

LISC

Rhode Island



Forging Opportunities



Executive Director Jeanne Cola

After a little more than 25 years in Rhode Island, we are taking a moment to look back on some notable achievements, and look forward to the work ahead.

Since 1991, we have invested hundreds of millions of dollars across this state, leveraged billions through those investments, completed hundreds of development projects, and looked at work through a creative problem-solving lens that has resulted in economic development through our neighborhoods. This provides an interesting benchmark, and shows some impressive results, but we believe the true measure of our success is in the number of neighbors touched by our work.

Our commitment to our state is steadfast. We work every day to build strong communities where individuals, businesses, and families can flourish. The way we do that has evolved in a very tailored way to meet the specific needs in our communities. We work deeply at the community level by bringing leaders together and really listening. Then we find solutions that work. The methodology is proven, and LISC operates this way in 31 U.S. cities, as well as through an expansive rural footprint. We bring key resources – money and talent – to help solve our most difficult issues.

Our work touches many sectors. We know that income and wealth building is an essential component of a healthy community, so we support financial literacy and career education programs where people can get the tailored training they need to find meaningful employment.

We know that quality child care is an essential support for families and a critical first step in developing the workforce of tomorrow, so we provide resources in the form of grants, loans, and expertise to help providers improve and expand their facilities in communities across our state. And of course, working to improve housing availability is key to our mission.

We pool federal, state, and local resources and invest in real estate, increase family income & wealth, stimulate economic development, improve access to quality education, and encourage healthy and safe environments and lifestyles – all with a deep understanding of what works in our communities.

While there has been meaningful progress over the past 25 years, there is still work to do to ensure that all of Rhode Island's communities have a chance to thrive. We are honored to work with our community partners to help make solutions possible. Together, we are forging opportunities for all Rhode Islanders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne".

Jeanne Cola
Executive Director, LISC Rhode Island

\$1.4B

LEVERAGED

\$345M

INVESTED
LOCALLY

LISC Rhode Island

has invested more than \$345 million in projects and programs and leveraged an additional \$1.4 billion.



State-wide Reach. Local Focus.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Rhode Island strategically links investments and programs to build on a network of community organizations and neighborhood resources in a way that supports innovation, delivers tangible results, and improves our quality of life.

LISC is involved in all corners of Rhode Island – from Woonsocket to Westerly, and Block Island to Hope Valley. Every neighborhood is a unique tapestry – a complex system of interconnected, moving parts. That is precisely why no single solution can ever hope to address all of a neighborhood’s needs.

We invest in overlapping program areas that reach into every aspect of community life. Our approach is comprehensive, effective and – most importantly – rooted in what neighbors want for themselves, their families, and the places they call home.

- Residential
- Commercial
- Capacity Building
- Community Safety
- Community/Educational Facility
- AmeriCorps
- Family Income and Wealth Building

Stimulating Economic Develop



The new WaterFire Arts Center blossomed after an initial investment from LISC. We worked hand-in-hand to help them move from concept to a beautiful community asset. The new facility is seen as a catalytic community development project that has spurred private development of more than 200 rental units of housing and created the second gateway to the Olneyville neighborhood.



ment through Strategic Investments

Our strategic investments in real estate serve as an innovative economic driver for communities that bring vitality to both our neighborhoods and commercial corridors across the state.

Very often, LISC Rhode Island steps in with those critical first dollars for a project that allows developers to proceed and brings about investments from other sources. This early investment encourages enterprise, spurs growth and revitalization, creates new jobs, and builds the local tax base.

In Providence, we provided key financing for a new mixed-use project that included an Urban Greens Co-op grocer. Not only did the project add needed housing, it also eliminated a food desert for that community.

Woonsocket is another example of where LISC's early involvement has proven to be a catalyst for growth. LISC Rhode Island was the first organization to step in with recoverable grant money and technical assistance that allowed NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley (NWBRV) to take steps to revitalize part of their downtown. The NWBRV project includes a

3,000 sq. ft. culinary incubator space for up to 25 new food businesses with top-of-the-line kitchen equipment from Hobart; affordable housing units; artist studio space, event and exhibition space, and a large open-air plaza suitable for movie nights and concerts.

Again, LISC Rhode Island is working with NWBRV to bring new life to the community through the creation of the new ARTech District, a creative placemaking site that will transform a loose collection of industrial-aged mill buildings into a hub of art, culture, and technology.

Our model for economic development hinges on creative problem-solving, technical expertise, and resources. LISC has partnered with Morgan Stanley and the Kresge Foundation to create The Healthy Futures Fund, which provided \$12.56 million in financing for the Central Falls Neighborhood Health



Station. It's a crucial centerpiece in the economic development and well-being of this community and will provide primary care, dental care, behavioral health, optometry, pre-natal, and pediatric services. Applying funding resources creatively made this vision a reality for these neighbors.

