

PRESS RELEASE

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United Way Investing \$10 Million in Community Programs Grants support organizations whose work advances the mission to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders

Providence, Rhode Island (May 23, 2023) — With a focus on achieving the goals of its [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#), United Way is investing \$10 million in the work of community organizations over three years. These latest grants have been awarded from United Way's Community Impact Fund and received by a total of 43 local nonprofits, following what were intentional changes to the organization's grantmaking program.

In 2021, United Way made the commitment to invest \$100 million over five years to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders. With this round of funding, the organization's contributions through programs, grants, and philanthropy now total more than \$71.25 million toward that goal in just three years. Additionally in 2023, United Way will offer more opportunities for funding with a focus on summer learning, opportunity grants, equity initiatives, and family stabilization, among others.

"Tackling our Rhode Island's biggest challenges, the building racial equity, requires big investments in the most innovative nonprofit organizations in our state," said Courtney Nicotolo, United Way's president and CEO. "With the support of our donors, sponsors, and corporate champions, we are driving changes in our state that benefit every Rhode Islander. Our partners are our partners in this work and in our mission to realize a thriving Rhode Island, and we are proud to work together for a better state."

United Way's overhaul of its grant program was driven by the purpose to better serve organizations whose work is rooted in actively advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Among the changes are three years of funding rather than two, awarding only unrestricted grants, including non-traditional reporting, and addressing the funding requires faced by nonprofits led by Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) leaders. On average, these organizations have less than half of the staff and budget as non-BIPOC-led nonprofits.

Aligning with United Way's strategic priorities, the focus areas of the awarded grants include (all of which have and experiential learning opportunities for students in underserved communities, housing, job training and economic empowerment, and community based advocacy to advance social justice and racial equity.

"The process for these funding decisions took the old model of grantmaking and turned it upside down, and I truly believe that can be transformational for nonprofits in our state," said Larry Warner, SVP, BIPOC, civil impact and equity officer for United Way. "We know our community has needs and that unrestricted support allows organizations to do the important work that meets those needs. This is what trust-based philanthropy looks like."