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Mayor Smiley and senator Reed celebrate National Community Development Week by visiting Providence CDBG projects

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Providence, RI Mayor Brett Smiley joined U.S. senator Jack Reed to celebrate National Community Development Week, happening this week April 10-14, 2023 by highlighting projects funded by Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME investment programs. In Providence, several projects have been funded by CDBG and HOME programs that have positively impacted the local quality of life. Mayor Smiley, senator Reed and council president Miller toured the West End Community Center, Bucklin Park, and a Habitat for Humanity build site.

“We support National Community Development Week and value the impact the CDBG and HOME programs have made in our community,” said mayor Smiley. “These investments in our infrastructure and local housing stock are what will immediately improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and continue to set Providence on the path forward to becoming a world-class city. I am thankful for senator Reed’s continued support in making this critical funding available.”

CDBG funds can be used to support housing rehabilitation, emergency rental assistance, affordable housing development, public infrastructure projects, small business assistance, and a wide array of public service programming. HOME program funds support affordable rental housing development, direct rental assistance, housing rehabilitation, and home purchase assistance.

“CDBG and HOME funds deliver so many benefits to residents and the city. This federal funding helps address ongoing economic development priorities, public facility upgrades, and housing needs. I appreciate the opportunity to join mayor Smiley for this walking tour demonstrating how CDBG and HOME funds are being put to good use here in Providence, and how they are attracting additional private investment in these neighborhoods. This is also an opportunity to get direct community input. These dollars are designed to help communities address local priorities. I know mayor Smiley and president Miller are working collaboratively and strategically with local residents to ensure CDBG and HOME investments are targeted to areas of maximum benefit that will do the most good for Providence,” said Senator Reed, a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee who has delivered \$88.5 million in CDBG funding and \$49.3 million in HOME funding since FY2020 to communities across Rhode Island.

Every year, the West End Community Center (WECC) serves more than 7,500 clients through their food pantry, case management, and childcare programs. Through annual CDBG public service funding, they have been able to continue expanding their staff and better meet growing demands for

services. Additionally, the agency has received funding through CDBG to conduct capital improvements, including \$50,000 in upgrades to their playground equipment to meet DCYF standards and \$68,400 pending for new flooring throughout the facility to improve safety and accessibility.

“Site visits reinforce the value of funding key projects throughout the city with Community Development Block Grants and the HOME Investment Partnerships program,” said city council president Rachel Miller (Ward 13). “From basketball court improvements at Bucklin Park to the construction of a Habitat for Humanity home for the Dominguez family to helping stock the food pantry at the West End Community Center, these funds quickly and directly impact the quality of life in our neighborhoods.”

The second stop on the tour, Bucklin Park, is another city facility that has seen CDBG investments allowing it to better serve its community. Through CDBG funding, the city has improved the park’s widely used basketball court and fencing. This investment will soon be complemented by a new splash park starting construction partially funded through American Rescue Plan Act funding.

The tour will culminate at a Habitat for Humanity build site. Habitat for Humanity of Greater Providence is utilizing City HOME Investment Partnerships Program (\$75,000) and additional funding from community partners to construct a single-family home at 273 Bucklin St.. The construction, now underway, is being carried out through local contractor Casa Buena Builders and more than 1,100 volunteers. The home has been presold to the Dominguez family of Providence, who will devote more than 350 hours into helping build their home.

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