



Year 6 Final Report 2024/2025

PREPARED BY:
**ONECRANSTON
HEZ STAFF**
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MISSION:

The OneCranston HEZ convenes, connects, and empowers the people of Cranston to advocate, create, and collaborate for a healthier and more equitable community.

VISION:

All feel welcomed to live in a cohesive and unified Cranston and are empowered to participate alongside community organizations, city government, education, and healthcare to create and support more equitable solutions for all residents.

VALUES:

- Resident-driven
- Equal Voice
- Transparent
- Collective Impact
- Empathetic
- Respect
- Strengths-based Approach
- Education
- Sustainable

The Cranston Health Equity Zone was created in 2019 as a resident-driven initiative aimed at addressing the root causes of health disparities primarily in the Arlington, Stadium, and Laurel Hill neighborhoods of Cranston. In 2020, OneCranston, a Working Cities Challenge, and the Cranston Health Equity Zone merged to become the **OneCranston Health Equity Zone**.

With similar missions, partners, and core values, each group was able to bring their strengths to the table, and form a cohesive new group with an exciting vision for Cranston. With this change, while always staying focused on our original census tracts and the HEZ mission, the OneCranston HEZ now has widened our lens to encompass all of Cranston.

We would not be able to serve our community without the dedication of our residents and stakeholders including the Cranston Family Center, the Cranston Public Library, the Cranston Fire Department, the Cranston Police, the Cranston Historical Society and Cranston YMCA, among others. In addition, the OCHEZ is able to refer residents to the myriad of support services offered by our backbone agency, Comprehensive Community Action Program.

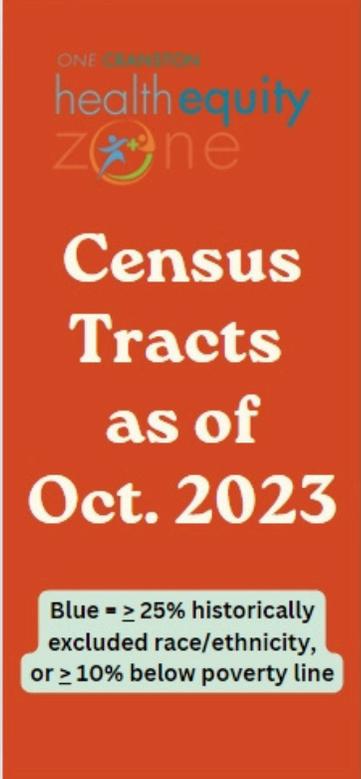


OCHEZ Team Members pictured with residents at Learning Community

II. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

GEOGRAPHIC AREA SERVED:

All of Cranston, RI (pop. ~82,934) with an emphasis on census tracts (CTs) with at least 25% historically excluded race/ethnicity and/or at least 10% of the population living below poverty. Based on updated 2020 Census data, the OCHEZ has updated our emphasized census tracts (CTs).



CT	% of population from historically excluded race/ethnicities	% of population below poverty line	Highest Ethnic %
140	39%	5.4%	Hispanic with 20%, Asian 9%, Black 7%
141	67%	12.9%	Hispanic with 49%, Asian 12%
147	59%	13.8%	Hispanic with 35%, Black 11%, Asian 10%
135	42%	20.6%	Hispanic with 17%, Black 11%, Asian 9%
136	44%	2.1%	Hispanic with 23%, Black 9%, Two+ 7%
137.01	46%	12.1%	Hispanic with 28%, Asian 8%
137.02	36%	9.1%	Hispanic with 19%, Asian 8%
134	20%	8.7%	Hispanic with 11%, Asian 3%
148	19%	2.9%	Asian with 9%, Hispanic 3%, Black 2%
142	41%	8.3%	Hispanic with 18%, Black 12%, Asian 3%
143	28%	2.6%	Hispanic with 14%, Asian 10%, Black 3%
145.02	7%	13.9%	Black with 3%, Hispanic 2%, Asian 2%, Two+ 2%

*2020 Census data

These 12 CTs make up 72% of the total population of Cranston (59,495).

