IMPACT REPORT

The RI Freedom Collective

Advocacy. Education. Change.

November 2024 to October 2026



FROM THE FOUNDERS

WE STARTED AT THE GATE

In November 2024, three men who came home after serving life sentences handed down when we were kids decided to start meeting people at the gate. We didn't have an office or a budget. We had a website, a PayPal link, and a shared memory of what that first hour outside feels like.

Two years later, 259 people have walked out of RIDOC and been handed a Welcome Back Freedom Pack with a working phone already in it. We sold out Roger Williams Park Casino for our first Freedom Gala. We spent a year with Harvard Kennedy School documenting why most people leaving prison in Rhode Island still don't know they can vote, twenty years after the law changed. And 14 community filmmakers are telling their own reentry stories on phones we put in their hands.

None of it happened because we had a plan on paper first. It happened because the people still inside told us what they needed, and the people who came home before us showed up to hand the next person a pack. This report is our accounting of that work, the people who paid for it, and what we owe the people we haven't reached yet.



Mario, Kyle and Steve.



Outside RIDOC's John J. Moran Medium Security Facility, where much of this work starts.

Kyle Campbell, Mario Monteiro and Steven Parkhurst

Co-founders, Rhode Island Freedom Collective

VOICES FROM INSIDE

"If you could please put a backpack aside for me I would be very grateful."

Sarah H., writing from inside, October 2026

The RI Freedom Collective has every single person incarcerated in RIDOC on Securus eMessaging. Anyone inside can be heard, use their own voice and ask for help on their own terms. They aren't asking RIDOC. They're asking people who served time and came through reentry themselves. These are some of the messages.

"It's really tough in here with all the lockdowns and closures of the education programming... It brings me hope to know that you made it out of the walls. God bless you and keep up the good work."

LUIS C. · DECEMBER 2025

"I don't get out until February of 2027, but if you could please put a backpack aside for me I would be very grateful. Thank you so much for all that you're doing. It's really admirable!"

SARAH H. · OCTOBER 2026

"I just did 100 days in jail. I don't have a place to live when I get out, nor do I have a phone or transportation. I appreciate your help with all this."

AARON F. · AUGUST 2026

"I have been incarcerated for the past 5 years. I would please like a cellphone and other things for my release, if that's possible."

GEORGE T. · OCTOBER 2026

"I could use your help with any services you have available. We both heard about your RI Freedom Collective program."

STEPHANIE P. · AUGUST 2026

"I may be getting out on home confinement this week. How would I go about connecting with you? Any information would be helpful!"

WENDY B. · OCTOBER 2026

"Thank you soooo much and God bless you." **HELEN C. · OCTOBER 2026**



The crew and volunteers with a round of Freedom Packs.

WHO WE ARE

JOIN THE COLLECTIVE

RIFC is a collective led by formerly incarcerated people. Our three co-founders served more than 80 years in prison between them. We meet people in the parking lot on the day they're released, because that is when a phone, a bus pass and a familiar face matter most. One principle runs through everything: the person who gets a pack today helps hand one out next month.

01

Welcome Back Freedom Packs

Mutual aid at the moment of release: a phone with service, hygiene supplies, food, transit and a resource app.

02

Civic Education

Making sure every Rhode Islander with a felony conviction who is not incarcerated knows they can vote.

03

Policy Advocacy

Putting the people closest to the system in front of the people who write its rules, in their own voices.

The crew

Victor Fabian, Wayne Johnson and Bobbie Henderson are the formerly incarcerated staff who hand out Freedom Packs every day, with volunteers beside them. Lucy Kirshenbaum manages the Freedom Pack program. Abby Wright runs social media.

BY THE NUMBERS

TWO YEARS, COUNTED

259

Freedom Packs handed out at release

October 2025 to October 2026, and growing by the day.

71%

of formerly incarcerated people in our discussion groups didn't know the 2006 voting law existed.

$416,659
Raised and committed since February 2025

300
Freedom Gala tickets. Sold out, May 29, 2026

129
Individual donors since February 2025

14
iPhone 17s given to community filmmakers, including co-founders Mario, Steven and Kyle

70+
Vetted organizations in our reentry resource directory, across 13 categories

130,000
Instagram views a month

Also: 15 phones bought for incarcerated coalition members, more than $5,000 in RIPTA bus passes, and $190,500 in new contracts and grants starting October 2026.



