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**Rhode Island Foundation**  
*Annual Report to the Community*

25

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# Welcome

We are pleased to share the Rhode Island Foundation's 2025 Annual Report to the Community, a reflection of a year defined by significant challenge and the extraordinary local action that rose to meet it.

Across Rhode Island, the organizations and individuals who serve our neighbors faced mounting pressure: federal funding freezes, growing food insecurity, deepening civic divisions, and an education system in need of fundamental reform. In each of these moments, this community responded with generosity, urgency, and purpose.

Last year's results speak to the power of collective generosity. In 2025, the Foundation raised \$82 million in new funds and awarded a record-breaking \$93 million in grants to more than 2,600 nonprofit organizations across the state. Our total assets grew to \$1.7 billion, and our investment portfolio returned 16.2% – resources that will continue to benefit the people of Rhode Island in perpetuity.

This report dives into some of the details behind those numbers. It is filled with stories of what it looks like when philanthropy and community align around shared values.

It looks like Child & Family Services, celebrating 160 years of serving Rhode Islanders, deepening their partnership with the Foundation through a new primary endowment fund that will sustain their mission for generations to come.

It looks like students at Raymond LaPerche Elementary in Smithfield leading their school toward a more sustainable future through the Rhode Island School Recycling Project, now reaching 63 schools and on track to serve every public school in the state by 2030.

It looks like stepping up when the impact of federal policy and funding changes began

rippling through the state. With support from people like you, we were able to offer more than \$5 million in emergency funding through our new Community Partner Resilience Fund – in the form of emergency grants to 76 food pantries and meal sites statewide, funding for the Lawyers' Committee for Rhode Island's Nonprofit Legal Protection Project, which helped 16 local organizations recover \$7.8 million in challenged federal funding, and more.

It looks like the Blue Ribbon Commission on school funding, an effort that brought together a diverse group of Rhode Island educators, community advocates, and policy experts to craft a bold proposal to modernize how Rhode Island funds public education.

And it looks like each and every Rhode Islander that chose to invest in our collective future by opening new funds, committing planned gifts, and with every act of giving large and small – among them Jill and Bill Caskey, the late Herman Hillson Rose, and Sharon Kurose, who established the G. Alan Kurose, M.D. Healthcare Impact Fund in honor of her husband Al, a beloved physician, nationally recognized healthcare leader, and longtime Foundation board member and chair, who passed away in October 2025.

Lasting progress requires more than any one organization, donor, or community can achieve alone. It requires partnership, persistence, and the willingness to work toward a future that is bigger than any of us.

Thank you for being part of that work.

All the best,

*David N. Cicilline, President & CEO*  
*Ann-Marie Harrington, Chair, Board of Directors*

# Our 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.

# What We Do

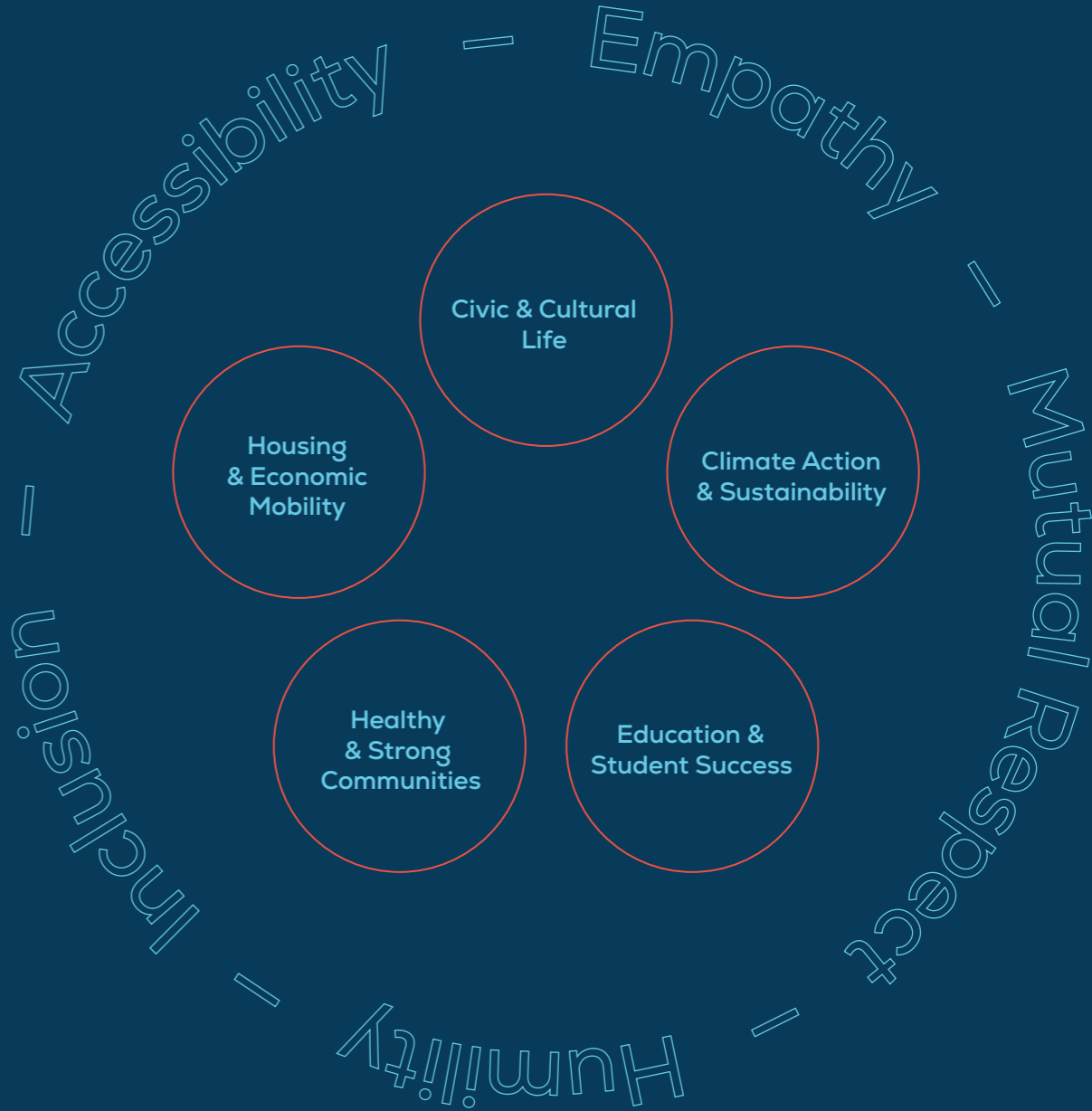


# A Thriving Rhode Island

# Community Priorities

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.



The Rhode Island Foundation awarded a record-breaking \$93 million in grants to more than 2,600 nonprofit organizations in 2025.

About two-thirds of the grants were directed by Foundation donors; and about one-third of the grants were made at the discretion of the Foundation.

Sixty-percent of the total grant dollars awarded in 2025 went to organizations supported by both donor-directed and Foundation-directed grants.

This alignment in funding demonstrates shared priorities between the Foundation and our philanthropic partners.

