

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** September 15, 2023

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**RI Gets \$6.75M Boost in Inflation Reduction Act Funds for Tree Planting & Job Growth**

*East Providence, Pawtucket Foundation, and EOHHS get federal aid to grow trees, jobs, and climate-resilient green spaces*

**WASHINGTON, DC** – U.S. Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse and Congressman Seth Magaziner today hailed \$6.75 million in federal funding for three projects that will plant more trees in East Providence, Pawtucket, and across the state. In addition to expanding tree canopies across Rhode Island and improving air quality, the federal funds will also grow youth and job training programs helping make the community greener through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Forest Service’s Urban and Community Forestry Program.

Reed and Whitehouse voted to commit more than \$1.5 billion in federal grants for tree planting as part of the Inflation Reduction Act (P.L. 117-169) with the goal of helping communities become more resilient to climate change, while improving access to nature and promoting health and wellness in urban areas.

In April, Rhode Island received \$1.2 million in Inflation Reduction Act funding for the state’s Urban and Community Forestry Program. Today’s announcement brings the total to nearly \$8 million for IRA-funded urban forestry initiatives across the state.

With today’s announcement, Rhode Island is getting federal funds for three key projects:

- \$3 million for the state’s Executive Office of Health and Human Services to support community-level work and provide comprehensive urban forestry training and technical assistance (TA) to diverse stakeholders to develop Urban Forestry Action Plans, leveraging existing investments in expanding tree canopy to advance planning, management, maintenance, and stewardship of urban forests.
- \$3 million for the Pawtucket Foundation to provide new trees and bioretention green infrastructure planting strips in five key neighborhood locations including the transit center, primary arteries out of downtown, and other residential and commercial areas.
- \$750,000 for the City of East Providence to implement a city-wide urban forestry plan with three major components: tree planting, a workforce development program, and environmental education programs. These programs will plant trees, employ and train summer workforce participants, college interns, and part-time laborers, and deliver education programs at public schools.

“We just experienced one of the hottest summers on record. This is a natural way to combat climate change and grow Rhode Island’s tree canopy while increasing employment opportunities. Planting these new trees will create economic, environmental, and health benefits. It will help provide more shade, improve air quality, stop erosion, and so much more,”

said **Senator Reed**. “I commend Mayor DaSilva, the Pawtucket Foundation, the state, and their community partners for successfully applying for these funds and I know they will put them to good use.”

“As climate change makes summers in Rhode Island hotter, creating more shady spaces in urban neighborhoods can provide some relief and contribute to better air quality. Our Inflation Reduction Act made a big investment in increasing tree cover because it’s a simple way to improve residents’ quality of life, beautify streets, and contribute to a cleaner environment,” said **Senator Whitehouse**, a senior member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. “Well done to Mayor DaSilva, the Pawtucket Foundation, the state, and all of their neighborhood partners on securing this federal investment in their communities.”

“Rhode Islanders deserve clean air and healthy communities,” said **Rep. Seth Magaziner**. “By expanding tree canopies across Rhode Island, we’re helping improve air quality, increase shade and make our state become more resilient to climate change while creating jobs in communities that need them.”

**East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva** stated: “It’s a great day to celebrate. We are thankful for the support and dedication from Senators Reed and Whitehouse and Congressman Magaziner and our local partners, EP Urban Forest and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, to plant more trees throughout the City of East Providence. We see this as an opportunity to double our efforts from 200 to 400 tree plantings annually, build our summer workforce and work with our school district to teach our youth about urban tree programs in hopes of creating future curators.”

“The Pawtucket Foundation is thrilled to receive this federal grant and looks forward to growing our urban forests and investing in the health and well-being of our communities,” said **Jan A. Brodie, Executive Director of the Pawtucket Foundation**. “I can’t wait to begin planning and organizing with my two highly-skilled and equally excited community partners, Groundwork Rhode Island and the City of Pawtucket’s Public Works Department. Senators Reed and Whitehouse and Congressman Magaziner have proven themselves as champions of environmental matters, and this tree and green infrastructure program is a testament to their legislative support.”

Rhode Island’s three federal grants were among 385 grant-funded projects nationwide, according to the U.S. Forest Service, a subsidiary of USDA, which received 842 applications requesting a total of \$6.4 billion in funding.

According to a [Tree Equity Score](#) analysis of 2,600 urban areas in the United States, lower income neighborhoods have 28 percent less cover and are almost 7 degrees Fahrenheit hotter than wealthier ones.

Trees “mitigate extreme heat, conserve energy, provide shade, absorb stormwater, create wildlife habitat, and filter air and water. An urban tree canopy leads to better health outcomes,” according to the Forest Service, which also noted that ambient temperatures are 11 to 19 degrees Fahrenheit lower in communities with a tree canopy compared to those without.

This latest round of federal funding follows a \$300,000 federal earmark Reed and Whitehouse secured to help the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) grow urban tree cover initiatives across Rhode Island and create heat-resilient communities.

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