DESCRIPTION OF RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUPS SERVED IN AREA AND ESTIMATED POPULATION REACHED:

The largest racial group in these areas is non-Latinx white (63%). People who identify as Latina/o/x make up 20% of residents in this area, people who identify as Black make up 4% of this area, people who identify as Asian make up 6%, and 7% identify as other. The main ethnic groups of the historically excluded racial groups are Dominican, Portuguese, Guatemalan, Cambodian, Haitian, Brazilian, and Cape Verdean. We have reached over 10% of residents in this area (~6,000 residents). The population we serve is representative of the areas we work in.

III. OUR IMPACT

Our working groups convene, connect and empower our residents in these four priority areas. See below for some highlights from their work in Y6.

Our Built Environment

Deep dive into the Comprehensive Plan

Ward highlight series that showed the best hidden gems of each Ward.

Long-awaited mural installation was complete

Youth Opportunity Zone

Huddle Center programming

Book distribution fair @ Sprague Mansion

Teen Job Fair

NEW

Data Group to support best practices for data collection and evaluation

Physical Health & Nutrition

Farmers Market

Virtual cooking classes

Pop-up vaccine clinics

Sports Equity Series

Trauma

Trauma-informed art and movement classes

CCAP Behavioral Health and Cranston Fire Department training connection

Narcan and resource distribution for overdose prevention

IV. FUNDING LEVERAGED

During the 2024/2025 fiscal year, the OneCranston Health Equity Zone received the below funding in addition to our Core funding from RIDOH

CDC-CHW GRANT - \$120,810

We were able to support a team of CHWs for the past three years through this funding from the CDC. Without it, we only have the funding to support 1.5 CHWs as opposed to the 4 we supported in 2024/2025.

PAPITTO - \$25,000 for Huddle Center Reboot

Supported staffing, program supplies and training for our new Huddle Center Membership Model which moved programming formerly at our brick and mortar location out into the community

FARMERS MARKET FUNDRAISING: \$10,800

We are proud to have more than doubled our Year 5 Farmers Market Fundraising total and are excited to offer an 11-week market series moving into Year 7!

HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS PLANNING GRANT: \$5,000

Through this additional funding from RIDOH we hosted 3 community listening sessions focusing on Healthcare in RI. We are particularly proud to have engaged the Khmer speaking Cambodian population through our partnership with Center for Southeast Asians.

LEARN 365 - \$15,773

We are a partner organization in Cranston's Learn365 grant and are set to support a peer mentorship program at Bain beginning this summer. Confirmation of this funding was received in Year 6.



V. MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

IN THE PAST YEAR, WE ARE VERY PROUD TO HAVE:

- Transitioned the Huddle Center into a membership based model, with 70 members
- Connected the CCAP Behavioral Health Team with the Cranston Fire Department to build a training program to be done fall 2026
- Held two more Cranston Future Olympians events, with 100 participants!
- Our Built Environment did a deep-dive into Cranston's Comprehensive Plan and supported sharing information about upcoming community meetings
- Celebrated our 3rd Annual Kick-off to Summer Reading event in partnership with Cranston Public Library, the Cranston Fire Department and Cranston Historical Society! This annual event saw 500 people receive free books and get connected to community resources.
- Continued our focus on community access to books through our monthly Other Book Club and a pop-up graphic medicine book group in partnership with the Cranston Public Library as well as our "Bring Your Own Book" Club at Cranston East High School, which has an average of 40 participants per meeting.
- Hosted PTO-TO-GO, an opportunity for parent leaders from around Cranston to meet each other and share engagement strategies from different schools.
- In partnership with our college interns we conducted 5 community listening sessions. In addition to our 3 sessions as part of the Healthcare Systems Planning grant, we used resident feedback to host a session on rest as a restorative practice and one around the unique role grandparents play in their grandchildren's lives and supports they may need.