A Samsung Galaxy phone with a US Mobile SIM, hygiene kit, food, a RIPTA Wave card, gift cards, a water bottle, the Welcome Home Resource Guide and the Voting Rights Guide.

PILLAR 01

WELCOME BACK FREEDOM PACKS

People used to walk out of prison with no one to meet them in the parking lot and no resources in the first hour or two of their release: no warm handoffs, only confusion about what their next step should be. Now 259 people, and growing by the day, have left RIDOC holding a Freedom Pack.

The phone is the point

Each pack costs about $250 and holds a phone with 90 days of free data and service. Someone who walks out at 7 a.m. with no number to give a landlord or a parole officer has one before they reach the bus stop.

It started with a supply chain

Our first partner was The Connectivity Project. Crystal MacKinnon's team helped us build a steady source of phones and the free 90-day plans that go into every pack.

The Welcome Home app

Every phone ships with the RIFC Welcome Home app on its home screen. It connects people coming home to housing, voting rights information and organizations we have vetted ourselves. When someone needs a bed or a lawyer, we don't hand them a number. We make the call with them and walk them to the next door.





A hand-off on release morning, and a pack and a Join the Collective shirt changing hands.

PILLAR 01 · FREEDOM PACKS

IN THE PARKING LOT

How it works

An MOU with RIDOC lets us share information with the department and work in facility parking lots, where we hand out packs as people walk out. Discharge planners Sara Gormley, Lou Martinez and David DePina refer people before release. Kerri Barton and Erika Paradis at Brown University Health's Center for Health and Justice Transformation refer patients leaving with medical needs.

Victor Fabian, Wayne Johnson and Bobbie Henderson, all formerly incarcerated, are in those lots almost every day. Lucy Kirshenbaum runs activations and keeps the tracker.

We follow up

Recipients fill out a pre-release questionnaire and hear from us at one, two and three months. Many come back to help at the next giveaway. A five-session digital literacy series covers the basics: Wi-Fi, email and search.

October 2026

Justice Assistance is funding $68,000 in packs for women leaving the women's facility through June 2027. A $115,000 state EOHHS contract runs the same months, October 2026 to June 2027, and a $7,500 Polaris award began too. Together they cover a projected 350 packs a year. Our goal is 500.



"Thank you so much for the backpack!"

Belinda G., September 2026. Every Freedom Pack is handed over in person, outside the gates, by people who came home first.












PILLAR 02 · CIVIC EDUCATION

A RIGHT STILL UNKNOWN

Rhode Island voters restored the vote to people leaving prison in 2006. Twenty years later, most of the people walking out of the ACI still think they lost it for good.

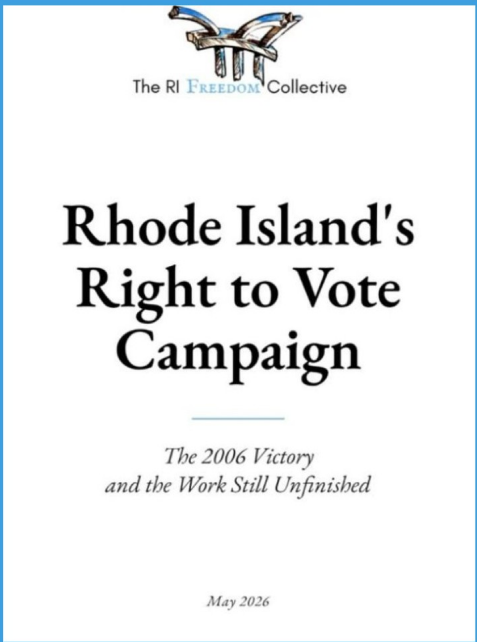
71%

did not know they had the right to vote

63% received no voting rights information at discharge

25% turnout among rights-restored voters in 2024, vs. 63% statewide

11% turnout in the first year after release



Report released at Freedom Gala, May 2026

The report

With Professor Cornell William Brooks and Harvard Kennedy School's William Monroe Trotter Collaborative for Social Justice, RIFC spent a year documenting the gap between the law and the people it was written for. The report traces it to three breaks in the discharge process and proposes seven fixes. None of them need new legislation. The full report came out in June 2026.

