



PANDEMIC RECOVERY OFFICE

Small Business Public Health Capital Improvements Final Report

Submitted by State of Rhode Island Pandemic Recovery Office

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<https://pandemicrecovery.ri.gov>

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Small Business Public Health Capital Improvements

Project Identification Number: 10010

Pandemic Recovery Office Approval Date: April 6, 2022

Project Completion Date: October 8, 2024

Funded Amount: \$6,900,000

Expended Amount: \$5,869,294

Project Expenditure Category: 1.8 Public Health: COVID-19 Assistance to Small Businesses

Problem Statement: The *Small Business Public Health Capital Improvements* project consisted of two subprojects: outdoor activity support (Take It Outside) and indoor ventilation support (Ventilation).

Take It Outside: Data clearly show that infectious diseases like COVID-19 are less transmissible in outdoor settings.¹ To support this public health imperative, it is important that small businesses can relocate more of their services to outdoor settings.

In the summer of 2021, the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (Rhode Island Commerce) conducted a survey of over 500 businesses and found that 77% of responding food service businesses and 88% of responding nonprofits/social assistance businesses would benefit from outdoor capacity supports.²

Ventilation: Studies have shown that good air circulation inside buildings (ventilation) reduces the spread of COVID-19 in aerosols.³ Ventilation upgrades not only help small businesses conduct business in a safer manner, but also provide the public with a sense of safety.

Project Overview: Only businesses that had up to \$2 million in annual gross revenues and demonstrated a negative public health impact from the COVID-19 pandemic were eligible to participate in this program in accordance with the FY 2024 enacted budget.⁴ Grants were capped at \$10,000, which applied to both Take It Outside and Ventilation as required in the enacting legislation.⁵ At least 20% of the funding awarded to small businesses was reserved for minority business enterprises (MBEs), including women-owned businesses.⁶

Take It Outside, \$4.9 million: The subproject provided grants to intermediaries (e.g., merchant/industry associations, chambers of commerce, nonprofits, downtown improvement districts, municipalities, and others) that procured, installed, or otherwise enabled the use of the following: chairs, tables, heat lamps, tents, outdoor Wi-Fi systems, masks, hand sanitizer, staffing, security, insurance costs related to specific outdoor activities, lighting, power sources,

¹ [Indoor Air and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | US EPA](#)

² [RI Small Business Coalition Survey](#)

³ [Ventilation in Buildings](#)

⁴ [FY 2024 Budget](#)

⁵ [R.I. Gen. Laws § 37-14.1-3](#)

⁶ [Ibid](#)

relevant signage, bike racks, and other goods or services that increase outdoor opportunities for impacted businesses and other entities.

Ventilation, \$2.0 million: The subproject provided initial technical assistance and needs assessment services to help small businesses improve their ventilation systems. The subproject also supported the purchase and installation of air filters and other ventilation equipment to increase air flow through buildings. Ventilation vendors provided small businesses a needs assessment and made necessary ventilation enhancements to improve air quality and better position businesses to address any future surges of COVID-19.

Financial Overview: All program payments can be found on the [Pandemic Recovery Office’s website](#) by filtering the “Project” box for “Small Business Public Health Capital Improvements.” The project did not utilize its full appropriation of \$6.9 million with \$1,030,706 of unexpended funds remaining at the conclusion of the project. These funds were appropriated to other eligible SFRF uses.⁷ The table below shows planned expenditures by fiscal quarter and actual expenditures by fiscal quarter:

Fiscal Year Quarter	Planned Expenditures	Actual Expenditures
FY 2022 Q4	\$3,771,131	\$207,158
FY 2023 Q1	\$1,118,868	\$806,249
FY 2023 Q2	\$5,002	\$985,756
FY 2023 Q3	\$521,000	\$638,218
FY 2023 Q4	\$1,302,500	\$1,081,581
FY 2024 Q1	\$181,500	\$746,503
FY 2024 Q2	-	\$1,032,529
FY 2024 Q3	-	\$169,102
FY 2024 Q4	-	\$202,198
Total	\$6,900,000	\$5,869,294

