



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



DESIGN X RI

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ABOUT DESIGNXRI

OUR HISTORY

DESIGNxRI was founded in 2013 to recognize the value and impact that creativity, design, and innovation brings to our society and the world. As the only state-wide organization for design in RI, we build value in the sector by creating events and programs that invest directly in design businesses, grow design talent, nurture the design community, and connect designers to professional opportunities.

OUR MISSION

DESIGNxRI is a nonprofit economic development organization that creates an opportunity-driven environment for RI designers, design businesses, and the design sector to thrive. We believe design is a critical economic sector that drives change globally, socially, and locally in the state of Rhode Island.

WHAT WE DO

DESIGNxRI works to support and strengthen Rhode Island's world-class design community. Through a series of educational and business training programs like [Design Catalyst](#) and the [Launch Program](#) and social and networking events like [DESIGN WEEK RI](#) and our [Clambake](#) speaker series, DESIGNxRI creates accessible ways for Rhode Island's design professionals to connect, learn, and advance in their careers.



WHO WE ARE

DESIGNxRI is made up of administrators, designers, and professionals who are deeply committed to supporting a vibrant community of students, educators, practitioners, and design enthusiasts.

OUR BOARD

Lara Salamano, *President*

Rich Overmoyer, *Vice President*

Manan Narang, *Treasurer*

Moises Valcarcel Gonzalez,
Secretary

Rose Kenyon

Siu-Li Khoe

Scott Lyons

Frank Mruk

Tuni Schartner

Glen Gallagher

OUR STAFF

Islay Taylor, *Executive Director*

Rue Sakayama, *Director of Operations and Storytelling*

Reba Mitchell, *Programs Director*

Devanshi Ved, *Programs and Events Manager*

Anna Brinkhuis, *Marketing and Graphics Creator*

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF OUR 2025 STAFF & BOARD MEMBERS WHO MADE THE MAGIC HAPPEN IN 2025

Nick Scappaticci, *Board Member*

Sophie Weston Chien, *Board Member*

Jo Lee, *Board Member*

Wendy 'MoMa' Michel, *Board Member*

Sasha Azbel, *Board Member*

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I stepped into my role as Executive Director in June of last year. While I am still fairly new to the organization, I am a longtime Rhode Island resident and have witnessed DESIGNxRI's impact on our creative community again and again. Even before joining the team, I experienced the value of this work through colleagues, friends, and studio mates who participated in the Design Catalyst Program, strengthening both their businesses and our broader creative landscape.

In my first six months, I've had the privilege of seeing that impact from a new vantage point. I've witnessed the dedication of DxRI's staff and board as they work to fulfill our mission and deliver the programs the Rhode Island design community depends on. From the holistic support Catalyst instructors and mentors provide to emerging micro design businesses, to the cross-sector connections fostered through Clambake: Creative Conversations, to the way DESIGN WEEK RI brings together the full breadth of our state's creative talent in celebration, these programs reflect the richness and generosity of our community.

They are made possible by a network of people like you across the state who believe in a future shaped by design.

At the same time, the past year brought significant challenges. In 2025, DESIGNxRI experienced a substantial reduction in funding as philanthropic strategies shifted, alongside an average 35% decrease in public funding. These changes required difficult but necessary adjustments, contracting in some areas while staying focused on what matters most.

Through it all, our commitment to mission has not wavered. DESIGNxRI exists to amplify the designers and creative businesses who help Rhode Island thrive, and that purpose continues to guide every decision we make.

Today, DxRI stands at an important moment, emerging from transition with an opportunity to reaffirm our mission and clarify our vision. As we look forward, we will continue to adapt, but we cannot do this work alone. It will require your partnership and support.

Thank you for being part of what comes next.

Islay Taylor
Executive Director

IMPACT AT A GLANCE



24

Creative businesses completed the Design Catalyst Program, across two cohorts, with expanded statewide access for the first time.



56

DESIGN WEEK RI 2025 events and open studios, delivered in partnership with organization and businesses statewide to engage the public in design.

\$40,969

Invested in local creative business through regrants, supporting small and micro enterprises across Rhode Island.

OUR 2025 EVENTS

In 2025, we brought out the creative crowds for a series of community events! Over the course of the year, we hosted three Creative Conversations and over 50 events during our 12th annual DESIGN WEEK RI!

DESIGN WEEK RI 2025

Each year, DESIGNxRI hosts DESIGN WEEK RI, a statewide festival of design celebrating designers, creatives, and entrepreneurs! The week offers a unique opportunity for designers to exhibit their work, share their stories, and connect with the amazing creative ecosystem that Rhode Island has to offer. DESIGN WEEK RI 2025 featured talks, tours, panel discussions, workshops, and more that showcased the diverse range of design and creative businesses operating in Rhode Island.