The Research Team

Steven Parkhurst, Kyle Campbell and Mario Monteiro, RIFC co-founders

Heather Gaydos, consultant

Joshua Eneji, Harvard College

Cat Gao, Brown University

Stacey Hadash and Virginia McDowell, Harvard 2026 Advanced Leadership Initiative Fellows

A Circle for Justice Innovations grant of $6,500 supported the research.

"We know where the cracks are because we've fallen through them. We speak the language of survival and transformation."

MARIO MONTEIRO, CO-FOUNDER, IN THE MARSHALL PROJECT, APRIL 2026

PILLAR 02 · CIVIC EDUCATION

IF YOU'RE OUT, YOU CAN VOTE

Peer to peer

One message runs through all of it: if you have a felony conviction and you are not incarcerated, you can vote in Rhode Island. Steve teaches it in places people already trust, including Justice Assistance. It is printed in every pack and loaded on every phone. A pamphlet from the Board of Elections lands differently than a man who served nearly thirty years telling you he votes now.

Join the Collective comics

Our voting rights comic strips now sit in every probation and parole office in Rhode Island. That Dude and Fresh Cut, the comic's two formerly incarcerated characters, carry the same message we teach in person. Someone in a lobby before a check-in can read the whole thing in two minutes and take it home.

We are strictly nonpartisan. We don't endorse candidates or tell anyone how to vote.



Issue #2: Know your voting rights if you are formerly incarcerated. "Can I vote?"



Steve and Kyle before a RIFC session.

MAY 29, 2026 · ROGER WILLIAMS PARK CASINO

THE INAUGURAL FREEDOM GALA

Sold out: 300 tickets, 15 sponsors, and legislators, funders, advocates and people a few months out of prison in the same room.

The program

Steve emceed. U.S. Congressman Gabe Amo spoke. James Jeter of the Full Citizens Coalition drew the line from Connecticut's voting rights fight to ours. Crystal MacKinnon of The Connectivity Project spoke on women's leadership and the phones in every Freedom Pack. Victor Fabian held the floor between segments, DJ Ty Lincoln ran the music, and Marlon "Inphynit" Carey closed with spoken word. Guests left with Jim Hazelwood's photo series booklet. Amos House catered.



YEAR TWO

JUNE 11, 2027

Rhodes on the Pawtuxet



A full room at the Casino.

"When people have the courage to tell their stories, and we really listen, it changes us all."

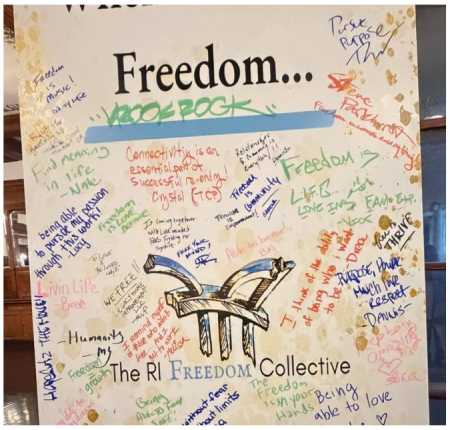
Written by a guest on the board by the door



Check-in on the porch.



Honorees and presenters after the awards.



"When I think of Freedom..." Guests signed the board by the door.

Our sponsors

Presenting sponsor: Campaign Legal Center's Restore the Vote. With Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth, Polaris MEP, Harvard and the Aspen Institute, Evan Kirshenbaum, Justice Assistance, College Unbound, Sinapi Law, Lisa Holley Law, Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island, Brenda Nagle, United Way of Rhode Island, Galilee Mission, The Just Criminal Justice Group and one anonymous sponsor.





A monthly filmmakers meeting, and the first round of iPhone 17s.

STORYTELLING

COMMUNITY FILMMAKERS

We gave out 14 iPhone 17s: eleven to community filmmakers and three to co-founders Mario, Steven and Kyle. One release-day video has been seen 15,000 times.

The program is a partnership with Stacey Hadash, Producer, SLV Films. Based on the model of *Nothing to See Here: Watts* by Michael Soenen. It is fiscally sponsored through the International Documentary Association. SLV Films has put $25,000 into the program so far.

