



# Rhode Island Foundation

One Union Station  
Providence, RI 02903

Rhode Island  
Foundation

# Only Together

Five-Year Action Plan  
2026 Update

In 2023 and 2024, the Foundation undertook a comprehensive effort to solicit community input, aimed at informing an evolved mission and Five-Year Action Plan. This included deep engagement with the public, collaboration with partners, donors, and team members, and rigorous research and data analysis to identify what matters most to Rhode Islanders and how we can best apply our resources to address community priorities.

We also took a closer look at our own practices, conducting a thorough internal review to assess who we are, what we do, and how we do it. This honest reflection allowed us to identify opportunities to grow and better align our work with the communities we serve.

We recognize that communities evolve, and so must we. Our commitment is to remain responsive and adaptive, continuously centering community voices in our decision-making, honoring every perspective, and being willing to change course when needed. The community is not simply a beneficiary of our work; they are an active partner in shaping it.

This Five-Year Action Plan is both a roadmap and a promise, guided by our deepened commitment to inclusion, accessibility, empathy, mutual respect, and humility, to listen, evolve, and lead with purpose.

# Evolution of our Five-Year Action Plan

2023

## RESEARCH

- CEO community visits
- Public telephone survey
- Grantee & donor survey

2024

## PLANNING & OUTREACH

- Public digital survey, equity & inclusion assessment & strategic roadmap
- Together RI open community conversations
- Sector & subject-matter convenings and meetings on community priorities
- Strategy and communications planning

2025

## LAUNCH

(First year of Action Plan)

- Supported by new brand messaging, promotional campaigns, and new visual identity assets
- Continuing to embed equity & inclusion in the Foundation's work

2026

## REINFORCING OUR APPROACH

(Second year of Action Plan)

- Commitment to community priorities
- Second year of core grant program cycle

2027

## MIDWAY MILESTONE CHECK

(Third year of Action Plan)

- Report on progress towards commitments and goals

2028

## MAINTAIN MOMENTUM & LOOKING AHEAD

(Fourth year of Action Plan)

- Renewed focus on mission, vision, values, and priorities
- Begin reflection and assessment
- Seek community input

2029

## REFLECTION

(Final year of Action Plan)

- Opportunity for reflection
- Highlight our impact, areas for growth
- Planning and research for next phase

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# Partner with Us Today

Partner with us today by making a gift to the Fund for Rhode Island, which enables us to address community priorities essential for a thriving state.

If you are already a Foundation fundholder, thank you! We hope you'll consider aligned giving, or adding to your existing fund, to help drive even greater impact toward our shared community priorities.

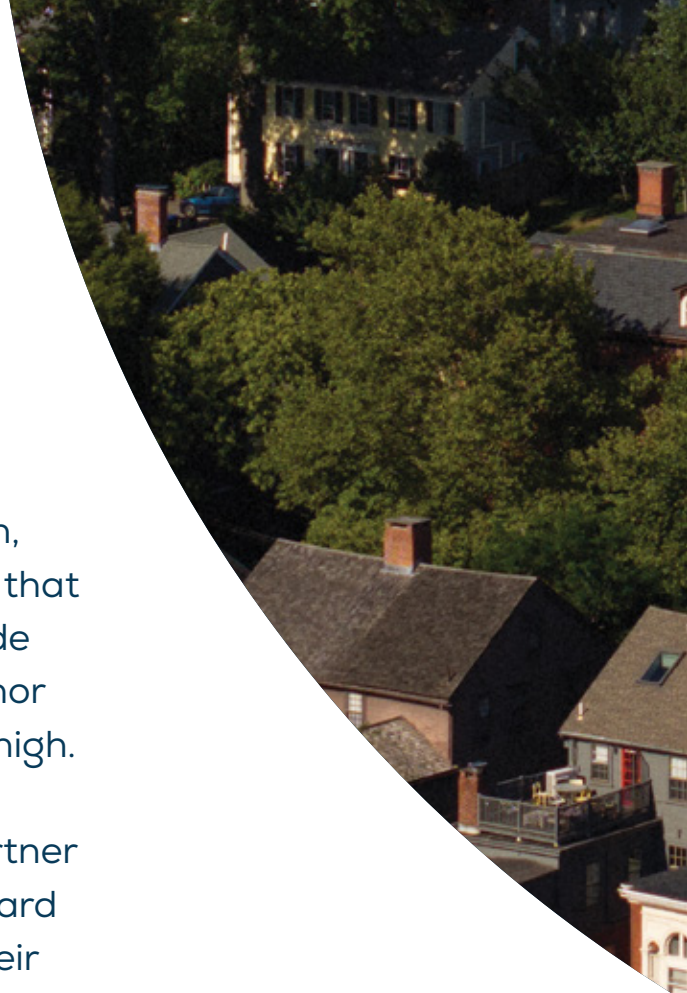
Connect with a member of our development team at [Giving@RIFoundation.org](mailto:Giving@RIFoundation.org) or by calling [\(401\) 427-4040](tel:(401)427-4040) to learn more.

Separately, we can have impact; but only together, on a solid foundation, can we build the future we all hope for.

