

# 2015 REVIEW



**CIVIC LEADERSHIP FUND**  
RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION



*February 2016*

[rifoundation.org/leadership](http://rifoundation.org/leadership)

# Thank you!

In 2015, 185 generous donors contributed \$354,247 to the Civic Leadership Fund at the Rhode Island Foundation. We are grateful to the 136 who continued their support, and we are pleased to welcome 49 new contributors. See pages 7 and 8 for a list of CLF supporters.

Thanks to you, the CLF continues to be a catalyst for positive change in Rhode Island. It provides valuable annual support that allows the Foundation to respond to timely opportunities and produce results quickly. The CLF is a platform for connection, initiation, dialogue, and action.

In 2015, the CLF convened conversations, sparked new efforts, informed the public, initiated research, and hosted nationally recognized speakers. This update describes the investments you have made possible with your contribution.

Thank you for investing in leadership. We are so very grateful for your support.





Dr. Shael Polakow-Suransky



Dr. Marshall Chin



Dr. Andres A. Alonso



Michael Bettersworth and Julian Alssid

## Community Conversations

### #RIconversations

Community Conversations tackle topics that are important to Rhode Island and feature contributors with unique, hands-on perspectives. In 2015, the conversations focused on our strategic priorities of economic security, education, and health.

We hosted nationally recognized keynote speakers like Dr. Shael Polakow-Suransky of Bank Street College of Education on the state of the teaching profession; Dr. Andres A. Alonso, former CEO of Baltimore Public Schools, on leading an urban school system; Dr. Marshall Chin of University of Chicago Medicine on reducing health disparities; and Michael Bettersworth of the Center for Employability Outcomes at Texas State Technical

College and Julian Alssid of College for America at Southern New Hampshire University on better aligning education and workforce development with the skills employers want.

We were also very proud to connect the national conversation to local progress. Our final 2015 Community Conversation featured a sampling of Foundation partners who are bringing these strategies to life through their innovative programs and hard work. Four presenters from each of the three sectors spoke to an audience of nearly 200 about their efforts to move the state forward.

Thank you to everyone who joined the conversation!



## Speaking of community dialogue

We partnered with the Alliance of Artist Communities, City of Providence, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, and Rhode Island State Council on the Arts to present the 2015 Senator Claiborne Pell Lecture on Arts and Humanities, a panel discussion on advancing cultural equity. The panel was moderated by Patrice Walker Powell, former deputy director of the National Endowment of the Arts. Several artists joined Patrice on the panel, including Raymond Two Hawks Watson of local organization Eastern Medicine Singers.

We were pleased to provide support for the fourth TEDxProvidence, an independently-organized TED event where video and live speakers combine to spark discussion and connections.

We continued to sponsor Executive Suite, WPRI-TV's public affairs program with political and

economic reporter Ted Nesi. More than 200 local companies and leaders doing business in Rhode Island have now appeared on the show. Executive Suite has proven to be so popular that WPRO-AM has begun airing it, too.

Once again, we supported a host of reporting by Rhode Island Public Radio that focused on the economy and public policy. And for the first time, we are underwriting local programming on Rhode Island PBS.

The Our Backyard campaign continued to highlight Rhode Island's assets and success stories. Recent features include Coastal Medical's ranking in the top 1% of Medicare Shared Savings Program Accountable Care Organizations nationwide, the inaugural Ocean State Oyster Festival, and local start-up Sproutel's participation in the first ever White House Demo Day.

## Collaborative Capacity Building

Our Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence offers training, technical assistance, and support to build the capacity of nonprofits, serving over 1,000 individuals and organizations throughout 2015. The Foundation also launched two exciting new capacity-building programs the past year.

Eight industry networks have been getting together for an intensive capacity building program. These organizations, such as the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association and DesignxRI, represent businesses that are critical to our economy. As intermediaries, they provide critical services to help businesses start and grow. The program provided training, technical assistance, funding, and peer support to strengthen each organization's ability to serve its members and industry and to strengthen the network that exists between the organizations.

