



**UNITED  
WAY**  
Rhode Island

# 2023 - 2024 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



# OUR VISION

A Rhode Island where every individual in each community has equal opportunity for justice and prosperity.

# OUR MISSION

Uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.

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# UNITED IN ACTION

## Welcome to the 2023-2024 United Way of Rhode Island Community Impact Report

This year marked our 98th anniversary, and together, we have built stronger families and stronger nonprofits. It is your personal and professional contributions – giving of your time, talents, and treasures – that are game-changing in our beloved state. Our community has been **United in Action**.

In this report we highlight some of our collective achievements. For example: Our two call centers; 211 and Rhode Island’s senior and disability resource center, the Point, handled 190,000 contacts from Rhode Islanders looking to find help, stability, and resources. We make a difference one individual at a time, but multiply this exponentially, and you get a sense for what a tremendous impact our programs have in the community.

In January of 2021 we launched our strategic plan, Live United 2025, and we committed to investing \$100 million dollars over five years. And in four years, we have invested over \$90.7 million through our Community Impact Fund and programs like 401Gives, Summer Learning Initiative, and our grantmaking endeavors.

Thanks to a partnership with the City of Providence, the recently launched Providence Equity Fund has selected 15 Providence organizations to continue closing the racial wealth gap, addressing the



negative impacts of urban renewal and providing high quality and culturally relevant education to our youth in non-traditional settings.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) helped over 10,000 low and middle-income taxpayers file their taxes, and helped put \$21 million dollars back into the pockets of Rhode Island taxpayers, to pour back into their households and the local economy.

Last year, we successfully advocated to put a \$120 million housing bond on the ballot. This bond will help community partners buy land that will support the construction of housing for people who are at the highest risk of homelessness, and allow more affordable housing to be built in Rhode Island.

When you, our donors, give to the United Way, you allow us to provide critical funding to many nonprofits who proudly serve Rhode Islanders. In January of 2024 we launched the Alliance for Nonprofit Impact, which now has over 350 member organizations and provides RI nonprofits with technical support, resources to improve their

networks and connections, and the know-how to bolster their operations when they need to pivot quickly because of external circumstances.

All of this work is done in unity with our partners, and our beloved donors and supporters.

As our Centennial approaches, I have been thinking a lot about our legacy. Leaving the world better than I got it for my sons Jacob and Ian, and for all the youth in our state is my personal driving force. I want our collective legacy to be that every family is thriving, with an affordable and stable home. I want every Rhode Islander who seeks access to a high-quality education and a high paying job to get just that. I want all Rhode Island nonprofits to become sustainable, well-funded organizations, collectively capable of serving the needs of all Rhode Islanders in their preferred languages, with staff that shares and understands their cultures, and guided by strong and stable leadership that reflects the rich diversity of people who live in our state. And to leave that legacy, we need you.

We need you to continue to advocate along with us, and to give of your time, talents and treasures to United Way of Rhode Island. Like Democracy, building community is not a spectator sport. There’s more to do and I can’t wait to continue our work together!

**Cortney M. Nicolato**  
President and CEO



# BUILDING UP PROVIDENCE

## THROUGH INVESTMENT AND ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY

United Way of Rhode Island is collaborating with the City of Providence to address the inequities that still exist in all areas of our society, and to help create a community where every Rhode Islander can thrive.

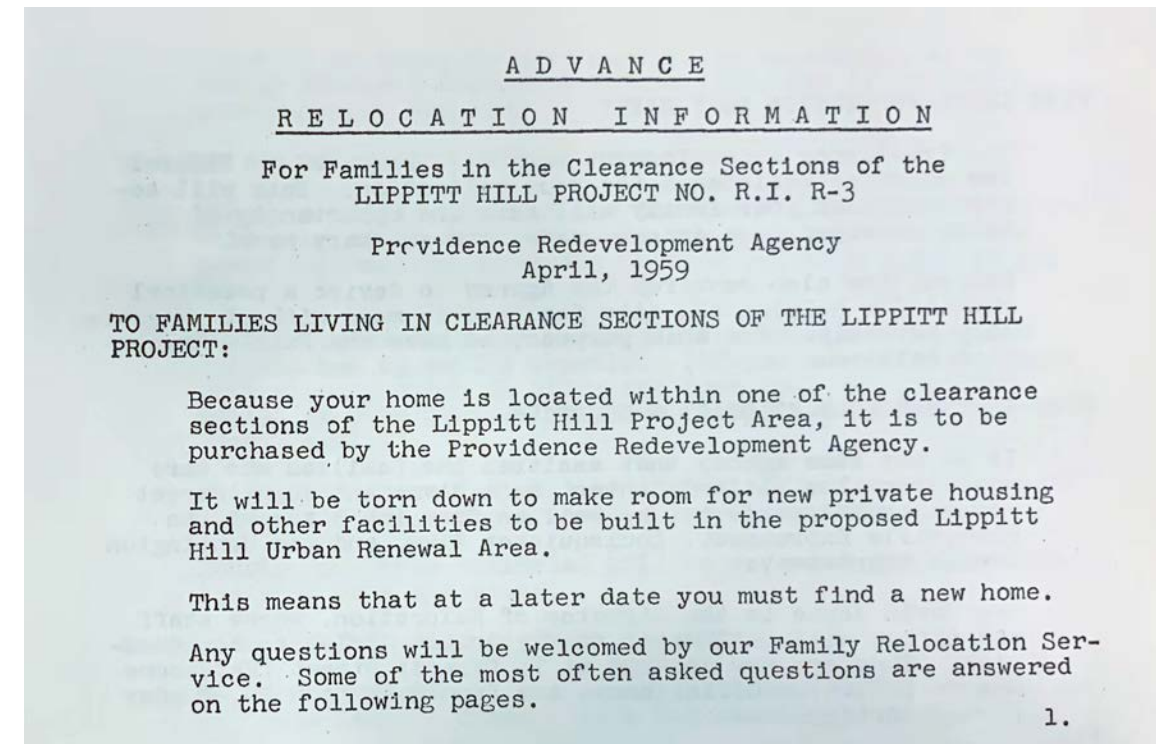
Through a historic allocation of 10 million dollars in funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), initially by former Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza, with a continued commitment by current Mayor Brett Smiley, United Way of Rhode Island is helping administer the granting and allocation of \$3 million over 2 years through the Providence Equity Fund.

This initiative closely follows the work and recommendations of the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission. This is a pivotal milestone for our state in addressing the systemic racial inequities and injustices that have persisted for generations, holding back our BIPOC communities.

These efforts represent one of the most significant commitments to repairing the harm done to these communities anywhere in the United States. This fund and its grants fully align with the goals of our LIVE UNITED 2025 strategic plan and reinforce our commitment to advancing racial and social equity and inclusion throughout Rhode Island.

The fund is designed to address the most pressing inequities within Providence, like systemic racism and socio-economic disparities. It also creates ways to achieve sustainable development and social justice, with an emphasis on communities of color, which have been historically underserved and disadvantaged by the existing structural systems. The COVID pandemic exacerbated many of the disparities that already existed.

