



Rhode Island
Foundation

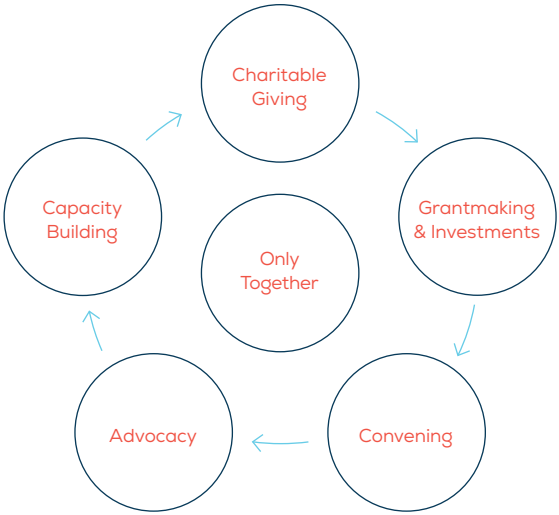
Climate Action and Sustainability

Learning and Impact Brief **June 2026**

Who We Are & What We Do

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



Organizations We Support

Support community-based solutions
to address climate change

- Acadia Center
- Bike Newport
- Clean Water Fund, RI Chapter
- Climate Action Rhode Island
- Conservation Law Foundation
- Grow Smart Rhode Island
- Providence Resilience Partnership
- University of Rhode Island Foundation & Alumni Engagement for the Island Resilience Cohort

Preserve nature and improve access to local green and open
spaces, especially in environmental justice communities

- Audubon Society of Rhode Island
- Providence Neighborhood Planting Program
- Racial and Environmental Justice Committee
- Revive the Roots
- Rhode Island Land Trust Council
- Save The Bay
- The Nature Conservancy
- Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

Support circular food systems and connect local producers
and consumers for food sustainability

- African Alliance of Rhode Island
- Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island
- Farm Fresh Rhode Island
- Pocasset Pokanoket Land Trust Inc.
- Rhode Island School Recycling Project
- Rhode Island Food Policy Council
- Roots 2Empower
- Southside Community Land Trust
- Westerly Land Trust

Innovative initiatives driving climate action and
sustainability, focusing on community solutions

- Conanicut Island Sailing Foundation
- City of Providence
- Eating with the Ecosystem
- Groundwork Rhode Island
- Movement Education Outdoors
- New England Grassroots Environment Fund, Inc.
- Providence Streets Coalition
- The Ocean Foundation

Climate Action & Sustainability Grantmaking at a Glance

Total 2025 Climate Action
and Sustainability Core Grant
Making Dollars Awarded

\$2.8 M

Total Number of
Grantees Supported

33

Our Investment & Focus Areas



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.



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



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



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.

What We’re Learning

Equity and access are inseparable from climate resilience. The communities least responsible for climate change face its sharpest consequences and must be central to every solution.

Food systems are a powerful climate lever. Diverting food waste and supporting local producers simultaneously addresses landfill capacity, greenhouse gas emissions, and food security.

Co-investment multiplies climate impact. When Foundation grants attract additional funders to the same work, results scale in ways that expand reach and accelerate progress toward our shared climate goals.

Youth are both beneficiaries and agents of change. Programs like the Rhode Island School Recycling Project demonstrate that young people who receive environmental education become advocates who extend long-term impact into their communities.

100%

of climate grantees are
supporting equity & inclusion

49,111

students & youth reached

60,038
acres

of land protected & managed

4,150
trees

planted or stewarded

*Projected impacts during the grant period. Metrics underrepresent impact due to variations in the data that grantees track and report.

Donor Spotlight

Fiorenzano Family
Save the Bay Fund



JoEllen and Arthur Fiorenzano established the first-ever designated fund at the Rhode Island Foundation in support of Save The Bay, driven by a long-standing commitment to environmental responsibility and the health of Narragansett Bay.