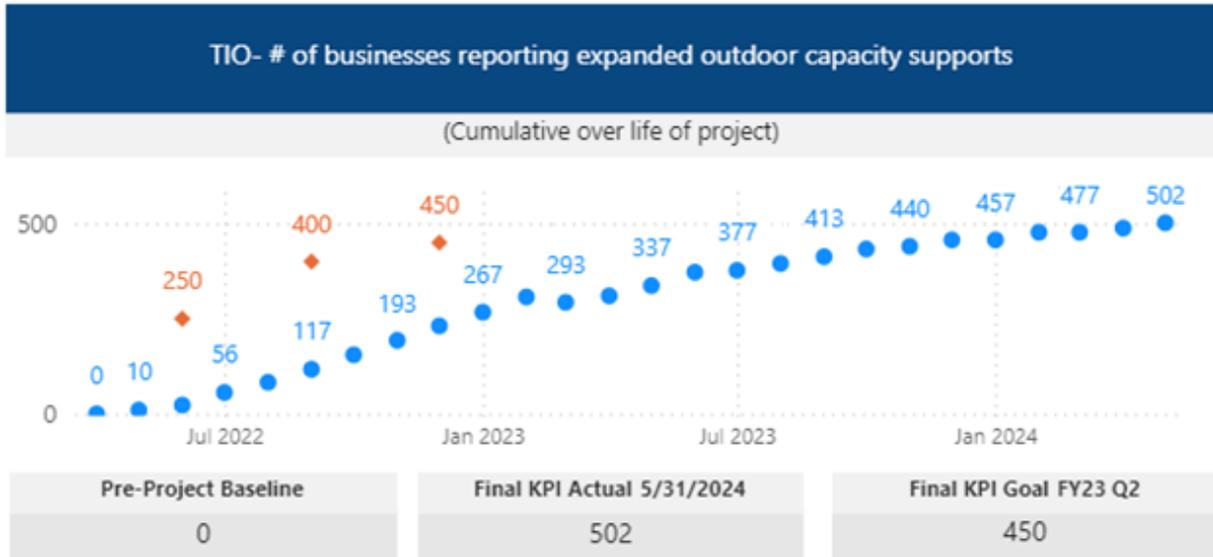
Note: A single audit fee applies to all State Fiscal Recovery Fund projects and accounts for \$1,761 of the funds shown in the above table.

⁷ The Fiscal Year 2024 Revised Budget required that unspent amounts of funding for this project be reallocated to the *Small Business Bridge Support* project.

Key Performance Indicators: The following are the key performance indicators based on quarterly goals and monthly data collections.

