

Papitto Opportunity Connection

September 2025

Essential Tips, Advice & 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.

Since our founding, Papitto Opportunity Connection (POC) has been committed to connecting nonprofits to each other and to community resources. In the current environment, this is as important as ever, and each month we are highlighting resources for our nonprofit partners. Understanding how to navigate all of the recent changes to federal grants—including executive orders, agency memos, and grant agreements—is the topic of two webinars coming up in October.

First, on October 2 from 11am to 12pm, [Lawyers Committee for Rhode Island](#) Chief Legal Counsel Amy Romero and the Nonprofit Legal Protection Project will hold an on-line workshop discussing what law applies to new federal grant terms and new conditions that have been placed on federal grants.

You can [register here](#).

Similarly, the [National Council of Nonprofits](#) will hold a webinar on October 6th at 3pm entitled “*What nonprofits need to know about the current federal grant landscape.*”

To learn more and to register, click [here](#).

Additionally, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* recently published articles offering [tips and advice for better grant seeking](#).

Finally, the [Alliance for Nonprofit Impact](#) provides information about the fast-approaching deadline for Congress to avert a government shutdown and what that may mean for nonprofits in its latest policy brief, which can be found [here](#).

An Update On POC's June 2025 Grant Cycle

POC's Board of Trustees has reviewed more than 125 grant requests from Rhode Island nonprofit organizations made during the June grant cycle for both operational (small) grants and the POC Million Dollar Innovation Challenge grant programs. Organizations that applied for funding will be notified of awards in early October, with grants being distributed during a two-week period before the end of October.

The next open grant cycle will take place December 1-15, 2025. For more information visit our website [here](#).

POC Proudly Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, we're highlighting a few of the many POC grantees who are dedicated to empowering and uplifting Rhode Island's Latino and Hispanic communities.

Discover the stories behind the faces of "Somos Rhode Island," a new exhibit that celebrates the strength and richness of Latino identity and heritage in our state. The collaboration between [Rhode Island Latino Arts](#) and the [Rhode Island State House](#) honors the pioneers who have helped shape the state's history through their courage and contributions. Find the exhibit at the lower level gallery at the State House.



This exhibition showcases a collection of 30 portraits created by artist [René Gómez](#).

"Every portrait in this exhibit tells a powerful personal story from someone in Rhode Island's Latino community," said RI Latino Arts Executive Director, Marta Martinez. "These are stories of where people come from, what they've achieved, and how they've helped shape the places we live in today. Together, they show the many ways Latinas, Latinos, and Latinx individuals have built and continue to influence Rhode Island's culture, identity, and future. Additionally, it will delve into narratives of strength and resistance in the face of

various challenges such as discrimination, marginalization, and issues related to social justice.”

Martinez says that by emphasizing these challenges, “our intention is to inspire younger generations by sharing these stories and to cultivate a sense of solidarity, understanding, and continuity among all participants.”

The Rhode Island State House is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. [The exhibit](#) will remain on display through November 28, 2025.

Celebrating 20 Years Of Impact At Latino Policy Institute

The [Latino Policy Institute](#) (LPI) is celebrating its 20th anniversary! The milestone marks two decades of research, advocacy, and community leadership for Latinos in Rhode Island. Founded in 2005 and inspired by the significant growth of Rhode Island’s Latino population, a dedicated group of community leaders began establishing a research institute focused on serving the needs of the Latino community. The initiative marked a pivotal step toward advancing research and advocacy for Latino residents.



Images courtesy of The Latino Policy Institute.

Since its founding, LPI has [published more than 10 research reports](#) that have shaped policy, expanded healthcare and educational opportunities, and advanced economic security for Latino Rhode Islanders.

“LPI’s work has helped pass driving privilege cards, healthcare for undocumented children, in-state tuition for undocumented students, expansions of paid family leave, and Secure Choice, which gives thousands of workers access to retirement savings,” said LPI Executive Director Marcela Bentacur. “We also became an independent organization after 17 years, which gave us the chance to grow our mission.”

Looking ahead, Bentacur says LPI is focused on protecting the most vulnerable, especially immigrant families, multilingual students, and those facing homelessness or struggling to meet basic needs.



“Latinos in Rhode Island face rising costs for basic needs like food, housing, and healthcare. In recent years, our community and other marginalized groups have carried the heaviest burden of these inequities. Without action, these challenges will continue to grow and affect future generations,” Betancur said.

Latino Cancer Control Task Force

Cancer is the leading cause of death for Hispanic and Latino people in the United States. In Rhode Island, a group of hardworking volunteers is dedicated to lowering the number of people in the state’s Latino community impacted by cancer.



Images courtesy of The Latino Cancer Control Task Force

[The Latino Cancer Control Task Force](#) is committed to saving lives and empowering the Latino community through education, prevention, and compassionate support.

With support from the Papiitto Opportunity Connection, hundreds learn, connect, and find hope through *Latinos Let's Talk Cancer*. The annual conference aims to raise awareness about cancer in the Latino community while breaking down barriers to understanding and accessing care. Conducted entirely in Spanish, the conference ensures attendees are respected and understood.



The organization's monthly Esperanza Support Group is the first Spanish-speaking group for cancer survivors and caregivers in Rhode Island.

"POC's support also allows us to create special experiences like healing retreats and wellness activities, where patients and families can recharge, feel supported, and know they are not alone," said Mercedes "Betty" Bernal, the founder of The Latino Cancer Control Task Force. "With POC's partnership, we are making a real difference in the lives of Latinos touched by cancer."

Mariam Kaba Named A Chuck Cooper Fellow

POC is proud of Mariam Kaba, the first-ever Transform Rhode Island winner whose passion for social justice, community engagement and creating real change now extends beyond her hometown of Woonsocket.

Mariam, who worked tirelessly to improve her Woonsocket community, recently was named the [Chuck Cooper Foundation Fellow](#), in honor of Chuck Cooper, the first black player drafted into the NBA by the Boston Celtics.

For the next nine months, Mariam will work with the Boston Celtics' Community Engagement Department helping to address social injustice and inequities across New England.



Image courtesy of Mariam Kaba

"I look forward to planning events with the community engagement team, fulfilling one of the six pillars of Boston Celtics United," said Mariam. "I hope to build relationships within the Boston community and carry out Chuck Cooper's legacy."

Now a sophomore at Northeastern University, Mariam is looking to make an impact in the underserved communities in the Boston area.

"I hope to learn and strengthen my ability to effectively implement impactful and measurable initiatives with the community engagement team," said Mariam.

The Celtics community engagement team is led by Providence native and former basketball standout at Bay View Academy and Northeastern University, Kash Cannon, who has taken her passion for the game out into the community. Kash was the keynote speaker at the 2025 TRIS announcement celebration back in May. There, she had a chance to meet Mariam and learn about her passion for social justice. The two were reunited months later when Mariam was chosen as the fourth Chuck Cooper Fellow.

“It was a full circle moment. I wasn’t part of the interview process. As soon as I saw her name I couldn’t believe it. She was selected without any help from me! It was meant to be,” said Cannon.

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