The Foundation also offered a monthly learning and support program for more than a dozen individuals new to leadership roles in Rhode Island's public schools. To support these new school leaders, we invited distinguished guests to facilitate conversations ranging from school budgeting and education law to time management and strategic communications.



## Sharing best practices

The INE Best Practice Awards, sponsored by Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, recognized five outstanding nonprofits for practices in the areas of advocacy, collaboration, communications, innovation, and leadership. Congratulations to the Rhode Island Jump\$tart Coalition, Green & Healthy Homes, the Boys & Girls Club of East Providence, Open Doors, and Girls Rock! Rhode Island.

We were again pleased to partner with the Rhode Island Department of Education to support the state's annual education recognition program. This program seeks to elevate the teaching profession by recognizing outstanding educators from every community in Rhode Island. Tracy Lafreniere, reading specialist from North Smithfield Elementary School, was named statewide Teacher of the Year, and 31 district teachers of the year were also recognized.

We also sponsored the Rhode Island Excellence in Education Conference, an annual gathering organized by the League of Charter Schools to offer educators the opportunity to collaborate and share best practices and innovations.

## Research to inform policy

The CLF supported three research efforts which are being used to inform policymaking.

The Foundation hired the District Management Council to study the prospect of a statewide teacher's contract. Rhode Island leaders from multiple sectors, led by a commission formed by the Senate President, expressed interest in exploring this possibility. We recognize the unique opportunities and risks associated with such an endeavor, and sought to contribute by grounding the discussion in research and evidence. The study, expected later this winter, will inform the Senate

commission examining the issue.

Our support enabled two important bodies of work that informed Governor Raimondo's economic development agenda. Early in 2015, we supported an analysis by RES Group of potential incentives that would allow the state to more successfully support businesses and attract jobs. Many of these incentives were incorporated into the budget passed by the General Assembly. We also supported the Brookings Institution study on how advanced industries can contribute more to Rhode Island's economy.

## Reforming public systems for public good

### Health Leaders Compact

In partnership with U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, we convened a coalition of health care leaders to consider the way health care is paid for. The group delivered recommendations on payment reform, progress targets, and tracking metrics to then-Governor-elect Raimondo, House Speaker Mattiello, and Senate President Paiva Weed.

In her executive order creating the Working Group for Healthcare Innovation, Governor Raimondo cited the group's work. The Working Group, which includes Foundation CEO Neil Steinberg, is charged with establishing a global health spending cap for Rhode Island, tying 80% of healthcare payments to quality by 2018, developing a next-generation health information technology

system for all payers, and establishing performance management frameworks to achieve population health and wellness goals.

### Lean Government Initiative

We offered a \$50,000 challenge grant for the state's efforts to streamline state government. The governor's Lean Government Initiative is intended to empower state employees to improve procedures and solve problems using a proven methodology used by manufacturers to eliminate waste, reduce wait and processing times, and realize greater efficiency as well as cost reductions. The challenge was met with \$61,000 in private contributions! Special thanks to Amica, Corning, Groov-Pin, Hope Global, TACO, Taylor Box, and Toray Plastics for stepping up.

## Buy Local RI

The localist movement is spreading, thanks in part to our Buy Local RI initiative. Buy Local RI offers businesses and consumers a central website where merchants can market their products and services and shoppers can find locally sold products, see events and promotions, and even sign up for email about discounts and special offers.

In July, more than 60 locally owned shops and restaurants offered special discounts to customers as part of the American Independent Business Alliance's "Independents Week" campaign, which encourages consumers to shop locally. And the 2015 holiday shopping season got off to a great start when the Foundation took a busload of Rhode Islanders on a statewide shopping tour that included stops at Ocean State Job Lot, Hope & Main, Mission Restaurant, Schartner's Farms, Wickford Village, and Foolproof Brewery.

Visit [BuyLocalRI.org](http://BuyLocalRI.org) to learn more, register your business, and sign up for our enews.



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