Total Foundation Assets

\$1.7B

Total Funds Raised

\$82M

Raised for Civic Leadership

\$723K

Scholarships Awarded

\$4.6M

Grants Awarded  
to 2,600 Organizations

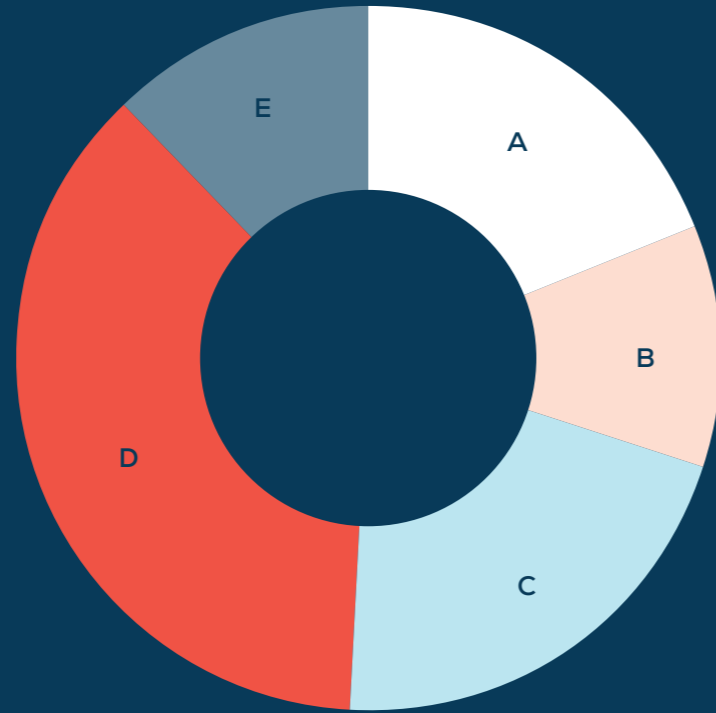
\$93M

Total Fund Investment Return  
for the Year

16.2%

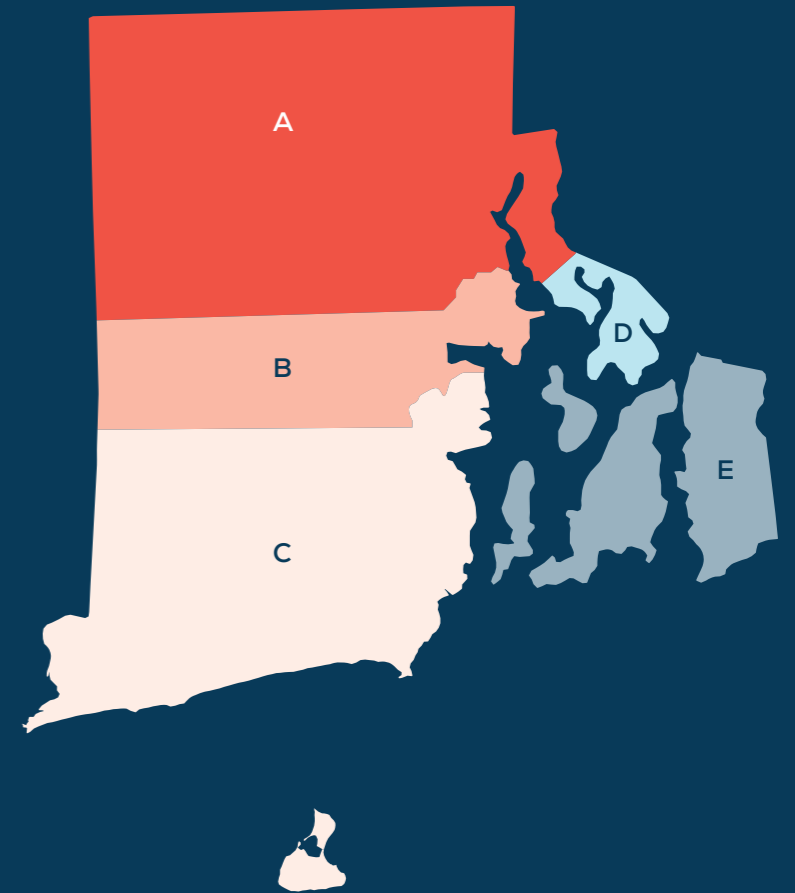
### 2025 Foundation-Directed Grants by Community Priority

- A** Civic and Cultural Life  
19%
- B** Climate Action and Sustainability  
11%
- C** Education and Student Success  
21%
- D** Healthy and Strong Communities  
37%
- E** Housing and Economic Mobility  
12%



### 2025 Foundation-Directed Grants by County\*

- A** Providence County: 66.2%  
State Population: 60.8%
- B** Kent County: 8.5%  
State Population: 15.5%
- C** Washington County: 6.6%  
State Population: 11.7%
- D** Bristol County: 1%  
State Population: 4.5%
- E** Newport County: 10.5%  
State Population: 7.5%
- Outside RI\*\*: 7.3%



\* County percentage calculated by grantee address. A large majority of grantees serve beyond the county they reside in.

\*\* Includes scholarships to support students attending college out of state.

Most recent Census Bureau Estimates (2024)

# Charitable Giving

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

On the following pages you will find a handful of stories that illustrate our donors' incredible generosity. We hope they serve as an inspiration, and a reminder that **only together** can we build the future we all hope for.

## G. Alan Kurose, M.D. Healthcare Impact Fund

No matter the challenge before him, Dr. George Alan Kurose returned to the same question every time: "What's best for the patient?" For Al, as he was known to those close to him, this was never a platitude; it was a discipline. He practiced it daily, first as an internal medicine physician in East Providence and later, as a nationally recognized healthcare leader.

Al passed away on October 30, 2025, at the age of 64, after a battle with pancreatic cancer that he faced with characteristic grace. His career spanned private practice, the presidency of Coastal Medical, where he helped build one of the country's best-performing Accountable Care Organizations, and senior leadership roles at Lifespan and Nuvance Health. He testified before the U.S. Senate on value-based care. Yet those who knew him best say he never spoke in terms of "I." It was always "we."

"He brought the right people into the room and gave them all equal footing," recalls his wife, Sharon. "He never thought he had all the answers. His ability to bring people together and make them feel comfortable sharing their knowledge, always working toward what's best for the patient -that was the secret of his success."

Sharon established the G. Alan Kurose, M.D. Healthcare Impact Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation to honor the two causes closest to his heart. "It combines the two things he was most passionate about, other than his family," she explains, "improving healthcare for Rhode Islanders and the work of the Rhode Island Foundation." Al served the Foundation as both

board member and board chair from 2017 through 2025.

This innovative fund will support an annual award and the Foundation's grantmaking in healthcare. Each year, the G. Alan Kurose, MD Healthcare Impact Award will recognize an individual, team, or organization advancing patient outcomes while improving quality and reducing cost. Alongside the award, the fund will expand the Foundation's discretionary grantmaking in healthcare, with a priority toward primary care, reflecting Al's belief that better care and lower costs are not opposing forces, but rather two sides of the same commitment to patients.

Al's daughter, Megan, sees the award as an important reminder of her father's ability to hold both the sweeping and the personal in view at once. "He always had a larger view in his mind, but he worked from the ground up. It always came down to the individual and how their care could be improved. Those years of taking care of patients were the great basis for his work as a healthcare policy reform leader."

For Sharon, the fund carries a deeper purpose still. "When you die at 64, there are grandchildren you haven't met yet. A fund like this is a legacy - it's a way that future generations of the Kurose family, as well as those who cared about Al, can come to know him and support the work he valued."

The Foundation is honored to steward this fund and to carry forward Al's legacy and vision for a healthier Rhode Island.



# Caskey Family Fund

Jill and Bill Caskey both arrived in Rhode Island in 1981 as college students. She, from Cape Cod, and he, from Oklahoma City, with a sense, he jokes, that he may have been a Rhode Islander in a past life. Although they lived in the same state, they wouldn't find each other until a few years after graduation. They married, spent seven years in Atlanta, and ultimately returned to the place they loved. Over forty years later, Rhode Island is unambiguously home.