Reentry has been filmed plenty, almost always by someone who never did time. These films are shot by people still figuring out bus routes, parole check-ins and how to talk to their kids again, and it shows. Gahlil Oliveira's video of his own release reached 15,000 views across platforms.

130,000

Instagram views a month, driven by this work and daily posts from the parking lot

THE FILMMAKERS

Franklin Baxley	Apr 2026
Dani Lefebvre	Apr 2026
Gahlil Oliveira	Apr 2026
Georgia Anderson	May 2026
Denise Tasker	May 2026
Marquis Lopez	Jun 2026
Kendall Whitaker	Jun 2026
Victor Fabian	Jul 2026
Neyda DeJesus	Aug 2026
Patti Santiago	Aug 2026
Mike Pratt	Sep 2026
Mario, Steven, Kyle	Apr 2026

PILLAR 03 · POLICY ADVOCACY

ON THE RECORD

People who have lived inside the system know where it breaks. Our job is to make sure lawmakers hear that directly.

We track Rhode Island bills that affect people inside and coming home, including the 2025 Free Communication bill (S 128) and the Sentencing Reconsideration Act (H 5362). We explain them in plain language and help directly impacted people prepare to testify in their own voices. Mario's own release under what Rhode Islanders now call Mario's Law shows what a second look at a long sentence can mean.

RIFC does not lobby, pay anyone to lobby, or take part in any candidate's campaign. People who testify do so as themselves.



Steve before the House Committee on Judiciary, and Mario on a panel moderated by Rep. Julie Casimiro.

IN THE ROOM NATIONALLY

15th National Conference on Higher Education in Prison, Cleveland, 2026. Kyle and Steve attended.

Philadelphia Freedom Party, Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth. Mario and Kyle attended.

Civic Power Convening, The Sentencing Project. Kyle and Steve spoke as panelists.

FICPFM regional convening, Las Vegas, 2026. Steve attended.

Brown University Public Health Symposium. Kyle and Steve spoke on the public health side of reentry.



Kyle and Steve at NCHEP, Cleveland.

OUR FUNDERS

THEY BET ON US EARLY

The Sentencing Project made the first big bet: $20,000 in June 2025 to a directly impacted-led reform group in Rhode Island. Thank you, Nicole Porter. Others followed, and in October 2026 state contract dollars joined them.

FUNDER	AMOUNT	WHAT IT SUPPORTS
RI Executive Office of Health and Human Services	**$115,000**	Freedom Packs and follow-up, Oct 2026 to Jun 2027; held through Reentry Campus Program
Justice Assistance	**$68,000 + $10,000 gift**	Women's Freedom Packs, Oct 2026 to Jun 2027
Campaign Legal Center, Restore the Vote	**$37,720**	Voting rights; Gala presenting sponsor
Stacey Hadash, Producer, SLV Films	**$25,000**	Community Filmmakers Program, spent directly
Center for Health and Justice Transformation, Brown University Health	**$23,000**	39 packs over three rounds
Anonymous donor	**$20,000**	Freedom Packs
The Sentencing Project	**$20,000**	Our first major grant, June 2025
Haymarket People's Fund	**$17,000**	General operations
Worth Rises	**$15,000**	Multi-month support from February 2025
Rhode Island Foundation	**$15,000**	Capacity building
UU Justice Fund	**$9,000**	Program support
Polaris MEP	**$8,500**	Packs for 15 Garden Time participants; Gala sponsor
Circle for Justice Innovations	**$6,500**	Voting rights work
Co-op Rhody joint fundraiser	**$3,651**	General support
FICPFM	**$2,500**	2027 Freedom Gala sponsorship, committed
Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth	**$2,000**	2026 Freedom Gala
Roger Williams University	**$600**	General support

CLOSE PARTNERS

WHO WE WORK WITH

Rhode Island Department of Corrections
MOU to share information and hold giveaways in facility parking lots

Brown University Health, CHJT
Medical discharge referrals and pack funding

The Sentencing Project
First major funder; Civic Power Convening (Nicole Porter)

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth
Gala sponsor; Philadelphia Freedom Party

International Documentary Association
Fiscal sponsor for the Community Filmmakers Program