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ABOVE: Providence Redevelopment Agency, Advance Relocation Information for Families in the Lippitt Hill Project No. R.I. R-3, 1959. Providence, RI, PRA, 1959, Providence City Archives, Hollinger Box Collection, Lippitt Hill Box 1. LEFT: Community organizers, municipal leaders, and grantee partners gathered with United Way of Rhode Island staff to announce the organizations benefiting from the Providence Equity Fund.



Through the fund, 15 nonprofits focused on these critical issue areas and making a direct impact in Providence have been awarded unrestricted grants of up to \$50,000 per year for two years.

The grants are designed to address the needs of Providence residents, particularly among Indigenous and tribal peoples, people of African heritage, those in Qualified Census Tracts and neighborhoods, and residents facing poverty. Priority was given to organizations whose programs focus on closing the racial wealth gap, addressing the negative impacts of urban renewal—such as displacement and gentrification—and enhancing access to culturally competent resources in education and out-of-school learning for K-12 BIPOC youth.

United Way of Rhode Island invests in organizations that support entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and job training to foster lasting economic change. Recognizing the long-term damage caused by urban renewal projects, this investment area also supports advocacy and housing initiatives aimed at rebuilding and restoring communities that have been disproportionately affected. By empowering residents and championing fair housing policies, the fund contributes to healthier, more resilient neighborhoods. Additionally, through programs that promote arts, advocacy, and education and serve the needs of diverse communities, the Providence Equity Fund helps build a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape.



## GRANTEE HIGHLIGHT

**Mini Entrepreneurs of Rhode Island is a grantee program of Providence Equity Fund.**

Erica Campbell is the founder and executive director of the program, which empowers children to develop entrepreneurial skills starting as young as age four. “Kids are creative and innovative,” Campbell says. “They need a platform to build on their development and grow valuable skills that can later transfer to any setting.”

Campbell began this journey with her own sons at age four, observing how they developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills. She recognized a need for alternative learning pathways and, over the past two summers, has offered free summer camps, along with school programs in partnership with the YMCA and local charter schools.

This year’s annual fair featured 62 youth-led businesses, reflecting the real need for entrepreneurial opportunities within the community. Many children don’t even realize they are budding entrepreneurs until they’re given the chance to explore these skills.

United Way is the largest funder supporting her work. In June, she transitioned to a full-time executive director role, which has enabled her to expand the program’s offerings, including after-school programs, access additional resources, connect with designers, apply for business grants, and continue growing to better serve the community’s needs.

Eight-year-old Pedro Saquic Echevarría has been participating in the fair for three years. He loves meeting new people, making connections, and learning something new each time he participates. Pedro has co-written three bilingual books with his mother, which he sells at fairs and online. He’s already starting to build wealth.

Pedro’s parents are deeply committed to supporting his growth and endeavors. This strong collaboration among grantees, parents, community organizations, and the children they serve exemplifies how the Providence Equity Fund supports culturally relevant education in Providence. Mini Entrepreneurs of Rhode Island aligns with United Way’s mission to advance racial equity and create opportunities for all.

## THE ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE RECEIVED GRANT FUNDING ARE:

- Building Futures
- Center for Indigenous Peoples Rights
- Center for Women & Enterprise
- College Unbound
- DARE - Direct Action For Rights and Equality
- Justice Assistance
- Manton Avenue Project
- Mini Entrepreneurs of Rhode Island
- Olneyville Neighborhood Association
- Providence Promise
- Providence Revolving Fund
- Rhode Island Black Business Association
- Rhode Island Black Heritage Society
- Sojourner House
- Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council



# UNITED IN ACTION

By supporting United Way of Rhode Island, you empower thousands of nonprofits to provide essential services and build a stronger, more resilient community.



Support a stronger and more equitable Rhode Island by making a gift today.  
[www.unitedwayri.org](http://www.unitedwayri.org)



# THIS IS WHAT ACTION LOOKS LIKE

REVISIT HIGHLIGHTS  
FROM THE 2024  
ANNUAL CELEBRATION





## WOMEN UNITED AWARD

This award recognizes a woman who through her selfless dedication to increasing childhood literacy in Rhode Island, and the generous contribution of her time, talent, and treasure, has empowered young minds, fostered a love of reading, and opened doors to brighter futures. Her efforts not only enrich individual lives but also strengthen the community. The recipient of this year's award is Nancy Serpa.

Nancy is the co-chair of the Women United Executive Committee. She joined the group in 2015 and has been an active member of the Community Engagement Committee since its inception. She has facilitated the Women United "Young Minds in Motion" afterschool program at local libraries and clubs. She has also organized community partner learning series events, served as a skills-based volunteer mentor, and advocated for afterschool and summer learning programs.

Nancy has always been a dedicated ambassador for United Way's annual Children's Book Drive, and she currently serves as the Board Chair of Books Are Wings. She has also served on the United Way's Community Advisory Board.



## DANTE F. MOLLO AWARD

The partnership between organized labor and United Way of Rhode Island has lasted over seven decades. The Dante F. Mollo Labor United Award recognizes a leader who has provided exceptional dedication to our community. This year's awardee is Frank J. Flynn.

Francis J. "Frank" Flynn has been an AFT vice president since 2011. Flynn had been the president of the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals since 2010. Prior to that, he served as president of the Cranston Teachers' Alliance, Local 1704, for eight years. Flynn began his career in 1977 as a special education teacher. His 34-year career included working at the elementary, middle and high school levels. He was involved in developing and implementing several highly effective inclusion models

to better serve the special needs student population in Cranston. Over the years, Frank served as negotiations chair, grievance chair, vice president, and president. During his tenure, he was instrumental in negotiating such education reforms as a professional development institute, a new teacher mentor program, and a teacher evaluation model. Flynn previously served on the AFT Teachers program and policy council. He currently chairs the AFT Legal Defense Fund; and serves on the AFT Constitutional Amendments and Convention Committee as well as other committees in the leadership of AFT, as well as numerous educational, labor, and civic boards and committees. He sits on the executive committee of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, Working Rhode Island, and the Providence Central Labor Committee. He chairs the state's Certification Policy Advisory Board and is a board member of the Occupational and Environmental Health Center of Rhode Island.



## TOCQUEVILLE UNITED AWARD

This award is given to outstanding people whose values and commitment reflect the United Way of Rhode Island's mission, and whose extraordinary concern, foresight and dedication inspire and create opportunities for a better life for everyone in our community. This year's recipients are Frances and Peter Trafton.

Frances and Peter met while they were both studying in Boston. After Frances graduated from Boston University and Peter from Harvard Medical School, they moved to San Francisco for Peter's surgical training. Following a couple of years at an Army hospital in Alaska, Peter joined the UC San Francisco faculty at San Francisco General Hospital. Frances soon retired from teaching grade school. In 1984 they moved to Providence and Peter joined Brown University's

Orthopedic Surgery Department at RI Hospital, where he worked for 20 years, until he stepped back to focus on international education with the AO Foundation and Health Volunteers Overseas, eventually becoming Emeritus Professor of Orthopedics at the Alpert Medical School in 2015.

