

Climate Action and Sustainability

As proud Rhode Islanders, we strive to mitigate the impacts of climate change and develop real resilience, especially within communities deeply and disproportionately affected by environmental pollution.

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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.

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Focus Areas

- Supporting implementation of policies that strengthen climate resiliency and adaptability and maximize access to historic federal investments for climate change mitigation, particularly for historically under-resourced and environmental justice communities.
- Preserving the natural environment and improving access to green and open space, especially in environmental justice communities.
- Supporting circular food systems and improving food sustainability with 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 with an equity focus and/or advancing solutions across multiple community priorities.

Case Studies

Climate Jobs

Climate Jobs Rhode Island (CJRI) is a broad labor/environmental coalition committed to an equitable, pro-worker, pro-climate green economy. In 2023, the Rhode Island Foundation supported the organization with a \$75,000 grant to help them maximize federal funding opportunities.

Renewable, zero-carbon sources of energy, especially wind and solar energy, are replacing fossil fuels, which will require a new transmission and energy delivery grid. Experts agree that we are nowhere near having sufficient human capital with green talent, skills, or jobs to reach desirable climate targets.

Transitioning the Ocean State's building, school, energy, and transportation sectors to renewable energy will require a sizable workforce to construct new power plants and transmission lines, modernize older buildings, and plan and deliver more resilient communities.

Food Policy Council

A food system includes all the processes involved in feeding people: production, harvesting, and processing of food; food aggregation, distribution, and marketing; food consumption, and ultimately, the care and treatment of food waste.

The Rhode Island Food Policy Council (RIFPC) brings together stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors to look at our state's food systems, how it operates, and what can be done to improve it.

Rhode Island Foundation has been a partner since the beginning of the RIFPC, providing nearly one million dollars to establish and support the Council's work over the past decade-plus.

The RIFPC continues to see opportunities for purposeful change in Rhode Island's food system: how the food system impacts and is impacted by climate change; the development of an equitable, regional food economy; access to healthy food as a human right; and a robust and educated workforce that sustains our food sector economy.

Save the Bay

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 Save the Bay for its advocacy, education, and outreach initiatives.