CLAMBAKE: CREATIVE CONVERSATIONS



Clambake: Creative Conversations is a speaker series designed to bring together designers, creatives, and design enthusiasts to exchange ideas and get inspired. In 2025, DESIGNxRI hosted three Creative Conversations events, partnering with local businesses and providing a platform for industry experts and up and coming creatives to share their insights, experiences, and best practices with the broader creative community.



1
 Brilliant DESIGN WEEK RI 2025 x Moniker Brewery Beer Can Design by Michelle Martins



4
 Events and open studios hosted by DESIGNxRI alumni



DESIGN WEEK RI

2 0 2 5

The 12th Annual DESIGN WEEK RI was a huge success, featuring 8 days of incredible

design events from talks and tours to workshops and demos. The week got off to an epic start with the Kickoff Party, and we went out with a bang at Anyhow Studio's Most Excellent Pottery Throwdown, this years closing celebration!

25
 Events, including six DESIGNxRI featured events

15
 Key partnerships, including Newport Art Museum, Innovate Newport, Anyhow Studio, and Moniker Brewery



DESIGN WEEK RI

2 0 2 5

OPEN STUDIOS WEEKEND

DESIGN WEEK RI invited the public into galleries, studios, and design firms across the state. More than 30 Rhode Island designers, creative businesses, and firms showcased the brilliance and diversity of the local design community, opening their doors to share their creative spaces with the community.



28

Designers opened their doors to the community across RI, from Middletown to Woonsocket



8

Days of design programming across the state

DESIGNERS AND BUSINESSES

THAT PARTICIPATED IN DESIGN WEEK RI 2025

OPEN STUDIOS HOSTS

Kelly Taylor Interior Design
DESIGN UNDER SKY
rebecca zhukov
Tyler Bisson
Matthias Pliessnig
Phlaneur Albuerme
80 Fountain St
Patchwork
Community Craft
Boyd Studios
seaCell Ex, LLC
Wild Lives

Boondock Design
EEG for Everyone
Night Light Neon
The Dusty Planet
Black Leaf
Edge and End Studios
Sweet Dreams Studio
Ira Garber Studio
AreWeFreeSpace
Pneuhaus
S.K.Grimes
Meg Little
Seaside Rug Hooking

Michelle Phaneuf
Ceramics
Marisa Lonkart
Gloria Dahl Studio
John Nanian
Photography
Jamestown Urban Relics
Gloria Dahl Studio
Ethan French
Karen Houston
Deborah Baronas
1170 East Custom Living

EVENT HOSTS

Shard Glass Studio
The Map Center
Brown University
Lumetta
Humans Make Tech
(add)ventures
LOMA

Night Light Neon
Newport Art Museum
At Work Collaborative
AUNTY'S HOUSE STUDIO
RISD Museum
OCTO Product Design
Pretty Snake

DownCity Design
RIMiAD
JohnnyCakes Design
CoDesign Collaborative
Anyhow Studio
Providence Preservation Society

PARTNERED EVENT HOSTS

Gallery Night
Anyhow Studios

Moniker Brewery
RISD

Innovate Newport
RIMiAD



8
Clambake: Creative Conversations speakers

150+
Clambake attendees

THE DESIGN CATALYST PROGRAM

The Design Catalyst Program is an intensive business development program for creative entrepreneurs. Over 80+ hours, participants gain comprehensive, transferable training in marketing, business development, brand identity, finance, and legal frameworks - equipping them with the same expertise they bring to their craft.

In 2025, we hosted two cohorts serving 24 micro-businesses, expanding accessibility across Rhode Island with classes in both Providence and Newport. For the first time, the second cohort was open to residents statewide and eligibility extended beyond low-to-moderate-income participants.

We piloted a paid tuition model for individuals above LMI thresholds, allowing them to participate at a discounted rate thanks to donor-funded scholarships, marking the first step in an earned income strategy for DESIGNxRI.

Additionally, eligibility was expanded to include nonprofits for the first time. The current cohort features two Providence-based community and arts-focused nonprofits, reflecting the program's growing reach and impact.





“

The Design Catalyst Program has helped me develop confidence around essential business practices that I didn't even know I needed. As a creative, you're acutely aware of the business portion of your work, but it can sometimes feel like a pull away from your creative practice. The Design Catalyst Program has helped empower me to feel creative even when I'm working on the business.

Jimmy Morgan, 3D Skating
Design Catalyst 2025-2026

”

“

It has all been so eye opening. The more I learn from each educator the more I realize I was working harder not smarter which is making me approach things with renewed enthusiasm, efficiency, and delighting in reformatting my business to be a space of exploring a variety of creative ideas.