Frances had the primary role in raising their three children, while Peter had long shifts at the hospital. Despite this, Frances found time for singing, tennis, debate club, and leadership and volunteering roles at the Gordon School.

Peter and Frances are impressed by United Way of Rhode Island's focus on identifying needs and opportunities for improvement in their communities, and they have given regularly through United Way. They devote much of their time and energy to helping Rhode Island achieve a just and equitable transition to renewable energy and a resilient, joyfully livable environment for all Rhode Islanders.

## COMMUNITY UNITED AWARD

This award honors the collective impact needed to make progress in our state, and illustrates the power of the many to address key issues. This year's awardee is the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation.

This delegation is a dedicated assembly of individuals who are approachable, present, and always fighting to improve the lives of all Rhode Islanders. They are true strategic partners to the United Way, and have worked with us over the years to reduce the barriers that Rhode Islanders often face when seeking stability, health, and prosperity. This past year, they partially funded the 211 and the Point call centers.

At the national level the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation has led the charge on encouraging the Bureau of Labor Statistics to release nonprofit employment data on a quarterly basis, just like every other employment sector does. This allows us to understand the sector's landscape in real time as it changes, and to react in a timely manner when necessary.

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## TOP CORPORATE PARTNERS

Each year, about 70% of the funds we raise come from our Corporate Partners Workplace Campaigns. These companies have shown a consistent and generous commitment to the United Way and to Workplace Giving. Many of them have been United In Action with us for decades, and some of them for close to a century. The funds these companies help us raise truly help us move the needle towards a more equitable community.

These partnerships extend beyond financial support. Our Top Corporate Partners all run impactful employee giving campaigns, and support other United Way initiatives like 401 Gives. In addition, they engage deeply with the community through our volunteering programs and other initiatives like VITA.

## THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENTS ARE:

### 100 or fewer employees:

- International Manufacturing Services, Inc.
- Locke Lord
- Dimeo Construction

### 100 - 499 employees:

- AIPSO
- BankNewport
- Centreville Bank
- Delta Dental of Rhode Island

### 500 or more employees:

- FM
- Gilbane, Inc.
- General Dynamics Electric Boat
- Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island
- Teknor Apex
- Rhode Island Energy
- Brown University
- Washington Trust Company

## BOARD CHAIR FERNANDEZ

It's truly a humbling moment for me to write as the newly appointed chairperson of the board of directors. This is the continuation of a personal journey that began over 20 years ago, when I first joined United Way of RI as an administrative assistant with the Community Investment team.

**As a staff member, I didn't just witness the incredible work being done, I lived it!**

We didn't always get to see the faces of the people whose lives were changed by the organization, but we all felt a deep sense of purpose that drove every staff member, volunteer, and community partner. The mission of this organization isn't just something I support in words; it's woven into who I am, and the values and the community spirit I found here helped shape me, both professionally and personally.

Moving into the role of chairperson is not just about leading the organization—it's about giving back to a place that has given so much to me. I am not just returning to a role but to a family—a community of people who share a commitment for helping others.

It is an exciting time at United Way! And as we prepare to reach the 100th year in Rhode Island, we invite you all to be part of the journey --- which is driven by a deep sense of responsibility to honor our past while ensuring we're ready for the future. And continue the important work of changing lives, pushing even further to meet the needs of those we serve. UNITED IN ACTION and driven by progress, our potential to impact lives is limitless.



Thank you for trusting me with this opportunity, and I look forward to working alongside all of you to continue making a difference in the community we care so deeply about.

Finally, I want to recognize my predecessor as board chairperson, Dolph Johnson.

Dolph has beautifully served as board chair over the last 3 years, during a time of much growth for United Way of RI. Dolph's expertise, along with his compassion to serve our community has catapulted our Live United 2025 Plan and will leave an incredible legacy that I am so proud to carry on.

Dolph, I, and all of us on the board are inspired by you. You have a way of making all of us feel heard and cared for. You lead with love and a generous spirit. You have taught us all so much of what it means to live in service to others.

**Rhode Island and United Way of Rhode Island are better because of you!**

**Paola Fernández**  
**Board Chair, United Way of Rhode Island**





# THIS IS WHAT A PHILANTHROPIST LOOKS LIKE



## A CONVERSATION WITH DAWN APAJEE

Dawn Apajee exemplifies a dedication to strengthening Rhode Island's workforce and community. As a new member of Women United at United Way of Rhode Island, Dawn blends her professional skills with a passion for community impact through philanthropy. Her recent accomplishment as a graduate of the 2024 Upsilon II Class of Leadership Rhode Island underscores her dedication to personal growth and social responsibility. For Dawn, being part of Women United is more than participation—it's an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Rhode Islanders.

### The First Connection: How Did You Become Aware of United Way's Impact?

The first time I truly understood the impact of United Way of Rhode Island was through a mentor who's been an incredible influence in my professional career. She had volunteered with United Way for years, and whenever we'd talk, she'd share stories of the people she met, the

impactful work she did, and the resilience she saw across the community.

One story she told me has stayed with me—a single mother who lost her job unexpectedly and was struggling. United Way was there with resources that could assist with her rent, childcare, and career training, which helped her secure a new job. Hearing how United Way stepped in at her lowest point made me realize you're not just providing resources; you're giving people hope and a way forward.

When I connected with United Way of RI, and attending an event in the spring about our education mission, I understood what my mentor had shared—United Way is a network of people lifting each other up. It's not just an organization; it's a true community.

### Dawn's "Why" and Why United Way?

For me, giving back isn't just a part of my work—it's something I'm deeply passionate about on a

personal level. Growing up in a family with limited resources, I understand the importance of support and opportunity. As a small business owner in Rhode Island, I witness the challenges people face every day, from finding stable employment to building better futures for their families.

City Personnel's mission is to connect people with meaningful opportunities, and United Way's mission aligns beautifully with that. Your work addresses urgent issues like economic hardship, educational inequity, and access to healthcare. These are issues that impact everyone, directly or indirectly, and supporting United Way allows me to contribute to tackling these barriers head-on.

My 'why' is simple: I want to see people in our community succeed, no matter their circumstances, and United Way is making that vision a reality. Knowing I'm part of your efforts is incredibly fulfilling.

### A Call to Action: The Power of Volunteering

I'd encourage anyone who's considering it to take that first step. It's amazing how much one person can impact the lives of others through United Way. You have this incredible way of turning each volunteer's time, expertise, or resources into real, measurable change. And it's not just about what you give; it's about what you gain. You get to connect with others who are equally passionate about making a difference, and you get to see the tangible results of your involvement. Getting involved with United Way is one of those experiences that stays with you. You'll be surprised at how much your time and efforts mean to those who are on the receiving end, and you'll come away with a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

**If you're on the fence, I'd say go for it—United Way provides an incredibly supportive space to do something truly impactful for our community.**



# WOMEN UNITED

We work on one powerful cause – improving childhood education. We are united by a strong sense of belonging to our mission and to the communities we call home.