That deep sense of belonging is at the heart of the Caskey Family Fund, a new unrestricted fund at the Rhode Island Foundation – one of the most flexible and meaningful forms of philanthropic giving.

The Caskeys have been giving to the Foundation for a decade, including to its Civic Leadership Fund, a current use fund supporting advocacy, civic engagement, convening, and research. Over time, as the Foundation communicated how the Caskeys' gifts were specifically being used, it deepened their trust and broadened their thinking.

**“We thought about leaving money to individual institutions,” Jill explains, “but organizations come and go. Having one place that adapts to changing needs felt like a positive move.”**

Instead of waiting to establish a fund through their estate, they decided to give meaningfully now, during their lifetimes.

For Bill, unrestricted giving carries a particular logic. “It might sometimes feel less glamorous,” he acknowledges. “You’re giving a little to the engine of the car. Everything that keeps an organization going – unrestricted giving helps with that.”

He also values the Foundation’s rigorous grantmaking that aligns closely with the Caskeys’ philanthropic interests. “When the Foundation grants to an organization, the research and legwork have been done appropriately. It feels good to know the oversight has been done.”

Education, food security, and climate health all matter to the Caskeys, and all are priorities the Foundation addresses. But what drew them to unrestricted giving was also something larger: confidence that the Foundation would direct resources where they were most needed, even toward organizations they’d never heard of, expanding their generosity beyond the familiar. “Names pop up as places that have been funded and I think – what a cool thing that’s happening,” Jill shares. “It keeps our giving from being limited to just what we know.”

The experience of opening the fund was, in their words, smooth, transparent, and well-guided. And the fund itself is designed to endure – open to contributions from family and friends, a thread connecting the Caskeys to Rhode Island well into the future.

“The Rhode Island Foundation will be around long after we are,” says Bill. “This fund represents a profound connection to the state we love, and that felt like a very good reason to make it part of our story.”



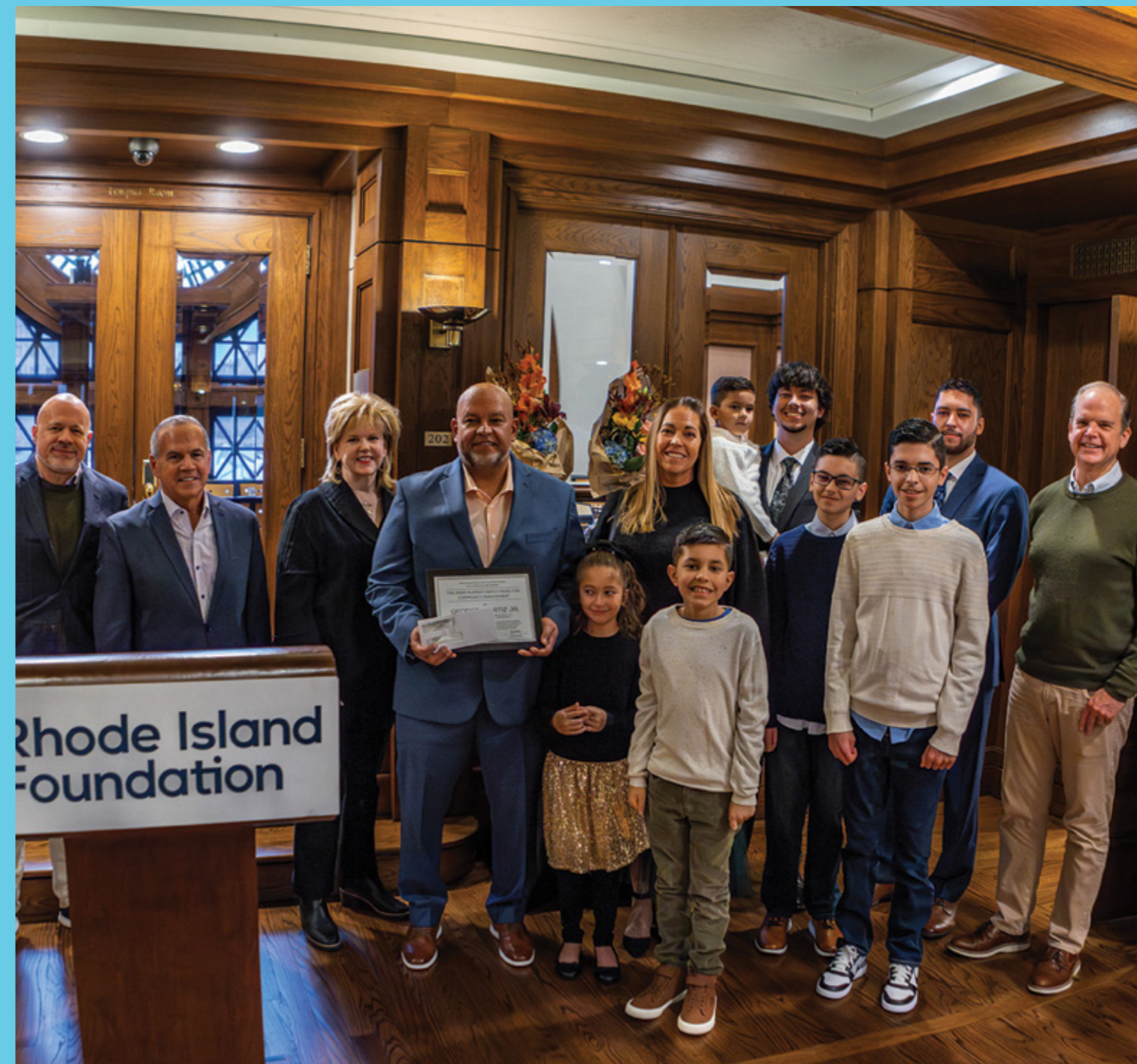
## A Full Circle Moment

Last year, the Rhode Island Foundation honored the Murray Family with its annual Carter Inspiring Partner Award, recognizing their deep commitment to philanthropy in Rhode Island.

Through their family foundation, the Murrays have invested millions in local nonprofits and established the Murray Family Prize for Community Enrichment at the Rhode Island Foundation, which annually awards \$50,000 to an individual working faithfully and quietly to improve lives across our state.

This year’s Prize was proudly presented to George L. Ortiz, Jr., co-founder and CEO of the ELISHA Project, a nonprofit that provides food, furniture, hygiene products, and household essentials to Rhode Islanders in need through a network of nonprofits, churches, schools, and municipal agencies from Warren to Woonsocket.

Together, the Murray Family’s generosity and George Ortiz’s tireless service embody a shared vision for community enrichment, one that continues to create ripples of impact across Rhode Island year after year.



# “I wanted to leave an imprint.”

## The Legacy of Herman Hillson Rose

“Every one of you who has created a fund here deserves an award, but tonight there is one person we want to single out for special recognition.”

Those words were spoken at a donor appreciation event in 2004, in honor of Herman Hillson Rose. He received the Rhode Island Foundation’s Inspiring Partner Award that June evening – and more than two decades later, following his 2026 passing at the age of 93, Herman’s memory and generosity continue to inspire.

“Herman was an incredibly warm, humble man,” shares Alison Jackson, Foundation Director of Development Operations. “When we heard, ‘Herman is coming in,’ so many of us would stop what we were doing to say hello. Everyone wanted to talk with him because you always walked away feeling better. It was just a joy to get to know him.”

His visits to the Foundation, most often dressed in khakis, blue blazer, and a Red Sox baseball cap, were unforgettable. So was the man himself.