# Mission

As Rhode Island's only community foundation, we mobilize generosity and motivate change that makes a difference. Our local roots, state-wide relationships, and century of experience anchor our work, and our hopes for our home reach high.

Since 1916, we've been a funder and true partner to those who help this state thrive, working hard at each table, across every community, by their side to improve the lives of all Rhode Islanders. Only together, through strong partnerships and building on work that's come before, can we create progress that lasts.





# Commitment

The Rhode Island Foundation is committed to advancing equity centered on valuing and embracing diverse identities and backgrounds and guided by inclusion, accessibility, empathy, mutual respect, and humility in partnership with our team and the community.

# Values



## Inclusion

Fostering an environment and creating experiences in which people of all identities and backgrounds feel welcomed, valued, and a sense of belonging.



## Empathy

Leading with care and responding to community needs with intention.



## Mutual Respect

Creating space for honest dialogue and shared understanding.



## Accessibility

Ensuring opportunities for people with different physical and cognitive abilities to participate, contribute, and thrive.



## Humility

Showing up ready to listen, open to new perspectives, and aware that lasting change requires shared leadership.



# Who We Are

## Neighbors Serving Neighbors

Our work is personal because Rhode Island is home. We know our neighbors and care about every one of them. Through these relationships, we connect the most pressing needs and practical solutions with an eye for equity and a heart for all. We start there to serve the home we share.

## The Community Table

More than ever, the world needs spaces where everyone can come to engage – so we set the table. We gather Rhode Islanders from all sides around common issues, supporting local leaders and transformative ideas. Then together, we catalyze action on our biggest challenges for the common good.

## Opportunity's Stable Ground

The generosity of countless Rhode Islanders has built the foundation we stand on. Because of them, we have state-wide reach and the financial strength to give progress a platform to leap. With a broad and long-term view, we innovate to meet systemic needs. On a century of service, each day we build the trust that gives rise to opportunity.

## A Greater Force For Good

Every act of giving makes an impact; collectively, they're a force that shapes our state. This is where we lead. With bold vision, we focus in on what works best, then we scale it. Both adaptive and adept at coordinating quick action, when we get behind something, we make it move.

# What We Do

Community foundations are a vehicle that anyone can use to turn their generosity into a powerful force for good.

Community foundations, like ours here in Rhode Island, serve a unifying purpose. We possess the unique ability to mobilize generosity and financial resources, build and activate networks of people, provide an enduring safe harbor during times of uncertainty, and celebrate and embrace differing experiences – all with the aim of solving critical community challenges.

As a nonpartisan public charity, the Rhode Island Foundation, like all community foundations, accepts charitable gifts of all shapes and sizes, pools and invests those gifts in financial markets so that they grow over time, and uses a responsible portion of the proceeds from those invested charitable dollars to make grants, provide scholarships, and support organizations and

efforts focused on strengthening our communities and enhancing the quality of life in our state. The design is intended to provide a permanent source of funding to help improve the lives of all Rhode Islanders – now, and for generations to come.

We're always evolving in step with our state to address the issues that matter most to Rhode Islanders. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we have the financial strength and reach to provide much more than funding. We foster collaboration among partners and decision-makers to develop innovative solutions to community needs, and we strengthen the capabilities of individual organizations and sectors to build their own resilient foundations. With a clear point of view on the challenges we face, we're driving progress and making a real difference for our neighbors state-wide.





