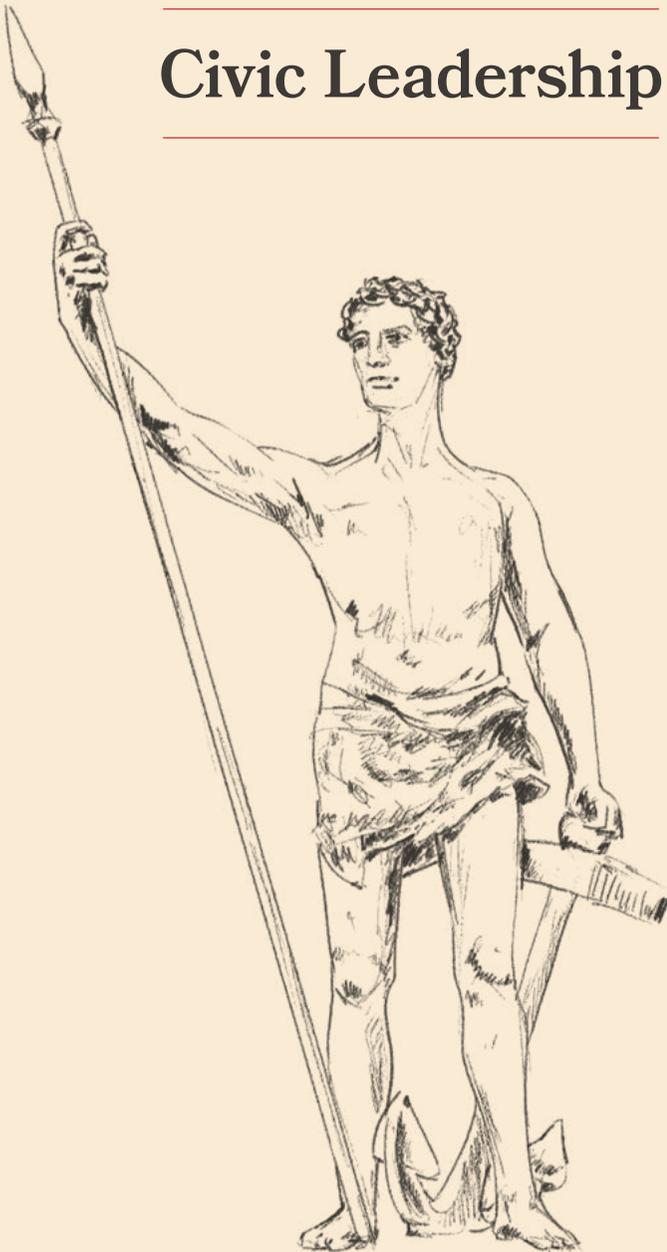


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# Civic Leadership

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RHODE ISLAND  
FOUNDATION

Civic leadership is working together to reform systems, providing opportunities for civic engagement, and assuring access to, and the use of, quality data to inform decision-making.

## Rhode Island Foundation + Civic Leadership

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We firmly believe that to create a stronger, more vibrant community all voices must be heard, all of us must collaborate to solve important issues and seize emerging opportunities, and decision-making has to be backed by quality data.

As the state's only community foundation and leading funder of its nonprofit organizations, we have seen that addressing these issues in our society can amplify the efforts of all of our partners. So we have made civic leadership activities a linchpin of our strategy. This allows us to have a significant impact on issues that are critical for our state today—and tomorrow—including improving our public education system, our state's economy, and the health of all who call Rhode Island home.

On the following pages, you'll see examples of the Foundation's civic leadership work which is supported through the generosity of hundreds of donors to our Civic Leadership Fund. Please be in touch with any feedback you may have; we'd be glad to hear from you.



## To fix the problems, we have to start by fixing the solutions.

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We're all keenly aware of the challenges facing our public education and healthcare systems. It is not a coincidence that education and healthcare are two of our strategic priority areas. Our goal of educational success for every student is ambitious. So we are focused on long-term improvements in achievement, the quality of educational environments, and coordination within the sector. For our healthy lives strategy, we are concentrating on improved health outcomes for all Rhode Islanders, better care, and lower costs. It is important that these efforts advance education and health equity across race, ethnicity, income, and geography.

We know we don't have all the answers – or the means – for achieving these bold goals. So in both of these critical areas, we have convened a knowledgeable and engaged group to create a vision and long-term plan to help chart—and stay—the course. We look forward to sharing our progress and learning from others, as it is only by working together that we will achieve the best possible outcomes for all Rhode Islanders.



## There is power in civic engagement.

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Every Rhode Islander has a role to play in ensuring our collective success. So we see intrinsic value in giving people the opportunity to voice their opinions, hear from their neighbors, and use their purchasing power to better the community.

- Launched in 2018, the **Together RI initiative**—20 sessions at schools, community centers, and senior centers across the state where Rhode Islanders talked face-to-face over a family-style meal—provided a venue for participants to voice their thoughts on our state’s strengths, challenges, and opportunities. This input from nearly 1,300 individuals is informing our civic leadership efforts going forward.
- Through the **Buy Local RI** campaign we encourage folks to support locally-owned independent businesses—the backbone of our economy and our communities. Local businesses are owned by people who live here and are invested in the community’s future. They often take more time to get to know—and to develop relationships with—their customers. And they keep money cycling through the local economy longer.
- **Pioneers**—a series of live podcast events—allows attendees and listeners to hear from, learn from, and be inspired by Rhode Islanders who are civic leaders in their own right. The inaugural series features intimate conversations with five Rhode Island pioneers – Alan Hassenfeld, former CEO of Hasbro Toy Company; Julie Nora, founder of the International Charter School in Pawtucket; Rabbi Leslie Gutterman, long time spiritual leader of Providence’s Temple Beth-El; Amanda Milkovits, a crime and investigative reporter who served the *Providence Journal* for nearly two decades; and Providence’s first Latino mayor, Angel Taveras.



Rhode Islanders exchanging ideas at Together RI.

## The decisions are only as good as the data.

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Informed decisions require quality data. It's why we've funded research into areas as diverse as bringing advanced industries to Rhode Island, a statewide teachers' contract, our small business ecosystem, and more.

It's also why we've taken an active role in Census 2020 preparation. We believe every Rhode Islander counts, so every Rhode Islander must be counted. We recognize that past Censuses have undercounted communities of color, people living in poverty, young children, and those living in rural locations. Businesses, philanthropy, and government rely on Census data to guide decision-making and resource allocation. An incomplete or inaccurate Census count in 2020 will affect the allocation of more than \$3 billion in federal funds to Rhode Island and, perhaps, reduce our representation in Congress. A fair and accurate count of all Rhode Islanders is paramount to our state's future.





**Would you like to join us?**

If this kind of civic engagement work resonates with you, we invite you to get involved.

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You also can learn more at [rifoundation.org/CLF](http://rifoundation.org/CLF)

**Ready to support civic leadership?**

Go to [rifoundation.org/Support CLF](http://rifoundation.org/SupportCLF)

We thank the hundreds of individuals, families, foundations, and corporations that have generously supported our Civic Leadership Fund since 2012.

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