Legend: ● Actual KPI Value Reported ◆ Quarterly Goals

1. Take It Outside – Number of businesses reporting expanded outdoor capacity supports

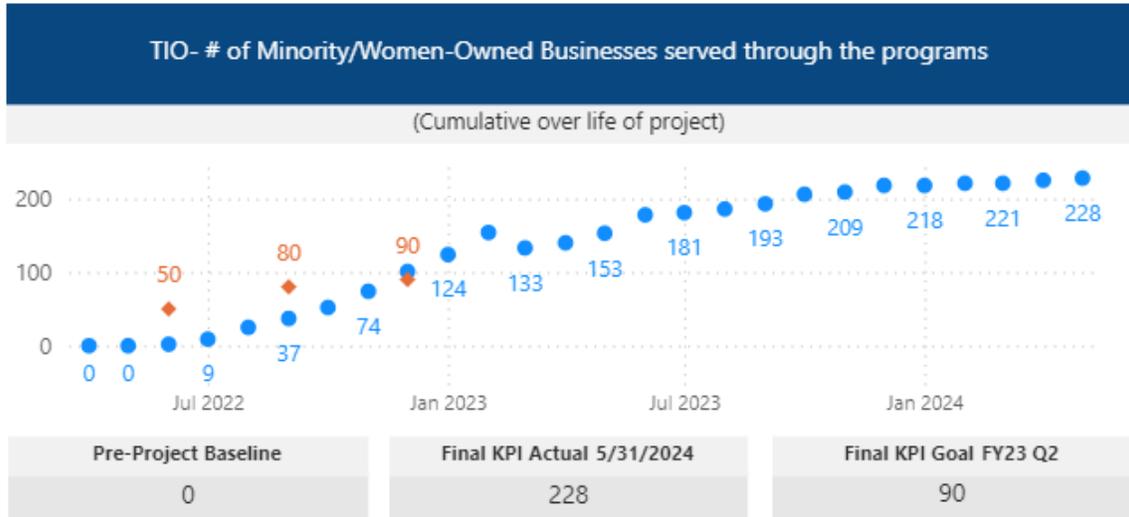


2. Take It Outside – Number of businesses that reported expanded business operations

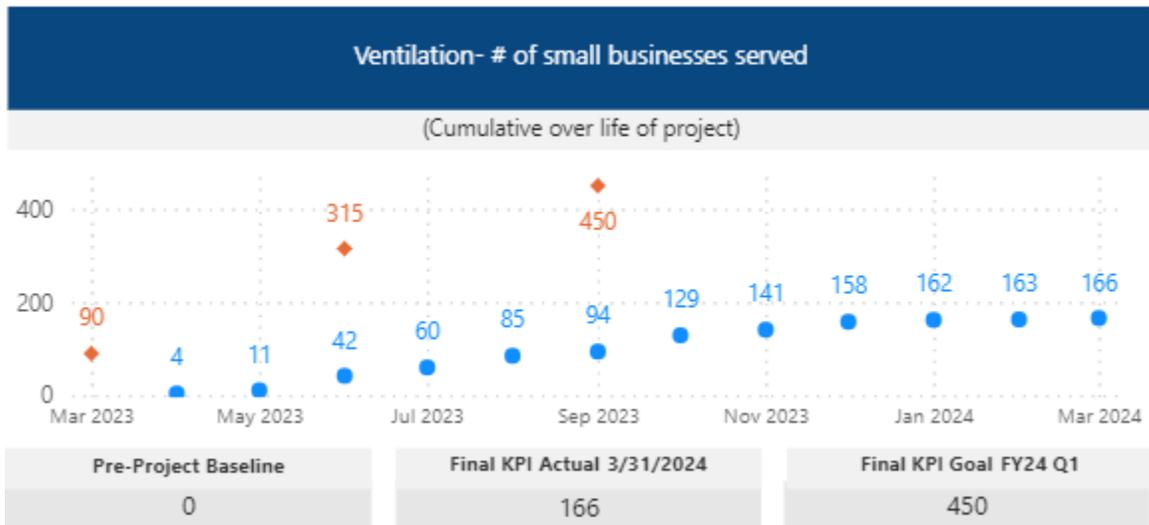




3. Take It Outside – Number of minority-/women-owned businesses served

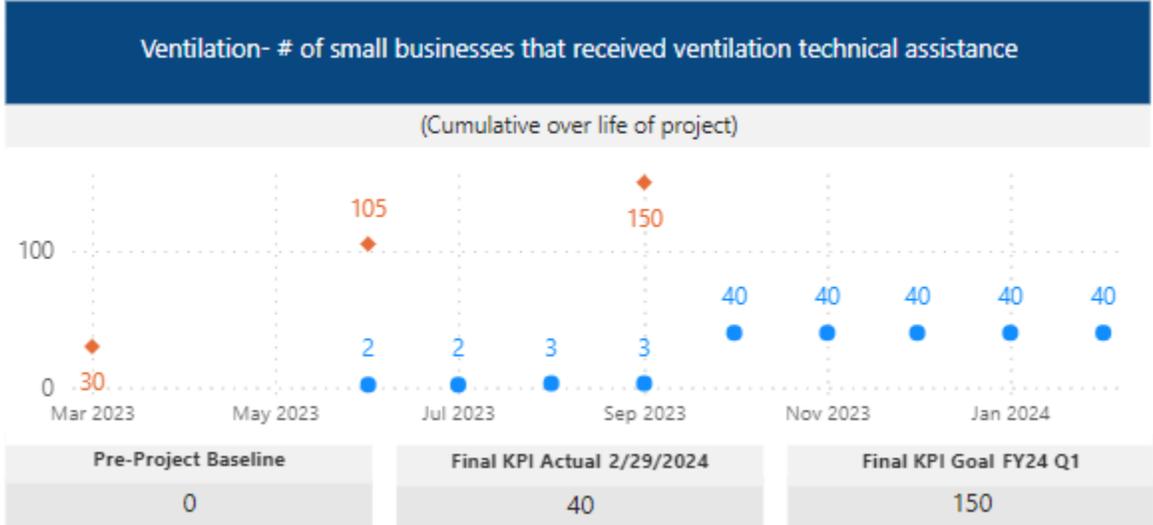


4. Ventilation – Number of small businesses served

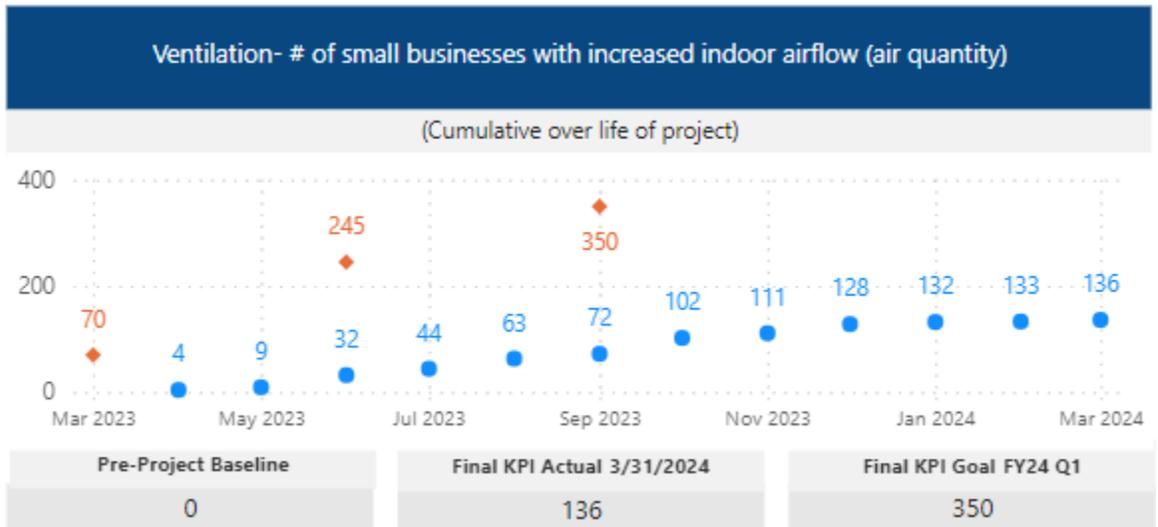




