

Papitto Opportunity Connection

October 2024

Grant Update

More than 125 non-profit organizations received funding as a result of Papitto Opportunity Connection's (POC) June 2024 call for unsolicited grant proposals. Of those proposals, 25 were submissions for POC's first \$1-million Innovation Challenge Grant. Those grants are awarded to proposals that are designed to create demonstrable systemic change for Rhode Island's communities most in need. In this cycle, POC awarded Brown University Health (formerly Lifespan) with a \$1-million Innovation Challenge Grant for its Comprehensive Sickle Cell Treatment Program. (Read story below)

After careful review and deliberation, POC's Advisory Board and Trustees decided not to award a second \$1-million Innovation Challenge Grant award, and instead provided 10 organizations with \$100,000 awards each. More than 100 other organizations that applied for small-grant funding received grants.

There will be another opportunity to apply for one of two \$1-million Innovation Challenge Grant award and for small grant funding between December 1 and 15, 2024.

You can learn more about POC grantmaking by visiting [here](#).



POC Awards First-Ever \$1 Million Innovation Challenge Grant To Support Brown University Health Comprehensive Sickle Cell Program.

POC recently awarded its first ever \$1 Million Innovation Challenge Grant to the [Brown University Health \(formerly Lifespan\) Comprehensive Sickle Cell Program](#), which will allow for expansion and enable it to become a regional leader and a national model for [sickle cell](#) care, reversing decades of inequity. Sickle cell is a life-threatening blood disorder affecting more than 100,000 Americans and millions worldwide.



BROWNHealth
UNIVERSITY

Images above: Brown University Health

Nearly all patients with sickle cell disease are Black or Latino and nationally the disease is woefully understudied and underfunded. Currently, approximately 300 Rhode Islanders suffer from sickle cell disease, and that number continues to grow as it is being found in more children through the state's newborn screening program.

Although the disease has been recognized for longer than a century, the development of sickle cell disease therapies has faced significant obstacles, largely stemming from insufficient research funding that many researchers and scholars have attributed to systemic racism.

"POC was founded on the premise of creating real change in communities with the most need in Rhode Island," said John Tarantino, POC Managing Trustee. "The expansion of the Brown University Health Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center will directly address the inequity in healthcare faced by those who suffer with this disease – due to lack of access to treatment and lack of funding for this disease. POC strongly encourages other

foundations in Rhode Island to join us by investing funds in this program. Working together, we can create a solution to this inequity, one that benefits our entire state.”



Gala Season Is Here

It's gala season in Rhode Island. Whether you attend, volunteer, or donate, your contributions uplift our communities and the organizations working every day to make a meaningful difference. This fall, several POC grantees announced advancements in their advocacy work and recognized community champions.



Mario Bueno
Director ejecutivo de Progreso Latino

Pictured above: Progreso Latino's Executive Director, Mario Bueno at their festive event.

Progreso Latino ushered in its 47th year of service to Latino families in Rhode Island with an event that embraced the spirit of carnival and masquerades and delivered a night of celebration with food, music, and fun.

At its annual gala, Higher Ground International recognized POC Advisory Board Member Ting Barnard. Ting received Higher Ground's prestigious Kingdom Chief Award. The Kingdom Chief "carries a cow's tail" and is the in-between and designator who helps to ensure the well-being of the tribe. Ting received this award for her advocacy in ensuring that Higher Ground International has been cared for and for helping to provide the critical resources necessary for it to thrive.



Pictured above from left: Ms Thong Khanh Phommasith (Ms Barnard's mother), POC Founder Barbara Papiitto, Ting Barnard, Ms Noi Reineke (Ms Barnard's sister).

Women's Fund of Rhode Island's annual 'Women Leading Change Celebration' celebrated their role in the passing of important legislation from Paid Family Leave to the Fair Pay Act. "We have trained community leaders in advocacy and motivated many of them to run for office," said Women's Fund CEO Kelly Nevins.

WOMEN'S fund

R H O D E I S L A N D

"We have over 100 women who have graduated from our Women's Policy Institute, which is a training program that teaches state legislative advocacy. 30 percent of our participants work for non-profit organizations and another 30 percent work for the government, so the program acts like a workplace training program," said Nevins.