Herman grew up as the son of working parents. He became a land surveyor for the Army in Panama, earned a degree in civil engineering in 1955, and eventually made his way to Rhode

Island in 1961, where he worked on key highway and planning projects that shaped the state. A move to the Department of Community Affairs deepened his belief in what he called “a fuller world,” one where the connections between people, place, and opportunity all mattered.

That belief guided his philanthropy. Herman once described his approach in the language of his engineering roots: “I was going to provide the lubrication between two rough surfaces so people can get somewhere. I want to take a project that exists in somebody’s mind and bring it to reality.”

Herman established his first donor-advised fund with the Foundation in 1986. Over time, one fund became four, each reflecting another dimension of his values: the Herman H. Rose Civic, Cultural and Media Access Fund, focused on libraries and cultural institutions; the DeRabbanan Fund, strengthening Jewish community organizations; the Rhode Island Rose Award Fund, honoring individuals making meaningful community impact; and the Skagitonians to Preserve Farmland Fund, supporting agriculture, farmers, and farmland.

“Herman felt you had to give back,” remembers Kathleen Malin, Chief Technology Officer and Vice President of Operations. “If you were blessed, you had a moral obligation to help.”

Herman funded grants to organizations across Rhode Island and took that responsibility seriously, reading applications, and visiting nonprofits to understand the work firsthand. At the Tomaquag Museum, historical photographs of Indigenous Peoples were preserved and archived. The Pawtucket Public Library digitized historical newspapers. Bristol gained tools to make town meetings accessible to all residents. Rhode Island Latino Arts documented the rich history of Latin Americans in Rhode Island, and immigrant gardeners in Providence received multilingual support. “His currency and richness were really his heart,” recalls Anna Cano Morales, Vice President of Equity & Inclusion. “He was very adamant that things need to be preserved.”

Herman told Foundation staff he had no intention of keeping his money – and he meant it. Over his lifetime, his generosity resulted in more than \$1.5 million in grants distributed to communities and causes he believed in.

It was the personal investment of time, dedication, and enthusiasm, as well as financial support, that set him apart. “We weren’t just his partner,” reflects Kelly Riley, Stewardship and Cultivation Officer. “He was our partner in this work.”

“I wanted to leave an imprint,” Herman said. “In some places, it looks like a highway, in others it looks like a particular collection in a library... something concrete in the community that people are using every day.”

The imprint he left, with people and in places too numerous to name, continues to make a difference.

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*The Rhode Island Foundation is grateful for Herman’s long-standing partnership and honored to steward his philanthropic legacy.*



### Music, Mission, and Community

Few settings capture the spirit of Rhode Island quite like Roger Williams Park, and the RWP Pops concert brings that spirit to life every year. As a proud sponsor of this beloved free community event, the Rhode Island Foundation was thrilled to see thousands of residents from every corner of the state gather under the open sky to enjoy a vibrant performance by the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra. The evening was a powerful reminder of what makes our

state special – and the perfect backdrop for celebrating the individuals who make it even stronger, as the Foundation presented three of its most prestigious annual awards on the Temple to Music stage.

Together, these three honorees embody the Foundation's deep commitment to recognizing those who work tirelessly to improve lives and strengthen communities across Rhode Island.



**Angelo Garcia**, co-founder and executive director of the Segue Institute for Learning, received the Trailblazer Award for his innovative approaches to education addressing systemic challenges including summer learning loss, chronic absenteeism, and teacher burnout.

**Dr. Amy Nunn**, CEO of the Rhode Island Public Health Institute, received the Community Leadership Award in recognition of her significant contributions to public health through leadership, advocacy, and innovative solutions.



**Magistrate Patrick Burke** was honored with the Civic Leadership Award for more than 20 years of exemplary service in the Rhode Island Superior Court, marked by fairness, empathy, and efficiency.

# Celebrating What's Possible: Child & Family at 160

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way it treats its children.”

– Nelson Mandela

In 1866, as local resident Ellen Townsend walked the streets of Newport, she witnessed the tragedy of orphaned children, left without family or means, begging for survival – one of the many devastating social impacts of the Civil War. The plight of these children moved her to act, persuading her brother, Christopher, to donate their family home along with \$500 for repairs, establishing the Home for Friendless Children: a place where the most vulnerable in the community could find care.

That founding act of compassion has endured 160 years.

Today, the safety and shelter that began at Ellen’s home has evolved into Child & Family, one of Rhode Island’s most trusted human service organizations – its reach expanding over the years to support not only children, but families and elders across the entire state. And while much has changed since those early days at 24 School Street, the organization’s deepest conviction has not.

“We believe that people thrive in families,” says Susan Jacobsen, who joined Child & Family as President and Chief Executive Officer in 2025, “and that families work best when the community cares for all of its members.”

## A Different Kind of Organization

What makes Child & Family genuinely unusual – even among organizations that have served their communities for generations – is the range of people it serves and the way that it serves them.

Most human service agencies specialize. They focus on children, or on housing, or on elder care. Child & Family does something unique. Operating community engagement centers in both Middletown and Providence, it offers services to Rhode Islanders at every stage of life, from early childhood care and education, to support for elders to maintain independence. The Sandpipers Early Learning Center in Middletown welcomes children as young as six weeks old. At the other end of the spectrum, the Aging Well program helps seniors remain safely in their own homes. There are family therapy and substance use recovery programs, foster care services that match children with nurturing families, independent living programs for teenagers aging out of foster care, and behavioral health services that treat not just the individual, but the whole family.

“I don’t know of any other organization that captures a lifespan quite the same way,” shares Patricia Holliday, the organization’s board chair.

The through-line connecting it all is a simple but powerful idea: when people are struggling, they don’t need to be told what’s wrong with them. They need someone to see what’s strong in them – and build from there.



## Equalizing Opportunity: Creating a Fair and Transparent Funding System for Rhode Island’s Public Schools

Rhode Island’s school funding system needs an update—and after a year of work, the Blue Ribbon Commission has a plan to fix it. With research and support from Brown University’s Annenberg Institute, local education leaders and community partners have come together around recommendations for a fairer, more equitable funding system that meets the needs of today’s students and families.

The Commission has taken a holistic look at the whole system and developed a forward-looking vision for what a modern, student-centered funding approach can and should accomplish—one that reflects changes in our economy and enrollment patterns, stays resilient to political shifts that create unpredictability, and embodies the values of Rhode Islanders.

To learn more about the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission and how you can make a difference, visit [RIFoundation.org/FairFunding](https://RIFoundation.org/FairFunding).

“When people let you into some of the hardest and most challenging moments of their lives, you are walking on hallowed ground,” says Jacobsen. “If we only see what’s wrong, it’s tremendously disrespectful.”

This distinct perspective shapes how Child & Family’s teams approach their work. Rather than asking families to fit into predefined categories of need, they ask what’s working – who in the family’s circle of friends, neighbors, and extended family can provide support, and how those natural connections can be nurtured and strengthened.



The organization’s family therapy programs are built on a foundation of “noble intent,” the idea that people’s behavior, even when it looks difficult or seems confusing from the outside, is almost always an attempt to meet a real need. Finding that intent, rather than labeling the behavior, opens a very different kind of conversation. It is also a reminder that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, deserves to be seen clearly, treated with dignity, and given access to the quality of care and education that helps families, and in turn, communities, to flourish.

### Willing to Change

Over its 160 years, the organization has also shown a willingness to completely rethink how it delivers on its mission to strengthen individuals, families, and communities. When research challenged long-held assumptions about the best way to care for young people, Child & Family listened.