5. Ventilation – Number of small businesses that received ventilation technical assistance

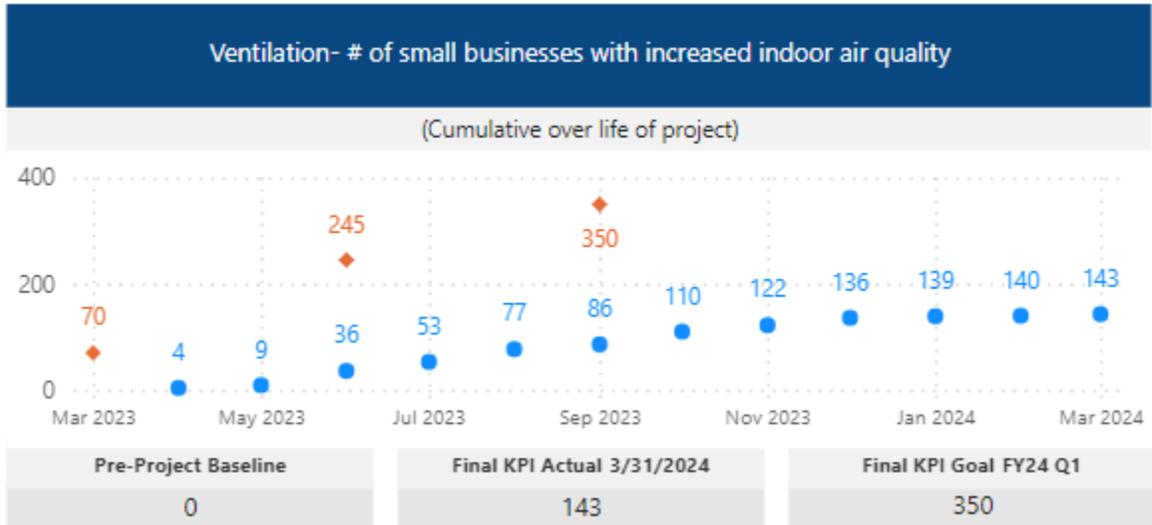


6. Ventilation – Number of small businesses with increased indoor airflow (air quantity)

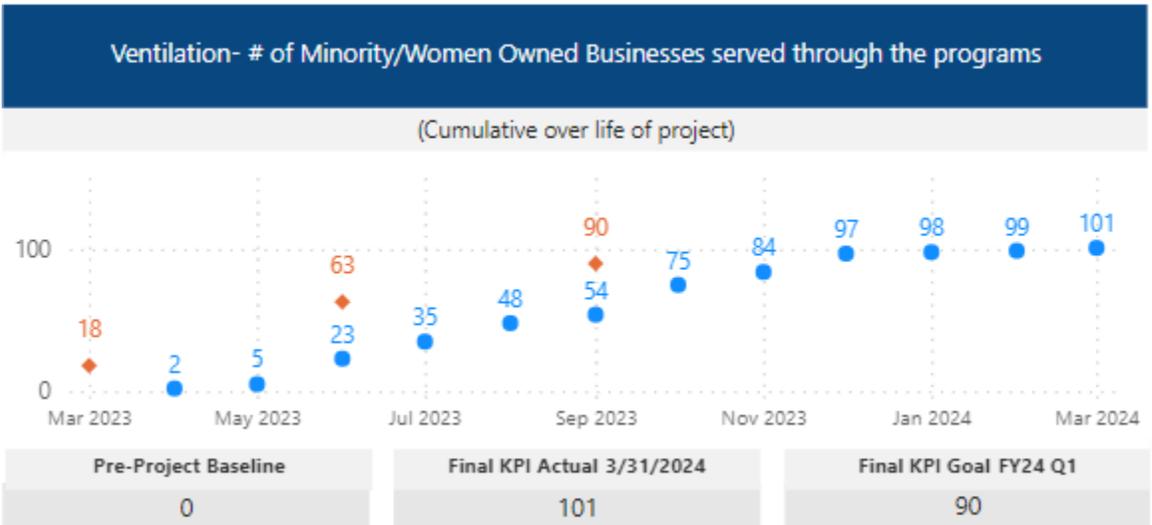




7. Ventilation – Number of small businesses with increased indoor air quality



8. Ventilation – Number of minority-/women-owned businesses served

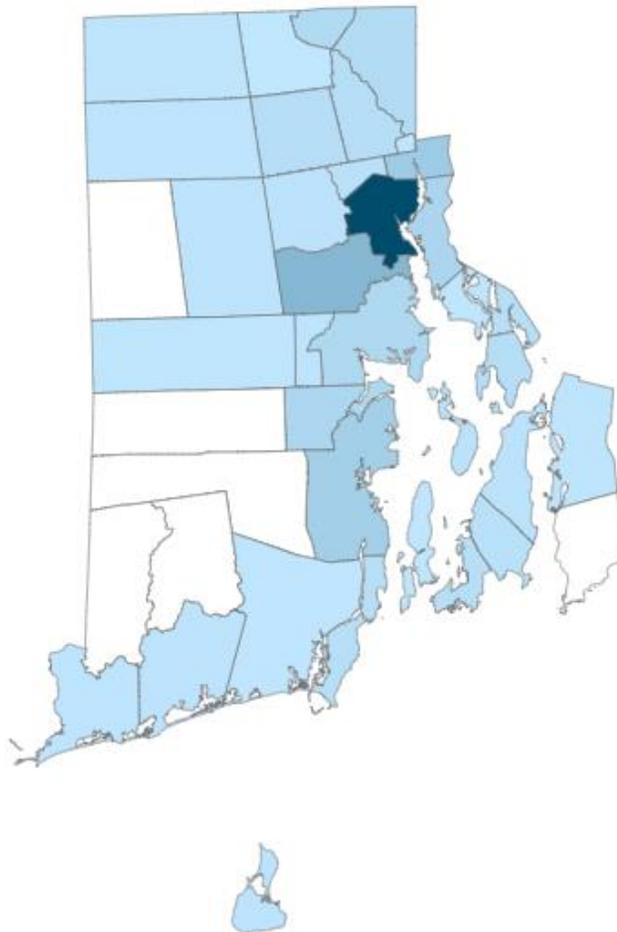


Demographics: The charts below show the distribution of program dollars by specific criteria, including location and subproject.

Take It Outside

Thirty-three municipalities had businesses that participated in the program, totaling \$4,035,893 in assistance distributed. Eleven intermediaries including municipalities and community organizations assisted in program implementation and spent a total of \$245,989 in administrative costs. Of the 502 businesses supported by this program, 228 were MBEs, including women-owned business.

