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## United Way Announces Design Team for Creating RI Nonprofit Resource Center

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The United Way of Rhode Island announced on Tuesday the selection of the members of a "Design Team" that will be tasked with co-creating a vision and plan for what a Nonprofit Resource Center to support Rhode Island organizations might look like.

According to United Way, the team features representation from nonprofits of varying size, with the selection committee "ensuring a racial and ethnically diverse makeup reflective of the communities the sector serves."

"There is a tremendous amount of knowledge, passion, and experience throughout our nonprofit community and their input is essential to influencing what this resource will ultimately look like and how it will function," said Cortney Nicolato, president and CEO of United Way. "We had a strong application response, and this group of individuals particularly stood out for their collection of unique insights and commitment to collaboration – I'm very excited for what comes next."

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The team members include:

Tarshire Battle, Roots2Empower

Niko Merritt, Sankofa Community Connection

Rikki Davis, RIOT RI



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Rakia Islam is one of the Design Team members. PHOTO: Refugee Dream Center

James Monteiro, Campus Reentry Program

Angelo Davis, Segue Institute for Learning

Tina Pederson, RAMP

Roberto Gonzalez, STEAMBox

Jo-Ann Schofield, Mentor RI

Anthony Hubbard, YouthBuild

Kristen Williams, Riverzedge Arts

Rakia Islam, Refugee Dream Center

## About Team

According to United Way, Design Team members are playing a vital role in co-creating the vision. They have begun meeting and will continue to meet bi-weekly for the next seven months. Members will engage with stakeholders across the state and respond to research to inform how the center will be structured, staffed, and funded. The team will then shape a recommendation to United Way.

“We have an opportunity to help re-imagine our state’s nonprofit landscape through establishing this much needed resource, and I see the priorities of building greater equity in funding and deeper statewide investments in human services infrastructure as being paramount,” said Rakia Islam, deputy director of Refugee Dream Center. “Having been exposed to the many social barriers that could use systemic intervention, I’m eager to contribute to the work of this team.”

Once established, a Nonprofit Resource Center will be able to serve the Ocean State’s entire nonprofit ecosystem, especially those led by Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and smaller organizations that are often under-supported, yet essential to our communities. To this end, the Design Team will work to create a vision that responds to needs nonprofit leaders across the state have identified.

These needs include equitable access to funding; assistance with racial equity work, leadership development and other capacity-building resources; advocacy support; and opportunities for connection, shared learning, and collaboration among nonprofits.

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