



Pods Swimming



Life Ring at Salty Brine State Beach



Boys & Girls Club of Providence

## RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT 2024 WATER SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM

Rhode Island's Water Safety Grant Program provides free swimming or paddlecraft safety lessons to students via scholarships through municipalities and water safety organizations. Despite the proximity most of our residents 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 Islanders from underserved areas and avoid some potential water hazards, such as drowning.

Capitalized by a line item proposed by Governor Dan McKee in the fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget which the Rhode Island General Assembly enacted in June 2023, DEM issued over \$70,000 in Water Safety Grants to 10 organizations serving nearly 1,050 students during FY2024. In FY2025, DEM is encouraging paddlecraft safety organizations to apply for the grant to increase safety knowledge throughout the state. The remaining \$5,000 in the FY2025 line item will be used to purchase lifesaving equipment, such as life rings, for Rhode Island's network of state parks and beaches.



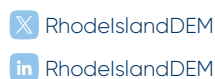
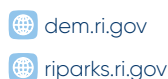
### 2025 OUTLOOK

DEM plans to offer Water Safety Grants again in FY2025, with \$80,000 of the \$85,000 budget dedicated to funding free lessons for youth from low-income households. An exciting new component for 2025 is the inclusion of paddlecraft organizations in the grant to provide free paddlecraft safety lessons. DEM received 17 eligible applications totaling over \$280,000 requested, including three municipalities and three paddlecraft lesson applications. DEM awarded grants to all 17 applicants with lessons to be taught between May and December 2025. DEM plans to allocate the remaining \$5,000 towards additional life ring installations at key state beaches and parks.

DEM also partnered with the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary to offer two free public paddlecraft safety classes. The courses taught 40 students over the age of 16 on how to choose and care for a paddlecraft, where to paddle, assessing and improving skills, and safety tips for paddling in cold water. All participants will receive free paddlecraft safety gear, including lifejackets, whistles, strobes, safety booklets, and dry bags.

“The Ocean state is known for its outstanding beaches and over 400 miles of coastline, highlighting the importance that all Rhode Islanders have equitable access to swimming lessons.”

