

# Papitto Opportunity Connection

March 2023

## The State of Black-Owned Businesses in Rhode Island: A Call To Action

Black-owned enterprises continue to lack access to capital, face disadvantages in securing government contracting and account for just four percent of businesses in the Ocean State, according to a new report shared by [Rhode Island Black Business Association](#) (RIBBA). Members say the sobering statistics, presented last month during the association's inaugural legislative breakfast, fall well below the national average and are just a glimpse of the crisis Black entrepreneurs are facing in Rhode Island.

"Access to capital is the biggest obstacle as it relates to company growth, especially Black businesses that are already at a disadvantage," said RIBBA's Founder and President, [Lisa Ranglin, PMP](#) (below). "We are urging credit institutions to open up lending to help Black business owners thrive."



Photo credit: RI Black Business Association

RIBBA's comparative analysis of minority owned establishments found that of the 4,768 Black owned businesses in Rhode Island, only 168 have employees. RIBBA also reports that Black Rhode Islanders who own businesses receive the lowest average loan amounts when seeking funding and continue to face major hurdles when working to secure government bids —with over 80 percent of purchase orders being awarded to white contractors. Despite this, data shows Black entrepreneurial growth in Rhode Island has been outpacing whites and Latinos in the last ten years.

# A Comparative Overview of Black-owned Businesses



Total Small Bus.	<b>33,200,000</b>	<b>108,360</b>
Total White-owned Bus.	<b>25,219,883 - 76%</b>	<b>93,322 - 86%</b>
Total Hispanic-owned Bus.	<b>4,228,625 - 13%</b>	<b>11,000 - 10%</b>
Total Black-owned Bus.	<b>3,239,551 - 10%</b>	<b>4,768 - 4%</b>

Resource: 2022 Small Business Profile United States  
2022 Small Business Profile Rhode Island

# Percentage of Black-owned Businesses With Employees: A Comparative Overview



	Total	Without Employees	With Employees	Total	Without Employees	With Employees
White-owned Bus.	25,219,883	20,450,000	4,769,883 - 19%	93,322	73,500	19,822
Hispanic-owned Bus.	4,228,625	3,897,000	331,625 - 8%	11,000	*	*
Black-owned Bus.	3,239,551	3,115,000	124,551 - 4%	4,768	4,600	168 - 4%

Resource: 2022 Small Business Profile United States  
2022 Small Business Profile Rhode Island

Chart provided by RI Black Business Association

Now, RIBBA is issuing a call to action. Members are urging lawmakers and community stakeholders to prioritize minority business development and work to invest \$100M in the next ten years. They're also calling for policy changes to the state's contract bidding process and the establishment of a diverse oversight committee. The association projects the investments would create thousands of jobs and increase the median household income for Black families.

"Rhode Island has an opportunity to change the landscape and build an ecosystem to help build sustainable equity and the growth of Black-owned businesses," said Lisa Ranglin

(below). “Building strong businesses is a win-win strategy to close the state's racial wealth gap in underserved communities.”

## Leveling The Playing Field: BIPOC Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition "bETA" Program

More than 30 men and women gathered recently on an early Saturday morning at the Community College of Rhode Island. The group was composed of professionals who had various backgrounds and worked in different industries. All had one thing in common: a strong desire to own their business. These men and women of color know it won't be easy.

While the majority of those in attendance were dressed in business attire, Providence's Joshua Robinson proudly wore a printed deep blue t-shirt that emphasized an important message:

Rapper  
Athlete  
Entrepreneur



Lt. Governor Sabina Matos, who welcomed the group of aspiring entrepreneurs, singled out Robinson and admired his shirt.

“We have to change the perception of who we are and what we do,” said Matos.

A new transformational program, BIPOC Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition (bETA) program addresses this inequity by facilitating business acquisition for Rhode Island's entrepreneurs of color seeking to acquire a new business. Developed by New Majority Capital Foundation, with support from Papitto Opportunity Connection (POC), bETA's

unique 8-week program offers an end-to-end approach and is designed to give BIPOC entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs of color in Rhode Island the knowledge, resources, tools, support, and access to the capital they need to acquire and successfully run a small business.

“The bETA training levels the playing field for aspiring entrepreneurs from BIPOC communities so they can be as compelling to a business owner selling their business to an Ivy League educated MBA grad,” said NMCF’s [Havell Rodrigues](#).

The first and only initiative of its kind in the nation, bETA kicked off its eight-week pilot program with the inaugural meeting of its first cohort recently at CCRI. “I’ve always wanted to own my own business,” said Robinson, thrilled to be part of the first cohort. “I couldn’t pass up this opportunity to be part of such an incredible program that will change lives.”

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## Finding Solutions In Non-Profit Work Today

To help non-profit leaders better understand organizational and financial management challenges, the Founder of The Capellan Group, [Victor Capellan](#), and [Bryant University](#) Professor of Accounting, [Dr. Kwadwo Asare](#), share their feedback as they engage in support work with POC funded organizations.



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## Weekend Of Activities Highlight Upcoming 401Gives.

[401Gives](#), Rhode Island’s statewide day of giving is just a few weeks away! Powered by [United Way of Rhode Island](#) and presenting sponsor [Papitto Opportunity Connection](#), 401Gives is designed to bring a collective voice to the nonprofit community and make a difference to these important organizations that deliver vital services to our communities.

In 2021, over \$3.1 million was raised for more than 500 of RI’s nonprofits. [Foster Forward](#), an organization dedicated to supporting children, youth and families impacted by foster care, led the way, raising **\$209,505** during the annual day of giving.

In 2023, 401Gives overall goal is to reach **\$4.01 million**.



powered by United Way of Rhode Island

Held annually on April 1 (401) since April 1, 2023, falls on a Saturday, this year's 401Gives has now expanded into a weekend long event. This is not an April's Fool's joke! Now, the state's nonprofits have a greater opportunity to raise funds for the important work they do each day.

401Gives Weekend Edition kicks off Friday, March 31 bright and early at 6 am and runs through Monday, April 3 at 6 pm. Activities will be held throughout the weekend across the state including [Farm Fresh](#) and [PVD Flea](#) to give you a chance to showcase your organization. Wear your t-shirts, display signs, and highlight your organization at the inaugural 401Gives [WaterFire](#) on the evening April 1.

For more information visit, [401Gives.org](http://401Gives.org)

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## Spread The Word

We want every single high school student of color in Rhode Island to apply for the Transform Rhode Island Scholarship, [Transform Rhode Island Scholarship \(TRIS\)](#)

So, for the last several weeks, community leader and educator [Chachi Carvalho](#) (below left) and 2022 TRIS finalist [Daisha Jackson](#) (below right) have been hosting [TRIS workshops](#) across the state at public, private, charter schools and via zoom, to get the word out about this amazing opportunity for high school students of color in Rhode Island.

Now we need your help. Tell your friends, colleagues, kids, neighbors and about this amazing opportunity for high school students of color to use their voice and share their ideas to create real change in their community.



A reminder: Rhode Island High school students of color must answer just this question:

**“If you were given a million dollars to better the lives of Rhode Island’s communities of color either through education, job skills training, business, housing or healthcare, how would you do it?”**

Ten TRIS finalists will be awarded scholarships worth between **\$5,000-\$25,000** and POC will invest \$1 million to make the winning idea become a reality.

Students can share their ideas by submitting an essay, video, or multimedia presentation. So, help us spread the word about this amazing opportunity. The deadline to enter is fast approaching on **March 31, 2023**.

For more information, visit [here](#).