Applications for the Women's Policy Institute are accepted from April through June. To learn about Women's Fund of Rhode Island events and opportunities, [subscribe](#) to their mailing list.



Pictured above: participants at the Women Leading Change Celebration event

Nearly 600 people danced, networked, and inspired one another at the 2024 [Rhode Island Black Business Association \(RIBBA\) Annual Awards Gala](#) recently at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick.

The sold-out event brought together Rhode Island's business community while raising funds to tackle systemic inequities Rhode Island's Black and brown entrepreneurs face in access to funding, social capital, entrepreneurial development, and contracting opportunities. RIBBA gives underserved businesses the connections, training, certifications and tools they need to thrive and grow.

Pictured below from left to right: Juan Carter, Melissa Dalomba Carter, Kristen Haffenreffer, Eulanda Lafrance, Nadia Lafrance, (Back) Arthur Johnson, Anna Cano Morales, and James Monteiro



AMOS HOUSE: Services Needed More Than Ever

[Amos House](#) works tirelessly to help people help themselves out of oppression, homelessness and poverty through the organization's vital services and results-oriented programs. Nearly 15,000 of Rhode Island's most vulnerable enter the door annually at Amos House, looking for housing, a meal, or one of the many services the non-profit provides.

With the cost of living in Rhode Island continuing to climb, services provided by Amos House are needed now more than ever. "Rhode Island is in the midst of a housing crisis. Rising housing prices, coupled with a lack of available units — especially affordable or subsidized units — have pushed a record number of our neighbors to the brink of homelessness or beyond," said Eileen Hayes, Executive Director at Amos House. "Add to this the issue of rising food costs, and the need for essential services support is at an all-time high."

Image below courtesy of Amos House



Helping people help themselves

With your help, we build strong individuals and families, sustainable communities and responsible businesses.

In the last 12 months, Amos House served a record 209,000 prepared meals, 60,000 more than the previous year. The organization also distributed 90,000 pounds of groceries and provided more than \$200,000 in direct rental support; the most in the history of the organization.

Amos House also offers critical services including job skills development.

With support from POC, Amos House has been able to expand its workforce training offerings and invest in people in a meaningful way. More than 100 individuals have successfully completed the workforce training program and are gainfully employed earning a living wage.

"Amos House is committed to providing workforce pathways that offer opportunities for adults to earn a living wage," said Hayes.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

meet the **MET** HIGH school

LOVE GOLF?
Share your passion for the game with our students!
Teach golf basics using our new **Golf Simulator***

PERK
Time for you to practice your own swing!

button hole
*Made possible through a partnership with Button Hole Golf Learning Facility
Check them out at buttonhole.org

When: Choose your times 9am-3pm, school days
Where: The Met HS, 325 Public St, Providence
Contact: Sue @ the Met - 401-752-2660 - or - sue.lynch@metmail.org

Volunteers Needed

The Met High School is seeking golf enthusiasts to teach students the game using the school's new golf simulator, donated by Button Hole.

To learn how you can donate your time and expertise, contact Sue Lynch at (401) 752-2660 sue.lynch@metmail.org.

To learn about Button Hole's mission, click [here](#).

Tracking Non-Profit Impact In Rhode Island

Each year, United Way of Rhode Island and Grantmakers Council of Rhode Island sponsor a "State of the Rhode Island Nonprofit Sector" survey, in order to educate funders and policymakers about the challenges facing non-profits across the state. The Alliance for Nonprofit Impact at United Way uses the data to advocate for the investment of more resources in the sector, and to develop responsive programs and services that support non-profit effectiveness and resilience.

All Rhode Island non-profits are being asked to participate to help build a full picture of current challenges facing Rhode Island non-profits. You will be invited to a presentation of the results once results are compiled.

Please use this [link](#) to complete the survey.

If you have questions, please contact Nancy Wolanski at nancy.wolanski@unitedwayri.org or Dr. Adama Brown at adama.brown@unitedwayri.org.

Image below: Grantmakers Council of Rhode Island



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