- Governor Dan McKee



**\$70,723**  
SWIM GRANTS  
AWARDED



**1,045**  
SWIM LESSON  
STUDENTS SERVED



**12**  
LIFE RINGS  
INSTALLED

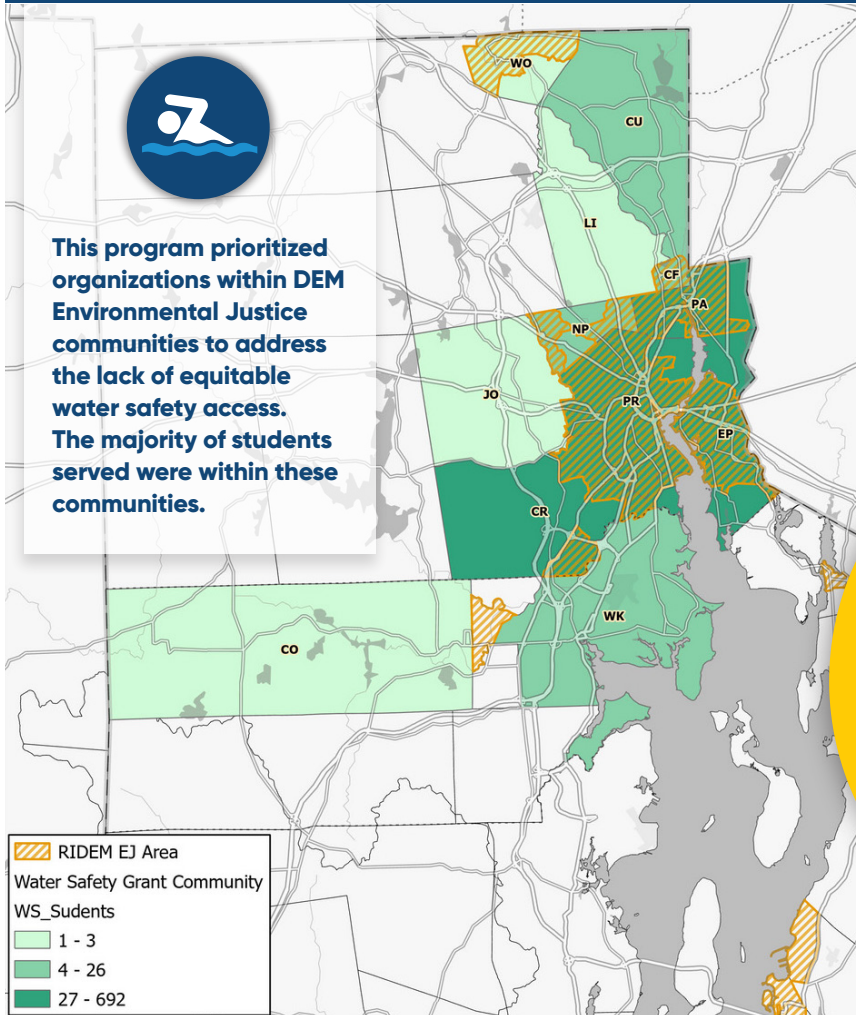


**2**  
PADDLERAFT  
LESSONS HELD

## RHODE ISLAND DEM: 2024 WATER SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM OUTCOMES

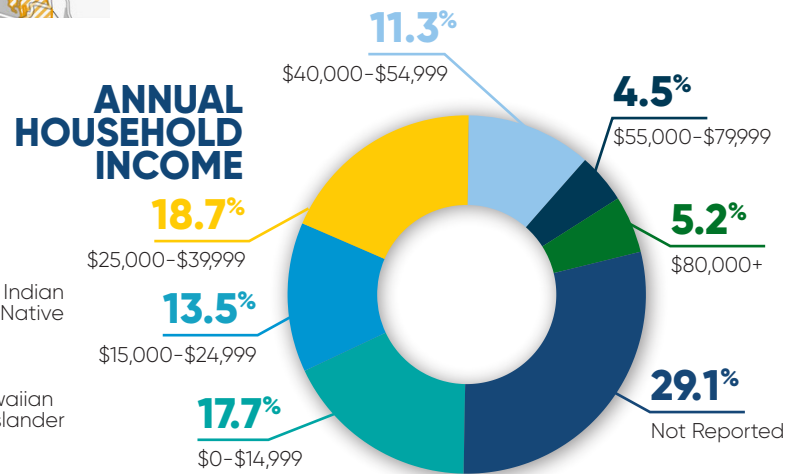
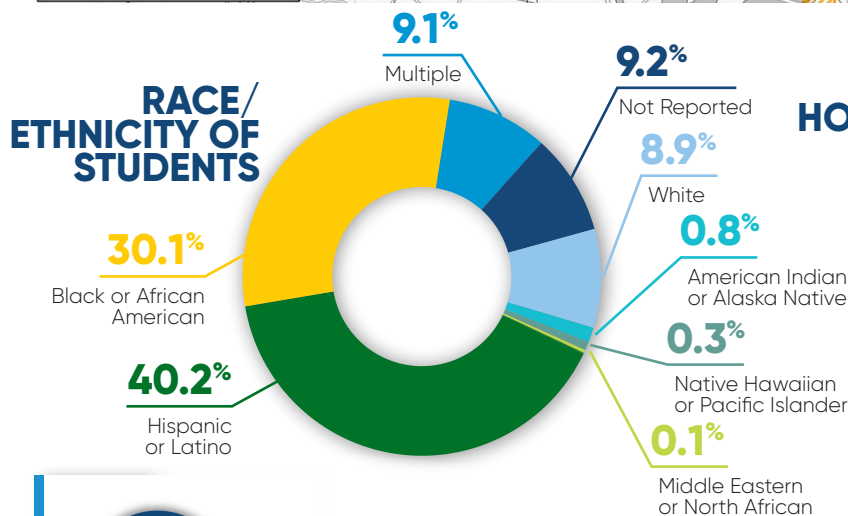
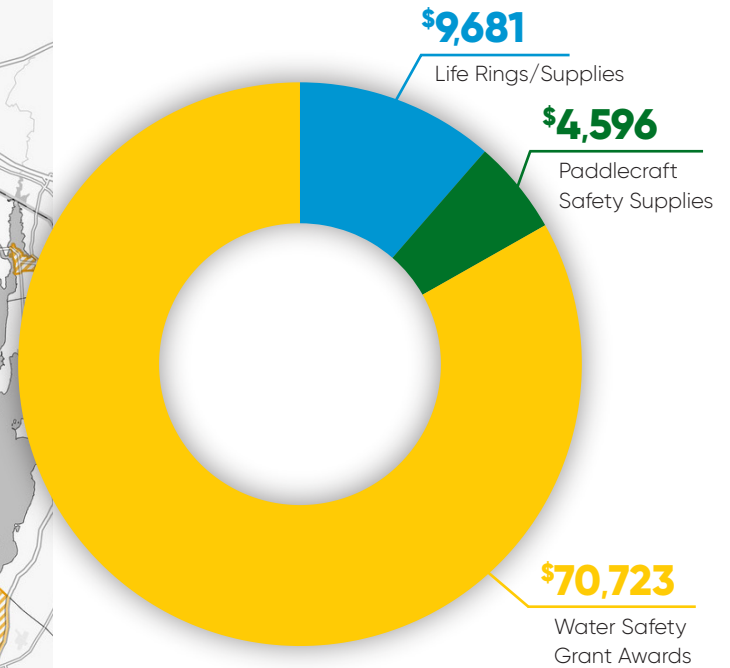


This program prioritized organizations within DEM Environmental Justice communities to address the lack of equitable water safety access. The majority of students served were within these communities.



DEM received 17 applications for Water Safety Grants, totaling \$337,570 in requested funds. DEM was able to award \$70,723 to the 10 organizations that received the highest scores. The program provided over 4,000 free swimming lessons to 1,045 students from infants to teens.

### 2024 BUDGET BREAKDOWN



**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 12 life rings at state properties across RI:

- Burlingame State Park Picnic Area, Charlestown
- Burlingame State Campground, Charlestown
- Charlestown Breachway Beach/Campground
- East Matunuck State Beach, South Kingstown
- 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
- Salty Brine State Beach, Narragansett
- Scarborough North State Beach, Narragansett
- Scarborough South State Beach, Narragansett

