to estimate a rate of cannabis-related charges per 100,000 residents.
4. An average rate across the four sections of time was then calculated for each municipality.
5. Across the municipalities, an average overall rate of cannabis-related charges was observed to be 264.36 per 100,000 residents, across 2000-2019 (this calculation does not include New Shoreham to prevent skew).

Criterion: Criminal Justice Enforcement

The Rhode Island municipalities listed indicate the areas with a charge rate above the overall average rate per 100,000 residents across municipalities and time (264.36).

Municipality	Rate per 100,000 Residents	Municipality	Rate per 100,000 Residents
Bristol	300.40	Narragansett	375.66
Central Falls	301.21	Newport	355.51
Charlestown	331.11	Portsmouth	356.50
East Providence	329.93	Richmond	323.27
Glocester	276.74	Smithfield	326.94
Hopkinton	443.56	Warren	291.55
Jamestown	318.58	West Greenwich	286.59
Little Compton	453.92	Westerly	359.76
Middletown	443.13	Woonsocket	365.92

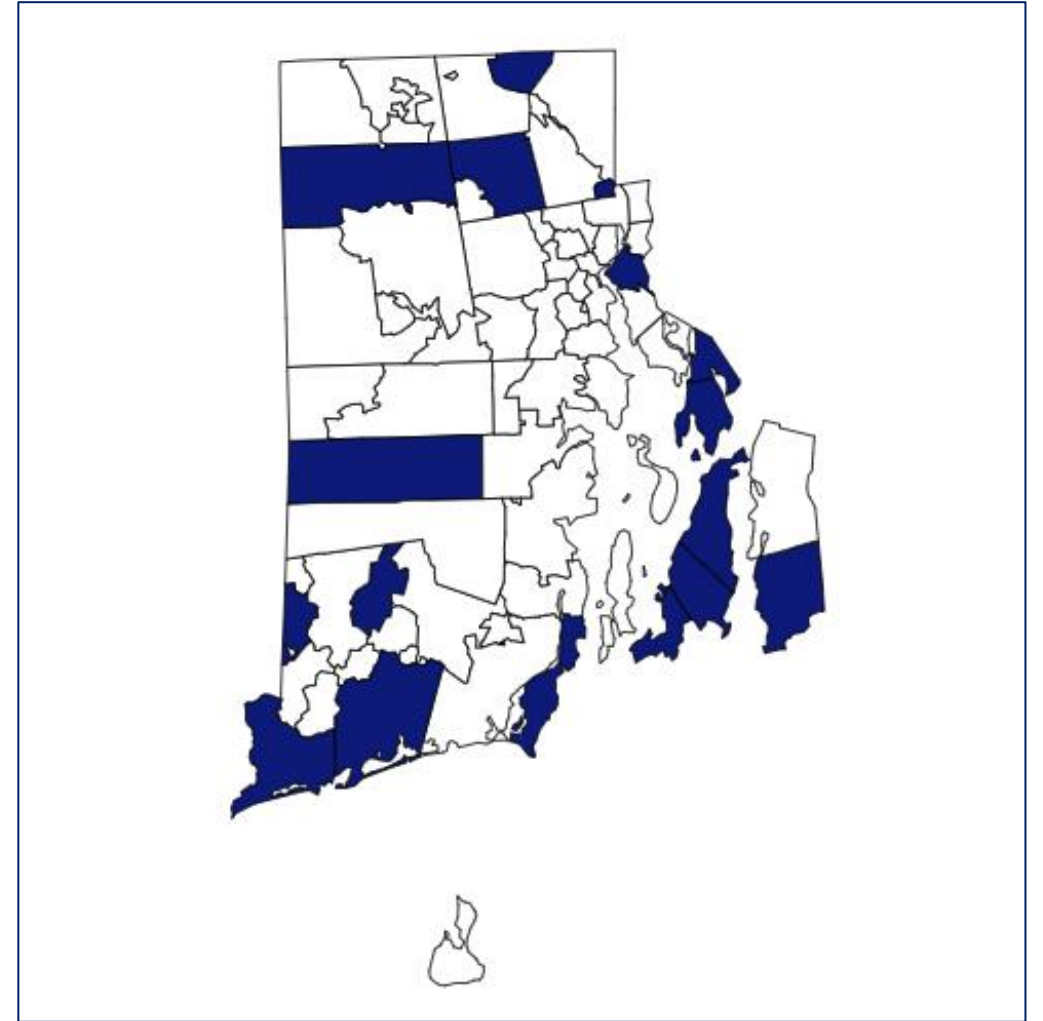


Table: Criminal Justice Enforcement

The rows highlighted in Table 5 demonstrate which municipalities had a rate above the overall average rate.

New Shoreham counts that meet the criteria are in red due to concerns about population size.

*Indicates that the rate of crime for that municipality lies one standard deviation above the mean.