Muffy Brandt
Design Catalyst 2025-2026

”



“

Catalyst has enabled me to take a step back and really learn how to treat my freelance career as what it is – a business. The courses have been an invaluable resource in learning how to develop a more solid foundation for my work as an artist. The resources provided have also enabled me to level up my workstation and streamline my process, and also given me a boost in attending networking events.

Michelle Martins
Design Catalyst Spring 2025

”

RI DESIGN BUSINESSES

SUPPORTED THROUGH THE DESIGN CATALYST PROGRAM

The 2025-2026 Design Catalyst Cohort



3D Skating, Jimmy Morgan

Aunty's House, Lilly Manycolors

Blackstone River Glass, Rebecca Zhukov

Ceramics With Marisa, Marisa Finos

Cranston Propulsion Laboratories, Jonathan Dinetz

Dara Benno

McCann Interior Design, Elizabeth McCann

Food & Company / ZAM Sauce, Sam Burgess

G Home, Haoying Zhang

M Arida, M Arida

Mosaic with Mia, Mia Schon

Muffy Brandt

Rachel Maeve Photography, Rachel Maeve

The Style Studio, Deon Marie

Wellsbuilt, Nolan Wells

The 2025 Spring Design Catalyst Cohort



Chroma Council, Linsey Wallace

DJ Dayglow, Kara Stokowski

Samuel Aguirre

Marvalina, Maura Cronin

Michelle Martins Art, Michelle Martins

INSTRUCTORS & MENTORS

It's the people behind our programs who make these educational opportunities truly impactful. Design Catalyst is led by talented professionals who are experts in their fields. These working designers and industry leaders are deeply committed to supporting emerging talent in Rhode Island. They generously share their knowledge, mentorship, and real-world experience with participants, offering guidance that helps build stability and momentum for early-stage businesses.

PROGRAM INSTRUCTORS

C. Alexander Chiulli

Galen Mooney

Blake Johnson

Kristine Merz

Devin Samuels

Matt Cavallaro

Dwayne Keys

Reba Mitchell

PROGRAM MENTORS

Asher Schofield, *Frog & Toad*

Mia Nolan

Hilary Jones, Gender Equity, Diversity, & Workplace Culture Change

Mike Zucker, BizNav Partners

Rikki Davis

Janelle Blakely Photopolous, Blakely Interior Design

Ryan Dean, LUMUKU

Jonathan Glatt, O&G Studio

Sara Ossana, Ossana Design & Consulting

Laura Duclos, Director of Creative Services at WaterFire Providence

Scott Lyons

Lindsay Degen, DEGEN

Tuni Schartner, Tuni Schartner Consulting

Mason Hailey, M Hailey

Vanessa Boynton Taylor

Matt Cavallaro, Nest Homeware

Yemi Sekoni, Donahue Models & Talent, LLC and RI Fashion Week

RIMiAD

Rhode Island Minorities in Architecture & Design

DESIGNxRI is the Fiscal Sponsor of Rhode Island Minorities in Architecture & Design (RIMiAD)



ABOUT RIMiAD

RIMiAD is an organization that fosters connections between individuals from underrepresented groups within the architecture, design, and allied fields. Founded in November 2022, RIMiAD has created a space for networking and community-building among designers and professionals.

A critical part of RIMiAD's mission is to promote diversity in the workplace by providing support to current professionals and inspiring students of all backgrounds to pursue architecture and design fields. RIMiAD hosts meetup events bringing professionals and college students together every other month which are hosted at minority-owned businesses throughout the state.

THE RIMiAD TEAM

Moises Valcarcel Gonzalez, DBVW Architects

Tami Hughes, DBVW Architects

Jasmine Arndt, Aharonian & Associates

Evelyn Ehgotz, Union

Oakgar Maung, Gilbane

Pedro Ortiz, DBVW Architects

Julia Reinalda, Taste Design

Carson Smith, Union

Jing Wu, Stephen Turner Inc

RIMiAD'S 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Hosted a workshop with Lee-Sean Huang, Building Your Dream Life

240

Total attendees, with an average of 40 per event (30%-50% new attendees at each event)

“

RIMiAD has been an amazing resource and support system for me. Sometimes as a minority designer it can be easy to feel lonesome, but RIMiAD has created such a safe and diverse community of professionals determined to build each other up and connect one another. I have found so many new connections to work alongside and to help grow in the industry. Thank you RIMiAD!