Distribution of Take it Outside Grants by Location

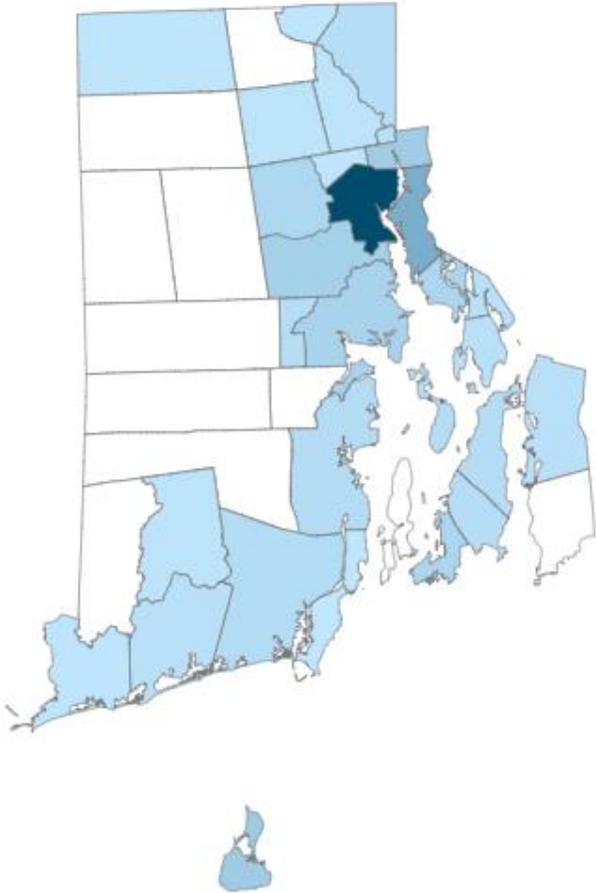


Municipality	Businesses Receiving Grants	Sum of Grants
BARRINGTON	2	\$12,058
BRISTOL	11	\$84,764
BURRILLVILLE	2	\$20,000
CENTRAL FALLS	1	\$10,000
CHARLESTOWN	3	\$29,197
COVENTRY	2	\$12,712
CRANSTON	51	\$443,603
CUMBERLAND	16	\$115,305
EAST GREENWICH	20	\$156,800
EAST PROVIDENCE	20	\$159,456
GLOCESTER	2	\$16,644
JAMESTOWN	1	\$10,000
JOHNSTON	7	\$39,144
LINCOLN	10	\$85,881
MIDDLETOWN	6	\$59,823
NARRAGANSETT	11	\$79,582
NEW SHOREHAM	3	\$28,927
NEWPORT	9	\$81,008
NORTH KINGSTOWN	28	\$227,587
NORTH PROVIDENCE	8	\$59,018
NORTH SMITHFIELD	1	\$2,395
PAWTUCKET	35	\$265,550
PORTSMOUTH	4	\$37,264
PROVIDENCE	172	\$1,463,253
SCITUATE	5	\$32,162
SMITHFIELD	19	\$84,807
SOUTH KINGSTOWN	3	\$15,669
TIVERTON	2	\$19,078
WARREN	11	\$79,759
WARWICK	18	\$137,671
WEST WARWICK	3	\$21,603
WESTERLY	3	\$23,086
WOONSOCKET	15	\$122,086
Total	502	\$4,035,893

Ventilation

Twenty-eight municipalities had businesses who participated in the program, totaling \$1,468,310 in assistance distributed. Seven community intermediaries assisted in program implementation and spent a total of \$117,341 in administrative costs. Of the 166 businesses supported by this program, 101 were MBEs, including women-owned businesses.

Distribution of Ventilation Grants by Location



Municipality	Businesses Receiving Grants	Sum of Grants
BARRINGTON	7	\$52,259
BRISTOL	2	\$20,000
BURRILLVILLE	1	\$6,460
CENTRAL FALLS	2	\$20,000
CHARLESTOWN	2	\$20,000
CRANSTON	7	\$69,295
CUMBERLAND	3	\$28,750
EAST PROVIDENCE	19	\$178,155
JOHNSTON	5	\$47,877
LINCOLN	1	\$10,000
MIDDLETOWN	4	\$28,863
NARRAGANSETT	1	\$1,444
NEW SHOREHAM	10	\$87,424
NEWPORT	6	\$51,360
NORTH KINGSTOWN	5	\$35,178
NORTH PROVIDENCE	1	\$8,768
PAWTUCKET	10	\$84,965
PORTSMOUTH	4	\$31,734
PROVIDENCE	53	\$484,121
RICHMOND	1	\$10,000
SMITHFIELD	1	\$10,000
SOUTH KINGSTOWN	4	\$35,449
TIVERTON	2	\$20,000
WARREN	3	\$20,467
WARWICK	6	\$59,125
WEST WARWICK	3	\$28,565
WESTERLY	2	\$8,880
WOONSOCKET	1	\$9,172
Total	166	\$1,468,310