SPOTLIGHT: CONNECTION IN ACTION

IN YEAR 6 WE CONNECTED THE COMMUNITY WITH THE FOLLOWING HEALTH RESOURCES



Distributed
81
flu/COVID
vaccines

Distributed
2,200
lbs of
produce

Distributed
500
youth/adult
books

Distributed
1,800
toiletry
items

VI. SUCCESS STORIES

Supporting tomorrow's workforce!
This year the Youth Opportunity Zone and the Learn to Earn program at CCAP partnered to host a Teen Job Fair for youth ages 13 to 17.

We have partnered for several years with Cranston Public Library on their Summer Camp Fair where they invite local organizations who offer youth camps to come and table. We always heard from teens and parents of teens that they were more interested in employment or even volunteer opportunities but it was difficult to know where to look. We partnered with CCAP's Learn to Earn program which offers a Summer Employment program with local employee partners and also reached out to community partners to come and table and share their opportunities. Additionally, our Learn to Earn staff led several work readiness workshops that covered resume writing, interviewing skills and employee conduct. We had 150 youth participate!



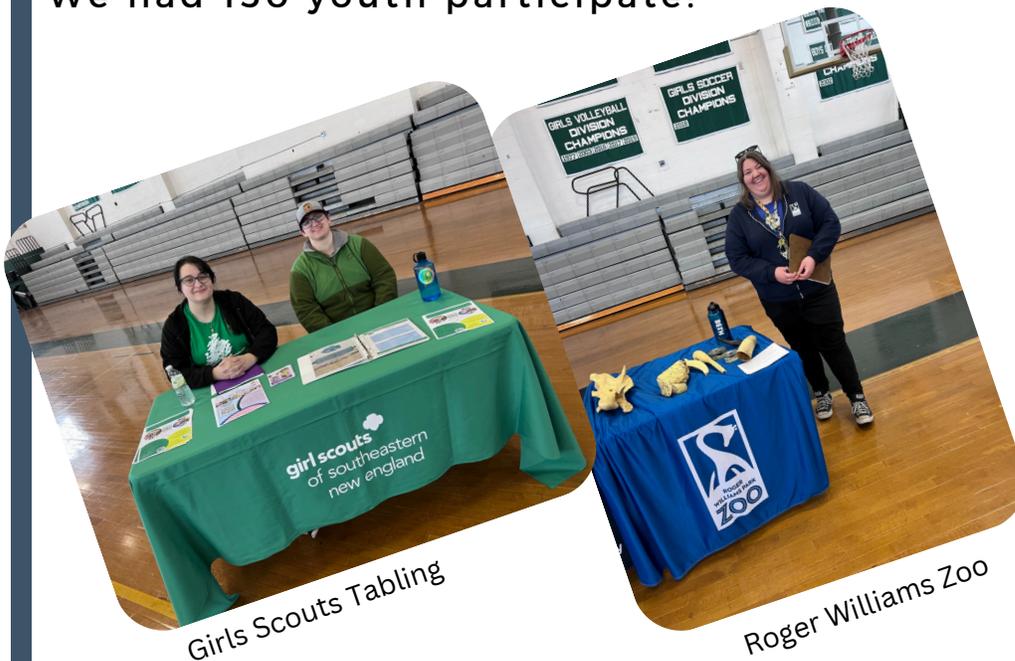
Teen Job Fair workshop



Scouting America Tabling



Providence Public Libraries



Girls Scouts Tabling

Roger Williams Zoo

WHAT WE LEARNED:

There is still a great need for employers to support teens over the summer. Even statewide grant funded programs have very limited spots and many of our tabling organizations were only hiring a handful of people in that age group. Approximately 10 youth found employment through the fair. An additional 10 youth applied to CCAPs Summer Employment but did not follow through with the process or applied too late.

VI. SUCCESS STORIES (cont.)

SPORTS EQUITY: CRANSTON'S FUTURE OLYMPIANS

Our Physical Health and Nutrition workgroup identified a need for more accessible sports opportunities for our city's youth based on our Community Needs Assessment where 1/4 of respondents reported a need for more sports facilities and more options for after-school activities.

