

The Central Providence Health Equity Zone



The Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Initiative

The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) established Health Equity Zones (HEZs) in 2015 to improve community health in areas that need it most. HEZs are collaboratives of residents, community organizations, health professionals, and others who come together to address the root causes of health disparities. The HEZs work to ensure every neighborhood has a fair and just opportunity to be healthier. This work requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, racism, and their consequences, including insufficient access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education, affordable housing, safe environments, and healthcare.

Key Accomplishments

200 hours of mindfulness education



25 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) engaged

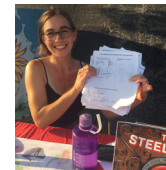


3903 residents received free, fresh produce



171 youth attended free sports camps

39 affordable homes replaced abandoned properties



5 community-designed fitness stations installed in Olneyville parks

2 Community Health Workers trained to address cardiovascular disease and diabetes



Expanding our reach: Central Providence HEZ

The Central Providence Health Equity Zone is an extension of the Olneyville Health Equity Zone. The Olneyville HEZ was built on a foundation of more than a thousand hours of resident interviews, dozens of community events, and countless organizational meetings. Using the knowledge gained from residents, ONE Neighborhood Builders (ONE|NB), residents and partners completed an action plan to remove obstacles to health. Then, ONE|NB and Collaborative partners went to work.

The Olneyville neighborhood saw many improvements to community health by 2018. Because of this success, the Olneyville HEZ decided to expand their target area to include nearby neighborhoods (Hartford, Valley and Federal Hill) with similar characteristics but fewer community organizations to do the work. With this expansion, they renamed themselves the “Central Providence” HEZ (CP-HEZ).

38%

Increase in residents who believed that they could easily access healthy food.¹

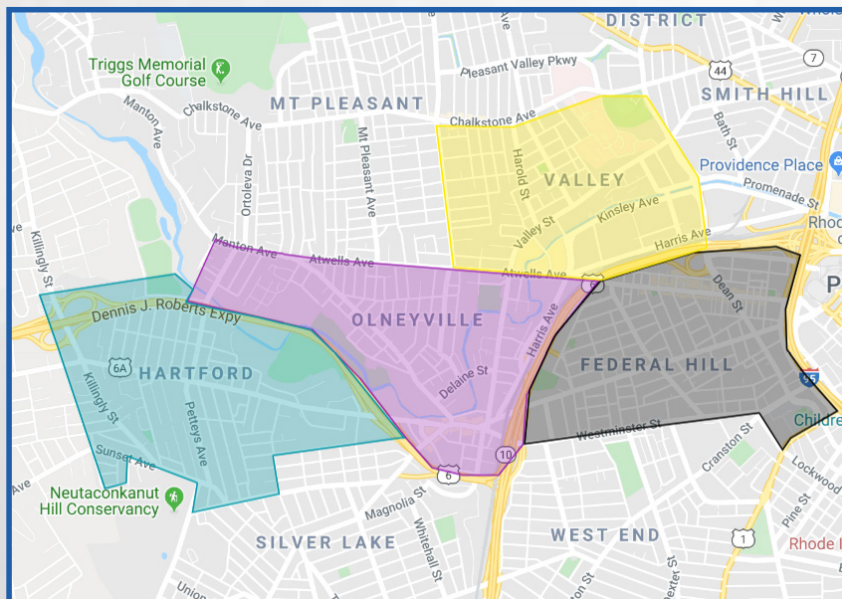
12%

Increase in monthly use of Joslin Park.¹

5%

Decrease in residents diagnosed with a chronic disease.¹

A Focus on Economic Opportunity



WHY? Life expectancy in central Providence neighborhoods is about 9 years less than that of residents from more socioeconomically advantaged neighborhoods of Providence.² 50% of the factors that determine health have to do with economic and social conditions.

HOW? To address socio-economic disparities we work to increase housing stability and affordability, improve access to living-wage employment and expand basic needs, such as childcare and transportation.

IMPACT? By improving the social and economic conditions of the community, the overall health of a community will improve. When our neighbors are healthier, they use less of expensive healthcare services. Savings realized by the healthcare system have the potential to be reinvested in actions that promote health.



Central Providence HEZ: Working Together

Backbone Organization: ONE Neighborhood Builders is the Backbone Organization that convenes the CP-HEZ. It staffs the Collaborative; establishes the strategic direction; provides fiscal oversight and grant management; and leads evaluation and external communication efforts.

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee is comprised of healthcare, advocacy, housing and resident engagement experts. This group works with ONE|NB to guide the direction of the CP-HEZ.

Neighborhood Links: Neighborhood Links are pillar organizations in the three new neighborhoods that act as the connectors between the HEZ infrastructure and the neighborhood stakeholders.

Community Health Workers: Community Health Workers are Registered Apprentices. This group of primarily bilingual-residents complete over 140 hours of hands-on and classroom experience, and receive their CHW certification. They keep the pulse on the neighborhoods and report trends back to the rest of the Steering Committee so programmatic adjustments can be made as needed.

Collaborative: The Collaborative is comprised of a diverse group of more than 25 partners, inclusive of all the partners mentioned above, who act as the HEZ thought-partners and implementation team. They meet bi-monthly to share resources and discuss neighborhood opportunities.

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(1) Perceptions and Activities of Olneyville Residents: Results of a Resident Survey to Inform the Olneyville Health Equity Zone, 2018
(2) CDC National Center for Health Statistics, the United States Small-area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP)
(3) Bureau of Labor Statistics - Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program
(4) Census ACS 2013-2017
(5) 2019 Housing Fact Book - HousingWorksRI at Roger Williams University (note: based on Providence data excluding the East Side)