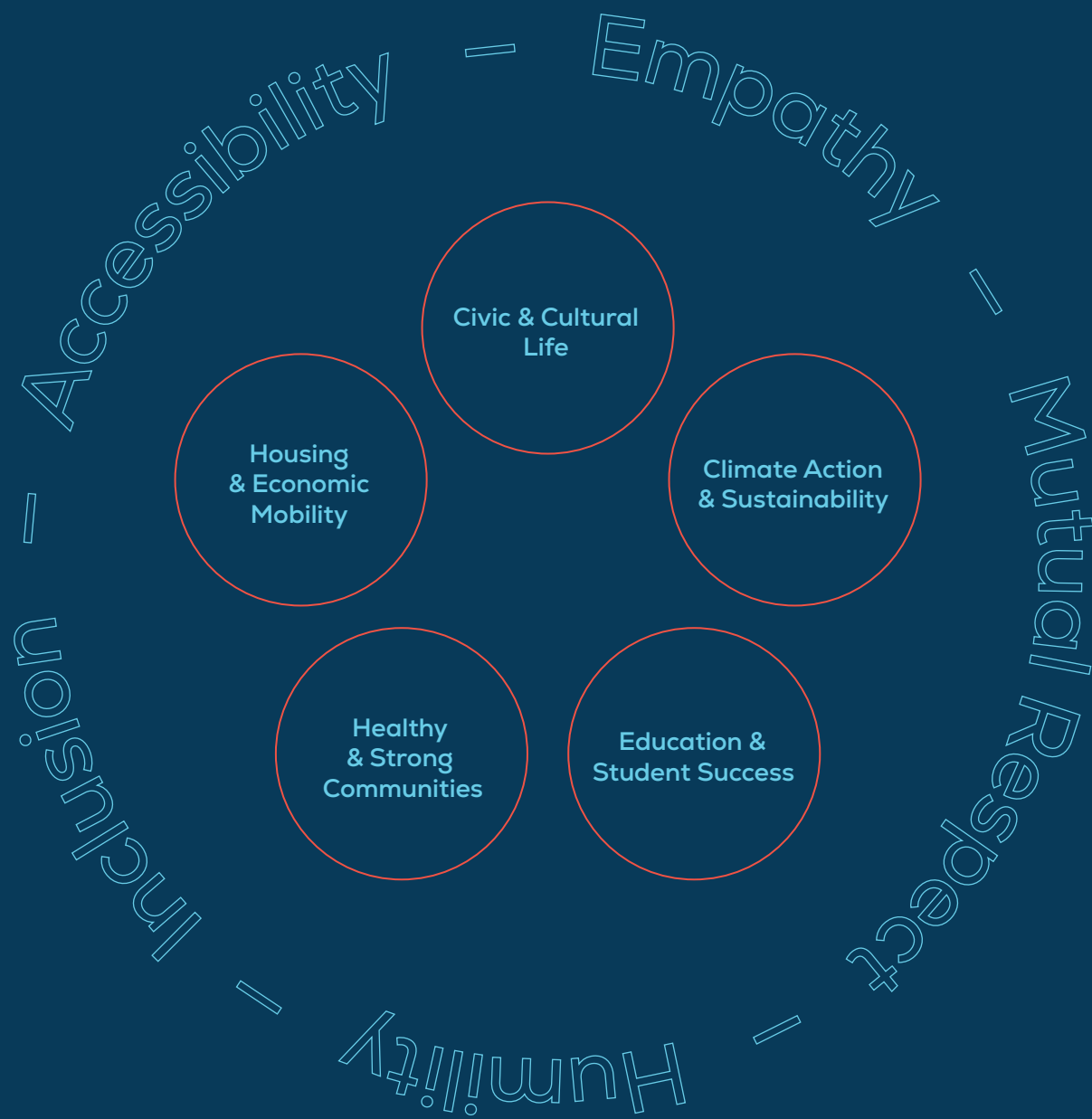


# Community Priorities

# A Thriving Rhode Island

Through deep engagement and discussion with the public, collaboration with our partners, research, and data analysis, we identified a set of community priorities that are essential for a thriving Rhode Island. These priorities were consistently voiced by the community we serve and will guide our efforts in the years ahead. As the state's community foundation we will continue to address Rhode Island's most pressing needs and advance promising solutions, with an eye for equity and a heart for all.

We believe in the potential for meaningful impact and are committed to using our resources, relationships, and knowledge of the community to make Rhode Island a better place for all.



Community Priorities

# Civic and Cultural Life

**Together, we lift every voice.**

We're committed to expanding civic, arts, and cultural opportunities that bring together people of diverse backgrounds to sustain equitable, thriving communities.



# Why does it matter?

When community members are better connected with each other and with the places they live, we also see increases in a range of positive factors including physical health, employment rates, and resilience and response to emergencies.

## Focus Areas

1

Enhancing access to trusted news and information sources, including support of independent local journalism.

2

Creating spaces and opportunities for community connection, volunteering, and arts and cultural activities.

3

Improving K-12 access to high-quality civics learning opportunities and greater access to civics professional development for educators.

4

Innovative, collaborative initiatives beyond the stated focus areas with potential to drive greater impact on civic and cultural life – particularly those that address inequities and/or advance solutions across multiple community priorities.

# Climate Action and Sustainability

Together, we protect the place we call home.

We strive to mitigate the impacts of climate change and develop real resilience, especially within communities deeply and disproportionately affected by environmental pollution.



# Why does it matter?

With a challenge of this magnitude, Rhode Islanders must work together to turn the tide and protect the places we love. Our state's unique susceptibility to climate change requires coordinated attention.

## Focus Areas

1

Supporting community-based solutions to address the sources of climate change and help Rhode Islanders prepare for, withstand, and respond to its impacts – especially in historically under-resourced communities facing greater environmental burdens.

2

Stewarding the natural environment and improving access to local green and open space, especially in environmental justice communities.

3

Supporting circular food systems and improving food sustainability including a focus on creating networks to connect local producers and consumers.

4

Innovative, collaborative initiatives beyond the stated focus areas with the potential to drive greater impact on climate action and sustainability – particularly those that address inequities and/or advance solutions across multiple community priorities.

# Education and Student Success

Together, we're improving education outcomes.

We're committed to strengthening student experiences, educator support, and collaborative efforts to address inequities and set all Rhode Islanders up for educational success.



# Why does it matter?

A thriving state depends on a public education system working equitably and urgently to prepare all students to succeed in life and access pathways to opportunity.

## Focus Areas

1

Strengthening educator capacity, including efforts to support an inclusive teacher workforce by expanding recruitment and retention initiatives.

2

Improving student learning experiences (prioritizing middle, high school, and high-needs populations), focused on youth development and increasing out-of-school support for students in underserved communities.