Full Citizens Coalition
Connecticut voting rights partner (James Jeter)

Rhode Island College and Roger Williams University
Student volunteers and campus partnership

Amos House
Freedom Gala catering

Project Weber/RENEW
Harm reduction partner for NARCAN

Alaria Business Solutions
Designer of the RIFC website (Odessa Collazzo)

The Connectivity Project
Our first partner: phones and free 90-day plans (Crystal MacKinnon)

Harvard Kennedy School, Trotter Collaborative
Voting Rights Report with Prof. Cornell William Brooks

Campaign Legal Center, Restore the Vote
Voting rights funding; Gala presenting sponsor

SLV Films
Community Filmmakers Program with Stacey Hadash; $25,000 in program funding

Justice Assistance
Women's Freedom Pack funding and civic education sessions

Reentry Campus Program
Fiscal sponsor for the EOHHS contract

Polaris MEP
Garden Time cohort packs

FICPFM
Formerly Incarcerated, Convicted People and Families Movement; 2027 Gala sponsor

Attorney Michael A. DiLauro
The Just Criminal Justice Group, LLC: criminal justice advocacy and policy development; Gala sponsor

129 INDIVIDUAL DONORS

It started with PayPal gifts in February 2025, when we were three men and a website. Itemized gifts through May 2026 total $7,376, with Gala tickets and 401 Gives on top. Thank you to Vera Bowen, Colette Johnson, Alejandra Salazar Gonzalez, Thomas Havey, Emily Cotter, Brittany Spitznagel, Sheila Wilhelm, Nicholas Longo, Katharine Lacouture, Bruce Reilly, Mark Toney, Amy Remensnyder, Brenda Dann-Messier, Roopa Duvvi, Jacqueline Kennedy, Jasmine Zheng, William Berman, Mary Jane Robinson, Jeffrey Matteis, Kathleen Carty, Ben Sisto, Juliana Verdone, Dawn Trimble, James Thomson, Charles Bellinger, Naoko Shibusawa, C. Eva Thomson, Rebecca Russell, Aaron Morse, Loretta M. Cimini, Sammyjoe Goncalves, Rachel Cabral, Kay Ruby, Jennifer Jewell, Chris Westfall, Kyle Bennett, Jonathan Savage, Laura Levine, Brenda Nagle, Kirshenbaum Law Associates, and every Giving Tuesday, 401 Gives and Gala ticket donor.

THE MONEY

WHERE IT CAME FROM, WHERE IT WENT

Since February 2025, RIFC has raised and secured $416,659: $189,334 received so far, $190,500 in contracts and grants starting October 2026, $11,825 more committed by CHJT, Worth Rises and FICPFM, and $25,000 that SLV Films spent directly on the Community Filmmakers Program.

FISCAL YEAR	RAISED	6% FEE	SPENT
FY25 (Feb to Jun 2025)	$40,444	$2,473	$11,765
FY26 (Jul 2025 to Jun 2026)	$91,768	$5,471	$95,688
FY27 to Aug 15, 2026	$47,123	$2,827	$27,824
Sep 2026, RIFC's own account	$10,000	–	–
Total received	**$189,334**	**$10,771**	**$135,277**

Individual gifts inside these totals: $7,376 across 54 itemized gifts through May 2026, plus Gala tickets and 401 Gives after that. The Rhode Island Freedom Collective is a tax-exempt charitable organization, determined by the IRS to be a 501(c)(3). EIN 42-4622528.

WHAT COMES NEXT IN 2027

500 packs a year
Up from about 350, with staff for pre-release questionnaires, eMessaging and three months of follow-up.

Join the Collective council
Formerly incarcerated people advising agencies and nonprofits on reentry.

Peer civic educators
Formerly incarcerated people trained to lead voting rights sessions, using the report's seven fixes.

First film screenings
Finish and screen the first full set of Community Filmmakers work.

500 individual donors
And the second Freedom Gala, June 11, 2027, at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet.



THANK YOU

And to the people still inside, who keep telling us what they need. We're listening.

The RI Freedom Collective

JOIN THE COLLECTIVE

rifreedomcollective.org

Contact@RIFreedomCollective.org · Instagram @the_ri_freedom_collective

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