



Pods Swimming



Life Ring at Salty Brine State Beach



Boys & Girls Club of Providence

RI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT 2025 WATER SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM

Rhode Island’s Water Safety Grant Program provides free swimming or paddlecraft safety lessons through scholarships offered by water safety organizations. Despite the proximity most Rhode Islanders have to public water access, whether saltwater beaches or freshwater ponds, the Ocean State does not have a robust water safety training curriculum. This program aims to bolster water safety training for Rhode Island youth from underserved areas and prevent potential water hazards, such as drowning.

Capitalized by a line item proposed by Governor McKee in the fiscal year (FY) 2025 budget, which the Rhode Island General Assembly enacted in June 2024, DEM issued \$80,000 in Water Safety Grants to 17 organizations serving nearly 700 students during FY2025. These students received over 4,500 lessons total, paving the way for a safer water experience in the future. The remaining \$5,000 was used to purchase additional life ring buoys for Rhode Island’s network of state parks and beaches, as well as lifesaving CPR, first aid, and AED training for Park staff stationed at waterfront state parks and beaches.

2026 WATER SAFETY GRANT OUTLOOK

DEM will offer Water Safety Grants again in FY2026, with approximately \$90,000 dedicated to funding free lessons for youth from low-income households. In addition to swim and paddlecraft lessons, DEM has incorporated adaptive swim lessons and equipment to assist students who need additional support for learning to swim. DEM received 17 eligible applications totaling over \$290,000 in requested funds, including two proposals for adaptive swim lessons and five requests for adaptive equipment and training. DEM awarded grants to all 17 applicants, with lessons to be taught between May and December 2026.

DEM.RI.GOV/WATER-SAFETY-PROGRAM



dem.ri.gov

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\$80,000
GRANTS AWARDED


4,539
LESSONS FUNDED
676
STUDENTS SERVED

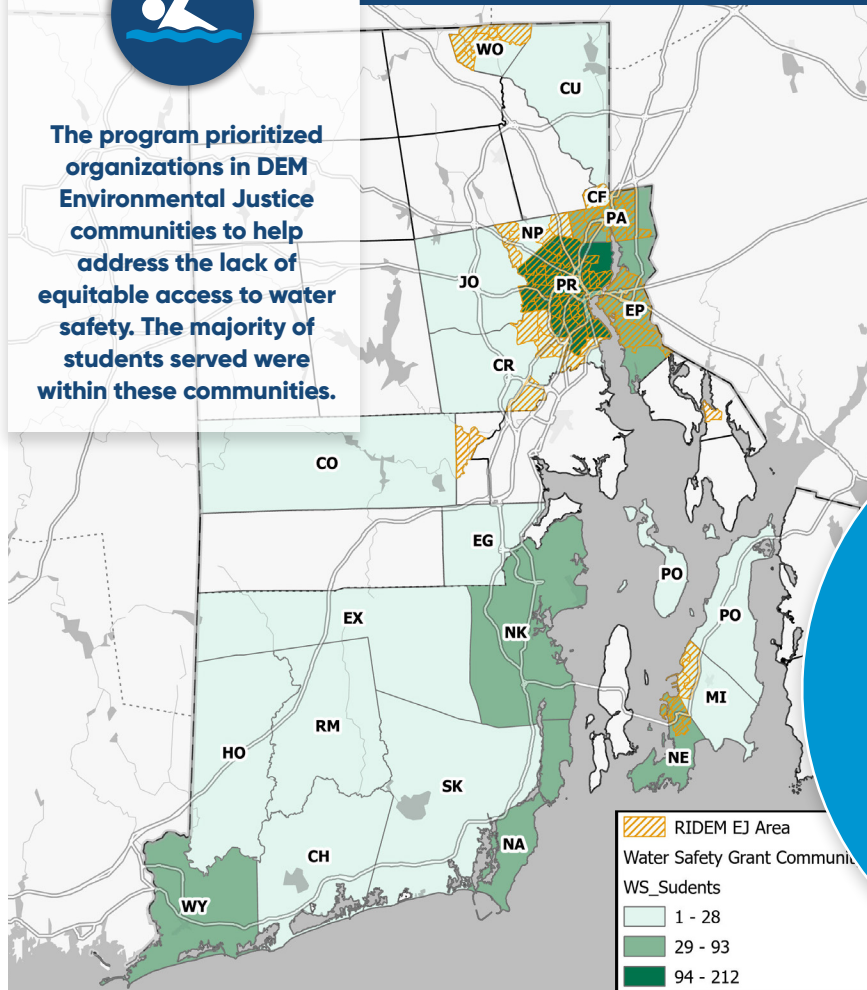

5
LIFE RINGS
INSTALLED


52
STAFF TRAINED
IN FIRST AID,
CPR & AEDS

RHODE ISLAND DEM: 2025 WATER SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM OUTCOMES

