

**PBN** PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

# BEST PLACES WORK

## 2021 AWARDS

### ENTERPRISE



**BLUE CROSS & BLUE SHIELD  
OF RHODE ISLAND**

### LARGE



**RITE -SOLUTIONS INC.**

### MIDSIZE



**EDWARD JONES**

### SMALL



**BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS  
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**Chisholm Chisholm & Kilpatrick** is thrilled to congratulate the winners of the Providence Business News 2021 Best Places to Work award.

Despite the challenges of the past year, these companies have remained incredibly dedicated to the wellbeing and security of their employees. We applaud your hard work and are inspired by your excellence. Congratulations on a job well done!



**Insperity** congratulates the nominees and winners of the 2021 Best Places to Work. Thank you for making a difference as we've faced many challenges this past year. As a supporter of small and medium-sized businesses, we know the pressure that comes with leading successfully. Having the right HR partner behind you expands your options. See what's possible with Insperity.



**Navigant Credit Union** is proud to serve as a sponsor for Providence Business News' Best Places to Work Awards. Year after year, this event shines a spotlight on Rhode Island's business community's collective commitment to employee-friendly values and organizational culture. We congratulate each of this year's honorees for your well-deserved recognition, and we look forward to celebrating with you all.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

### The vanguard for a post-pandemic recovery

**IF WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU** truly makes you stronger, then there are 72 companies featured in these pages that should make you feel good about the state's chances for a strong post-pandemic recovery.

Few today would question the wisdom of investing – in good times and bad – in company culture and the well-being of employees.



But what makes this year's Best Places to Work honorees stand out is that they had the pieces in place long before their survival depended on it over the past year.

Flexible work schedules, employee reward programs, community support, open communication and efforts to promote staff diversity all help employees feel valued. That, in turn, makes them more-willing partners when an existential threat to the company hits.

All of this year's winners have their own collaborative cultures that made shifting to remote work and adapting to changing client needs far easier than the alternative.

And many of those companies have also doubled down on already generous employee benefits.

It's no surprise that associate-owned Edward Jones would be among those leading the way. This year's first-place winner among midsize companies gave employees up to 10 additional paid days off to deal with COVID-19-related issues. It also set up a disaster relief fund that collected nearly \$1 million to help workers.

Not coincidentally, the financial services firm is one of three companies to have been recognized every year since PBN began this program 16 years ago. The others are Embrace Home Loans Inc. and Hinckley Allen & Snyder LLP.

They and the rest of this year's honorees represent the vanguard of the eventual economic recovery, largely due to their commitment to their most valuable assets – employees.

We'd like to thank our partner sponsors, including returnees Chisholm Chisholm & Kilpatrick Ltd. and Navigant Credit Union, and Insperity Inc.

*Michael Mello*

Michael Mello  
Editor





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**HOME SWEET HOME:** During the company's ninth annual Blue Across Rhode Island Day, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island associates spend the day building a house with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Providence. COURTESY BLUE CROSS & BLUE SHIELD OF RHODE ISLAND

# Blue Cross staff appreciates flexible, supportive structure

BY ELIZABETH GRAHAM | Contributing Writer

**THIS FALL,** Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island is aiming to bring its 738 employees back to the office for at least a few days a week.

The company is eyeing a hybrid environment, in which employees split time between working at home and at the office.

It's a plan that's taken shape after months of serious consideration, said Chief Human Resources Officer Hillary McCurley.

"We've been working pretty aggressively since last year on what that's going to look like," she said of the hybrid model.

As Blue Cross prepares to reopen workspaces, the company is using the same sort of thoughtful approach that it took when employees were told not to return to its Providence headquarters after the COVID-19 pandemic forced a statewide shutdown last spring.

While working from home may have felt shaky at first, the company quickly began offering support. Employees were offered stipends for home office equipment, flexible work schedules, and they were encouraged to make wellness a priority.

"I would say in the beginning we were all a little unsure of this and it was wonky, but we found our rhythm," said McCurley, a mother of two young girls.

She is just one of many parents within Blue Cross' ranks who were particularly grateful for the nontraditional work hours that the company began to offer.

"We feel very, very supported. I'm so glad that I was working for BCBSRI when the pandemic hit," said public relations specialist Jill

Flaxington, mother to a 5-year-old boy and 18-month-old girl. "I looked at companies that I'd formerly worked for and how they handled the pandemic, and it was a world of difference."

