

Infusion of Funding Supports Nonprofits During COVID Crisis in Rhode Island

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Rhode Island's nonprofits are getting a multi-million dollar shot in the arm during the COVID-19 crisis.

On Monday, April 20th, the United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) and the Rhode Island Foundation announced they've awarded \$5.7 million in grants to 130 groups since March. National Grid was one of the first companies in Rhode Island to help support to the fund.

The COVID-19 Response Fund was created by UWRI and the Rhode Island Foundation to support nonprofits serving the community through the pandemic. Grants range from \$10,000 to \$75,000.

The funds help local agencies provide food, housing and healthcare to Rhode Islanders impacted by the crisis. Additional funding was also awarded for medical supplies to care providers facing enormous challenges to keep the doors open and services flowing to those who need them the most.

"It's been an amazing example of corporate support from National Grid," said Sandi Connors, UWRI's Executive Vice President and Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications. "It was fast and generous and so appreciated because the need is so great."

National Grid directed \$500,000 to support customers affected by the health impacts, financial hardships and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding is to help provide immediate relief to families and individuals in need and bolster efforts by local organizations, like UWRI, to assist communities across Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York.

"We are committed to helping our customers through the difficult times and uncharted challenges associated with this pandemic," said Badar Khan, National Grid's U.S. President. "We recognize this is an unprecedented and rapidly changing situation. We want to do our part to look out for customers and protect the communities

where we live and serve.”

Children’s Friend of Providence is one of the 130 nonprofits to receive funding. It is the oldest child welfare service in Rhode Island. Children’s Friend was founded back in 1834, when the world was dealing with a cholera pandemic.

“Children’s Friend continues to support our most vulnerable children and families through this crisis. As with most disasters, those most vulnerable feel the negative impacts first and most harshly,” said David Caprio, president and CEO. “Two dozen staff have been working on-site every day in Providence and Central Falls, throughout the crisis to ensure over 6,000 families have access to food checks, in a safe way.”

“These funds really help the most vulnerable populations and we see the most vulnerable populations are hit the hardest,” said Connors.

Capital City Community Center is a social service agency that provides food, housing and child and senior care. It helps vulnerable residents in the Smith Hill neighborhood of Providence. Annually it provides food assistance to roughly 8,400 clients, serving a monthly average of 315 adults, 201 children and 175 seniors.

“Capital City Community Center is so pleased to have received this grant for our Food Pantry,” said Susan Stevenson, Director for Capital City Community Center. Stevenson said that it will help feed and provide essential supplies to the residents of the Providence neighborhoods who are devastated by the effects of Covid-19; children who are home from childcare and school closures, adults who have lost their jobs, and seniors who are alone and isolated.

“There is a lot of need in the community and we are so grateful for the funds,” Connors said. “They are truly making a difference and truly saving lives, if we couldn’t get food and medicine, this would be a much different situation.”

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