For decades, the organization operated group homes for young people, as the prevailing belief at the time held that best practice involved removing struggling teenagers from difficult home situations and placing them in structured residential settings – homelike, but not home.

As research accumulated and advanced, it became clear that this residential model often caused more harm than good. Young people in these settings frequently felt isolated and disconnected – from their families, their communities, and any lasting sense of belonging. The evidence pointed firmly toward keeping families together whenever possible, and toward family-based foster care when that wasn’t an option.

Child & Family changed course.

“We’ve really moved assertively in that direction,” says Rob Archer, Vice President of Quality and Program Operations, who has been with the organization for 19 years. “These are research-based approaches – ways to work with families that actually work.”



Today, the organization operates just one independent living home for young adults aging out of foster care. Its energy has shifted toward in-home support programs, quality care for children with complex needs, and community-based services that help families stay together and grow stronger.

Making that kind of structural shift takes resources, time, stability, and the ability to weather the transition. It is precisely why the

organization’s relationship with the Rhode Island Foundation – and the endowment that anchors it – matters as much as it does.

“Throughout the history of this organization, philanthropy has allowed us to make very big pivots in moments when we knew that was the right thing to do,” Jacobsen explains.

### A Place for Everyone

Child & Family’s Sandpipers Early Learning Center demonstrates what becomes possible when quality care is made accessible to everyone.

Located at the Middletown community center, serving children six weeks through age five, Sandpipers offers full-time early care and education to families across the full economic spectrum. Through a sliding scale tuition model, high-quality early education is available to every child regardless of what their family can afford.

That belief, that everyone deserves quality care and support regardless of their circumstances, shapes not only the programs that Child & Family provides, but also how it thinks about those it serves and the barriers that often stop families from asking for help in the first place.

“If your family is having a hard time, and you know that, with some support, you could make it better – that’s the time to reach out,” Jacobsen says. “We often wait far too long because we think we have to do it all on our own. My hope is that coming here feels different, not because something is wrong with you, but because you can build on what’s right.”

### An Enduring Partnership

The Rhode Island Foundation has been part of Child & Family’s story for over three decades, providing more than \$3.36 million in grants since 1989. That support has reached across the organization’s wide breadth of work – from early childhood education to family therapy to capacity building – reflecting a shared belief that strong, healthy communities are built on access to care, education, and opportunity.

Keith Tavares, now the Foundation’s Director of Capacity Building, came to know Child & Family as a staff member, helping lead the capital campaign that built the Middletown community center, which opened in 2009. That experience introduced him to the value of a deeper, long-term financial partnership – one that led to the establishment of the Townsend Planned Giving Endowment Fund at the Foundation in 2016. In 2025, that partnership reached a new milestone. Child & Family has established a primary endowment fund at the Rhode Island Foundation, an investment in the organization’s future and its ability to continue serving Rhode Island’s most vulnerable residents.

Jess Kennedy, Vice Chair of the Board and Immediate Past President, says the decision about where to place that endowment was straightforward. “We’re both Rhode Island institutions serving the common good,” she says. “We wanted to work with an organization that speaks our language, that understands what we do and what’s important. It aligned with our mission in every way.”

Where the organization invests its assets, Jacobsen believes, also says something about what it stands for. “Our endowment at the Rhode Island Foundation contributes to positive community impact and a mutual commitment to Rhode Island’s children,” she says. “That matters a great deal.”

“Child & Family embodies the Rhode Island Foundation’s deepest commitments – ensuring every child has access to quality care and education, that families have the supports they need to stay together, that our elders can age with dignity, and that no Rhode Islander is left behind because of the circumstances of their birth,” says Rhode Island Foundation President and CEO David Cicilline. “This enduring partnership and the endowment that will carry their work into the future is a testament to what’s possible when philanthropy and community align around shared values.”

## What Comes Next

As Child & Family marks its 160th anniversary, the work ahead is concrete and ambitious. The organization is expanding its evidence-based family services across the state, including a first-of-its-kind program supporting youth at risk of gang involvement. Developed in partnership with Functional Family Therapy LLC, Child & Family was the first organization in the world to implement it.

There are plans to deepen evaluation partnerships with universities, ensuring that data and outcomes continue to drive where resources go and how programs evolve. Growing the endowment remains a priority, giving the organization financial flexibility to respond to emerging community needs and to pivot when evidence points to a better way.

And there is also a steady, ongoing commitment to investing in the people who do the work: competitive salaries, robust benefits, and professional development that reflects the belief that staff who feel valued and supported are best positioned to help the families who need them.



For Child & Family, this milestone anniversary is, above all, a moment of gratitude – for the donors, partners, and community members whose sustained investment has made all of it possible. And for an organization that has always defined itself by its willingness to respond, it is also a moment of readiness.

Reflects Jacobsen, “This is a time to say thank you to the community for its investment, its love, and its care for this organization. The board is committed to honoring our legacy, while writing the next chapter. We know where we are, what we need to do, and we have a clear vision for how we are going to get there.”



## Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

Members of our community gathered at the Rhode Island Foundation to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month over vino y comida, honoring the vibrant legacy of the Hispanic community, whose deep roots in Rhode Island have shaped and enriched our state’s culture, traditions, and identity for generations.

The evening featured the presentation of our 2nd Annual Hispanic Heritage Month Award to Francis Parra, executive director of Teatro ECAS and longtime educator, in recognition of her inspiring leadership and enduring impact.

# Standing With Our Community

Responding with urgency and purpose, the Rhode Island Foundation mobilized over \$5 million to support and protect Rhode Islanders served by local community organizations.

When federal funding freezes began rippling through Rhode Island’s nonprofit sector in early 2025, the consequences were immediate and impossible to ignore. Food pantries faced the prospect of empty shelves. Meal delivery programs for seniors braced for disruption. Housing organizations faced impossible staffing decisions. For the thousands of Rhode Islanders who depend on these services, the stakes could not have been higher.

The Foundation responded swiftly, committing over \$3 million in emergency support for nonprofits whose federal grants had been frozen or cut, and providing funding for the legal resources those organizations needed to protect their missions and continue serving Rhode Islanders. In partnership with donors who rallied to help their neighbors, the Foundation went on to exceed that commitment, investing over \$5 million by year’s end.

At the heart of the Foundation’s response was its new Community Partner Resilience Fund (CPR Fund), through which the Foundation awarded grants to nonprofits directly impacted by federal funding losses. Seeded with \$500,000 from the Foundation’s own reserves and matched by generous donors, the Fund offered grants of up to \$50,000 to help organizations with scenario planning, financial planning, crisis

communications, fundraising consulting, and other professional services.

Ultimately, \$1.2 million in CPR Fund grants reached 27 nonprofits across the state, including Family Service of Rhode Island, Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, Progreso Latino, and the Women’s Resource Center in Newport, among others. Nearly 90 percent of applicants reported that they had already cut – or would soon need to cut – services to Rhode Islanders.

For Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island, which delivers nutritious meals and daily wellness checks to thousands of older and disabled adults, a \$50,000 grant helped the organization strengthen its volunteer program, a strategic investment in the future of its Home-Delivered Meal Program and long-term stability of services.

“The uncertainty surrounding key federal funding streams led us to seek emergency support through the CPR Fund,” said Meghan Grady, Executive Director of Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island. “Most of our clients would have nowhere else to turn if service is disrupted, so we are taking proactive steps to protect those who rely on us.”



