



PRESS RELEASE



50 Valley Street, Providence, RI 02909-2459 | (401) 444-0600 | fax (401) 444-0635 | www.unitedwayri.org

Contact: Michael J. Cerio | michael@ceriocommunications.com | (401) 743-8269

United Way Selects Nonprofit Leaders for Latest Executive Director Learning Circle Yearlong series focuses on strategic development and increasing organizational capacity

Providence, Rhode Island (Feb. 1, 2024) — Laser-focused on its work to support the needs of the state’s nonprofit community, and on the heels of launching the Alliance for Nonprofit Impact, United Way of Rhode Island has kicked off its latest Executive Director Learning Circle. The organization has selected 11 local nonprofit leaders to participate in the yearlong program that focuses on strategic development and increasing their organizations’ capacity to deliver their social impact work.

United Way first introduced the Executive Director Learning Circle in 2017, developing the program specifically for leaders of Rhode Island nonprofits with an annual budget of less than \$1 million and to strengthen their delivery of services. Since, more than 60 nonprofit executives have graduated from the program.

“Nonprofits are the backbone of our communities, providing vital programs and services that touch the lives of nearly everyone who calls Rhode Island home,” said Cortney Nicolato, United Way’s president and CEO. “But our nonprofits are not unlike small businesses in that they need support and access to resources so they can do even more of what they do so well. And this program helps to provide that so these leaders’ organizations can thrive today, and for the future.”

Throughout the coming year, the participating nonprofit leaders will engage in workshops focused on strategic planning, fund development, board engagement, marketing and communications, and more. The executives will also benefit from scenario sharing and one-on-one coaching in a range of competency topics. Additionally, graduates of the program can apply the experience toward credits for an MA from Roger Williams University in community development.

The Executive Director Learning Circle is led by facilitator Michael Fournier, a retired nonprofit executive with deep experience consulting organizations across Rhode Island and Massachusetts. It is made possible by a generous grant from BankNewport. The nonprofit leaders selected as fellows for the 2024 cohort and their respective organizations are:

- Rose Albert, [Rhode Island for Community and Justice](#)
- Nora Barré, [Downtown Providence Parks Network](#)
- Julio Berroa, [Haus of Codec](#)
- Melissa Carden, [Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence](#)
- Norma Gonzalez, [DaVinci Center](#)
- Hannah Martin, [Revive the Roots](#)
- Katelyn Mushipi, [Good Neighbors](#)
- Stephanie Nunes, [Youth in Action](#)
- Kate Sayles, [Rhode Island Land Trust Council](#)
- Stephen Souls, [North Kingstown Food Pantry](#)

-More-

- Latoya Watts, [WattsNatural Tutoring](#)

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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. As 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, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X \(formerly known as Twitter\)](#), or [YouTube](#).