The Future Workforce Council, created shortly after operations went remote, continues to meet weekly to support employees as they work from home and to ensure they are properly equipped.

Employees are also encouraged to block off time to do things for themselves, such as partaking in new mindfulness and well-being programming offered by Blue Cross.

As workers began finding their remote footing last year, efforts to help them adapt to pandemic life resulted in feedback.

"The biggest thing we took away from all of that was the gratitude," McCurley said, citing responses on the employee surveys the company regularly conducts. But, she said, "We have a lot of unsolicited feedback also," shared in emails, instant messages and phone calls in which workers sent thanks for the flexibility offered by the company.

On top of that, Blue Cross extended its response to the pandemic beyond its workforce.

Donations were made to the COVID-19 Response Fund and the COVID-19 Behavioral Health Fund, both overseen by the Rhode Island Foundation.

Blue Cross also offered about \$25 million in premium relief to its members and customers

**Blue Cross & Blue Shield  
of Rhode Island**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I. 738

CEO AND PRESIDENT

**Martha L. Wofford**

and scrapped copays for all COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccinations.

Some employees delivered groceries to needy Medicare members, and others sewed masks and took supplies to homeless shelters.

Those actions fall in line with what Blue Cross has come to expect of its workers, many of whom also log hours of community volunteer work each year, McCurley said.

"Volunteering and philanthropy and community [are] part of our DNA," she said. "It's contagious. Once you come here, it really resonates. Our associates are excited about the work that we do for the community."

Blue Cross has also strived to create its own workplace community.

A diversity council, made up of employees, works to promote inclusion and cultural competence, while seven separate employee business resource groups provide focused diversity support. Among them are groups for Black, LGBTQ+ and Latin employees, veterans, those with disabilities, people juggling work and kids, and "rising talent."

"It's an environment where you can bring your whole self to work. This is a place where you can be you without judgment; it's a place where you'll be supported," McCurley said. ■

1



**Blue Cross  
Blue Shield**  
of Rhode Island

Volunteering and philanthropy and community [are] **part of our DNA.** It's contagious.'

HILLARY MCCURLEY,

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island chief human resources officer






**COMMUNITY HEALTH:** Whether at the Amgen Rhode Island site in West Greenwich or working at home, Amgen staff are upholding the company's mission to serve every patient.  
COURTESY AMGEN RHODE ISLAND

**2** **What three words best describe your staff?** Hardworking, team-oriented, compassionate.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** At Amgen, we are driven by a set of values that includes trust and respect, collaboration, communication and accountability, among others. During this last year, it has been more important than ever to uphold our values to ensure our staff feels supported both inside and outside of work.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** In the past year, we have set up a dedicated landing page for staff to access all the information they need to help them work through the COVID-19 pandemic. From worksite guidance to benefit information and wellness and mental health information, this wellness site has information that helps guide staff access to at-home wellness programs, as well as free access to mental health workers through our Lyra program. Additionally, we have an on-site occupational health nurse who is available to speak to staff about questions they may have at no charge. ■



**Amgen Rhode Island**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 903

RHODE ISLAND VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS

**BRIAN BRITSON**

Questions answered by: SENIOR MANAGER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS

**TARA URBAN**




**SPECIAL DELIVERY:** AAA Northeast employees deliver snacks and other items to health care workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.  
COURTESY AAA NORTHEAST

**3** **What three words best describe your staff?** Member-centered, innovative, proud.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We've provided our employees with a wealth of resources to help with their physical, environmental, emotional and financial well-being: job reassignment and retraining, paid time off, and 100% coverage of health expenses for COVID-19-related illness and vaccines.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our environment is one in which our employees feel a sense of involvement, empowerment, value and, most importantly, belonging.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Our employees are empowered to give their time, talents and personal donations, which are matched through our matching gift program. Our charitable giving programs are employee-led, where our employees explore community needs, develop relationships with charitable organizations and direct club's donations where they will have the greatest positive local impact. ■



**AAA Northeast**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 1,210

CEO AND PRESIDENT

**JOHN GALVIN**

Questions answered by: SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING

**LISA MELTON**

# We are Rhode Island's community foundation.

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Chris Barnett  
Ricky Bogert  
Adrian Bonéy  
Nicole Bucci  
Lou Capracotta  
Jean Cohoon  
Sharon Collier  
Claudia Cornejo  
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Jen Reid  
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Ian Ross  
Joe Santos  
Jim Sanzi  
Donna Sowden  
Neil Steinberg  
Karen Sylvia  
Bazl Taliaferrow-Mosleh  
Keith Tavares  
Noel Velasco







**CLEANING THINGS UP:** Employees for The Washington Trust Co. participate in the company's Virtual Community Cleanup event.  
COURTESY THE WASHINGTON TRUST CO.



