



For Immediate Release

June 6, 2023

Central Providence Polls Open Today for \$1 Million Nine Neighborhood Fund, State's Largest Participatory Budgeting Initiative

Nine Neighborhood Fund to host voting party, raising awareness on the ONE/NB Community Budgeting Initiative to support the 02908 and 02909 area

PROVIDENCE, RI - Community voting in Central Providence will begin today - June 6 - to determine how to allocate \$1 million through the Nine Neighborhood Fund participatory budgeting process. Voting is open to all residents aged 13 and over who live in or go to school in Providence's 02908 and 02909 zip codes. The Nine Neighborhood Fund participatory budgeting initiative is the state's largest direct budgeting effort and is led by ONE Neighborhood Builders, one of the state's leading community development corporations. Polls will be open through June 20.

"Participatory budgeting is about representation and providing an opportunity for every neighbor to have a voice in shaping the future of their community," said **Anusha Venkataraman, Managing Director of Central Providence Opportunities: A Health Equity Zone**. "The Nine Neighborhood Fund will support projects that will improve health outcomes in Central Providence. Initiatives like this grow civic participation and give power back to the community. We are hopeful that other organizations and communities replicate the work we're doing in Central Providence."

Voting will take place both [online](#) and [in person](#). Community members will have the opportunity to cast their vote for a number of community investments, including amenities in our local parks, programs for young people, community art and culture, and many more. The projects included on the ballot were developed by community members and narrowed down from more than 300 ideas collected from residents of 02908 and 02909. The Nine Neighborhood Fund

steering committee, also comprised of local residents, led the idea collection process and is now facilitating the community-wide vote.

Participatory budgeting provides a democratic process for individuals who live in the community to make direct decisions about how to spend components of a budget. The Nine Neighborhood Fund is the largest known participatory budget allocation in Rhode Island and is focused on improving community health outcomes and strengthening quality of life throughout Central Providence. Funding for the Nine Neighborhood Fund was made available by the state Executive Office of Health & Human Services and Department of Health and through private grant funds secured by ONE|NB.

Funds cannot be used to supplement existing programs, services, or projects that normally would be funded by state or local government. In addition, there are program cost limitations to ensure that smaller projects can be achieved and that the sustainability of the project is built into its implementation. For a complete list of projects on the ballot and more information, visit <https://decideri.org/>.

Results from the voting will be tabulated after polls close and will be announced shortly after voting has ended.

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 35,000 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 more than 2,583 unique users in the Olneyville neighborhood.

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MEDIA CONTACT

Mike Raia (for ONE Neighborhood Builders)
mikeraia@halfstreetgroup.com | 401.340.9425

