



Press Release

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City breaks ground on East Providence Community Center

EAST PROVIDENCE, RI – The City of East Providence, along with RI’s Congressional delegation, Gov. Dan McKee, Senate President Val Lawson, House Majority Whip Katherine Kazarian, members of our local delegation, and members of the East Providence City Council broke ground on the city’s new state-of-the-art \$16 million Community Center.

The proposed 19,446-square-foot site, located at 610 Waterman Ave. (behind the Robert E. Rock Senior Center), is the culmination of a multi-year collaboration between community members, City council, and Peregrine Group, Bentley Builders LLC, William Starck Architects and Sage Environmental.

Having a new community center for residents has always been a goal of the administration. Prior to this administration, residents twice voted on referendums to have a new community center built, but those requests were never realized.

“Once complete, the new East Providence Community Center will offer our youth, our families, older adults and civic organizations a place where they can thrive and continue to highlight the city’s mission of creating opportunities where residents can live, learn, work and play,” Mayor Bob DaSilva said. “This Community Center is just another example of how East Providence is moving forward and continues to be a welcoming and inclusive community for all.”

The new center will offer recreation programming, job training, health monitoring services , community meetings, and more. Some of the many uses for the state-of-the-art-facility will include out of school learning for our students, digital literacy training, the continuance of higher education, and expanding on current programming going on throughout the city.

The East Providence Community Center will be completely funded through state and federal dollars. The City of East Providence is utilizing \$10.43 million in funding from the State's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CPF) Community Learning Center (CLC) Municipal Grant program. The city received an additional \$3 million in Congressional Directed Spending for the project from Senators Jack Reed and Sheldon Whitehouse as well as former Congressman David Cicilline.

Furthermore, the East Providence City Council approved an additional \$3 million in ARPA funds toward the project.

"I was proud to support federal funding to help East Providence kick off construction of a welcoming new community center where residents of all ages can exercise, relax, meet new friends, gain new skills, and explore new passions," said U.S. Senator Jack Reed, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee who worked with his delegation colleagues to secure a \$3 million federal earmark and make available American Rescue Plan Act funding for Rhode Island during the Biden Administration which is helping to advance the project.

"I'm very pleased to help deliver federal funding to finally bring a community center to East Providence. This new center will create opportunities for residents across the city for years to come," U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse said. "Congratulations to Mayor DaSilva and the entire East Providence team on making this project a reality."

"When Rhode Islanders have access to spaces to gather, learn, and engage with one another, the connections that help our communities thrive are built," David N. Cicilline said. "At the Rhode Island Foundation we're excited to see this project move forward, because investing in community spaces is investing in our shared future."

In April 2023, Governor Dan McKee announced a new out-of-school learning initiative, Learn365RI, which is designed to shift learning from the traditional 180 school days to 365 days of learning by supporting partnerships between municipalities, local education agencies (LEAs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) to expand high-quality, extended learning experiences.

In May 2023, East Providence became the second community to sign the Learn365RI Municipal Compact and in doing so committed to helping the state improve student achievement levels through increasing out-of-school learning time. Learn365RI seeks to improve student learning outcomes to reach Massachusetts levels in three key metrics: RICAS math and English Language Arts scores, student attendance, and FAFSA completion.

“When completed, this community learning center will create a space for local government, non-profits, and organizations to serve the people of East Providence, by offering education, job development, and health monitoring,” Governor Dan McKee said. “As a former mayor, I know that municipal leaders understand the unique needs of their residents.”

“That is why each of the community learning centers across the state will have a different look, feel and menu of options,” McKee added.

The groundbreaking in East Providence is the latest milestone in Governor McKee’s Community Learning Center project which is part of his Learn365RI initiative to expand out of school learning, leading to over 20 centers that will offer education, job development and health monitoring programs throughout the state.

“We are grateful and thankful to our Congressional delegation, Senators Jack Reed, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, Gov. Dan McKee, and former Congressman and now Rhode Island Foundation President David Cicilline for helping to secure the funding, which will make the East Providence Community Center a reality,” Mayor Bob DaSilva said. “Without their support, this new community space would not have been possible.”