After the success of the Basketball session in May 2024 the group got together to plan two other sporting events. In the summer of 2024 we hosted the first Soccer Sports Equity clinic. We were able to utilize the Cranston Stadium, where the High School students play which was very exciting for the participants. We also expanded the program to engage volunteers from our local Nike Collective as well as High School athletes from in and around Cranston. In November 2024 we hosted our volleyball clinic. We again welcomed volunteers from the Nike Collective as well as members of both the boys and girls Cranston East volleyball teams. (Little did we know that the boys who helped coach would go on to be Division 1 State Champs this year!) As part of the clinics, we surveyed parents as to why their kids may not currently be participating in organized sports. The feedback we received was that parents with multiple children find it hard to bring their kids at different times and that parents with financial barriers found the scholarship process confusing or overwhelming.



WHAT COMES NEXT?

Our HEZ was able to connect with CLCF (Cranston's League for Cranston's Future) the city's largest local sports program. They have joined our Physical Health and Nutrition Group and plan to help support the next iteration of this initiative by volunteer coaching, connecting kids to existing programs and helping parents navigate financial assistance.

VI. SUCCESS STORIES (cont.)

Farmers Market Fundraising!

After the success of our inaugural fundraising year and with a nod toward future sustainability, we made a goal to run our 2025 Farmers Market season entirely with fundraising dollars.



Building off of last year's success, we convened a small group to create a plan for this year. Using existing connections while also re-engaging last year's donors we were able to reach out to both individuals and organizations to fund our market. Special thanks to Episcopal Charities, our largest donor, who utilized their Food Now grants program to make a \$5,000 donation. New this year, we also received a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield to add more health services and supports at the market, as well as hosted our first trivia night! We partnered with local business The Thirsty Beaver on one of their Trivia for a Cause nights and raised an additional \$300. One of the highlights is always seeing the community come together to raise funds, truly making our Farmers Market something that is for our community, by our community. This support has allowed us to expand our season and add five additional weeks in 2025!

BUILDING BRIDGES: Renewed Partnerships and Collaborations in Year 6
As we strive to meet the most pressing needs in our community, our road map is always changing. With stakeholder turnover across sectors and leadership and staff changes within our own collaborative, we are proud to have renewed relationships across this last year.

Adopted a Community Garden Box at Dutemple Elementary

Developed a referral program between Bain and our CHW team.



MENTOR RHODE ISLAND

Worked with Mentor RI for Mentorship Training for Learn365



Connected CFD with CCAP BH to work towards a Mental Health training for Fire Fighters

Connected with Learn 2 Earn to create programing for teens in Cranston



CCAP
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM
YOUR COMMUNITY'S HELPING HAND

VII. LOOKING AHEAD

Ahead of our 2024/2025 Year 6, we gathered our collaborative for an in person meeting to look at our objectives and focus our scope of work. From that meeting, we created three pillars: Convene, Connect and Empower and streamlined our objectives from 25 to 8! We came together again head of Year 7 with a new challenge - how to continue our important work in the community with even more limited resources. We asked our collaborative of staff, residents and stakeholders to weigh in on the most impactful efforts as we plan the year ahead.

CODE GRANT

We are spending the summer planning for the launch and implementation of our CODE grant funding which will have us working more closely with our colleagues at the Warwick HEZ.

We are strategizing on how to fulfill the scope of work for CODE through the HEZ Framework and what programs and initiatives we have run in the past that make the most sense to continue through our capacity building funds.

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS



We ran several community listening sessions in Year 6, some based on resident feedback and others through funding from RIDOH. We engaged staff from the Center for Mediation and Collaboration in a training for our staff around conducting CLS and also utilized our college interns to facilitate and gather data. We are excited to continue gathering resident feedback in Year 7 both with our Code Grant listening sessions as well as community suggested topics to help shape our workplan.