In the summer of 2017, LISC continued our relationship with Morgan Stanley and created a bond fund dedicated to community development. In this first of its kind public offering, LISC was able to raise \$100 million to invest in projects that build affordable housing, new businesses, child-care centers, and charter schools in our communities.

Growing Income & Wealth thr



ough Workforce Development

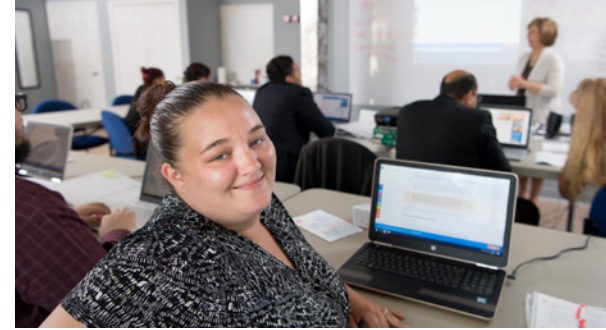
Healthy, vibrant communities are made up of people who have living wage jobs and feel confident about their economic futures. To get there, residents not only need the skills to enter the workforce and advance along a path of employment, but also the skills to tackle the facets of financial life – earning a steady paycheck, budgeting, building good credit, and saving for the future.

LISC Rhode Island understands that true financial security requires a multifaceted approach. With funding from the Social Innovation Fund (SIF), LISC developed and expanded the Financial Opportunity Centers (FOC) model. FOCs deliver three essential, integrated services: employment coaching, financial education and coaching, and provides access to income supports that help them to make behavioral changes about money, improve their financial stability and prepare to be successful in the workplace.

Our data showed that FOC clients make significant gains in increasing their net income and net worth, improving their credit scores, and finding

employment. The data also showed that FOC clients lacked the foundational skills needed to enroll in and successfully complete the higher-level skills training needed for jobs that offer better wages and career pathways. LISC responded by developing Bridges to Career Opportunities (BCO).

BCO addresses the needs of lower-learner clients by providing basic education and work readiness preparation that is contextualized to job-training, in concert with FOC and other support services. This comprehensive approach is proving successful in preparing clients to compete in the job market.



LISC's workforce development programming also includes management of the SNAP Employment and Training program for the State. LISC Rhode Island partners with qualified workforce development agencies to offer SNAP recipients a range of education and vocational opportunities supplemented with services and supports such as books, transportation vouchers, and dependent care subsidies.

Through our partners, LISC Rhode Island helps people overcome obstacles, learn new skills, and find stable employment.

Expanding Investment in Housing



and other Real Estate

A safe, affordable home is one of the basic requisites of life. It's a key to individual health and well-being, and the foundation for sustainable, economically vibrant, and diverse neighborhoods. Housing is where LISC started, and even as our vision has expanded to incorporate work to improve education, health, safety, and economic growth, it remains the foundation of our mission.

LISC Rhode Island invests in projects that build and strengthen communities, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across Rhode Island. We leverage every dollar invested through powerful local partnerships with leading businesses and foundations.

We combine our technical expertise with creative packaging of key financial tools – recoverable grants, pre-development funds, loans and equity investments, and more – to transform hopes and dreams into tangible outcomes: more affordable places to live, new retail storefronts, expanded child care centers, and assisted living facilities – all to create vibrant and thriving neighborhoods in our state.

LISC Rhode Island assembled innovative and robust funding packages for diverse projects like the Georgiaville Village Green in Smithfield which added 42 units of affordable family housing with smart design; or Lucy's Hearth in Middletown which created 15 transitional units for homeless women and children in a renovated commercial space now powered by solar energy. We have worked with the Pawtucket Central Falls Development Corporation to renovate the historical Old Colony Bank Building to include 13 new affordable rental apartments and a new urban food lab which will provide workforce training. We've partnered with Omni Development Corporation to rehabilitate 292 units in Pawtucket



using a financial package that includes RAD, a new HUD-funding model. Each project fills a critical need within the tapestry of our community.

LISC Rhode Island acts as a catalyst for renewal. We help our partners to rebuild neighborhoods, improve opportunities, and strengthen the fabric of our communities. We invest in both the brick-and-mortar structures and in the web of people-centered infrastructure that enables Rhode Island communities to grow and prosper.

Building Child Care & Early



Learning Facilities

Education is a key predictor of economic stability and personal well-being. Communities thrive when families have access to quality child care, education opportunities, and enrichment activities for their children.

Supporting access to quality child care is fundamental to the work LISC does in Rhode Island. It prepares young children for school and life, supports working parents, improves family well-being, and is known to promote healthy development and close the achievement gap. High-quality, birth-five early childhood education is also considered one of the most efficient ways to provide tools for upward mobility by building the foundation of a highly educated, skilled workforce at an age when the brain is hard-wired for its most rapid growth and development.

