



For Immediate Release
May 4, 2023

ONE|NB Will Honor Community Catalysts at 35th Anniversary Celebration Later this Month

Outgoing Rhode Island Foundation President Neil Steinberg, Lt. Governor Sabina Matos, Interim Health and Human Services Secretary Ana Novais will be honored for contributions to Central Providence and broader Rhode Island communities

PROVIDENCE, RI - As ONE Neighborhood Builders (ONE|NB) approaches its [35th Anniversary](#) celebration, the organization announced it will honor three notable community members who have a proven commitment to improving the lives of all Rhode Islanders and strengthen all Rhode Island communities. The Community Catalyst Awards will be presented to Rhode Island Foundation President Neil Steinberg, Lt. Governor Sabina Matos, and interim Secretary of the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health & Human Services Ana Novais.

“Over the last 35 years, ONE|NB has expanded our reach and deepened our roots with an unwavering commitment to cultivating safe, healthy, and vibrant communities. Without the help of our trusted partners, this would not have been possible,” said **Jennifer Hawkins, President and Executive Director of ONE|NB**. “There are so many individuals who contribute to the impact of ONE|NB’s initiatives throughout Rhode Island. In recognition of ONE|NB’s milestone anniversary, I am pleased to recognize three notable members of our community who have served as true catalysts for change.”

Rhode Island Lieutenant Governor Sabina Matos, the first Afro Latina elected to statewide office in Rhode Island, has been one of the state’s leading advocates for safe, affordable, and accessible housing for more than a decade and a half. Her lived experience as a single mom who faced housing insecurity has informed her public work as a member of the Providence City Council and as Lt. Governor. She played a key role in 2022 to ensure that the Rhode Island state budget included a record \$250 million investment for housing.

“It is an honor to be chosen by ONE|NB as a recipient of the 2023 Community Catalyst Awards. From serving as a board member of the Olneyville Housing Corporation to working alongside ONE|NB to combat the housing crisis as Lieutenant Governor, I have been proud to partner with this organization for decades as it has grown, innovated, and delivered proven results for Rhode Island,” said **Matos** . “For 35 years, ONE|NB has strengthened neighborhoods and empowered families, and I look forward to seeing all that they will accomplish as they expand throughout Providence and across the state.”

Neil D. Steinberg will retire as President and CEO of the Rhode Island Foundation at the end of the month. Over the past 15 years, he has transformed the philanthropic organization and created a culture of impact. His work on housing and community development led most recently to the [Housing Supply and Homelessness in Rhode Island](#) report, which provides the state Department of Housing with observations and options for jumpstarting action on Rhode Island’s housing crisis.

“Throughout my time at the Rhode Island Foundation, I have seen ONE|NB’s positive impact on the communities they serve, and I am proud to have been a continued supporter of their endeavors and success,” said **Steinberg** . “With the current state of housing in Rhode Island, ONE|NB’s work is more crucial than ever, and the Rhode Island Foundation is proud to step up in working towards a better future for our communities.”

Ana P. Novais, Acting Secretary of the RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services , a tireless champion of health equity for over 25 years, has helped support ONE|NB’s role as the backbone of [Central Providence Opportunities: A Health Equity Zone \(CPO-HEZ\)](#). With roots in Portugal and Angola, Novais understands the unique challenges, opportunities, perspectives, and experiences faced by immigrants living in and around Providence. Novais’ leadership was key to the creation of the RI Health Equity Framework which launched the HEZ initiative that has been recognized and implemented in cities and states nationwide.

“As a proud partner of the CPO-HEZ, I understand the unique challenges faced by those living within our communities, and with the help of ONE|NB, we have seen long term solutions implemented throughout the Greater Providence area with a clear impact,” said **Novais**. “It has been amazing to see ONE|NB’s work reach beyond the scope of affordable housing with initiatives like CPO-HEZ, where we are able to stress the importance that housing, and health go hand in hand.”

For over three decades, ONE|NB has been a leading innovator in community development. Convening diverse partners, collaborators, and friends to improve health equity and economic mobility by thinking beyond just housing. The 35th Anniversary celebrates not only the success of ONE|NB, but all our trusted partners and community leaders along the way. [The event](#) will take place on May 24, 2023, between 5:30 and 8:30 pm at the Graduate Hotel in Providence, RI.

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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