Ranking of our Current Objectives As voted on by collaborative members

- 1 Increase access to affordable, culturally relevant fresh foods
- 2 Housing access/equity in housing policy
- 3 Resident connection and resource sharing
- 4 Advocacy/Civics
- 5 Access to health services and health materials
- 6 Increase access to youth and adult leadership opportunities
- 7 Increase pride in built environment spaces
- 8 Increase access to biking

Programmatic Priorities As voted on by collaborative members

- Farmer's Market
- Parenting Support
- Sports Equity Series
- Advocacy Opportunities

OUR PILLARS: CONVENE CONNECT EMPOWER

VIII. SUMMARY

“You’re not a wave, you’re water.”
~Ram Dass



Our summary this year is inspired by Melinda French Gates’ 2024 Commencement speech at Stanford University. In it, she talked about embracing change and the powerful opportunity that lies within periods of transition. It seemed natural to focus on the section of the speech that talked about the missed opportunity that happens if you focus all your energy on the shortest path to the next familiar thing as opposed to sitting in the discomfort and allowing your plans to change. As often happens, another piece of the speech emerged as an even better focal point as we move forward.

Gates shared a teaching from world renowned spiritual leader Ram Dass about two waves about to crash onto the shore. The big wave, seeing what lies ahead, warns the small wave that they are “done for.” The small wave replies that they will be fine, because they are not actually waves, they are the water. This story is a beautiful reminder that Health Equity Zones are not just the programs we have created, or the scope of work we have been delivering. HEZs are frameworks built on resident trust, connection and engagement. And while one wave may be breaking, there is still an entire ocean of opportunity to engage with residents, connect them to resources within our community and empower them to reform as another wave of change in the places where we live, work and play.

Last year when we wrote this summary, the focus was on adaptability - making sure we had a plan for the path ahead. But what if the real question is “what if we have to KEEP adapting?” What if our long-term funding circumstances are such that with each new cycle we have to continually change our structure and deliverables? Does that mean that the HEZ dissolves? Will we ever get to a scenario where a HEZ would cease to exist? If we approach this next year and even the next ten years with the mindset that the HEZ is not a wave, but the whole ocean, there will always be a way to convene, connect and empower residents. The mechanisms in which we do that may have to adjust but we will always be able to weather the storm because our course is clear.

Wishing “fair winds and following seas” to all of us for the journey ahead.

PARTNER SUMMARY

Below are some of the key partners in our HEZ collaborative, however please see Appendix B for complete list of partners in Y6.

OF SECTORS REPRESENTED IN OUR COLLABORATIVE: 20

Cranston Family Center

Bringing families, schools and the community together



CRANSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

140 Sockanosset Cross Road
Cranston, RI 02920
401-943-9080



Cranston Senior Center

The Michael A. Traficante Senior Enrichment Center

CRANSTON



POLICE



MENTOR
RHODE ISLAND



Episcopal Charities
of Rhode Island



Cranston
HERALD
cranstononline.com



JOHNSON & WALES
UNIVERSITY

HousingWorksRI
at Roger Williams University



CPS
Building Cranston's Future One
Child at a Time



YEAR 6 IN PICTURES

NEWS SOURCE: WWW.CRANSTONONLINE.COM



Connecting Cranston to Providence by bike



CLEANING UP: Trash bags from the clean-up event and mural unveiling at the Gansett Avenue tunnel on the Washington Secondary Bike Path.



Posted Wednesday, October 16, 2024 12:00 am



NEWS

Cranston YMCA on a roll with new biking infrastructure



TEAM EFFORT: Initiative Director Andrea Champagne and members of the Our Built Environment subcommittee pose with the new bike racks ready for use. One committee member, Daria Brashear, rode her bike to the bike helmet distribution event on Tuesday morning. Committee members and staff (left to right): Kate Felder, Andrea Champagne, Ruthann Lombardi, Margaret Noel, Sal Nacci, and Daria Brashear.



Health Equity Zones:
10 Years of Impact
Celebration



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