**HAVING A HEART:** Amica Mutual Insurance Co. employees take part in the American Heart Association's "Wear Red Day" to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease.  
COURTESY AMICA MUTUAL INSURANCE CO.

**4** **What three words best describe your staff?** Caring, committed, trustworthy.  
**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Washington Trust's culture is supportive, team-oriented and full of spirit, passion and a desire to do what's best for fellow employees, our customers and our community. Employees often describe colleagues as their Washington Trust family.  
**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** Our focus on diversity in our workforce is intentional, and we partner with many recruiting programs such as Year Up, and college and university job fairs that allow us to interact with potential job candidates of many different demographics and backgrounds.  
**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We enhanced our employee assistance program to provide more holistic support for our colleagues, including nontraditional guidance on needs such as family and relationship matters, financial guidance, travel services, addiction treatment and more. ■

**The Washington Trust Co.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 534  
CHAIRMAN AND CEO  
**EDWARD O. HANDY III**  
Questions answered by:  
CHAIRMAN AND CEO  
**EDWARD O. HANDY III**

**5** **What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** For those who have returned to the office, we've implemented strict and comprehensive cleaning, distancing and safety procedures. We also began offering a safely accessed free lunch program. Also, Amica implemented virtual fitness classes.  
**How do you support community service work by your employees?** The Employee Community Involvement Program, which provides grants to nonprofits where employees or their spouses are involved. The Volunteer Day Program, which provides employees with paid time off to volunteer. The Matching Gifts Program, which matches employee donations at \$1.75 for every \$1.  
**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We've enhanced our paid parental leave by providing four weeks of parental bonding for new parents. We added a backup care program that gives employees access to center-based and in-home care for children and dependent adults. We rolled out an employee recognition program in which peers and leaders can reward fellow employees. ■



**Amica Mutual Insurance Co.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.:  
**1,745**  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**ROBERT DIMUCCIO**  
Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**ROBERT DIMUCCIO**

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**CRUSHING COVID:** Through the pandemic, Providence Community Health Centers Inc.'s workers engaged in outreach through various initiatives, food drives and helping homeless families with holiday gifts. COURTESY PROVIDENCE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS INC.

**6** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** During the peak of COVID-19, PCHC adjusted leave and benefit policies to accommodate staff who may otherwise not have qualified for such benefits. PCHC also paid for all staff and their families to subscribe to HeadSpace, a well-being and meditation vendor, and paid for all staff to be covered under an identity protection benefit.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** We provided the state and nation's first walk-up COVID-19 testing tent.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** We doubled our promotions from within over last year and 100% of the internal promotions were women.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Whenever possible, PCHC strives to promote from within. ■



**Providence Community Health Centers Inc.**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **542**

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**MERRILL THOMAS**

Questions answered by:  
SUPERVISOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
CENTRAL SERVICES  
**KATHERINE SCOTT**



**EMPLOYEE SUPPORT:** Members of Blount Fine Foods Corp.'s communication and engagement team, along with some company supervisors and managers, work at some of the tents to give back to Blount employees. COURTESY BLOUNT FINE FOODS CORP.

**7** **What three words best describe your staff?** Dedicated, agile, caring.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** Blount Family Pantry (April-July) – a once-a-week pantry supplying bread, milk, eggs and other treats for our team. On-site COVID-19 screening and testing. Vaccination scheduling support and an incentive for completed vaccination.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** During the pandemic, we donated product to national and local agencies for drive-thru free distribution.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Family, quality, caring.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We are continually working with our team and wellness specialist to provide programs and support for physical and mental wellness, including Mental Health May. ■



**Blount Fine Foods Corp.**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **971**

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**TODD BLOUNT**

Questions answered by:  
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST  
**PATTY MUCCITELLI**



**KEEPING FIT:** Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island employees work out in a gym together. COURTESY NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH PLAN OF RHODE ISLAND