The response from CPR Fund grantees captured just how much Foundation support meant to organizations working on the front lines. Michelle Wilcox, President & CEO of Crossroads Rhode Island, expressed gratitude for the Foundation’s investment as homelessness in Rhode Island neared record levels. “Each success story, each person who finds hope, opportunity, and a home, is made possible in part by caring partners like you,” she wrote.



Beyond the CPR Fund, the Foundation’s support included \$2 million across two rounds of its Community Priority and Capacity Building Grant programs, prioritizing organizations impacted by federal cuts. And when the SNAP funding crisis hit, the Foundation, bolstered by donor support, awarded \$1.9 million in emergency grants to 76 food pantries and meal sites statewide, helping ensure Rhode Islanders had access to food until federal funding for the program was restored.

For many community organizations, emergency funding was only part of the answer. They also needed legal expertise to push back against funding terminations, understand their rights, and protect their missions. The Foundation recognized this need, committing \$100,000 to the Lawyers’ Committee for Rhode Island (LCRI)

Nonprofit Legal Protection Project (NLPP), to help fund pro-bono legal assistance, training, and information sharing for nonprofits impacted by federal actions.

Founded in December 2024, NLPP quickly became an essential resource for Rhode Island’s charitable sector.

NLPP delivered training sessions to hundreds of nonprofit staff, leaders, and board members, and provided individualized legal consultations to 67 Rhode Island nonprofits. When 16 local organizations filed agency appeals challenging \$32.8 million in funding terminations, NLPP support helped them recover \$7.8 million.

The Tomaquag Museum was among those who benefited directly. “NLPP helped Tomaquag Museum with federal funding concerns. They helped us get our Institute of Museum and Library Services grant reinstated,” its executive director, Loren Spears, noted. “Their help is critical for nonprofits to access pro bono legal support and address the rapidly changing federal funding landscape.”

For the Women’s Resource Center, with 80 percent of its funding coming from government sources, NLPP’s training proved equally vital.

“Training provided by NLPP has been invaluable, helping us to learn quickly what our rights and responsibilities are with grants,” shared Jessica Walsh, its executive director.

“The breadth of these federal cuts and the resulting elimination of crucial services to Rhode Islanders creates a funding challenge that philanthropy alone cannot address,” explains Foundation President and CEO David Cicilline. “But just as we have during previous moments of uncertainty throughout our 109-year history, the Rhode Island Foundation is committed to leveraging our resources and collaborating with partners, donors, and policymakers to respond thoughtfully, effectively, and dynamically.”



### Building Community in Tumultuous Times

The Rhode Island Foundation brought together more than 60 community foundation CEOs and senior leaders from across the country in Chicago for a day-long session focused on accelerating innovation and strengthening civic health at the local level. Hosted in partnership with CFLeads and the National Civic League, the gathering featured thought-provoking presentations, peer-to-peer exchange, and practical strategies for building trust, civic participation, and local problem-solving.

With more than 900 community foundations serving communities across the political spectrum, the event represented a powerful opportunity to share strategies, build connections, and strengthen civic life. It is part of the Foundation's ongoing commitment to addressing deepening divisions, restoring faith in institutions, and combating growing isolation in our communities.

Grantmaking & Investments

## Small Choices, Big Impact: How RI Students Are Leading the Fight Against Food Waste

When students at Smithfield's Raymond LaPerche Elementary finish lunch, they don't simply toss their leftovers into the trash.

Instead, they carefully sort food scraps for compost, place unopened milk, yogurt, cheese sticks, fruits, vegetables, and other perfectly good food items on a share table, and separate recyclables—all under the guidance of 'Cafeteria Rangers,' student leaders who oversee the daily process. This everyday cafeteria routine represents part of a growing movement across Rhode Island schools to tackle one of the state's most pressing environmental challenges: food waste.

The Rhode Island School Recycling Project (RISRP), first launched in 2001, is leading the charge with an ambitious mission: by 2030, every public school in Rhode Island will compost food scraps, recover edible food for

redistribution, and reduce food waste by 50 percent – a goal that aligns with those of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

As the Project's co-founder Jim Corwin puts it, "We're turning cafeterias into classrooms—every tray, every choice is a lesson in sustainability."

The numbers are startling. In 2019, RISRP conducted an audit of three school districts – including elementary, middle, and high schools in urban, suburban and rural settings – and found that Rhode Island schools discard 13.8 tons of food every week, amounting to 2,500 tons per school year. Even more troubling, 388 tons of that food is unopened and completely safe to eat: whole fruit, granola bars, yogurt, cheese sticks, and milk tossed into the trash. Statewide, this translates to 27,777 pounds wasted on a typical school day, with 4,000 pounds of good, unopened food discarded. Over the course of a school year, five million pounds of food are thrown away, while more than 776,000 pounds could go to Rhode Islanders facing hunger.



According to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank's 2024 Status Report on Hunger, 38 percent of the state's households experienced food insecurity in 2024, a significant increase since 2021. Communities of color face even higher rates. Rising costs of living, increased rent and utilities, and higher food prices have left families struggling to afford enough food.

Also serious are the environmental and health implications of food waste. Most discarded food ends up in Johnston's Central Landfill, which is nearing capacity. Additionally, as food decomposes, it produces methane—a potent greenhouse gas more powerful than carbon dioxide that accelerates climate change, contributing to more extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and threats to wildlife and natural habitats.

RISRP's approach to these critical issues is hands-on and student driven. Each school participating in the nonprofit's Get Food Smart initiative receives educational materials, a share fridge, containers, and composting supplies. The real magic happens when students take ownership of the process, sorting liquids, recyclables, compost, and share-table items. Together, they learn healthy food handling practices, participate in waste audits, and even visit the landfill to witness the environmental impact firsthand.

Julie Dorsey, LaPerche Elementary's principal and president of RISRP's board, and Steve Burger, the school's daytime custodian, share the program's effects on students.

"The Cafeteria Ranger program has great educational impact," Dorsey explains. "We have a garden outside...they [the students] are in the garden growing things and see some of that getting wasted. We also take the second and fourth graders to the Resource Recovery Center so they can see the true impact when the food ends up in the landfill, rather than being composted. All of that has made a significant difference for them."

"The kids have done a fantastic job. Recycling at the school level is very important. You have to start when you're young and carry on into adulthood. Unfortunately, we are running out of space in the landfill, and we have to help out the best we can," adds Burger.

Teachers also integrate sustainability into everyday lessons, so students learn by doing—sorting, composting, and tracking data. Composting closes the loop, turning scraps into



rich soil for gardens. Beyond education, the program provides financial benefits, reducing dumpster use and landfill fees.

In 2024, the Rhode Island Foundation awarded a \$10,000 capacity-building grant to RISRP to strengthen program sustainability. Most recently, 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 funded by donors who wish to remain anonymous. 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.

"Before receiving the Foundation's funding, our focus was on implementation with less attention paid to helping schools maintain the program long-term," explains Warren Heyman, RISRP's organizing director. "With this support, we've developed hands-on activities to keep students engaged—composting for school gardens, building raised garden beds, helping students plant pollinators, flowers and vegetables. We're connecting students with the environmental benefits of their actions."

Since the 2021 launch of its Get Food Smart program, RISRP has grown from four schools, including LaPerche, to 63, with plans to reach half of Rhode Island's schools by 2027, and all the state's public schools by 2030.

To date, the organization has achieved some remarkable milestones: more than 400 tons of food waste diverted from landfills and turned into compost to enrich soil health, 48 tons of food recovered and redistributed, and a 22 percent reduction in food waste per student compared to 2019. According to food rescue organization Rescuing Leftover Cuisine, the amount of food recovered equals over 80,000 meals, critical for a state where nearly two out of every five households face food insecurity. These efforts have also prevented 604.5 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions—equivalent to removing 141 gasoline-powered vehicles from the road for a year.