Sign up online or email [womenunited@unitedwayri.org](mailto:womenunited@unitedwayri.org) or [www.unitedwayri.org](http://www.unitedwayri.org)



# EQUITY CHALLENGE

United Way of Rhode Island's mission is uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders. Our Equity Challenge is designed to help individuals and organizations engage with topics surrounding equity. This year's topics included Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Advocacy, and being an Accomplice.

Equity Challenge 2024 launched on June 19 (Juneteenth) and lasted seven days. This year's challenge was shorter than previous years' and required a daily time commitment of 30 minutes. Each day, we offered three activities that participants could read, listen to, or view. We also offered three curated pop-up experiences for folks seeking in-person connection. These experiences included panel discussions with topic experts and other interactive opportunities.

All elements of Equity Challenge 2024 were designed to reduce physical and systemic barriers. It was offered at no cost, and all activities were available to anyone with an internet connection and a smart device. A total of 1,388 individuals participated in the challenge.

Organizations who engaged at least 75% of their employees earned an Equity Challenge Champion certificate. 53 organizations participated in the challenge and, of these, 16 earned certificates. These certificates are a tangible recognition that they have moved beyond buzzwords and into living the principles of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Organizations also received a digital badge to showcase on their website, across social media, and in email signatures.

In addition, Brown University Health (formerly Lifespan Health System) earned the Trailblazer in Equity Award. We are grateful to them for encouraging their thousands of employees to take part in Equity Challenge 2024.

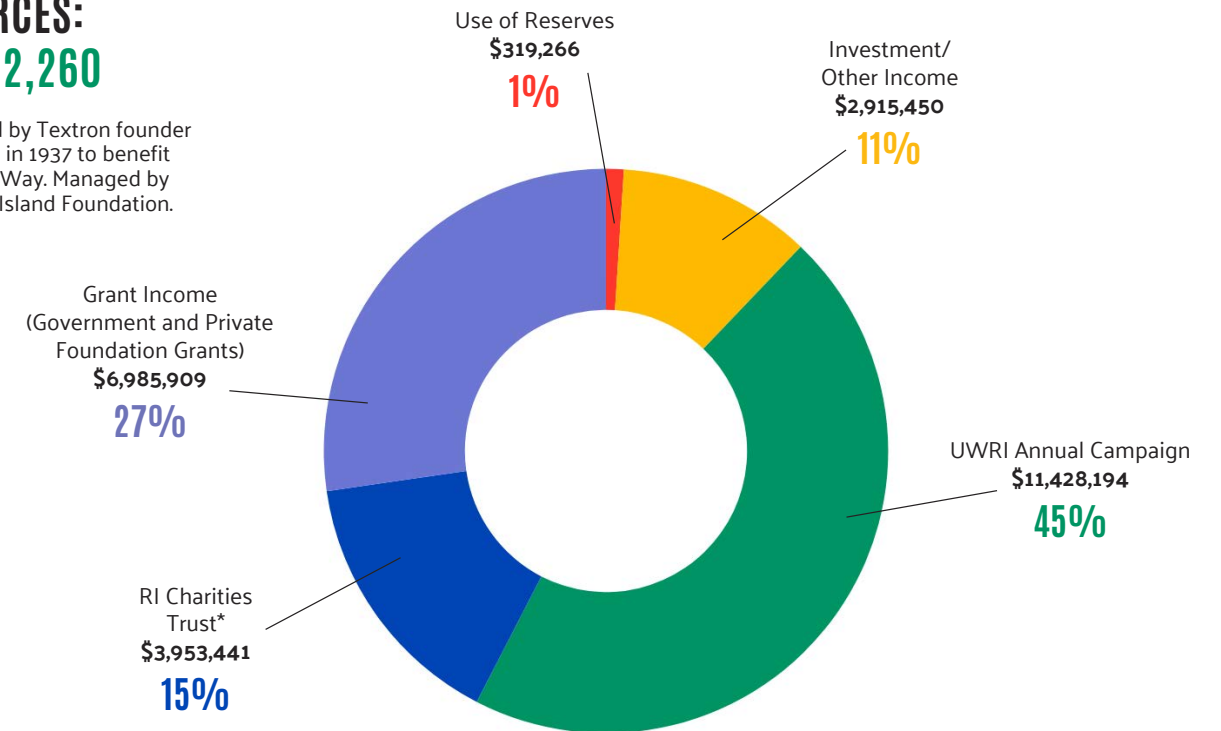
Interested in joining Equity Challenge 2025? Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, or TikTok. You will be the first to know when registration opens!



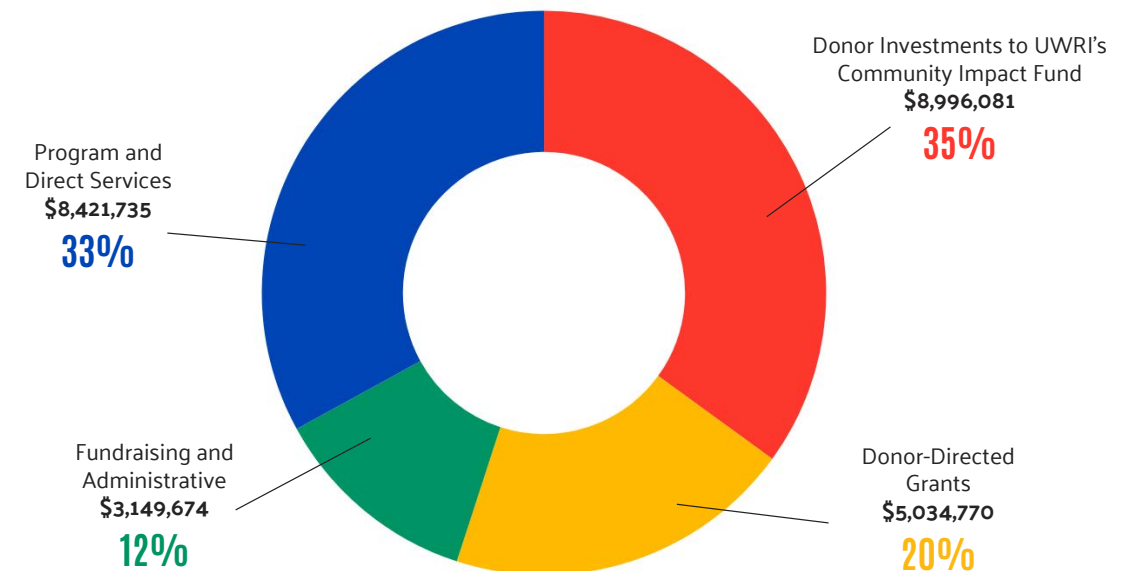
## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS FY '24

**RESOURCES:**  
\$25,602,260

\* Established by Textron founder Royal Little in 1937 to benefit our United Way. Managed by the Rhode Island Foundation.