**8** **What three words best describe your staff?** Compassionate, resilient, member-focused.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Neighborhood introduced an Employee Disaster Relief Program for staff. Staff can request a tax-free grant of \$500 or \$1,000 per month to assist with expenses or a loss of income due to COVID-19.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our culture supports a shared passion by our employees to serve Rhode Island's most vulnerable populations. Employees work at Neighborhood because they feel a strong connection to our mission and in making a difference in the lives of others.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** Neighborhood's goal is to recruit, hire and advance diversity and inclusion throughout the organization. During the last several years, over 38% of our new hires have been diverse, and we remain committed to valuing diversity in gender, ethnicity, race, culture, experience and background. ■



**Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **588**

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**PETER MARINO**

Questions answered by:  
HUMAN RESOURCES BUSINESS PARTNER AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT LEAD  
**DIANA CHRISTIAN**



Associates participating in BCBSRI annual day of service.

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EC-544000 5/21



# BEST PLACES TO WORK - ENTERPRISE COMPANIES

(based on companies with more than 500 regional employees)

2021 rank	Company name	Person in charge	Type of business	No. of local employees	% of voluntary turnover	% of women employees	Flexible work hours	Holidays per year	Sick days for ill-dependent	Employees donating PTO time to others	Diversity programs	401(k)/retirement plan	Bonus or incentive programs	Telecommuting options	Tuition reimbursement offered	Stress and wellness programs	Workplace fitness facilities	Support community service initiatives	Career-development programs
1	Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island	Martha L. Wofford	Health insurer	738	9%	62%	✓	11			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Amgen Rhode Island	Robert Bradway and Brian Britson	Biotechnology manufacturer	903	17%	64%		20	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	AAA Northeast	John Galvin	Automobile servicer	1,210	17%	62%	✓	11	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	The Washington Trust Co.	Edward O. Handy III	Financial institution	534	8%	50%	✓	11	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
5	Amica Mutual Insurance Co.	Robert DiMuccio	Insurance	1,745	9%	52%	✓	14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Providence Community Health Centers Inc.	Merrill R. Thomas	Health care	542	10%	85%	✓	13			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Blount Fine Foods Corp.	Todd Blount	Manufacturing	971	34%	35%		10	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Neighborhood Health Plan of Rhode Island	Peter Marino	Health care	588	8%	79%	✓	11			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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**HOLIDAY CHEER:** Rite-Solutions Inc. employees get into the spirit at a recent holiday company party. COURTESY RITE-SOLUTIONS INC.

# Collaborative team solves complex tech challenges

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer

## THE MOTTO AT Rite-Solutions Inc. is “Friends enjoying work.”

But, for the award-winning Middletown-based software, cybersecurity and information technology solutions provider’s more than 200-strong team, the words and the passion behind them go much deeper than a catchy motto.

“I’ve been in the workforce for 40 years and this is the friendliest place I’ve ever worked,” said Dennis McLaughlin, CEO and president. “Our work is challenging and rewarding, and our workplace is welcoming and supportive. We work hard to ensure that everyone is respected, challenged and successful.”

The bulk of Rite-Solution’s work – supported by satellite offices in Stonington, Conn., Arlington, Va., and Washington, D.C. – involves the federal government and the U.S. Navy, including producing complex software systems for the U.S. submarine fleet.

Over the past year, the company has been developing an innovative cyber dashboard for a complicated command and control system for one of its military customers that lets users know what the status is, where the problems are and what needs to be done to make it right.

In addition to moving several of its customers to the cloud, the company has undertaken extensive development on artificial intelligence/machine learning efforts, creating a low-cost buoy that the U.S. Department of Defense or port security entities can use to visually identify ships passing in and out of a port.

With such high-level and intense work taking place every day, Rite-Solutions still makes it a top priority to praise employees

for their efforts, recognizing them through biweekly postings, spot bonuses, dinner-out coupons and team lunches. While the company awards annual bonuses for outstanding work, McLaughlin feels it is these more-immediate acts that make a difference.

“Waiting for the annual bonus to recognize a good deed almost defeats the reward cycle,” McLaughlin said. “We certainly award annual bonuses for outstanding work, but we like to acknowledge good work publicly as soon as possible.”

