

# Themes and Preliminary Questions

Research Areas will be divided into “Themes” that allow the research community to explore the thematic areas as part of interdisciplinary teams and as individual projects.

## IMPACT OF FEDERAL SPENDING

- What can state government do to ensure that federal block grant funds are managed and invested most effectively?
- What is the potential impact of increased spending on defense in Rhode Island?
- How can Rhode Island align state priorities with the federal government for positive impacts as well as prepare for any potential negative impacts of changes to federal spending?
- What is the potential impact of cuts to Medicaid on the state? (impact of uninsured residents on Rhode Island’s hospitals, medical access facilities, and physicians)
- What might the role of our health exchange be, and/or what would potential options for its future mission be, if changes were made to the Affordable Care Act, or dismantling occurs?
- What is the overall “health” of our healthcare industry in the state and what are potential impacts of cuts in federal spending?
- What would be the financial and logistical (e.g. delivery and network systems) implications of a growing number of uninsured residents in RI?
- What is the impact of the federal work study program on student persistence and success in Rhode Island higher education institutions, and how can it be improved?
- How do RI districts use federal Title II, III, and IV dollars? Which are the most effective practices and what are the implications of federal cuts in these areas?

## INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION

- How can transportation be better aligned with the needs of Rhode Island’s in-state commuters? (including college students living off campus)
- How could a Pawtucket Train Station help to attract people to live/work in Rhode Island?
- How can transportation infrastructure (including parking) be designed to fit past, current and future urban planning?
- What is the role of new forms of transportation (like Uber and Lyft) in supporting transportation needs (and innovative approaches i.e. providing supports for aging population in getting to medical appointments, patients to opioid treatments programs (OTP), etc.)?
- In what ways can vacant buildings (e.g. abandoned factories and mills) be better repurposed in the state?
- How can Rhode Island achieve the space needed for large industrial parks?
- How can districts and municipalities be better supported in making effective investments in school infrastructure?
- How can school transportation be more efficient while prioritizing student safety?

### REGIONAL COLLABORATION

- What types of regional strategic partnerships could Rhode Island participate in that are beneficial to the state?
- What are best practices and lessons learned for public sector regional collaboration?

### ENERGY

- What are the economic costs and benefits of regional carbon pricing?
- What are the short- and long-term strategies for capitalizing on alternative energy systems, such as wind, water, and solar power?
- How can alternative energy sources reduce the amount of state spending on energy?
- What are practical methods local businesses can adopt to utilize alternative energy to its fullest potential?
- How can alternative energy practices make local businesses more competitive? How can Rhode Island be more competitive nationally with alternative energy use?

### ENGINEERING

- How can we leverage the investments in higher education in engineering to build momentum for engineering focused jobs in the state?
- Are there opportunities to make Rhode Island a premier location for engineering focused industries (i.e. ocean engineering, medical engineering)?

### CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- How can the state be more pro-active in reducing entry into the criminal justice system (i.e. better understanding entry points)?
- How can we decrease recidivism within the sex offender population (what are the supports/treatments needed)?

### MANUFACTURING/ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

- A working group will be formed to explore potential questions of interest in the manufacturing and advanced manufacturing sector.

### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN RHODE ISLAND: THE IMPACT ON BUSINESS INVESTMENTS AND THE ECONOMY

- What are the short- and long-term implications (social, economic, etc.) of Rhode Island's declining population?
- In what ways does Rhode Island's aging and elderly populations impact the state (financially, economically and in the workforce)?
- What effects does family-size have on larger financial and governmental concerns in the state?
- What are the best practices for reversing declining population trends? Where are we gaining? Where are we losing?
- What are potential implications for Rhode Island of losing a U.S. House seat in the future?
- Which business investments can be leveraged based on our changing demographics?
- What types of degrees/training are needed for the job growth sectors in Rhode Island? How does this compare with national trends?