**USE OF RESOURCES:**  
\$25,602,260





# COMMUNITY IMPACT FUND

The Community Impact Fund from United Way of Rhode Island supports initiatives that address the root causes of systemic inequalities and improve economic, educational, and health outcomes for communities across Rhode Island.

By pooling donations from community members, the fund targets programs that promote social justice, equity, and basic needs such as housing, food security, and quality education. It also invests in workforce development, helping individuals gain job skills, find employment, and achieve financial stability. Through partnerships with local nonprofits and community organizations, the fund aims to create sustainable change and empower under-resourced communities throughout the state.

Our funding supports the LIVE UNITED 2025 strategic plan, which guides United Way of Rhode Island's work in four focus areas:

## LIFT UNITED

We're investing in affordable housing, improving care coordination, expanding access to adult education and job training, and supporting the growth and stability of women- and minority-owned businesses.

## ACHIEVE UNITED

We're working to ensure all Rhode Island children go to school with the tools to learn, increasing literacy levels, and expanding access to afterschool and summer learning programs.

## INVEST UNITED

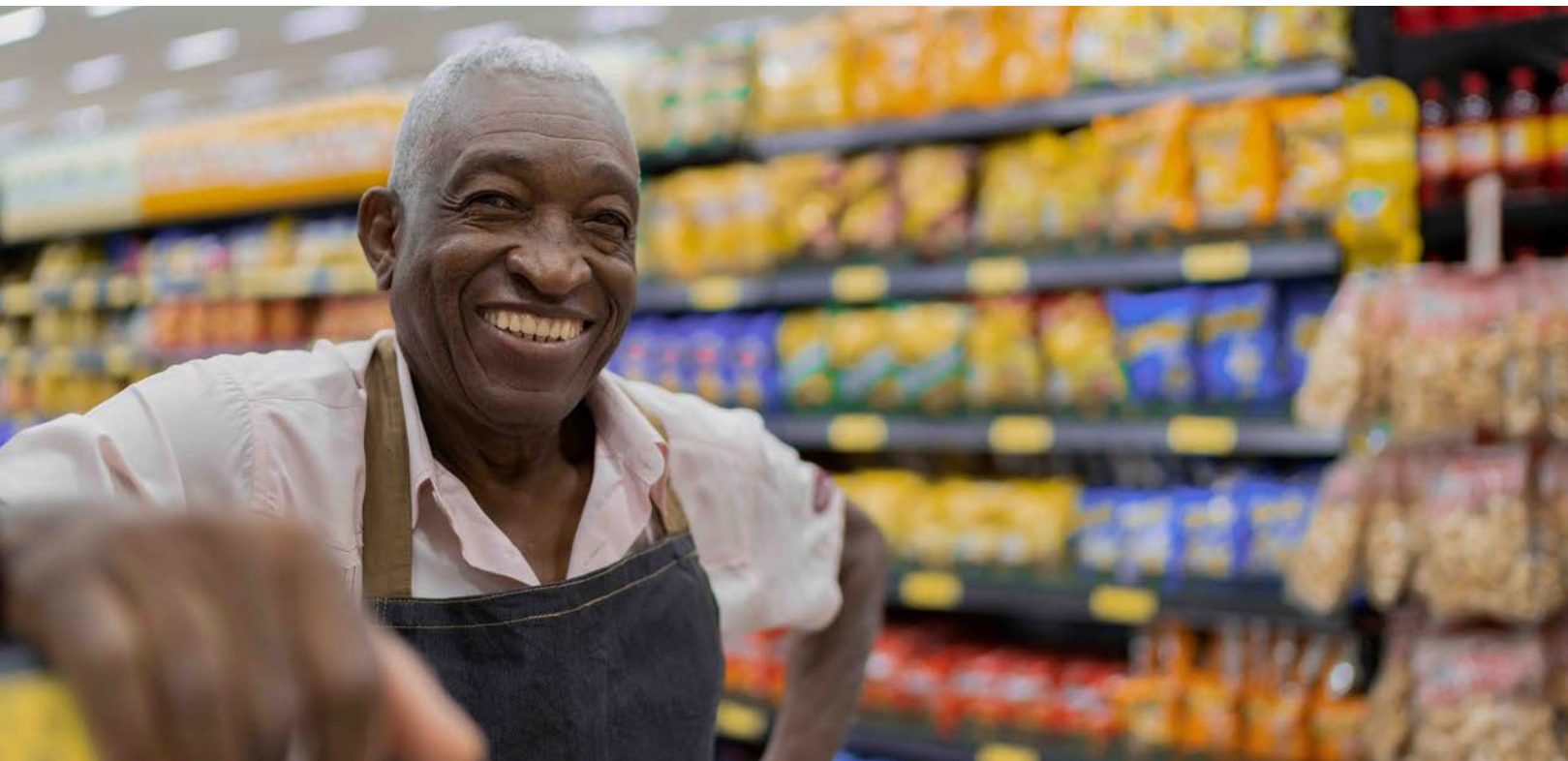
We're building nonprofit resiliency and leadership development, empowering donors, engaging corporations, and connecting Rhode Islanders with volunteer opportunities.

## ADVOCATE UNITED

We're driving systemic change through public policy and research, training Rhode Islanders to be advocates, and working to increase voter turnout throughout the state.