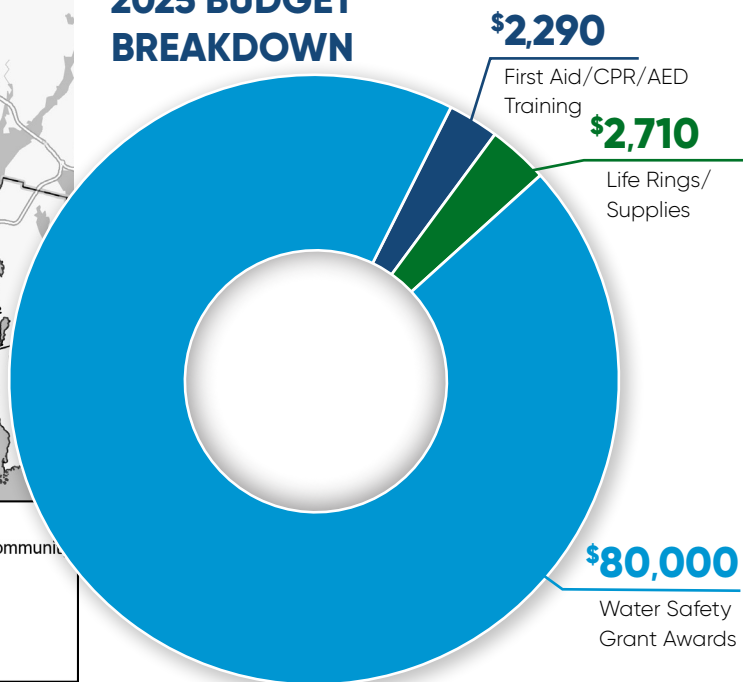


The program prioritized organizations in DEM Environmental Justice communities to help address the lack of equitable access to water safety. The majority of students served were within these communities.

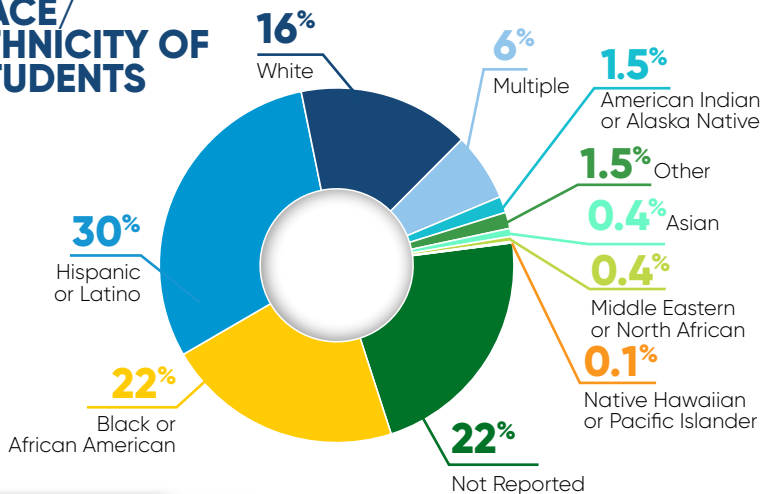


In FY2025, DEM received applications from 17 organizations for Water Safety Grants, totaling more than \$280,200 in requested funds. DEM awarded grants to all 17 applicants, totaling \$80,000. The program provided 4,539 free swimming and paddlecraft lessons for 676 students from infants to teens.

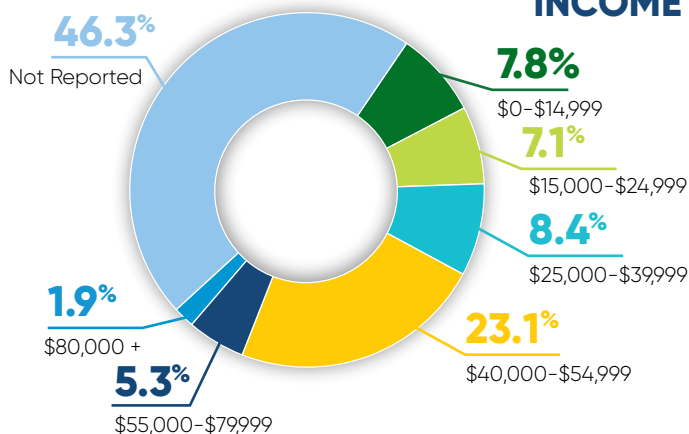
2025 BUDGET BREAKDOWN



RACE/ETHNICITY OF STUDENTS



ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME



LIFE RINGS are crucial safety equipment that provide flotation to a person struggling in the water and at risk of drowning until emergency personnel arrive. To date, DEM has installed 17 life rings at state properties across RI:

- Brenton Point State Park, Newport
- Burlingame State Park Picnic Area, Charlestown
- Burlingame State Campground, Charlestown
- Charlestown Breachway Beach/Campground
- East Beach State Beach, Charlestown
- East Matunuck State Beach, South Kingstown
- Fort Adams State Park., Newport
- George Washington Campground, Glocester
- Goddard Memorial State Park Beach, Warwick
- Lincoln Woods State Park Olney Pond, Lincoln
- Misquamicut State Beach, Westerly
- Pulaski State Park, Glocester
- Roger Wheeler State Beach, Narragansett
- Salty Brine State Beach, Narragansett
- Scarborough North State Beach, Narragansett
- Scarborough South State Beach, Narragansett