Although the nature of the work allows for a great deal of flexibility for working remotely, McLaughlin says it was important to take measures to promote group and person-to-person activities such as collaboration, innovation, and on-the-spot training and mentoring during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“One thing we really missed was something we call the ‘serendipity of the water cooler,’ which is the hallway, water cooler or post-meeting discussions where small bits of very useful information are passed from one team member to another,” McLaughlin said.

In her role as vice president of people operations, Susan Borden has the unique opportunity to work with and get to know everyone who joins the company, something she feels makes her very lucky.

“Our people are the foundation of our company,” Borden said. “It’s the people I work with and the ability to make sure that we, as a company, do the best we can for our employees and their families. The atmosphere is very col-

**Rite-Solutions Inc.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I. 227  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**Dennis McLaughlin**

laborative and supportive. Everyone supports everyone else and pulls together as a team whenever it is needed.”

Borden says the company reviews annual employee surveys and encourages employees to join one of its culture teams, including the Events Team, Wellness Team and Green Team. The survey results and the efforts of these teams have resulted in changes for the company, whether that be a benefits change, or the way communications are handled internally.

One very well-received program is “mutual fun,” a crowdsourcing ideation environment that works like the stock market with employees creating ideas that they feel will help the company, the culture, the employees and the business. Employees are given a virtual amount of money to invest in great ideas that they can also volunteer to support and help grow. The Mutual Fun Board and the company founders review the investments and provide funding and backing for the projects they feel will help the business and community.

“I think we have proven that high performance is possible without the painful dynamics found at many workplaces,” McLaughlin said. “People respond to respect, listening and teamwork.” ■



**“We like to acknowledge good work publicly as soon as possible.”**  
DENNIS MCLAUGHLIN, Rite-Solutions Inc. CEO and president





# That's quite a family tree.

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PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

**BEST PLACES TO WORK**

AWARDS

Winner 2021



**Amica**

AUTO HOME LIFE




**OUT SHOPPING:** Navigant Credit Union employees went shopping for backpacks and school supplies, which were provided to the families of The Izzy Foundation.

COURTESY NAVIGANT CREDIT UNION

**2** **Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Yes, we never stopped supporting those organizations still seeking funding in 2020. In fact, Navigant Credit Union was one of the leading funders of the Rhode Island Foundation's COVID-19 Response Fund.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our culture is community-oriented and team-oriented. Our employees bring a genuine passion to the workplace, and they look out for one another.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** We have an internal committee called V-Force, which organizes volunteer outings for our employees throughout the year. These outings give employees an opportunity to get out of the office for a day or for a few hours and give back to the communities we serve. Nearly 100% of our workforce volunteers their time every year. ■



**Navigant Credit Union**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 339

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**GARY E. FURTADO**

Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**GARY E. FURTADO**



**STARKWEATHER & SHEPLEY**

INSURANCE BROKERAGE INC.

Thank you to all of our employees for continually making Starkweather & Shepley one of the Best Places to Work in Rhode Island.

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**BEST PLACES TO WORK**

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**SCHOOL IN SESSION:** Gilbane Building Co. employees work on-site through the COVID-19 pandemic constructing the new East Providence High School.

COURTESY GILBANE BUILDING CO.

**3** **How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** What makes Gilbane different is the relationship that our employees share with their co-workers. Grounded in core values such as integrity and teamwork, combined with the pride that comes from building stronger communities, there is a true spirit at Gilbane that everyone is in it together.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** In addition to a robust benefits package, Gilbane offers a comprehensive wellness platform, monthly challenges, annual benefit discounts related to wellness initiatives, and a network of wellness champions who lead activities across the organization.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** Diversity, inclusion and belonging is a critical focus at Gilbane. Our Inclusion and Diversity Council sets ambitious goals in all aspects of diversity and inclusion, including those related to hiring and promotion decisions.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We've added a new wellness platform to promote health and wellness. ■



**Gilbane Building Co.**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 250

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**MICHAEL MCKELVY**

Questions answered by:  
SENIOR HUMAN RESOURCES PARTNER  
**MOLLIE CASCIONE-HURLEY**





**PRESERVING THE PAST:** Embrace Home Loans Inc.'s human resources team cleaned headstones at the historic Braman Cemetery in Newport. COURTESY EMBRACE HOME LOANS INC.