3

Collaborating on policy, procedure, and use of resources at the state and local level, particularly centering on revisions to the school funding formula, multilingual student supports, creating relevant student opportunities, and addressing workforce challenges.

4

Innovative, collaborative initiatives beyond the stated focus areas with the potential to drive greater impact on education and student success – particularly those that address inequities and/or advance solutions across multiple community priorities.

# Healthy and Strong Communities

**Together, we care for our neighbors.**

We work for equitable access, use, and quality of healthcare, expanding collaborations that address social determinants of health, workforce needs, healthcare costs, and the overall health and well-being of all Rhode Islanders.



# Why does it matter?

Access to high-quality, affordable, sustainable, and culturally appropriate healthcare is critical to the health of Rhode Island as a whole. More than that, it's a fundamental right.

## Focus Areas

1

Improving access, use, and/or coordination of primary care and behavioral health care services, with particular focus on ensuring a robust and representative workforce across diverse care settings.

2

Supporting efforts to mitigate key health disparities that focus on addressing underlying root causes, shifting institutional practices, and/or advancing systemic reform.

3

Sustaining and expanding comprehensive community-based efforts that help individuals and families meet their basic needs and address inequities in the determinants of health for underserved communities.

4

Innovative, collaborative initiatives beyond the stated focus areas with the potential to drive greater impact on healthy and strong communities – particularly those that address inequities and/or advance solutions across multiple community priorities.

# Housing and Economic Mobility

Together, we're closing the gap.

We're identifying and addressing barriers to affordable housing throughout the state, reducing economic disparities, and improving household financial stability.



# Why does it matter?

Economic opportunity should be within reach for all Rhode Islanders, including affordable housing, career mobility, and generational wealth building, particularly within historically underserved communities.

## Focus Areas

1

Expanding availability and access to affordable housing and supports for Rhode Islanders experiencing housing insecurity.

2

Increasing access to effective workforce development programs, including those with wrap-around services and training and credentialing for high-demand jobs and industries.

3

Enhancing financial well-being in underserved communities through initiatives that increase access to financial education and the ability to apply that learning to achieve long-term financial security.

4

Innovative, collaborative initiatives beyond the stated focus areas with the potential to drive greater impact on housing and economic mobility – particularly those that address inequities and/or advance solutions across multiple community priorities.





# Case Studies

## Civic and Cultural Life

### Growing Tomorrow's Civic Leaders Today



Generation Citizen is leading a movement to ensure every young person is equipped and inspired to strengthen our democracy. The organization envisions a future where young people drive efforts to create a more just, participatory, and inclusive society. Through an equity-centered approach to real-world education, Generation Citizen is transforming how civics is taught, providing all students with meaningful opportunities to engage and learn.

With funding from the Rhode Island Foundation's Catalyst Grant program, Generation Citizen will support the Rhode Island Civic Learning Coalition (RICLC), a multiracial, multigenerational, and nonpartisan network committed to ensuring equitable access to high-quality civic education. Founded in 2021, RICLC brings together nonprofits, community groups, educators, youth, and public institutions to promote a democracy where all voices are empowered and heard.

Building on the 2021 Civic Literacy Act, the coalition aims to position Rhode Island as a national leader in civic learning by advancing three priorities: legislative and infrastructure development, educator support and resources, and assessment and youth engagement. Key policy efforts include advocating for a statewide civic

education funding bill, revitalizing the dormant Civics Commission, and promoting the appointment of dedicated civics staff at the Rhode Island Department of Education.

The initiative will also empower educators through conferences, virtual learning communities, and curated high-quality, equity-centered resources. To track progress, the coalition is integrating civics indicators into assessment tools that measure student learning and engagement.

Students serve as active partners in this work, taking leadership roles in advocacy and coalition strategy to ensure civic education reflects their experiences and aspirations.

### Creative Skills. Community Impact.

DownCity Design empowers young people to strengthen their communities by harnessing the creative power of design. The organization offers free afterschool and summer programs that train Providence County teens to become skilled changemakers by designing and fabricating functional projects for public spaces and community groups.

Since 2009, over 3,500 participants have collaboratively created more than 115 new amenities for Providence, including pocket parks, community gardens, and outdoor classrooms, working together to make their city more accessible, healthy, and vibrant.

Rhode Island Foundation support enables DownCity Design to provide programming that addresses critical gaps in the design industry, where only 4% of registered architects and

engineers identify as BIPOC and just 11% of practicing architects in Rhode Island are women. The organization works to reduce systemic barriers for youth interested in creative careers by providing hands-on technical training, career exploration, mentorship, and workforce readiness skills.

**Miliany, a junior at Classical High School, reflects on her experience: “Throughout this project at DownCity Design, we’ve done so much... from building models, to measuring slopes, experimenting with Rhino, and using drills and tools to bring our ideas to life. It’s been a hands-on, creative, and really rewarding time for us.”**

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### Where Representation Takes Center Stage

The Contemporary Theater Company enriches Rhode Island’s cultural landscape by providing inclusive and accessible performing arts opportunities. Based in Wakefield, the organization offers year-round programming including a mainstage season of six plays, improv festivals, youth and adult classes, summer camps, live music performances, and partnerships with local schools.

