



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 31, 2024

## Nine Neighborhood Fund Selects Three Agencies for Community - Led Improvements in Central Providence

**PROVIDENCE, RI** – The Nine Neighborhood Fund, ONE Neighborhood Builders’ community-led participatory budgeting initiative, will officially launch in February three of the eight projects the Central Providence community [approved in June](#). The Nine Neighborhood Fund project committees awarded contracts to vendors to administer a bike repair and distribution program, a peer mental health training initiative, and a program to provide residents with water filters.

The Nine Neighborhood Fund is the state’s largest participatory budgeting effort and was facilitated by ONE Neighborhood Builders (ONE|NB) and Central Providence Opportunities: A Health Equity Zone team (CPO-HEZ).

“I am incredibly excited to partner with organizations who share the values of the Nine Neighborhood Fund and the Central Providence community to help turn our approved projects into reality. Community-led participatory budgeting allows us to create lasting change with the community involved at every step,” said **Anusha Venkataraman, Managing Director of ONE Central Providence**. “I can feel the momentum building, and I am grateful to the committees for taking the time to find the right contractors to support our projects.”

In June 2023, Central Providence residents and students aged 13 and older had the opportunity to vote. Out of the 20 projects on the ballot, eight projects were approved by the Central Providence community.

The Nine Neighborhood Fund Implementation Committee, composed of 15 people representing the neighborhoods, local organizations with expertise, City, State, and ONE|NB, was responsible for developing a structure for RFP reviews across all projects. This included the creation of subcommittees consisting of neighborhood members and stakeholders related to the project’s subject area as well as ONE|NB staff.

The subcommittees will spend February finalizing scopes of work with selected contractors and launching the projects. The Implementation Committee plans to issue RFPs for the second round of projects approved in June 2023 at the end of January.

**Projects currently being finalized;**

- **Bike Distribution & Repairs** : This project will provide free bikes and bike repair services to low-income residents of the neighborhoods.
  - *Contractor*: Chad Brown Alumni Association, an active community organization of former and current residents of Providence's North End and Chad Brown neighborhoods. Its aim is to positively impact the community through service and leadership.
  - *Contracted Amount*: \$27,000
  
- **Peer Mental Health Training** : This project will train and certify residents as peer mental health counselors for high school age students in the 02908/02909 neighborhoods.
  - *Contractor*: Project LETS, a national grassroots organization and movement that aims to create innovative, peer-led alternatives to the current mental health system. Their work includes peer support and communicative care, political advocacy, organizing, and mutual aid.
  - *Contracted Amount*: \$45,000
  
- **Water Filter Distribution** : This project will distribute free water filters and replacement cartridges to the residents of the neighborhoods, to ensure access to safe and clean drinking water and provide outreach and education.
  - *Contractor*: Olneyville Resilience Hub at the Joslin Recreation Center, a community-driven facility committed to community resilience, climate change mitigation, emergency management and social equity.
  - *Contracted Amount*: \$300,000

Participatory budgeting provides a democratic process for individuals who live in the community to make direct decisions about how to spend a portion 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.

#### **ABOUT ONE NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDERS:**

ONE Neighborhood Builders (ONE|NB) is a nonprofit community development leader that improves lives across Rhode Island by building homes and connecting communities. They use their 35 years of practical experience in the housing and community development fields to test new ideas and challenge entrenched systems. ONE|NB is the convening entity of Central Providence Opportunities: A Health Equity Zone (CPO-HEZ), a place-based collective impact initiative of more than 60 stakeholders across the nine neighborhoods of Central Providence. CPO-HEZ advances the shared vision for greater health and economic equity in the 02908 and 02909 zip codes.

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