



For Immediate Release
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ONE|NB Adds Experienced Community Development Expert to Leadership Team

Anusha Venkataraman brings nearly two decades of experience in community development, policy, and organizing, to state's leading community development corporation

PROVIDENCE, RI - ONE Neighborhood Builders (ONE|NB) named **Anusha Venkataraman**, the former executive director of the New York City Racial Justice Commission, as the organization's first Managing Director of Central Providence Opportunities: A Health Equity Zone (CPO-HEZ), an initiative focused on advancing health equity and economic mobility in the 02908 and 02909 zip codes in Providence.

"Anusha is a seasoned expert in community development, policy, and organizing, and we are thrilled that she has returned to Providence. As ONE|NB looks to further strengthen our foundation as a community-centered impact organization, we knew we needed to find a leader with a track record of building community trust and getting results," said **ONE|NB President and Executive Director Jennifer Hawkins**.

With a background in urban planning, Venkataraman's work has focused on community development, public policy, civic engagement, political organizing, and the arts. Previously, she served as the Executive Director of the NYC Racial Justice Commission, where she steered a public process of reviewing the city's charter, resulting in three successful ballot initiatives advancing racial equity.

"Across my career in grassroots organizations, nonprofits, and in city government, I have seen what is possible when community members are empowered to drive action," said **Venkataraman**. "I am excited to make my return to Providence—a city I am deeply passionate about—and help lead this initiative with ONE|NB in addressing the systemic barriers to health and economic equity in Central Providence and collectively building a stronger future."

Before leading the NYC Racial Justice Commission, Venkataraman held positions in the NYC Office of the Mayor, including Chief Service Officer and Senior Advisor to the Deputy Mayor for Housing & Economic Development, as well as in the NYC Department of Housing Preservation

& Development. She also worked with the community organization *El Puente* in Brooklyn on a neighborhood-wide health and sustainability initiative. Venkataraman started her career in Rhode Island's nonprofit sector, including as an AmeriCorps VISTA member at the Steel Yard in Providence.

The Managing Director provides strategic leadership and capacity to [Central Providence Opportunities: A Health Equity Zone](#), which brings together residents, more than five dozen community-based organizations, health professionals, local businesses, elected officials, and others to address root causes of health disparities and to improve neighborhood conditions.

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) established Health Equity Zones (HEZs) in 2015 to improve community health in areas that need it most. HEZs are collaboratives of residents, community organizations, health professionals, and others who come together to address the root causes of health disparities. The HEZs work to ensure every neighborhood has a fair and just opportunity to be healthier. This work requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, racism, and their consequences, including insufficient access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education, affordable housing, safe environments, and healthcare.

As Managing Director of CPO-HEZ, Venkataraman will oversee ONE|NB's work with community partners and residents who have been working for nearly a year to develop a vision for Central Providence. ONE|NB and its partners will culminate this planning work on Monday when they unveil the Central Providence Roadmap, with a vision to ensure that all residents of Central Providence will live healthy, stable lives and be empowered to impact the conditions in their community.

Venkataraman earned a master's degree in city and regional planning from Pratt Institute and a bachelor's in international relations from Brown University.

ABOUT ONE NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDERS:

ONE Neighborhood Builders (ONE|NB) is a nonprofit community development leader in Rhode Island that is expanding its work to the broader Greater Providence area while maintaining its deep roots in its historic home of Olneyville. ONE|NB's mission is to develop affordable housing and engage neighbors to cultivate healthy, vibrant, and safe communities. Since its founding in 1988, then as Olneyville Housing Corporation, ONE|NB has developed 466 affordable apartments; 130 for-sale homes for low- to moderate-income homebuyers; and nearly 34,000 square feet of commercial and community space—totaling more than \$135 million of investments. ONE|NB is the convening entity of [Central Providence Opportunities: A Health Equity Zone](#), which brings together residents, more than five dozen community-based organizations, health professionals, local businesses, elected officials, and others to address root causes of health disparities and to improve neighborhood conditions. As the convener, ONE|NB is the backbone organization of this collective-impact initiative to increase economic mobility for residents in Central Providence. ONE|NB also created [the first free community wireless network](#) in Rhode Island, providing high-speed broadband to nearly 3000 unique users in the Olneyville neighborhood.

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