

PRESS RELEASE

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United Way Invests \$175,029 in Olneyville Programs that Lift Up At-Risk, Marginalized Communities

Providence, R.I. (September 20, 2021) United Way of Rhode Island has sent a total of \$175,029 in grants to 12 nonprofits for their work to create long-term change in the Olneyville neighborhood of Providence they call home. The community investments were awarded from United Way’s special Olneyville Fund and focus on supporting the [Lift United](#) goals of its [LIVE UNITED 2025](#) strategic plan to create opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.

“Olneyville has enjoyed an impressive transformation during the last decade, but I know all of us in this community recognize more must be done for families and this neighborhood to realize its full potential,” said Roshni Darnal, director of community investments for United Way. “From our first day here we committed to being a part of that change and could not be more enthusiastic about the innovative programs we have the opportunity to support to help change lives for the better.”

Among the grantees is the Olneyville Branch of Providence Community Library, which received \$20,000 to expand its Community Onramps to BA Completion program – an effort run in partnership with College Unbound. In a neighborhood where just 10 percent of residents have a college degree (compared with, statewide, 48% of white adults, 32% Black, and 20% Latinx), the program provides an important step toward a post-secondary education for graduates of PCL’s successful GED courses.

Another funded organization is Project Weber/RENEW, whose work provides culturally-appropriate and sensitive case management supports for a range of at-risk populations, including HIV, queer and trans communities, and those who are justice involved. Its grant will fund the development of the Central Providence Expungement Clinic. The clinic aims to work with the R.I. Public Defender’s Office to remove eligible charges from individuals’ criminal records and resources to redirect lives, such as reinstating licenses and obtaining IDs and documents necessary for employment.

A full list of grantee organizations is as follows:

Amenity Aid	Button Hole	Children’s Friend and Service
Clinica Esperanza/Hope Clinic	Farm Fresh RI	FirstWorks
Girls Rock! RI	Inspiring Minds	Project Weber/RENEW
Olneyville Branch: Providence Community Library	Reach Out and Read RI	YWCA Rhode Island

United Way established the Olneyville Community Fund in 2008 when it relocated to the neighborhood from the city’s East Side. Since, it has used the fund to invest more than \$1.2 million to improve services for residents, increase the capacity of community-based organizations, and enhance public spaces.

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United Way of Rhode Island is uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders. A member of the world's largest nonprofit network, we bring together individuals, business, nonprofit, community leaders and government to tackle the root causes of inequity and achieve specific, measurable goals. Our programs include 211, the statewide front door connecting Rhode Islanders with social services, resources, and vital programs. Both directly and through grants to nonprofits, we are investing to build economic opportunity, advance childhood learning, expand philanthropy, and to drive policy and participation. To learn more, visit unitedwayri.org, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).