According to the enacting legislation, 20% of all *Small Business Public Health Capital Improvements* funds were earmarked for minority business enterprises, including women-owned business enterprises, (W/MBEs) as defined by Rhode Island law.⁸

Of the \$4,035,893 in *Take It Outside* support, \$1,799,056, or 45%, went to W/MBEs. The table below shows the breakdown:

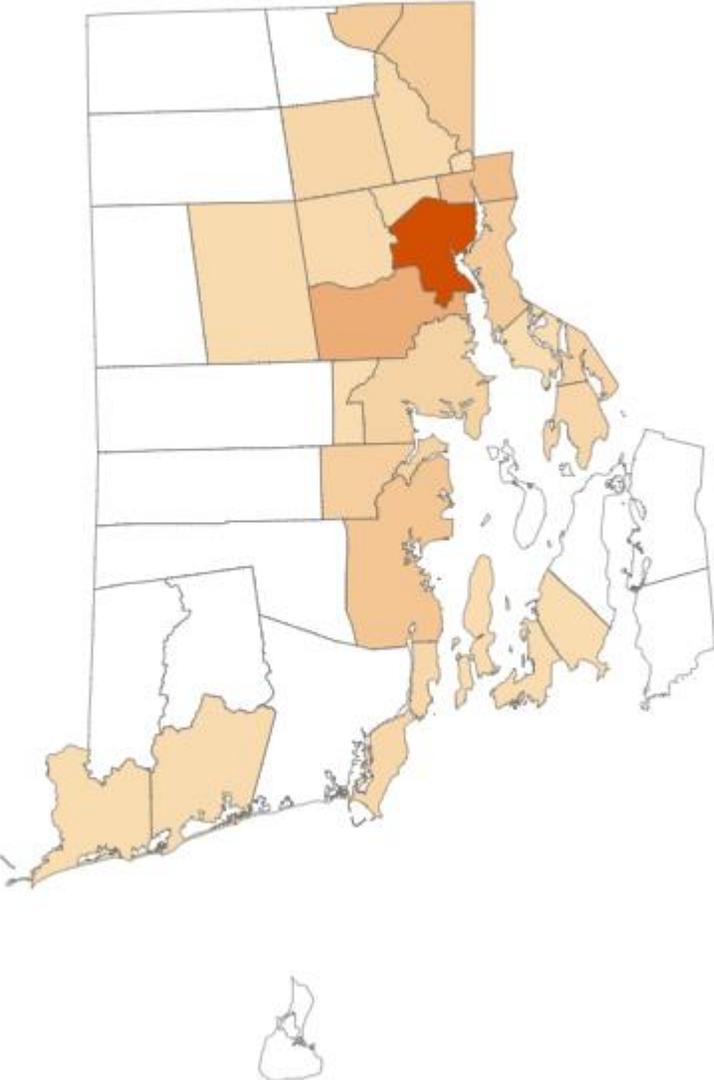
W/MBE Category	Number of Businesses	Amount Received
Racial and ethnic-minority-owned businesses (men)	9	\$85,554
Racial and ethnic-minority-owned businesses (women)	198	\$1,526,189
Women-owned businesses (not racial or ethnic minority)	21	\$187,313
Total	228	\$1,799,056

Of the \$1,468,310 in *Ventilation* support, \$899,361, or 61%, went to W/MBEs. The table below shows the breakdown:

W/MBE Category	Number of Businesses	Amount Received
Racial and ethnic-minority-owned businesses (men)	6	\$45,771
Racial and ethnic-minority-owned businesses (women)	7	\$54,158
Women-owned businesses (not racial or ethnic minority)	70	\$626,461
Other MBE classification (economically and socially disadvantaged and not disclosed)	18	\$172,970
Total	101	\$899,361