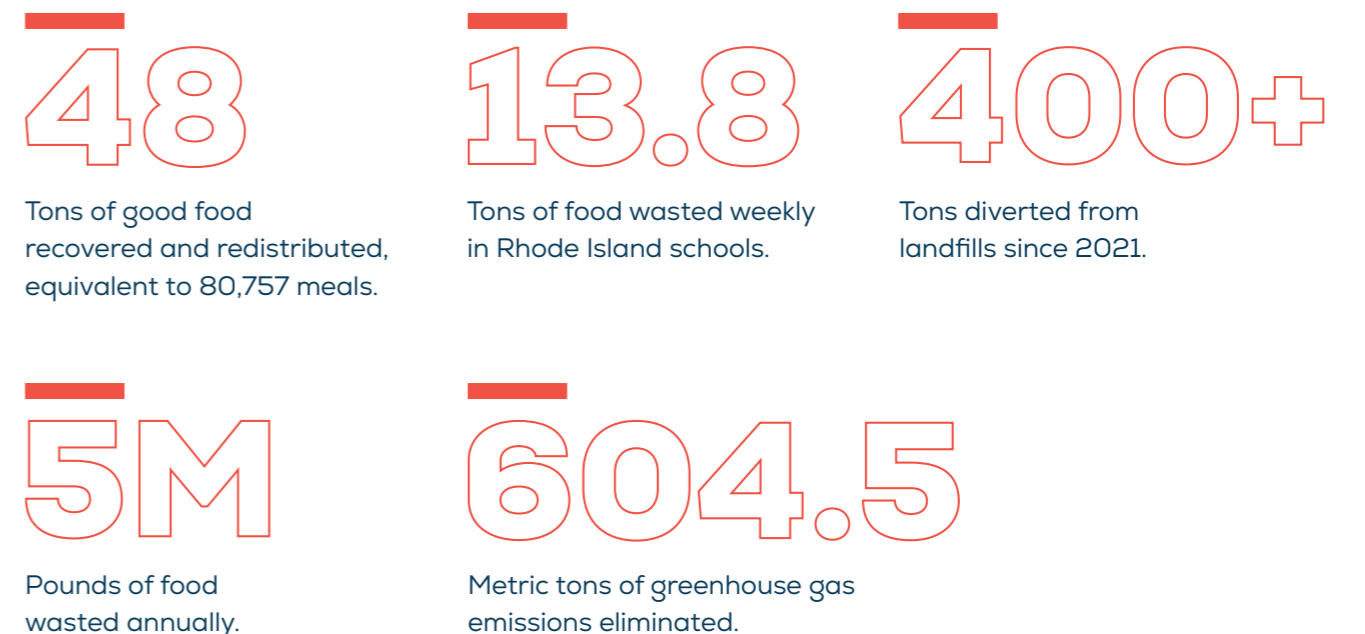
Corwin also emphasizes an important distinction in addressing food waste: "Some people think that if you're diverting your food waste away from the landfill for composting, you're reducing food waste. You're not. That's much more difficult. It's about preventing it from happening in the first place." This philosophy drives RISRP's three-pronged approach: reduce waste at the source, recover edible, healthy food for those experiencing food insecurity, and recycle what remains through composting.

And the program's influence extends beyond the cafeteria and the present moment. Students

carry these habits home, inspiring their families to start composting and rethinking food waste. "Our kids are going to be the adults of tomorrow," says Dorsey. "They're going to care about climate change, and they're going to put things in place in their own lives. It starts at this level."

As RISRP works toward its 2030 goal of reaching all Rhode Island public schools, the organization continues developing new ways to keep the program engaging. Food waste audits, compost awareness weeks, zero waste days, and field trips help to ensure students remain connected to the environmental impact of their daily choices. As climate challenges intensify, this innovative school-driven initiative offers practical, attainable solutions – and hope. Through education and empowerment, Rhode Island's students are proving that small choices today are contributing to a more sustainable tomorrow.

"Educating kids at an elementary level is important because they are the future," says Heyman. "These young people are taking to heart what they learn about recycling and composting...and hopefully, they are going to help us save the planet."



To hear more from Jim Corwin, co-founder of the Rhode Island School Recycling Project, tune in to *Together RI*, the Rhode Island Foundation podcast featuring thoughtful conversations and insights into the power of giving and collective action.



Advocacy

# Building a Stronger Rhode Island, One Big Bet at a Time

The Rhode Island Foundation's Civic Leadership Fund has spent over a decade investing in systemic change. Its latest effort could reshape how the state funds public education for a generation.

been quietly laying the groundwork for one of the most ambitious policy efforts in recent state history: a top-to-bottom redesign of Rhode Island's public school funding formula.

## A Formula Past Its Prime

Rhode Island has a bold ambition: to rank among the top-performing education systems in the country by 2030. But the funding formula meant to power that goal hasn't been updated in 15 years, and it's showing its age.

Lasting change, the Rhode Island Foundation believes, requires more than traditional charitable giving. It demands strategic collaboration, informed advocacy, and the willingness to tackle complex problems head-on. Since 2011, the Foundation's Civic Leadership Fund has put that philosophy into practice, investing over \$5 million in systemic solutions across the state.

That's the central finding of a Blue Ribbon Commission on education funding, which spent 2025 auditing the state's system from the inside out. Co-chaired by Foundation President and CEO David Cicilline and Dr. Nora Gordon, a Distinguished Professor of Public Policy at Georgetown University, the Commission convened an unlikely coalition of teachers, superintendents, union, charter, and district school leaders, municipal officials, and community advocates. The goal: build consensus across traditional divides and draft a modernized roadmap.

The results speak for themselves. A \$100,000 investment to champion the 2024 Housing Bond helped secure \$120 million for affordable housing statewide. Through Together RI 2024, the Foundation created spaces where 2,000 Rhode Islanders shared their perspectives across communities. And a long-running partnership with Brown University's Annenberg Institute has

## Pioneers of Equality

The Rhode Island Foundation presented its inaugural Pride Awards to State Rep. Edith Ajello of Providence and former State Rep. Nancy Hetherington of Barrington, recognizing their decades of pioneering advocacy for LGBTQ+ equality in Rhode Island. The two women first made history in 2001, co-sponsoring landmark legislation prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity or expression in housing, credit, and employment – with Hetherington serving

as the first openly gay woman in the General Assembly and Ajello continuing to champion expanded protections in the years since.

The awards were the highlight of the Foundation's second annual Pride Month Reception, which brought together supporters of Rhode Island's LGBTQ+ communities before staff and attendees joined the Providence PrideFest Parade.



## What's Broken

The current formula leaves significant gaps. It doesn't cover basic operational costs like student transportation or building upkeep, forcing school districts to choose between fixing infrastructure and hiring staff. It treats all students the same, regardless of differing needs and costs. And it offers no way to ensure that money actually translates into better student outcomes.

## The Fix

The Commission's core proposal centers on a weighted student formula, a funding model that directs more state dollars to districts based on the specific needs of their students. Economically disadvantaged students, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities would each generate additional funding. High-cost career and technical education programs would receive proper support. And the state would absorb unpredictable expenses (like extraordinarily high-cost special education services) that currently push districts into crisis budgeting.

The Commission drew on models from across the country, including California's accountability framework, Connecticut's local funding requirements, and Michigan's approach to supporting multilingual learners, tailoring each for Rhode Island's context with research support from the Annenberg Institute.



