

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access

Rhode Island Foundation is committed to advancing equity centered on valuing and embracing diverse identities and experiences and guided by inclusiveness, accessibility, compassion, mutual respect, and humility – in partnership with our team and the community.

No one's race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, socio-economic, housing, or justice-involved status should limit their access to opportunity.

Focus Areas

- Implementing a DEIA Strategic Roadmap for the Foundation, to ensure a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization, embedding our DEIA commitment in all efforts to address community priorities, and maintaining accountability.
- Advancing transparent strategies to engage and encourage participation from diverse grantees, donors, partners, and communities.
- Continuously improving and adapting our Equity Leadership Initiative program in alignment with our work as a community foundation and our focus on priorities for a thriving Rhode Island.
- Enhancing systems and policies to support a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible work environment, and vendor, grantee, and investment relationships.

Case Studies

DEIA Strategic Roadmap

In early 2024, a comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Needs Assessment was conducted by Upton Consulting Group. This included feedback from community partners, the internal Foundation team, and members of the Foundation's Board of Directors. The results revealed the need for a more data-driven and substantive DEIA strategy to help improve the Foundation's culture and enhance our relationship with our community partners.

This feedback helped inform our DEIA Strategic Roadmap, ensuring that the Foundation's DEIA commitment is embedded in every aspect of our work. Achieving this goal requires a change management approach that drives both behavior and systems change across the Foundation.

The DEIA Strategic Roadmap fully aligns with and informs the organizational priorities within the Foundation's Five-Year Action Plan and guides us as we continue working in partnership with the community to build a more inclusive and equitable future for all Rhode Islanders. The DEIA Strategic Roadmap is both externally and internally focused, ensuring our DEIA commitment strengthens our relationship with the community we serve and fosters an equitable and inclusive work environment for our team members.

More information on this work is available at www.rifoundation.org.

Capacity Building Grants

In 2021, the Foundation launched a program for nonprofits led by people of color as part of its 3-year, \$8.5 million investment to address racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Eleven organizations were chosen to receive three years of mentoring and coaching and \$30,000 each year to extend their reach and encourage collaboration.

- The Reentry Campus Program (RCP) participated in the program. The Providence-based nonprofit's mission is to improve access to and completion of post-secondary education for individuals who are transitioning from the incarceration system back into their communities. The RCP also has a mentorship program and provides critical wrap-around services, continuous support, and resources specific to their individual needs.
- Movement Education Outdoors, also one of the 11 participating organizations, started in 2018 to work with youth (ages 11-13) and community organizations from Providence, Woonsocket, Central Falls, and Pawtucket to offer outdoor experiences with the premise that all young people should have equitable chances to be in and enjoy outdoor activities. The activities include hiking, kayaking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, water and air quality testing, and mindfulness and movement practices.
- Mixed Magic Theatre, another of the participating organizations, was for a long time among the few caretakers of Black art in Rhode Island. The husband-and-wife duo have been nationally recognized artists for more than four decades. They started the theater company in 2000.