Table 5. Rate of Cannabis-Related Charges between 2000-2019, by Municipality

Municipality	Rate per 100,000 Residents	Municipality	Rate per 100,000 Residents
Barrington	142.43	New Shoreham	616.48*
Bristol	300.40	Newport	355.51
Burrillville	230.58	North Kingstown	171.49
Central Falls	301.21	North Providence	217.15
Charlestown	331.11	North Smithfield	224.70
Coventry	175.14	Pawtucket	254.81
Cranston	133.22	Portsmouth	356.50
Cumberland	116.28	Providence	259.14
East Greenwich	125.89	Richmond	323.27
East Providence	329.93	Scituate	116.88
Foster	243.26	Smithfield	326.94
Glocester	276.74	South Kingstown	183.65
Hopkinton	443.56*	Tiverton	263.01
Jamestown	318.58	Warren	291.55
Johnston	124.95	Warwick	237.22
Lincoln	105.17	West Greenwich	286.59
Little Compton	453.92*	West Warwick	215.89
Middletown	443.13*	Westerly	359.76
Narragansett	375.66	Woonsocket	365.92

Criterion Met by Municipalities

Municipality	Poverty Rate	Free Lunch	SNAP	Unemployment - 2022	Unemployment - 2023	Charges (Above Average)	Total Criterion Met
Barrington	5.43	4.0	3.4	2.1	2.1	142.43	0
Bristol	7.3	31.6	7.6	2.8	2.7	300.40	1
Burrillville	6.6	34.1	8.8	3.1	3.0	230.58	0
Central Falls	29.9	88.6	37.1	3.9	3.6	301.21	4
Charlestown	7.5	15.7	4.1	3.7	3.4	331.11	1
Coventry	9.4	26.2	11.5	3.0	2.8	175.14	0
Cranston	7.4	39.5	11	3.2	3.0	133.22	0
Cumberland	5.9	18.9	9.3	2.7	2.5	116.28	0
East Greenwich	4.7	6.0	5.6	2.6	2.6	125.89	0
East Providence	9.6	42.1	12.2	3.4	3.0	329.93	1
Exeter	3.9	13.2	7.9	2.8	2.5	N/A	0
Foster	5.4	26.0	8.6	3.1	2.9	243.26	0
Glocester	5.3	13.2	7.4	2.5	2.3	276.74	1
Hopkinton	5.8	15.7	10.8	2.9	2.4	443.56*	1
Jamestown	3.4	5.9	5.9	2.2	2.0	318.58	1
Johnston	7.1	36.4	12.2	3.5	3.3	124.95	0
Lincoln	7	26.4	8.3	2.6	2.6	105.17	0
Little Compton	4.2	13.3	5.8	2.9	2.6	453.92*	1
Middletown	6.2	31.2	6.7	2.8	2.8	443.13*	1
Narragansett	19.3	13.9	5.9	2.1	2.1	375.66	1

Note. * Indicates that the rate of charges for that municipality lies one standard deviation above the mean.
Cells highlighted meet the criterion.

Criterion Met by Municipalities

Municipality	Poverty Rate	Free Lunch	SNAP	Unemployment - 2022	Unemployment - 2023	Charges (Above Average)	Total Criterion Met
New Shoreham	8.8	18.1	5.8	6.8	8.2	616.48*	-
Newport	14.4	58.8	14.2	2.7	2.6	355.51	1
North Kingstown	8.8	19.4	9.9	2.5	2.4	171.49	0
North Providence	11.5	38.3	12.2	3.2	3.0	217.15	0
North Smithfield	7.2	15.9	5.1	2.7	2.5	224.70	0
Pawtucket	14.1	70.7	21.6	3.8	3.7	254.81	1
Portsmouth	5	10.7	5	2.8	2.7	356.50	1
Providence	23	76.4	30.1	4.0	3.9	259.14	3
Richmond	1.3	15.7	3.1	1.8	1.7	323.27	1
Scituate	3.4	10.9	3.8	2.9	2.6	116.88	0
Smithfield	3.6	11.4	7.8	2.8	2.5	326.94	1
South Kingstown	5.4	14.6	7.1	2.8	2.5	183.65	0
Tiverton	5.5	21.2	5.9	3.1	2.9	263.01	0
Warren	9.2	31.6	9.2	3.0	2.9	291.55	1
Warwick	7.2	30.4	11.8	2.7	2.6	237.22	0
West Greenwich	1.7	13.2	9.4	3.0	2.8	286.59	1
West Warwick	12.1	44.1	18.1	3.4	3.2	215.89	0
Westerly	7.6	33.9	6.5	3.3	2.9	359.76	1
Woonsocket	21	82.9	25.9	4.3	4.3	365.92	5

Note. New Shoreham counts that meet criteria are in red due to concerns about population size.

* Indicates that the rate of charges for that municipality lies one standard deviation above the mean.

Cells highlighted meet the criterion.

Thank you!

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References

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