A signature initiative, the Ocean State Black & Funny Improv Festival, brings together Black performers from across the country to perform and teach alongside local Rhode Island artists. Launched in 2021 with support from Rhode Island Foundation Community Grants (now known as Neighborhood Grants), the Festival provides a critical platform for underrepresented voices in

improv while emphasizing education, mentorship, and collaboration.

Building on the Festival’s success, the organization aims to pilot school workshops led by Ocean State Black & Funny artists during the 2025–2026 season, bringing professional Black performers directly into Rhode Island classrooms to help ensure all young people can see themselves reflected in the performing arts.



## Climate Action and Sustainability

### Protecting the Bay, Then and Now



Protecting the health and future of Narragansett Bay and its watershed has been Save The Bay's goal for the past 50 years. Founded by concerned citizens in 1970, the organization's initial focus was on stopping proposed oil refineries in Jamestown and Tiverton. Through the decades, the focus has evolved and expanded – to industrial pollution in the 80s, habitat restoration in the 90s, and a major investment in education in the 2000s.

The Rhode Island Foundation's grants and capacity building programs have been pivotal to the impact of Save The Bay. The Foundation's support of Save The Bay goes back to the environmental group's earliest days. Records show that the Foundation awarded a 'modest grant' of \$1,000 in 1972 for general support, and the partnership has continued through the decades to the Foundation's more recent multi-year grants to the organization for its advocacy, education, and outreach initiatives.

### Kids Leading the Fight Against Food Waste

The Rhode Island School Recycling Project (RISRP) helps schools reduce food waste and build sustainable practices through its Get Food Smart program. The initiative teaches students to effectively sort lunchroom waste, divert organics for composting, recycle materials, and recover healthy food for donation. By implementing proven best recycling practices, students develop new habits around food waste, sustainable behaviors that reduce what schools send to landfills.

The work addresses a critical environmental challenge: more than 40% of Rhode Island's unused food ends up in landfills, where it creates

methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Food waste is the top single material in the state's waste stream, and Rhode Island's central landfill is anticipated to reach capacity by 2046. Reducing food waste ranks among the most impactful climate solutions available today.

Through hands-on participation in the program, students develop environmental awareness creating habits that extend beyond the cafeteria and become advocates for waste reduction in their schools and communities.

In 2025, a collaborative effort brought \$750,000 in support to RISRP. The Foundation contributed \$500,000, including \$250,000 through its Catalyst Grant program, with a portion of the

## Climate Action and Sustainability

Foundation's contribution funded by a grant from the EverHope Foundation. 11th Hour Racing, a Newport-based organization dedicated to addressing the climate crisis and protecting ocean health, added \$250,000. Together, these investments underscore Rhode Island's commitment to tackling food waste and climate challenges.



### Environmental Justice Begins Outside

Movement Education Outdoors (MEO) empowers Black, Brown, and low-income youth in Rhode Island to connect with the land and communities they call home. Founded in 2018, the organization guides young people in developing leadership skills for transformative change toward environmental and racial justice through land and water-based learning experiences that center the knowledge, joy, and liberation of people of color.

MEO provides multiple access points for youth of color and those with limited economic resources to experience wellness in outdoor environments. Activities include hiking, kayaking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, water and air quality testing, and mindfulness and movement practices. Through place-based education, both youth and practitioners build connections to their environment while developing tools to heal, adapt, and lead in the face of environmental and social change.

Rhode Island Foundation funding assists MEO in providing experiential training and peer support for a cohort of frontline youth workers, practitioners, and outdoor educators. Through this program, participants gain frameworks, tools, and networks to shift power dynamics with young people and create culturally affirming, community-driven learning environments. Each participant will develop a personalized Plan for Change to extend their impact across Providence, Pawtucket, West Warwick, Central Falls, South Kingstown, and the East Bay.



## Education and Student Success

### Youth Lead the Way on Education Justice

The Center for Youth & Community Leadership in Education (CYCLE) at Roger Williams University partners with youth, families, educators, and community stakeholders to build collective power and advance educational justice through organizing, leadership development, and coalition building.

CYCLE's approach is grounded in the belief that building the schools that communities deserve requires collective power derived from shared leadership and trusting relationships between youth, families, and educators. The organization prioritizes the needs and vision of those most impacted by inequities – youth and families of color, low-income communities, immigrants, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities – recognizing that educational justice demands their participation in decisions about democracy, resources, and dignity in public education.

A key example of this work is OurSchoolsPVD, an alliance of youth-serving grassroots organizations including the Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education, Providence Youth Student Movement, Youth In Action, Young Voices, and RI Center for Justice. CYCLE serves as an organizational anchor, while a Youth Leaders Cohort drives all campaign leadership and decision-making, with adults in supporting roles.

**As CYCLE Executive Director Keith Catone notes, student advocacy reflects deeper desires: “They want teachers who look like them. They want schools that reflect who they are and where they are from, and they want voice.”**

The Rhode Island Foundation supports this justice-oriented work through grant funding to CYCLE and many of the youth-led partner organizations.