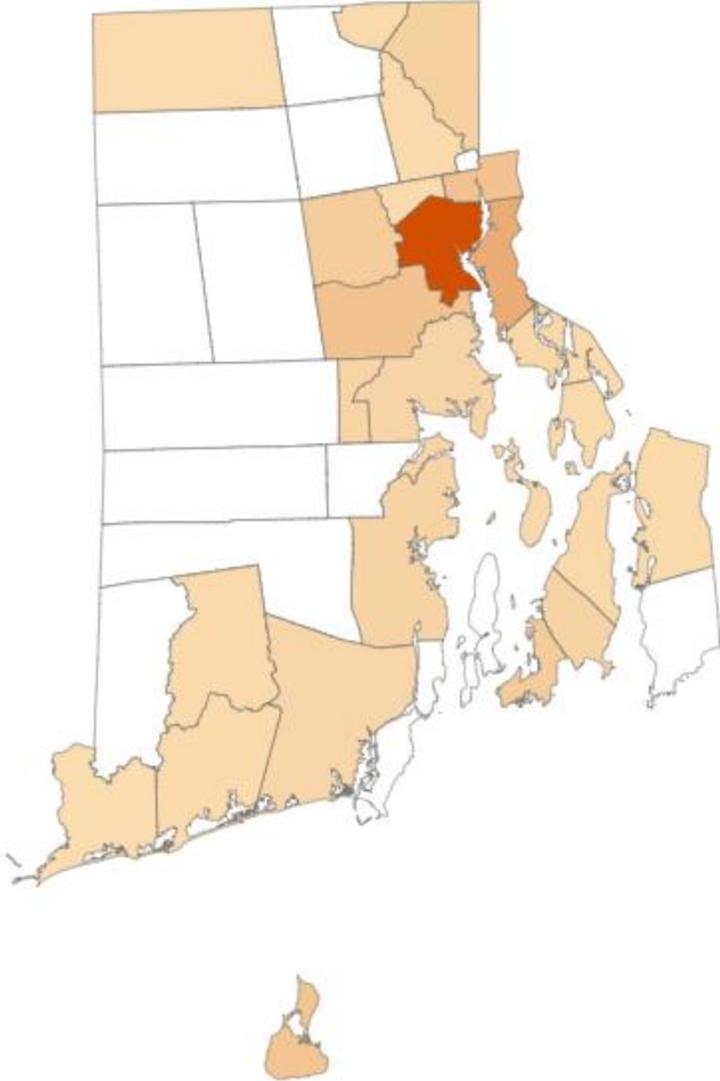
⁸ [Title 37: Public Property and Works, Chapter 14.1: Minority Business Enterprise, R.I. Gen. Laws § 37-14.1-3](#)

Distribution of Take it Outside Grants to W/MBEs by Location



Municipality	W/MBEs Receiving Grants	Sum of Grants
BARRINGTON	1	\$10,000
BRISTOL	4	\$34,480
CENTRAL FALLS	1	\$10,000
CHARLESTOWN	2	\$20,000
CRANSTON	27	\$214,722
CUMBERLAND	12	\$86,899
EAST GREENWICH	10	\$67,786
EAST PROVIDENCE	10	\$83,558
JAMESTOWN	1	\$10,000
JOHNSTON	5	\$20,632
LINCOLN	3	\$28,353
MIDDLETOWN	1	\$10,000
NARRAGANSETT	4	\$29,853
NEWPORT	1	\$9,640
NORTH KINGSTOWN	14	\$109,743
NORTH PROVIDENCE	3	\$23,852
PAWTUCKET	19	\$139,802
PROVIDENCE	75	\$624,239
SCITUATE	2	\$20,000
SMITHFIELD	5	\$35,658
WARREN	7	\$47,428
WARWICK	7	\$52,388
WEST WARWICK	2	\$11,603
WESTERLY	1	\$10,000
WOONSOCKET	11	\$88,419
Total	228	\$1,799,056

Distribution of Ventilation Grants to W/MBEs by Location



Municipality	W/MBEs Receiving Grants	Sum of Grants
BARRINGTON	2	\$12,970
BRISTOL	1	\$10,000
BURRILLVILLE	1	\$6,460
CHARLESTOWN	1	\$10,000
CRANSTON	6	\$59,495
CUMBERLAND	3	\$28,750
EAST PROVIDENCE	11	\$105,916
JOHNSTON	4	\$37,877
LINCOLN	1	\$10,000
MIDDLETOWN	3	\$22,863
NEW SHOREHAM	6	\$54,253
NEWPORT	4	\$38,837
NORTH KINGSTOWN	3	\$22,387
NORTH PROVIDENCE	1	\$8,768
PAWTUCKET	7	\$58,545
PORTSMOUTH	2	\$11,806
PROVIDENCE	33	\$302,849
RICHMOND	1	\$10,000
SOUTH KINGSTOWN	2	\$15,449
TIVERTON	1	\$10,000
WARREN	2	\$10,467
WARWICK	2	\$19,290
WEST WARWICK	2	\$20,000
WESTERLY	1	\$3,206
WOONSOCKET	1	\$9,172
Total	101	\$899,361