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Rhode Island AGC honored for \$250,000 grant for The Providence Plan's YouthBuild new classrooms

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Classrooms, built largely with a \$250,000 grant from the Rhode Island Associated General Contractors' (RIAGC's) labor union-supported Industry Advancement Fund for The Providence Plan's YouthBuild organization, have opened at the group's new headquarters in the Olneyville section of the city.

The new classrooms are part of a \$1.9 million interior renovation of an early 20th Century building used as "The Polish National Home" civic center by a community that previously was largely of eastern European origin. Olneyville Housing Corp., a nonprofit community developer of affordable housing, acquired the building in 2004. With the cooperation of several community organizations, Olneyville Housing planned the renovation so it could move its headquarters to the first floor of the 66 Chaffee St. building from an overcrowded apartment-based office and lease the second floor of the 9,000 s/f building to The Providence Plan for its YouthBuild program. A ceremony rededicating the building was held on Thursday, Nov. 19.

The project, whose construction costs increased over the years from an earlier estimated \$1.2 million, received a boost in late October with the presentation of a \$401,000 check by Providence mayor David Cicilline. Funded by a Community Development Block Grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the check supplemented earlier donations and will help pay for more than 40 people who were employed in construction jobs on the project.

In addition to the RIAGC's \$250,000 industry advancement fund donation for the YouthBuild classrooms, funding for the rest of the project included \$150,000 from a Housing Resources Commission grant, \$100,000 in City of Providence Ward 15 bond funds, a \$140,000 City of Providence Community Development Block Grant, a \$15,000 Laborers' Union grant and a \$10,000 Carpenters Union grant. To complete the funding, Olneyville Housing is borrowing \$217,000 from the Providence Economic Development Partnership and \$615,000 from Rockland Trust.

YouthBuild Providence is a workforce development and alternative education program that helps young adults from 16- to 24-years-old qualify for construction apprenticeships as they earn their General Equivalency Diplomas. The new classrooms will enable the organization to double the number of pre-apprenticeship students it can help qualify for good-paying jobs as they enter construction apprenticeship programs. More than 100 graduates of YouthBuild Providence have entered the working world in the last five years, and 200 more are on a waiting list to enter the program.