Founded in 1970, Save The Bay is an independent, member-supported nonprofit that works to protect and restore the Bay through advocacy, education, and habitat restoration, with a vision of a Narragansett Bay that is fully swimmable, fishable, and accessible to all. The Fiorenzanos have spent countless hours boating, swimming, and fishing on the Bay, and that personal relationship inspired their decision to create a fund ensuring consistent, perpetual support for Save The Bay’s mission. As owners of Fashion Accessories First, a Greenville-based fashion accessories company, they have brought that same environmental consciousness to their business, working closely with vendors and customers to reduce their environmental impact and promote sustainability.

The Fiorenzano Family Save the Bay Fund is a model for how a deep connection to place, combined with strategic and sustained philanthropy, can make a lasting difference for Rhode Island’s natural heritage.

Food Systems
Impacts

From school cafeterias to community gardens, our food systems grantees are proving that place-based approaches, rooted in cultural practices and shared knowledge, can recover food, reduce waste, and advance sustainability across Rhode Island.

844

farmers, producers & community gardeners supported

925 tons

Food waste diverted from landfill

492 tons

Food rescued/gleaned & donated

2,925
MTCO₂e

Greenhouse gas emissions reduced or avoided

*Projected impacts during the grant period. Metrics underrepresent impact due to variations in the data that grantees track and report.

Grantee Impact Summaries

Rhode Island School Recycling Project



The Rhode Island School Recycling Project (RISRP) is working toward an ambitious goal: by 2030, every public school in the state will compost food scraps, recover edible food for redistribution, and reduce food waste. Through its Get Food Smart program, operating in 63 schools, students become active participants in sustainability, sorting waste, managing share tables, and learning about the environmental and social costs of what gets thrown away. The scale of the problem is

significant: Rhode Island schools discard an estimated 2,500 tons of food per school year, including nearly 400 tons that are perfectly safe to eat, even as more than a third of the state’s households face food insecurity.

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 supported by a grant from the EverHope Foundation – alongside \$250,000 from 11th Hour Racing, a Newport-based organization dedicated to addressing the climate crisis and protecting ocean health. Together, these investments underscore Rhode Island’s commitment to tackling food waste and climate challenges. To date, the program has diverted more than 400 tons of food waste from landfills, recovered 48 tons of food equivalent to over 80,000 meals, and prevented more than 600 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

Pocasset Pokanoket Land Trust

The Indigenous Food Sovereignty program, developed by the Indigenous People’s Network of Massachusetts and Rhode Island and fiscally sponsored by the Pocasset Pokanoket Land Trust (PPLT), is a tribal community micro-farming initiative rooted in traditional Native American agricultural practices. The program serves marginalized communities across Rhode Island and Connecticut – teaching people how to grow their own herbs, fruits, and vegetables using entirely natural methods, without chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Beyond food access, the program advances land reclamation, cultural preservation, and economic development, fostering community, agency, and resilience.

The Rhode Island Foundation’s support – including a \$75,000 grant to advance farm viability and food sovereignty – has been catalytic for PPLT’s growth. The Foundation’s initial grant enabled the organization to



hire a grant writer, expanding its capacity to pursue additional funding and broaden its reach. Ongoing support from the Foundation and its donors continues to strengthen a program that addresses food insecurity through an Indigenous lens, offering a culturally grounded model for sustainable, community-led food systems.

Learn More and
Make a Difference

Protecting Rhode Island’s
environment is a shared
responsibility and a
shared opportunity.

To learn more about the Rhode Island Foundation’s work in this priority area, please contact:

Jennifer Pereira
Vice President of Grants and Community Investments
and Director, Climate Action and Sustainability
jpereira@rifoundation.org
401-427-4052

To support organizations and initiatives working to advance climate action and sustainability across Rhode Island, you may direct your gift to the Fund for Climate Action and Sustainability at rifoundation.org.