### Leadership That Lifts Student Outcomes

Founded in 2010, the Center for Leadership and Educational Equity (CLEE) provides leaders with professional learning and support to create equitable outcomes for students in Rhode Island's schools. CLEE envisions every child having their unlimited potential and joy unleashed each day, bringing this vision to life through continuous transformation of systems and educators.

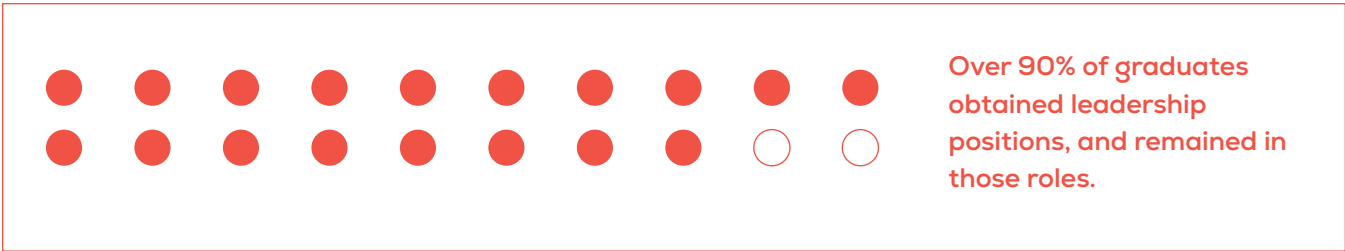
Rhode Island faces challenges common across the nation: high teacher turnover, limited time for professional learning, and insufficient leadership development. CLEE addresses these challenges through collaborative leadership pathways, asynchronous learning experiences, and scalable professional development. The organization's impact is measurable: 92% of graduates from their principal certification program, the Principal Residency Network, obtained leadership positions, and 95% have remained in those roles.

More importantly, CLEE ties their work to student outcomes, with statistically significant progress in increasing equitable outcomes for students.

The Rhode Island Foundation's 2025 funding supports CLEE's efforts in three key areas: expanding leadership development access for educators, including those from underserved communities, developing flexible “anytime” learning modules that allow educators to engage in professional development without the limitations of in-person or synchronous

scheduling, and strengthening capacity to support leaders navigating today's polarized educational landscape. This investment helps ensure educators

can continue to foster student-centered environments, keeping the focus on improving learning for every Rhode Island student.



## Leveling the Playing Field for Student Success

Project GOAL's (Greater Opportunity for Athletes to Learn) mission is to provide a free coeducational program affording every student the opportunity for educational support while being part of a sports team, regardless of financial constraints, cultural background, language barriers, or lack of transportation. The program serves students ages 9 to 14.

Running several days per week after school for three hours, the first half of the programming is dedicated to small-group schoolwork and

tutoring time led by certified teachers, and the second half is focused on soccer and other athletic programming. Project GOAL works collaboratively with students, families, and teachers to set goals for academic and behavioral growth, with regular monitoring of progress.

With support from the Rhode Island Foundation, Project GOAL is expanding significantly – from serving 180 students annually to 250 – and extending its reach beyond Central Falls and Providence to include students in Pawtucket and Woonsocket. This growth enables more young people across Rhode Island to access the combination of academic support and athletic opportunities that helps them thrive both in the classroom and on the field.



## Healthy and Strong Communities

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### Designing Streets That Put Communities First

Providence Streets Coalition is an alliance of 42 community organizations, businesses, schools, neighborhood associations, and individuals advocating for people-friendly streets in Providence. Their mission focuses on safer streets, expanded transportation choices, and policies advancing mobility justice to support equitable, affordable, and sustainable movement for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

The Rhode Island Foundation supports two critical focus areas: “Save RIPTA” advocates for full and sustained funding of Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, partnering transit riders of all backgrounds with labor unions, nonprofits, and institutional allies. “Safe Streets Providence” advocates for transportation infrastructure to meet all road users’ needs and preventing traffic violence. Safe Streets focuses on completing Providence’s planned system of protected paths, trails, and neighborhood greenways to make the city more walkable, bikeable, and ADA-accessible.

This work addresses urgent climate challenges and public health needs. Transportation comprises



40% of Rhode Island’s greenhouse gas emissions, making improved public transit, walking, and biking essential to meeting the state’s decarbonization mandates.

The impact is particularly significant for vulnerable populations: Providence’s highest-crash intersections are concentrated in areas of persistent poverty, RIPTA riders are disproportionately lower-income and Black and Latino, and 7,000 high school students rely on RIPTA as their school transportation. Supporting sustainable transit options helps Rhode Island’s most cost-burdened residents maintain mobility, safety, and quality of life.

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### Helping Neighbors Age at Home – Together

The Village Common of Rhode Island is a nonprofit, volunteer-driven membership organization that supports older adults who wish to age at home. Through a network of local villages – community-based networks of mutual support – The Village Common is seeking to fundamentally change the experience of growing older in Rhode Island. The

organization helps communities establish and sustain villages across the state.