# TOTAL FUNDING JULY 2023 - JUNE 2024: \$5,293,119

<b>Workforce Development, Economic Mobility, and Basic Needs</b>	<b>\$1,350,000</b>	<b>Summer Learning Communities</b>	<b>\$546,679</b>
Beautiful Day	\$75,000	Central Falls – Central Falls School District	\$102,451
Community Care Alliance	\$75,000	Cranston – Cranston YMCA	\$59,228
COYOTE RI	\$75,000	Newport – Newport Partnership for Families	\$150,000
East Bay Community Action Program	\$75,000	Westerly – Southern RI Conservation District	\$85,000
Economic Progress Institute	\$75,000	Woonsocket – Connecting for Children & Families	\$150,000
Federal Hill House	\$75,000		
Fuerza Laboral	\$75,000	<b>Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)</b>	<b>\$295,000</b>
Genesis Center	\$75,000	Community Care Alliance (Lead for CAP Assoc)	\$115,000
Higher Ground International	\$75,000	Connecting for Children & Families	\$10,000
Hope & Main	\$75,000	Eastern Indigenous Research Institute	\$8,000
Latino Policy Institute	\$75,000	Federal Hill House (Lead for PVD Coalition)	\$129,500
Man Up, Inc.	\$75,000	Johnnycake Center for Hope	\$10,000
Progreso Latino	\$75,000	Progreso Latino	\$15,000
Reentry Campus Program	\$75,000	Westerly Area Rest Meals (WARM) Center	\$7,500
Refugee Dream Center	\$75,000		
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT	\$75,000	<b>Opportunity Grants</b>	<b>\$166,750</b>
The Milagros Project	\$75,000	Rhode Island Afterschool Network	\$75,000
Tomaquag Museum	\$75,000	Onward We Learn	\$50,000
		Books Are Wings	\$14,750
<b>Housing</b>	<b>\$750,000</b>	Rhode Island Department of Ed	\$10,000
Center for Health and Justice Transformation	\$75,000	Institute For Labor Studies	\$7,500
Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE)	\$75,000	College Unbound	\$4,000
Foster Forward	\$75,000	Thrive Behavioral Health	\$3,500
House of Hope CDC	\$75,000	Women's Fund	\$2,000
Housing Network of Rhode Island	\$75,000		
HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University	\$75,000	<b>PVD Equity Fund</b>	<b>\$729,300</b>
ONE Neighborhood Builders	\$75,000	Institute for Labor Studies	\$50,000
OpenDoors	\$75,000	Justice Assistance	\$50,000
Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness	\$75,000	Rhode Island Black Business Association	\$50,000
Sojourner House	\$75,000	Center for Women & Enterprise	\$50,000
		Providence Revolving Fund	\$50,000
<b>Early Childhood &amp; Youth Development</b>	<b>\$1,251,000</b>	Providence Promise	\$50,000
Alliance of RI Southeast Asians for Education	\$75,000	College Unbound	\$50,000
Camp RYSE	\$75,000	Olneyville Neighborhood Association	\$50,000
Cape Verdean American CommDevelopment	\$75,000	Building Futures	\$50,000
College Visions	\$75,000	Center for Indigenous Peoples Rights	\$29,300
Community Libraries of Providence	\$75,000	Manton Avenue Project	\$50,000
Diversity Talks	\$75,000	Rhode Island Black Heritage Society	\$50,000
DownCity Design	\$75,000	Mini Entrepreneurs of Rhode Island	\$50,000
Girl Scouts of Southeastern New England	\$51,000	Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council	\$50,000
Inspiring Minds	\$75,000	DARE	\$50,000
Mt. Hope Learning Center	\$75,000	Sojourner House	\$50,000
New Urban Arts	\$75,000		
Providence Student Union	\$75,000	<b>Special Initiatives</b>	<b>\$204,390</b>
Rhode Island for Community and Justice	\$75,000	Deputy Director Learning Circle	\$17,500
Riverzedge Arts	\$75,000	Executive Director Learning Circle	\$29,500
The MUSE Foundation of Rhode Island	\$75,000	Family Stability Initiative	\$150,500
Young Voices	\$75,000		
Youth In Action	\$75,000		



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paola Fernandez (Chair)	Jayne Donegan
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Srini Krishnamurthy	Carolyn Belisle
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Suresh Swaminathan	Michelle Carr

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Kelly Nevins	Diana Capellan	



# 2023-2024 LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

## Lift United: Supporting the Nonprofit Workforce

Nonprofits employ nearly 1 in 5 Rhode Island private sector workers, many of whom lack access to retirement benefits. To address this, the **Alliance for Nonprofit Impact** led advocacy for the **Secure Choice Retirement Savings Plan Act**. This program will offer a public retirement savings plan to small businesses and nonprofits at no cost, helping close the retirement savings gap and reduce economic vulnerability for nonprofit employees.

## Advocate United: 211

Advocating for 211 at multiple government levels has been instrumental in addressing equity gaps statewide. Our success in securing a \$200,000 state investment underscores the importance of 211 data in educating policymakers and guiding equity-focused initiatives, ensuring resources reach those who need them most.

## Advocate United: Civic Engagement

Ahead of the 2024 elections, we advocated for legislation that improves voter access, such as **Non-Affiliated Party Voters in Primaries** and the **Mail Ballot Signatures and Deadlines** reform, which eliminates outdated requirements, making voting more accessible for all Rhode Islanders.

## Invest United: Affordable Housing

Addressing Rhode Island's affordable housing crisis is a priority for United Way. We advanced legislation reducing barriers to housing development, including Electronic Permitting for Development Applications and Zoning Standards for Accessory Dwelling Units.

We championed the **Utility Termination Moratorium Extension**, which prevents shutoffs for essential services, supporting housing stability for vulnerable Rhode Islanders. We also partnered with the Family Caregiver Alliance on **After Death of a Lessee** legislation, providing security to families facing sudden financial instability after the loss of a leaseholder.

## Lift United: Economic Empowerment

United Way supports economic empowerment policies that drive small business growth and benefit minority-owned enterprises. In partnership with the Workforce Alliance, we advocated for enhancements to the RI Works Program, boosting cash benefits to enable completion of workforce training. We also advocated for increased Summer EBT Program funding, addressing seasonal food insecurity among families.

Our commitment to affordable childcare remains strong. Through the **Summer Learning Initiative** and efforts to expand eligibility in the **Child Care Assistance Program**, we're advancing initiatives that empower families to secure family-sustaining employment.

## Advocate United: Racial and Social Justice

We achieved significant progress toward social justice, securing enhanced protections for crime victims, increased funding for domestic violence prevention, and simplified access to compensation for survivors of sexual crimes. The **Crime Victim Compensation Program Modifications**, developed with the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence, allow survivors to use funds for home modifications, helping prevent repeat violence. Streamlined access to compensation ensures that survivors receive timely support as they rebuild their lives.

## Achieve United: Equitable Education

We championed expanded access to higher education through **Foster Youth Scholarship**, **Rhode Island Promise**, and **Hope Scholarship** programs, removing financial barriers for vulnerable youth. Additionally, we supported increased **Multilingual Education** funding and codification of the **Early Childcare Workforce Registry**, ensuring all Rhode Islanders have access to quality education, from early learning to higher education.

These legislative achievements underscore United Way of Rhode Island's commitment to building a just, equitable, and thriving community for all. Through steadfast advocacy, we continue to drive transformative change across the state, ensuring every Rhode Islander has the opportunity to live a safe, healthy, and prosperous life.





# ANSWERING THE CALL

## 211 AND THE POINT'S 2023 IMPACT IN RHODE ISLAND

Through the generosity of our donors, last year United Way's 211 and the Point (Rhode Island's aging and disability resource center) handled over 190,000 calls, emails, texts, and walk-ins from Rhode Islanders seeking help, stability and resources.

Any Rhode Islander, regardless of income, is welcome to contact our two call centers. The 211 call center is staffed 24/7, every day of the year. 211 also answers any calls to the Point that come in after business hours. We offer three walk-in rooms and our 211 RV – a mobile resource center that provides office hours at 15 locations and staffs over 250 outreach events annually. 75% of our staff is bilingual and bicultural, providing services in over

200 languages and dialects. Most importantly, we listen closely to what the community tells us, and we use the insights we gain to shape our programs and advocate for what Rhode Islanders need most.

211 is frequently activated to provide reliable information in collaboration with the RI Emergency Management Agency, or with our state partners, such as the Office of Healthy Aging, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health, and the Secretary of State's Office. In 2023 alone, we were activated for food box distribution; supported callers during a government shut down; helped people find shelter and report damages during localized flooding events; and helped folks locate COVID vaccine and testing locations, as well as quarantine and isolation centers.