## Accountability at the Center

More money alone won't fix the problem, the Commission argues. That's why their proposal includes a new Fiscal Responsibility Board to track how districts spend public dollars and whether that spending moves the needle on student achievement. Districts would be required to publicly report progress on closing achievement gaps, and standardized accounting practices would make education spending transparent to everyone, from state legislators to local taxpayers.



For struggling districts, the plan offers a tiered support system: technical assistance first, followed by more intensive state intervention for those with persistent challenges. The goal isn't punishment, but partnership.

The Commission's recommendations now await action from state lawmakers. For the Rhode Island Foundation, it's the Civic Leadership Fund's approach in action: research-backed, coalition-driven, and focused on results that outlast any single budget cycle.

*The Blue Ribbon Commission's full recommendations are available at [RIFoundation.org/FairFunding](https://RIFoundation.org/FairFunding)*

## Investing in Rhode Island's Future

Hundreds of students from across Rhode Island are heading to college with the help of more than \$4 million in scholarships from the Rhode Island Foundation. Dozens of individual and organizational donors have established scholarship funds at the Foundation to help students cover tuition, fees, and books, with awards ranging from targeted assistance to the Carter Roger Williams Scholarships, worth up to \$80,000 over four years.

Audrey Adams, a Barrington High School graduate and Carter Roger Williams Scholar, will attend the University of Michigan to study sociology and creative writing. Timothy Year, a Cranston High School East graduate and

recipient of the Rhode Island PBS and The Public's Radio Scholarship Fund, is majoring in communications at Rhode Island College. Their stories reflect the transformative impact of donor generosity – turning dreams of higher education into reality.

The Foundation's scholarship portfolio spans a wide range of needs and interests, from support for students in specific academic majors or communities to aid for Rhode Islanders pursuing trade and technical education. As these young people join the workforce and contribute to civic life, the impact of our donors' philanthropy will be felt for years to come.





### Pressing Forward

Press Forward Rhode Island is a chapter of the national Press Forward network of funders working to expand resources for local news, and a collaborative effort of the Rhode Island Foundation and the van Beuren Charitable Foundation.

At our 2025 annual supporter dinner, John Palfrey, President of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, shared how MacArthur advances its mission to build a more just, verdant, and peaceful world by investing

in civic health, supporting local communities, and sustaining trustworthy journalism. The conversation explored why initiatives like Press Forward matter and the unique role community foundations play in bridging divides and strengthening democracy.

The Rhode Island Foundation is proud to host a local chapter of Press Forward, reflecting our ongoing commitment to supporting trustworthy local journalism and an informed civic community.

# 2025 Investments

Generous Rhode Islanders have entrusted their philanthropy to the Rhode Island Foundation for more than a century.

To better our communities and our state requires more than good intentions. It requires good vision, strategy, and discipline. The Foundation deploys prudent, long-term financial strategies to have the most impact today while preserving and growing our endowment for the future.

The Foundation's investments are managed by a committee of directors and community members with expertise in the field, along with the support of an investment consultant and the Foundation's chief financial officer. The Investment Committee establishes the investment policy, selects investment managers, and monitors performance.

Our significant scale allows us access to some of the top-performing investment managers in the country, giving us a competitive advantage, and we set exceptionally high performance standards for managers to ensure sustained growth. Our strong long-term endowment returns consistently rank us in the top quartile compared to our community foundation peers, reinforcing our commitment to excellence.

We believe that effectively accessing and managing diverse talent-inclusive of varied backgrounds, age, experience, race, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, and culture-leads to improved outcomes. The Foundation expects investment managers and other third party providers to respect and reflect the priority we place on equity, diversity, inclusion, and access.

## Spending Policy

Our spending policy ensures that our endowment continues to grow even as we continue to meet the needs of the day for the people of Rhode Island. The spending policy of between 5.5% and 5.75% (including our support fee) calculated over a sixteen-quarter trailing average, allows us to provide a predictable stream of grants to organizations that serve our community, while maintaining a prudent rate of endowment growth. The spending policy is reviewed annually by the Foundation's board of directors.

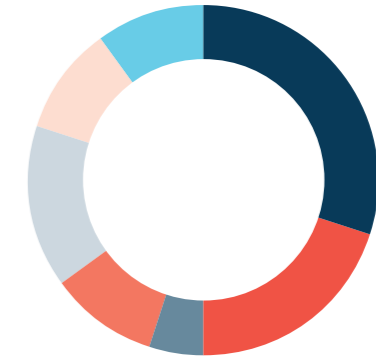
## Investment Pool Options

The Foundation maintains three investment pool options. The decision of which pool to invest in is typically driven by whether a donor has an interest in a specific mission-aligned investment strategy.

## 01 Legacy Investment Pool

This is the Foundation's primary and longest-standing investment pool. As our largest pool, assets are invested to preserve and enhance the principal of the pool and provide a dependable source of spending for support of our donors' charitable goals and the Foundation's programs, initiatives, and operations.

For long-term growth and to help minimize volatility, the funds are broadly diversified across asset classes, investment styles, and economies.



Target Asset Allocation

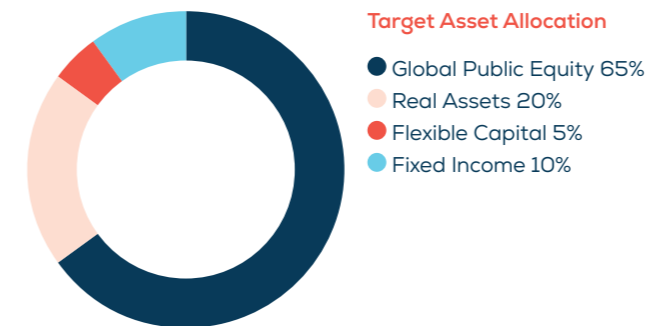
- Equity 55%**
  - Domestic Equity 30%
  - International Equity 20%
  - Emerging Markets 5%
- Alternative Investments 35%**
  - Flexible Capital 10%
  - Private Capital 15%
  - Real Assets 10%
- Fixed Income 10%**

## Investment Performance Net of Fees\*

1 Year	16.2%
5 Years	9.6%
10 Years	9.9%
20 Years	7.9%

## 02 Climate Action Investment Pool

This is the Foundation's newest investment pool, launched in 2024, providing an option for donors that desire to invest their charitable contribution to the Foundation in a portfolio that factors environmental criteria into investment decisions.

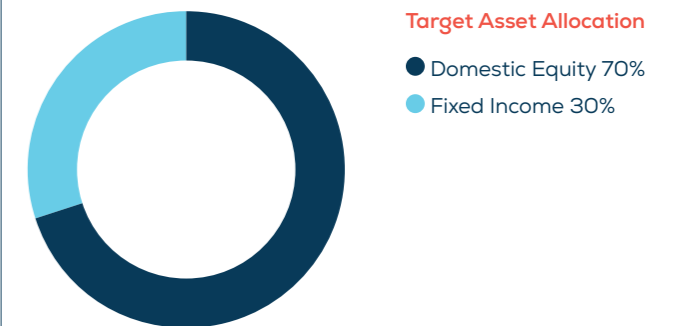


## Investment Performance Net of Fees\*

1 Year	17.2%
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## 03 Socially Responsive Investment Pool

This investment pool option was initiated by the Foundation in 2004 and seeks investments with positive performance on environmental, social and governance criteria.



## Investment Performance Net of Fees\*

1 Year	11%
5 Years	8.1%
10 Years	10.1%
20 Years	9.1%

\*As of 12.31.2025

# 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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.