Currently operating in Barrington, Burrillville, Edgewood, Glocester, Providence, and Westerly, the organization connects volunteers with village members for transportation to medical appointments, household chores and minor repairs, technology support, and friendly calls and visits. Villages also host social and educational events, combating the isolation that profoundly affects older adults.

Recent statistics show that 18% of Rhode Island's population is now 65 and over, projected to reach 25% by 2040. With private homecare costs exceeding \$30 per hour, many older Rhode Islanders – particularly the 52% of older households earning under \$50,000 – cannot afford needed support.

The barriers are especially significant for older adults living alone who may be socially isolated or lacking family support, as well as LGBTQ+ older adults, women, and Hispanic and Black seniors who face higher care needs.

With Rhode Island Foundation support, The Village Common is developing new villages in Aquidneck Island, Cumberland, Exeter, and Jamestown, a village for older Hispanic adults on Providence's Southside, and a statewide Circle of Pride to better support LGBTQ+ older adults.

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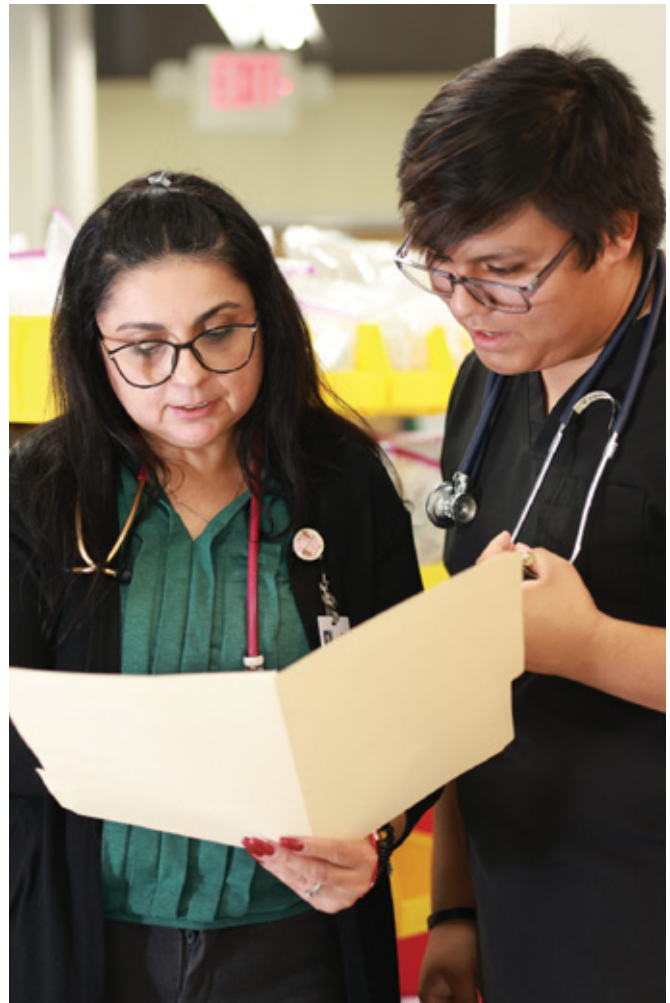
### Culturally Grounded Care When It's Needed Most

Established in 2007, Clínica Esperanza/Hope Clinic is dedicated to breaking down barriers to accessible healthcare with a mission to provide culturally attuned and linguistically appropriate medical care and preventive health services to uninsured Rhode Islanders. The clinic offers a Continuity of Care Clinic, specialty clinics, wraparound services, and the Emergency Room Diversion Project – known as the CHEER walk-in clinic.

The CHEER clinic serves a critical need, helping individuals with acute conditions like infections or chronic illnesses that, left untreated, could result

in severe illness or death. Without CHEER, these patients would overcrowd emergency rooms or delay care until it's too late. In 2024, the clinic experienced a 50% surge in new patients, where the clinic was forced to turn away some seeking care due to capacity constraints.

The Rhode Island Foundation's support is helping expand capacity to meet this growing demand while delivering extraordinary value: for every dollar invested, \$71.18 is saved in preventable emergency room visits and hospitalizations. This funding enables the clinic to serve more uninsured Rhode Islanders while reducing strain on the state's healthcare system and preventing medical crises before they occur.



## Housing and Economic Mobility

### Opening Doors to Home – and Opportunity – Across Northern RI

Neighborworks Blackstone River Valley (NWBRV) is a community development corporation working to enrich neighborhood life and expand affordable housing opportunities throughout Northern Rhode Island, with a focus on Burrillville, Glocester, North Smithfield, and Woonsocket. Their work creates stable housing, fosters economic mobility, and helps build thriving communities.

Despite a state mandate requiring that 10% of each community's housing be affordable, many fall short of this threshold, limiting housing choices, and perpetuating segregation and economic inequality. NWBRV actively works to correct these inequities by developing affordable housing in underrepresented areas, ensuring families of all incomes can live, work, and attend school where they choose. Equity drives their approach through

culturally specific homebuyer education, barrier-free hiring practices, and inclusive marketing. For nearly a decade, NWBRV has operated Accessing Home, a statewide homeownership program, in partnership with AmeriCorps. The program serves low to moderate income Rhode Islanders statewide, offering resident resource navigation and eviction prevention, while providing paid career training for AmeriCorps members as HUD-certified resident services coordinators.