- Lily Gucfa, Vision 3 Architects

”

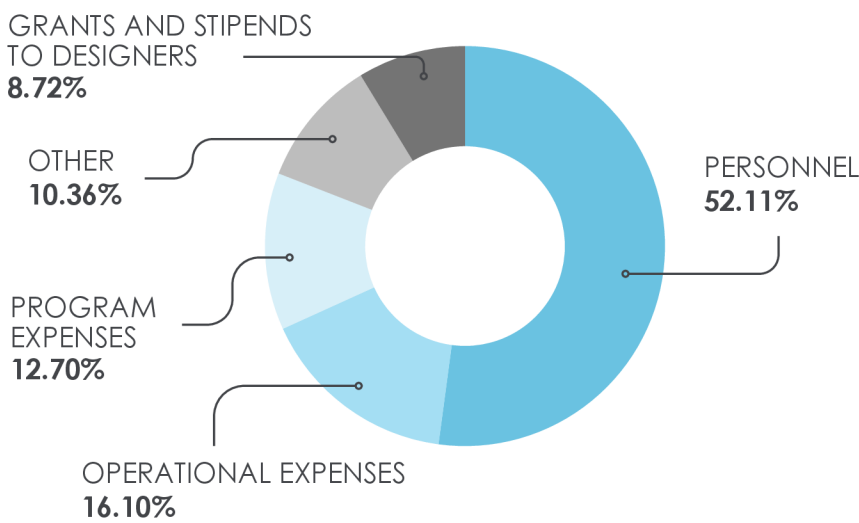
6

Meet-ups across the state of Rhode Island: Cumberland, Narragansett, East Providence, Providence (x3)



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

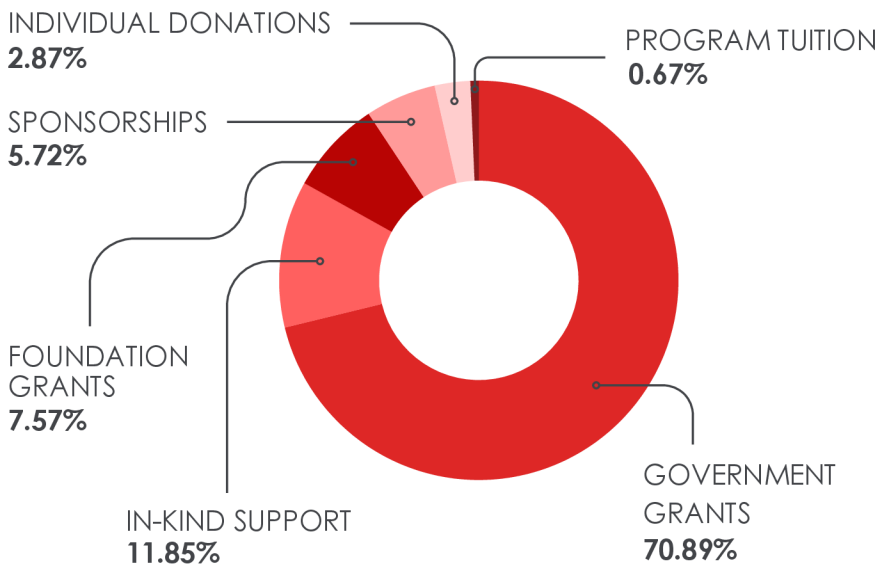
EXPENSES



2x
the percentage of our income came from donations than in 2024!

20%
of income came from sponsorships, in-kind support, or individual donations

INCOME



24
businesses served in the Catalyst program in one year. The most in a single year to date!

SUPPORTER RECOGNITION

To all of our incredible supporters, thank you for investing your time, talent, and resources in DxRI. Your generosity in 2025 helped us create new possibilities, remove barriers to access, and bring design-driven opportunities to every corner of our community.

The following list recognizes the donors and funders who made our work possible this past year. Your commitment to Rhode Island’s dynamic design community, and your belief in our mission drives everything we do.

Want to help design the future together? Reach out to islay@designxri.com to support DxRI’s non-profit mission in 2026.

BUSINESSES & FOUNDATIONS

(add)ventures
 Allegra Printing
 DBVW Architects
 DESIGN UNDER SKY
 DownCity Design
 Dusty Planet Studios LLC
 Eastern Bank
 Goldman Sachs 10,000
 Small Businesses

Kelly Taylor Interior Design
 Lindquist
 Lumetta Inc.
 Moniker Brewery
 New England Home Magazine
 Night Light Neon
 Orange Square
 Patchwork Community Craft
 Providence Tourism Council

Receptor Creative Agency
 seaCell LLC
 Shard Glass Studio
 Socially Professional
 The Black Leaf Tea and
 Culture Shop
 Union Studio Architecture &
 Community Design
 World of JAS dba Pretty Snake

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2025 GRANT AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT





THANK YOU,
DESIGNXRI

Contact

www.designxri.com

info@designxri.com

819 Westminster St. Unit 03
Providence, RI 02903