Our call centers also serve Rhode Islanders eligible for Medicare and Medicaid services. In 2023-2024, we received 6,342 Medicare-related calls, and 4,371 Medicaid-related calls. Of these, 647 were for Medicare enrollment and 689 were Medicaid applications. Below is a breakdown of the Medicare and Medicaid-related services we provided:

We have more than 20 members on our team, who collectively hold the following certifications: Community Resource Specialist; Aging and Disability Specialist; State Health Insurance Program Enrollment Specialist; Certified HealthSource Navigator; Certified Community Health Worker, Person Centered Options Counseling Specialist, and SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Specialist. 211 is in the process of obtaining Accreditation from Inform USA –the agency which accredits organizations that demonstrate excellence in information and referral services across North America.



Every call is a story that reflects how 211 provides essential resources to help Rhode Islanders turn their lives around. Take Susan, for example. She came to Rhode Island as an international student with limited English skills and soon discovered she was pregnant with twins. Six months into her pregnancy, she visited our 211 mobile resource center at an outreach event. In pain and feeling desperate, Susan feared she might be forced to leave her host home, facing the real possibility of homelessness.

The community resource officer connected Susan with prenatal care, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, and several local organizations that could provide essential support during her pregnancy, including clothing and food.

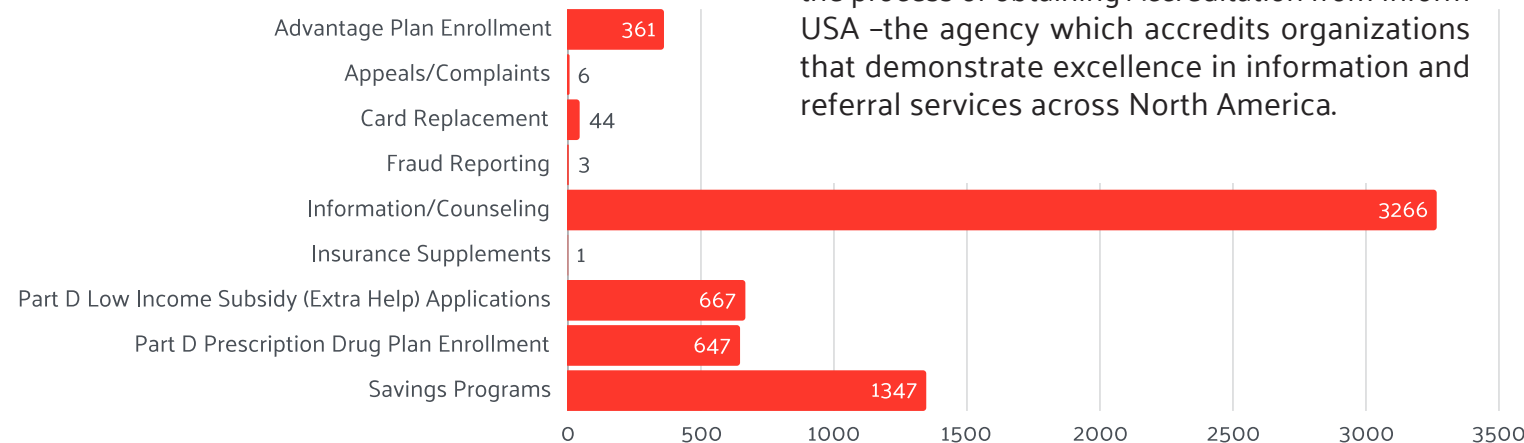
211 also put her in touch with her home country's consulate office, as she hoped to return home. Sadly, due to her high-risk pregnancy, travel was not an option. With the support she received, Susan was able to stay in her host home.

A few months later, Susan gave birth to her twins, who faced medical complications and required care in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). 211 helped her secure a place at the nearby Ronald McDonald House, allowing her to stay close to her babies during their treatment. After nearly two months in the hospital, the twins were finally discharged. Susan returned to her host family and, eventually, to her home country. She still keeps in touch, grateful for 211's help.

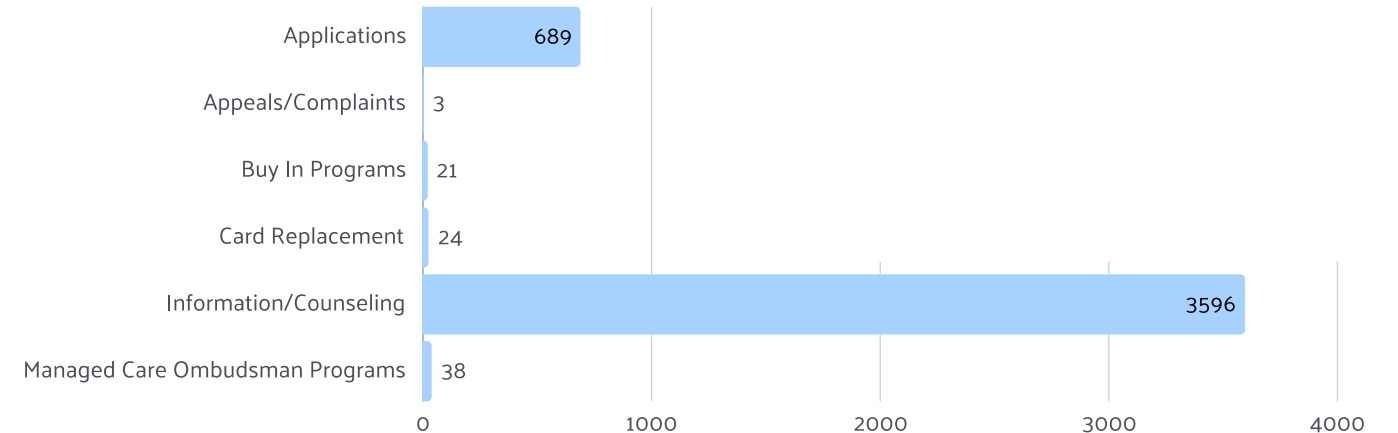
**Support 211, the Point, and other critical United Way programs by giving today.**

[www.unitedwayri.org/donate](http://www.unitedwayri.org/donate)

### Medicare



### Medicaid





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Rhode Islanders who commit **\$1,000 - \$9,999** to the Community Impact Fund (CIF) to address disparities and take action

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Two donors wish to remain anonymous.

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Three donors wish to remain anonymous.

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The Anchor Society recognizes United Way of Rhode Island's most loyal donors whose investment in our community's future makes significant and long-lasting change in people's lives. Through their planned gift, Anchor Society members make an impact that will be felt during their lifetimes and for many years to come.

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# \$3,800,000

TOTAL RAISED IN 2024

# \$14,000,000

TOTAL RAISED IN 5 YEARS!



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We are proud to partner with Organizations, Foundations, and Trusts across our State in support of our mission for a more just and equitable state for all. Most complement their giving with a workplace giving program and work with our volunteer engagement team to engage employees in meaningful team-building activities. Others work with us to craft comprehensive corporate social responsibility programs.