That's why LISC Rhode Island founded the Rhode Island Child Care Facilities Fund (RICCFF), a public/private partnership designed to help early childhood programs develop and grow safe,

high-quality learning environments – indoors and outdoors – with a focus on supporting projects that expand opportunities for vulnerable populations.

The RICCFF has invested over \$20 million in quality early care and educational facilities through grants, loans, and equity investments, which has leveraged another \$30 million. We have provided technical assistance and training to hundreds of organizations, created nationally published resource guides, and launched an online training platform – all to improve environmental conditions for children.

As the needs of our community evolve, we modify the strategies used to improve the quality of space. A growing body of research supports the importance of active, outdoor play and exposure to

natural elements, so we've designed a program to improve outdoor spaces with low-cost, high-value, simple design components.

The RICCFF also supports state departments and systems. We've conducted an assessment of early learning center facilities across the state and offered expert assistance to regulators, helping to move the quality early care and education agenda forward. As we continue to advocate for increased investment in early education, our involvement in public policy brings us to the table with community leaders and advocates. Together we develop funding, regulatory, and policy solutions that strengthen child care and early learning systems.



Improving Community



Safety

For close to two decades, LISC Safety has supported teams of community developers and law enforcement working together to make neighborhoods safer.

No neighborhood plagued by crime will be attractive to residents or merchants, so addressing those issues is critical to successful community and economic development. LISC Safety helps to establish partnerships among law enforcement, residents, business owners, and members of other neighborhood institutions in order to change the dynamics of crime in the community.

In Rhode Island, our team works closely with community-based partners and law enforcement in Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls, and Woonsocket to work with specific neighborhoods to address safety. In these areas, we are making meaningful changes in the lives of our neighbors.

In Providence, we worked with the residents of Aleppo Street in the Olneyville area, which had the third highest rate of violent crime among all

neighborhoods. The area was impacted by several large nuisance buildings, and had a significant drug and prostitution problem. By forging a partnership based on a community contract with residents, police and investors worked together to reverse decades of entrenched problems.

Through LISC Rhode Island's real estate and other investments, we saw a dramatic decrease in crime that translated into improvements in the quality of life for residents. Together with partners from the Providence Police Department, we were able to help turn a blighted, chronically unsafe area into a neighborhood of choice and opportunity.



Increasing Health Equity



Because someone's zip code shouldn't determine their health, LISC Rhode Island works to improve many facets of neighborhood life, improve access to healthy food, access to health care, and to provide safe places to exercise, so that all of our neighbors have a chance to reach their health goals and thrive.

As the coordinating agency for the Pawtucket/Central Falls Health Equity Zone (HEZ), an initiative funded by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), LISC Rhode Island focused on one of the most underserved regions in the state. We engaged the community, gathered a collaborative of partners, and created a unified approach to finding strategies to address health concerns and challenges within Pawtucket and Central Falls. The collaborative worked together to produce the Building Healthy Neighborhoods Action Plan.

After just one year of implementation, we began to see benefits to the community. Significant

strides were made to expand access to fresh fruit and vegetables; additional walking trails and groups were created that increased the level of physical activity for residents; programs were put in place to foster intergenerational relationships; and diabetes education and management programs were expanded. Partners continued to work on creating affordable housing solutions and job creation and training programs. We have seen the positive impact, and look forward to more improvements for our neighbors.

Creative Placemaking



Creative placemaking can mean renovating a historic theater, or building affordable live/work space for artists. It can encompass transforming a weedy lot into a lively gathering place or an abandoned church into a community exhibition space. It can be organizing a dance festival or painting a mural to beautify a building.

At LISC, we know that when the energy of the arts is the driving force, the possibilities are limitless.

In Providence, we have worked with residents, the Southside Cultural Center, City of Providence, The Providence Police Department, and Rhode Island School of Design to create an outdoor performance setting with an expanse of green lawn leading up to a modern new building with translucent-white roof and walls. SouthLight has become a visible beacon for the neighborhood and an exciting new venue for local community performances.

LISC works to ensure that creative placemaking is inclusive and equitable to everyone, and reflects the hopes, dreams, and desires of all community members. When that happens, it brings new life and meaning to the community.



Jeanne Cola
Executive Director

Cindy Larson
Deputy Director

Pauline Bellavance
Executive Assistant

Deanna Bruno
Program Assistant

Erin Cox, AIA
Program Officer

Liz Klinkenberg
Program Officer

Sue Leonardi
Program Assistant

Jeremiah O'Grady
Program Officer

Megan Ressler
Assistant Program Officer

Claudia Staniszewski
Program Officer

Nati Taveras
Program Assistant

Carrie Zaslow
Program Officer