Rhode Island Foundation support has been instrumental in sustaining NWBRV's work, including stepping in when federal funding cuts threatened the continuity of the Accessing Home program.

During the most recent program year, 13 AmeriCorps members supported over 4,000 individuals, the highest total in the program's nine-year history – and helped nearly 600 Rhode Islanders transition into safe, healthy, affordable housing.

### The Data Behind Better Housing Policy

For more than 20 years, HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University has led statewide efforts to provide timely data and research that informs the creation and implementation of affordable housing policies. The organization envisions a Rhode Island where communities embrace a variety of housing choices, enabling residents of all incomes to live in healthy, quality homes within vibrant, flourishing neighborhoods.

Their flagship publication, the annual Housing Fact Book, delivers comprehensive housing affordability data for each of Rhode Island's 39 municipalities, serving as an essential resource for state and local

officials and community groups. This work is made possible in part through the Foundation's general operating support, which assists HousingWorks RI in producing its Fact Book and sustaining research efforts. The report analyzes critical issues including housing cost burden – with the 2025 report revealing that one-third of Rhode Island households are cost burdened – providing evidence to support policy decisions and resource allocation.

HousingWorks RI further analyzes data through the lens of race and ethnicity, identifying persistent challenges facing communities of color in homeownership rates and cost burdens. The organization also strengthens the case for housing as a social determinant of health, documenting connections between housing stability, quality, and



affordability with health outcomes. This research framework positions housing policy as integral to community wellbeing and public health, expanding

understanding of housing's role beyond shelter to encompass broader quality of life.

### Multilingual Talent Strengthening Rhode Island's Workforce

The Rhode Island College Workforce Development Hub partners with residents, community organizations, and stakeholders across education, government, healthcare, and industry to build the knowledge and skills of Rhode Islanders, creating pathways to economic opportunity and career advancement.

As part of its workforce programming, and with support from the Rhode Island Foundation, the Hub offers a Medical Assistant Certificate of Continuing Study – a contextualized ESL workforce training program designed specifically for multilingual learner adults. This innovative approach combines language acquisition with career preparation, helping participants overcome barriers to entering healthcare careers. Students gain essential skills, including clinical testing, basic pharmacology, medical terminology,

electronic charting, and HIPAA compliance, among other competencies needed for success in healthcare settings.

A key component of the training includes internship placements at medical sites throughout Rhode Island, providing hands-on experience in real-world healthcare environments. Partner organizations include Clínica Esperanza, Comprehensive Community Action Program, Providence Community Health Centers, and Blackstone Valley Health Center. These placements allow students to apply their learning while building professional networks and demonstrating their capabilities to potential employers.

By combining language learning, technical training, and practical experience, the program creates a pathway for multilingual learners to build successful healthcare careers that support families and communities.

# Only together can we create progress that lasts.

Separately, we can have impact, but only together, can we build the future we all hope for.

As a nonpartisan public charity, we accept charitable gifts of all shapes and sizes, and we pool and invest those gifts in financial markets so that they grow over time.

We use a responsible portion of the proceeds from those investments to make grants, provide scholarships, and support organizations and efforts focused on strengthening our communities and enhancing the quality of life in our state.

Giving to the Foundation is much more than a financial transaction. You're able to work with experts in charitable giving and grantmaking professionals who are working daily with the state's nonprofit sector.

No matter how much you give, you are part of a powerful force for good, helping to address community priorities essential for a thriving state.

## Ways to Give

### Establish a Fund

Create an unrestricted fund, donor-advised fund, designated fund, or field-of-interest fund in alignment with the Foundation's community priorities and to support causes important to you.

### Support an Existing Fund

Contribute to the Fund for Rhode Island or another established fund that aligns with your interests.

### Planned Giving

Include the Foundation in your will, donate securities, or explore options like charitable trusts and annuities.

# Partner with Us

## Flexibility

There are many ways to give. We'll work with you, or your advisor, to determine the simplest – and best – way to make your philanthropic hopes a reality.

## Sound Investments

Charitable gifts become part of one of three highly-diversified investment pools. We'll work with you to choose a pool that fits. Our scale allows access to some of the top-performing money managers in the country.

## Expertise

We know Rhode Island. Our team of grant makers and philanthropic advisors will work to ensure that your charitable gift has impact. We have the resources, relationships, and expertise to offer guidance and to perform necessary due diligence.

## Permanence

Through the Rhode Island Foundation, your charitable dollars create a permanent legacy in, and for, Rhode Island.

## Tax Benefits

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity as classified by the Internal Revenue Service.

Your contributions qualify for the maximum allowable deduction for income, gift, and estate tax purposes.

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# How to Get Started

Every act of giving makes an impact; collectively, they're a force that shapes our state.

Connect with a member of our development team at [Giving@RIFoundation.org](mailto:Giving@RIFoundation.org) or by calling (401) 427-4040 to learn more.