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**\$500,000 or more**

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FM  
RI Department of Human Services  
RI Office of Healthy Aging  
RI Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner

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Arc of Blackstone Valley  
Arthur & Martha Milot Fund  
Ashaway Line & Twine Mfg. Co.  
AstroNova, Inc.  
Automatic Data Processing, Inc.  
Avient  
Baker Family Fund  
Bally’s Tiverton Casino & Hotel  
Bally’s Twin River Lincoln Casino Resort  
Barton Gilman LLP  
BayCoast Bank  
Beacon Mutual Insurance Company  
Blackall Fund  
BNY Mellon Wealth Management  
Boss Family Fund for Learning Opportunities  
Bristol County Savings Bank  
Bristol Warren Regional School District  
Brown Physicians, Inc  
Burns & Levinson LLP  
Cameron & Mittleman  
Cap Ex Advisory Group  
Catepillar, Inc.  
Cavanagh Company  
CBIZ & MHM  
Children’s Friend and Service  
Coastal1 Credit Union  
Cranston Teacher’s Alliance  
Cumberland Farms  
Customers Bank  
David McCahan, Jr & Nancy McCahan Fund  
DeMoulas Super Market  
Duffy & Sweeney, LTD  
Edna N. Davol Fund  
EMC Insurance Companies  
Emily Nicholson Designated Fund  
Emma and Ely Oppenheimer Fund  
Emma L. Myrick Memorial Fund  
Endurance Wealth Management  
Enterprise Holdings  
Ernst & Young  
Eversource  
FedEx  
Ferland Corporation  
Figments  
Fogarty Center  
Foster Forward  
General Dynamics Mission Systems  
Genevieve C. Weeks Fund  
George & Evelyn Ingleby Fund  
George & Naomi Sawyer  
Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce

HarborOne Bank  
Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc.  
Henry P. & Priscilla B. Eldredge Fund  
Hinckley Allen & Snyder LLP  
Hindley Manufacturing Company  
IHeart Radio  
International Manufacturing Services,  
International Packaging Corp.  
Intracorp/CIGNA  
ITW Companies  
Janci Foundation  
John and Mary Wall Fund for United Way  
John R. Hess Company, Inc.  
Johnson & Johnson  
Johnson & Wales University  
Johnson Controls  
Johnston Public Schools  
Julius and Jesse Richmond Fund for the United Way  
Julius and Jesse Richmond Palmer Fund  
Kahn Litwin Renza & Company, Ltd.  
Katherine F. Hubbard & Josephine H. Williams Fund  
Kenney Manufacturing Company  
Key Container Corporation  
Kimberly Clark  
L3Harris  
Laborers’ International Union of North  
Liberty Mutual Insurance Company  
Lifespan Corporate Services  
Locke Lord, LLP  
Manulife  
Mary Yonker Trust  
McLaughlin & Moran, Inc.  
McLaughlin Research Corporation  
Meehan Foundation  
Meeting Street  
Merrill Lynch  
Molina HealthCare  
Morgan Stanley  
Murray Family Charitable Foundation  
Naomi and Viola Osterman Fund  
Narragansett Bay Commission  
National Grid  
Nationwide Insurance  
Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island  
Newport Restaurant Group  
ParsonsKellogg, LLC  
Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP  
Paychex  
Pearle W. & Martin M. Silverstein Foundation  
Peggy and Henry Sharpe Fund for United Way  
Providence Mutual Fire Insurance Company  
Providence School Department  
Raytheon Company  
Rhode Island AFL-CIO  
Rhode Island Credit Union  
Rhode Island Monthly

RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
RI Federation of Teachers and Health  
RI Image Joseph Morel Photography  
Rite-Solutions, Inc.  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
Roberts, Carroll, Feldstein & Peirce  
Robinson & Cole LLP  
Rockland Trust  
Roger Williams University  
Rupert C. Thompson Jr. Fund  
Sansiveri, Kimball & Co., L.L.P.  
Sayer Regan & Thayer, LLP  
Schneider Electric  
SouthCoast Wind  
Stanley Tree Service Inc.  
Starkweather & Shepley Insurance  
State of Rhode Island Retirees  
Target Stores  
Textron Inc.  
The Damon Company  
The Hanover Insurance Group  
The Ruth & Samuel Markoff Foundation  
Thrive Behavioral Health  
Toray Plastics (America), Inc.  
Town of Bristol  
Tuition Management Systems/Nelnet  
UnitedHealthcare  
Verizon  
Victor & Gussie Baxt Fund  
Warwick Teachers Union  
Wells Fargo Advisors  
Westerly Community Credit Union  
Women’s Fund of Rhode Island  
Wood River Health Services, Inc.  
Wright-Pierce  
Zachry Group





## LABOR SUPPORT

We are grateful for all the union members who work so hard to help their fellow Rhode Islanders in need.

### With special thanks to:

Patrick Crowley, Rhode Island AFL-CIO, President  
Member of United Way of Rhode Island's Community Advisory Board  
Karen Hazard, Dante F. Mollo Labor United

### Rhode Island AFL-CIO Executive Committee

Chris Buffery, IBEW Local 2323  
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Christopher Sabitoni, New England Assistant Regional Manager, Laborers' International of North America, New England Regional Office  
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FRANK FLYNN

Dante F. Mollo Labor United Award



## VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE (VITA)

Gifts to United Way of Rhode Island power the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. This is a nationwide initiative supported by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which trains and certifies volunteers to provide free tax preparation services to low and medium-income individuals. Many seniors, persons with disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency use this program. VITA services are often hosted by community organizations in accessible and comfortable locations. United Way of Rhode Island partners with VITA to manage and deliver these services in 23 sites across Rhode Island.

Tax preparation can cost between \$100 - \$300 for the typical VITA user, which can be used instead to pay for other essential needs like rent, groceries, or healthcare.

United Way of Rhode Island's investment of \$300,000 in the VITA initiative returns \$76 for each dollar invested.

In addition to tax preparation, United Way partner Progreso Latino is certified to assist individuals in applying for an ITIN, or individual tax identification number, a requirement to obtain a drivers' privilege card or identification privilege card.

The site at the Center for Southeast Asians helped a taxpayer who was about to get evicted from his apartment as his rent was past due. He had not filed taxes in seven years and had no supporting paperwork. VITA created an IRS online account and helped him request his transcripts from the State Division of Taxation. Even though two years of tax returns were withheld because he filed late, he was able to deposit about \$10,000 in his bank account from his refund and stimulus and was able to stay in his apartment.

VITA volunteers can identify and help claim important tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC), which can add thousands to a family's refund. VITA's guidance ensures they receive the maximum and most accurate refund possible, while minimizing audits. A volunteer at Jonnycake Center for Hope (JCH) identified an error in a client's prior year return, and filed an amendment with a substantial refund for the taxpayer.

Maximum annual income to qualify for VITA services

\$67,000

The average annual income of a Rhode Island filer was

\$33,407

10,612  
Tax Returns  
processed by VITA

\$13,413,942  
in total refunds for  
Rhode Islanders

\$4,544,170  
total Earned Income Tax refunds  
for Rhode Islanders







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Dial 211 or visit [www.221ri.org](http://www.221ri.org)  
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