

Papitto Opportunity Connection

October 2025

POC Grant Update: Understanding The POC Funding Process

Currently, Papitto Opportunity Connection ([POC](#)) is in the process of distributing grants resulting from requests made during our June 2025 application period. Understandably, during notification and distribution, many organizations ask about their award, and for a more robust understanding of the process POC uses in determining grants.

Twice a year – in June and December – POC provides an opportunity for non-profit organizations to apply for an unsolicited grant – either a POC Million Dollar Innovation Grant or an Operational Small Grant. POC awards approximately \$6 million annually through this process, with \$3 million dedicated to the June cycle, and \$3 million to the December cycle. In June 2025, we received requests from more than 130 non-profit organizations in Rhode Island for both grant programs.



In reviewing the Innovation Grant applications, the trustees first ask multiple critical questions about an organization's structure, history, and mission. How long has it been in business? Does it have a track record of success? Does it have a budget and infrastructure that is able to support a \$1 million infusion of funding? Is there a plan to sustain the program after POC's grant runs out at the end of one year? Does the organization's mission align with POC - is it focused on education, job skills training, entrepreneurship, healthcare, criminal justice or housing?

Once those questions are answered satisfactorily, then the trustees turn to the proposed program itself. Among the most important questions asked here: Is the proposed program truly new and innovative, and not just designed to be a funding source for an existing

program? Will the proposed program create systemic change for communities most in need?

If the trustees determine there is a proposal that meets those thresholds and decides to award a Million Dollars to one organization, then all the other applicants for the Innovation Grant are automatically placed into the small operational grant pool for consideration. In each cycle, the trustees will determine if one organization will receive \$1 million or if POC will use that money to make five, ten or thirty separate grants.



In the June 2025 cycle, no applications were deemed to have met the threshold required for a \$1-million award by the trustees. Instead, the trustees voted to distribute funding to more than two-dozen organizations that applied for an Innovation Grant.

Small operational grants are designed to help nonprofits continue their mission, and in each cycle POC receives scores of applications for this funding. POC Trustees have determined that small grants are generally not to exceed \$50,000. In fact, most of those grants are between \$2,500 and \$10,000.

Lastly, POC no longer provides new multi-year grants. Those organizations which received multi-year grants will be required to submit new applications once the grants end and must understand that if any new funding is provided, it will be pursuant to the guidelines described above. While there are many organizations doing important and admirable work in Rhode Island, POC funding is not and never has been intended to be long-term funding for any organization, nor is POC funding intended to be the sole source of funding for any organization.

Essential Tips, Advice And Key Information For Nonprofits



Each month, we'll share essential tips, expert advice, and valuable information aimed to support POC-funded nonprofit organizations to grow, thrive, and continue to create a big impact in our mighty state.

Every single dollar donated to a nonprofit should go where it matters most — the cause itself. But that’s not always the case. Many fundraising platforms take a cut of the donations — funds that should go directly to the nonprofit.

Until now.

Zeffy is a 100% free fundraising platform that ensures every dollar donated directly goes to the nonprofit — no fees, no percentage, no cuts.

In return, Zeffy gives donors the option to make a voluntary contribution to its organization. At the payment confirmation step, donors have the option (at no obligation) to contribute to Zeffy.

One POC grantee, Khadija Lewis-Kahn, a member of the Jammah leadership team, is an advocate of Zeffy. Jammah provides educational and support services including childcare, residential care for juveniles, recreational offerings, educational opportunities, and other community services and events to those in need in Rhode Island. Lewis-Kahn is using the platform ahead of an upcoming event and notes it's saving the Providence-based nonprofit organization hundreds of dollars. She highly recommends Zeffy to other POC-funded nonprofits.

"It's almost unbelievable that Zeffy offers this high level of service with absolutely no fees — easy ticket sales, donation receipts, and donor engagement tools all- in-one platform," said Khadija. "Zeffy has been an incredible fundraising partner for us, and every dollar we save goes directly back into our mission, allowing us to make an even greater impact."

Future Gen Cancer Scholars Program

The Future Gen Cancer Scholars program, the first of its kind mentoring program, aims to build Rhode Island’s next generation of cancer physicians and researchers reflective of the communities it serves. Established in 2022, the paid fellowship program engages Rhode Island high school students from the state’s urban core in a six-week program for two summers where they shadow top cancer doctors and scientists at Rhode Island, Miriam, and Hasbro Children’s Hospitals and have access to state-of-the-art laboratories at the Brown University Health Cancer Institute. This program encourages its scholars to eventually pursue a career in the medical profession in Rhode Island.

Daniel Oduro, a freshman at the University of Rhode and a 2024 graduate of Shea High School, participated in the Future Gen Program.



First Row Left to Right: Joseline Soberanis, Rosderely Guzman, Heidi Guarcas, Cristofer Ulloa, Adrianny Reyes, Eliany Silva, Belina Teixeira, Victoria Correia, Melissa Paula

Second Row Left to Right: Ronella Dennis, Kaylyn Woods, Alberta Stokes, Carlene Foster, Raquel Ortiz, Mirna Mateo Ayala, Adam Sackor, Yamilet Martinez

Third Row: Left to Right: Monoluwa Adeniyi, Rocci Dennis, Jaya Richard, Ava Parker, Jaymeson Taylor

“The Future Gen Program was one of the best opportunities I have ever had. The best part was meeting actual doctors in oncology, like Dr. Safran, Dr. Mega, and Dr. Ollila. Being able to work one on one with them, and shadow them all day was a one-of-a-kind experience,” he said. “I was able to fully understand the steps it takes to diagnose, treat and save a cancer patient. I was even able to watch a surgery happen in my second year!”

His experience in the Future Gen program solidified his desire to one day work in the healthcare field.

“At home, in Ghana, access to medicine, medical centers and physicians is very limited. It is because of this little access that I lost my younger sister. My motivation is my family, and with that motivation I want to become a surgeon,” said Daniel. “My biggest benefit of this program was that I got to see what doctor’s day looks like, and I got to live it like it was my own day.”

FirstWorks Presents Silkroad’s American Railroad

Mark your calendar. FirstWorks presents [Silkroad's American Railroad](#) Sunday, November 9 performance at [The Vets](#). The upcoming performance will feature a dynamic ensemble of eight world-class musicians, led by internationally acclaimed pipa master Wu Man. American Railroad weaves a rich sonic tapestry that honors the often-overlooked contributions of immigrant communities in building the transcontinental railroad — a project that reshaped the nation.



Image courtesy of FirstWorks

After the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, a trip from coast to coast that used to take months was shortened to just under a week, allowing for the transport of goods and ideas across the continent in ways previously inconceivable. Profit-seeking corporations and the American government financed it, but the people who built it and who were most affected by it are the focus of this program of music—Indigenous and African Americans and other immigrant laborers whose contributions have been largely erased from history.

Silkroad's American Railroad seeks to acknowledge and celebrate untold stories by amplifying unheard voices from these communities, painting a more accurate picture of the global diasporic origin of the American Empire.

Tickets are limited. To purchase a discounted ticket, click [here](#) and use the promotional code: ROADPOC

[WEBSITE](#)

[MISSION](#)

[SIGN UP](#)

[CONTACT](#)

Papitto Opportunity Connection

100 Westminster Street Suite 105 | Providence, RI
02903 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) |
[Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

