

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **United Way of Rhode Island Appoints Four to Its Board of Directors**

*Elected are David Bonenberger, Anthony Botelho, Courtney Hawkins, and Yahaira Placencia*

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND (Oct. 24, 2022) — A slate of four community leaders has been appointed to the United Way of Rhode Island Board of Directors. The new directors were welcomed in their roles during the organization’s recent 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration.

Elected for three-year terms are David Bonenberger, president, R.I. Energy/PPL; Anthony Botelho, SVP, team leader, Washington Trust; Courtney Hawkins, health and human services industry executive, Salesforce; and Yahaira “Jay” Placencia, SVP, private client advisor, Bank of America.

“We are excited to welcome such a talented group of individuals to our board — These are folks who care deeply about Rhode Island and every single person who lives here,” said Dolph Johnson, United Way board chair and EVP & chief human resources officer for Hasbro, Inc. “Each brings a unique and important perspective to our work to build racial equity and opportunities for all.”

David Bonenberger is the president of Rhode Island Energy and a key leader of PPL Corporation. He has more than four decades of experience in the energy industry, and prior to coming to the Ocean State, was VP of operations integration at PPL in Pennsylvania. He holds a degree from Bloomsburg University, and a master’s in business administration from Wilkes University.

Anthony Botelho joined Washington Trust in 2021, where he oversees the bank’s Commercial & Industrial group, and also its Cash Management division. He has spent more than 35 years in the financial sector, with experience across private banking, commercial real estate, and market development. Anthony is a past president of the Rhode Island Bankers Association. He is a lifelong Rhode Islander and graduate of both the University of Rhode Island and Bryant University, where he earned a master’s in business administration. Anthony and his family live in Lincoln.

Working with government to implement health and human service technology tools that improve services, Courtney Hawkins serves in a leadership role for Salesforce. Previously, she was director of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, where she was committed to ensuring all vulnerable families and individuals had an opportunity to make economic progress. She oversaw the state’s public benefits programs as well as the divisions that handle child support enforcement and vocational rehab for individuals with disabilities. During her tenure, she shepherded major policy and procedural improvements to the childcare aid and cash assistance programs.

Since joining Bank of America’s business banking division in 2000, Yahaira “Jay” Placencia has held a wide range of roles, and is currently SVP, private client advisor. She is responsible for managing commercial client relationships and for developing strategies that support for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Jay has a deep commitment to her community. She is a member of the Rhode Island Commodores and serves as a trustee of the University of Rhode Island Board, among her involvements. She is also a member of United Way of Rhode Island’s Community Advisory Board and its Governance, Ethics, and Nominating Committee. Jay is a first-generation Dominican American and the proud mother of two children. She lives in Johnston.

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Along with the new additions to its Board of Directors, United Way of Rhode Island also installed new members to its Community Advisory Board. The Community Advisory Board is a diverse group of individuals who lend their expertise and insights to help guide the organization's strategic initiatives and community investments. It is an additional way for the organization to stay connected to the community and inject its voice into its work. New to the Community Advisory Board are:

- Jillian Balzano, community relations officer, Washington Trust
- Kathleen Burke, executive director, Newport Partnership for Families
- Rilwan Feyisitan Jr., president & CEO, Community Action Partnership of Providence County
- Robert Hughes, retired CEO, Missouri Foundation for Health
- Kerci Marcello Stroud, chief marketing and communications officer, Rhode Island School of Design
- Dorca M. Paulino, director, Office of Equal Opportunity, University of Rhode Island
- Juan "J'Juan" Wilson Jr., founder & CEO, The MUSE Foundation of Rhode Island

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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, businesses, nonprofits, 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 drive policy and participation. To learn more, visit [unitedwayri.org](https://unitedwayri.org), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Twitter](#).