**MEANINGFUL MISSIVES:** Employees of BankNewport and Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island help create more than 400 cards of encouragement for Meals on Wheels recipients. COURTESY BANKNEWPORT

**4** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We introduced a benefit called Sitter-Tutor reimbursement. This benefit reimburses employees up to \$1,000 per child/\$4,000 per family to help with costs associated with hiring a sitter or a tutor for a school-aged child so that our employee parents could balance working remotely and managing children who are learning remotely.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** In partnership with our employee assistance program and medical insurance, we have added monthly wellness seminars and activities such as meditation, chair yoga, walking challenges, telehealth visitation, and updates on testing and vaccination site locations.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** We have a volunteer program called Embrace Cares. Every full-time employee received 100 hours of paid time off to volunteer in the community. Additionally, we have our Dollars-for-Doers program. This program pays \$10 per hour volunteered to the organization where the employee performed community service. ■




**Embrace Home Loans Inc.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 382  
CEO **DENNIS F. HARDMAN**  
Questions answered by:  
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
**DENISE CUNHA**

**5** **How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** BankNewport's culture is based on our core values: We celebrate individuality, we empower creative problem-solving, we invest the time to get to know our customers, communities and employees, and commit to serving the financial needs of Rhode Islanders.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Through the "We're All In" Volunteer Program, employees donated over 3,500 hours toward financial education and community service in 2020 in spite of the pandemic. Over \$1.47 million was awarded to 300 nonprofits in the form of sponsorships and proactive charitable grants.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** Based on employee feedback, BankNewport implemented the Retail Management Development Program designed to build retail management talent while providing career development and promotional opportunities. Individuals who complete the program receive future readiness for career progression toward branch operations manager and branch sales manager positions. ■



**BankNewport**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 261  
CEO AND PRESIDENT **JOHN F. MURPHY**  
Questions answered by:  
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AND MANAGER OF EMPLOYEE RELATIONS AND BENEFITS  
**CAROLYN ODELL**



PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS  
**BEST PLACES TO WORK**  
*Winner* 2021 AWARDS

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**WORK** AWARDS

Winner 2021

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Stephen White, President/CEO  
Westerly Community Credit Union

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f

ig

tw

in



**SHOW OF STRENGTH:** Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. Ltd. employees participate in a recent jet pull at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick.  
COURTESY KAHN, LITWIN, RENZA & CO. LTD.

# 6

**What three words best describe your staff?** Smart, passionate, entrepreneurial.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our culture is centered around our people. KLR colleagues are strong-minded, thoughtful and always willing to go the extra mile.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** We encourage our staff to volunteer their time to various organizations through memberships, active participation and support. Our team members serve on the boards of directors and as committee chairs for more than 100 organizations.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** Our employees' health and well-being are and always have been our top priority at KLR. During the past year ... we developed initiatives that specifically addressed the remote workforce and the personal situations of our employees. Some of the changes include the ability to have a flexible work schedule (part time and hybrid), unlimited paid time off, PTO for vaccines and adjusting health benefits to address the needs of our colleagues and their families. ■

## KLR

**Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. Ltd.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 205  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
**ALAN H. LITWIN**  
Questions answered by:  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
**ALAN H. LITWIN**

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**NIGHT OF CELEBRATION:** Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc. team members gather at the ABC Excellence in Construction Awards event night in September 2020.  
COURTESY STARKWEATHER & SHEPLEY INSURANCE BROKERAGE INC.


# 7

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We have a culture of integrity, trust and respect.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Wellness has been changing at S&S to match our associates' goals. We continue to offer one-on-one sessions with a nutritionist twice a year. We are holding monthly webinars, quarterly team walking challenges and monthly wellness warmups.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Although we have not been able to volunteer our time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Starkweather remains true to our commitment to our clients and the communities in which we collectively serve. We are excitedly planning in-person volunteer events for later this year. We recently held a beach cleanup on Martha's Vineyard and it was great to see some of our associates again.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We know the pandemic has been hard on all. In 2021, we implemented a matching gift program, which helps our employees' donation dollars go further. ■



**Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 150  
CHAIRMAN AND CEO  
**LAWRENCE KEEFE**  
Questions answered by:  
CHAIRMAN AND CEO  
**LAWRENCE KEEFE**





**LET'S PARTY:** R.I. Housing and Mortgage Finance Corp. employees celebrate and say goodbye to a retiring employee in January 2020. COURTESY R.I. HOUSING AND MORTGAGE FINANCE CORP.

**8** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** Employee assistance program. Remote work. Additional time off. COVID-19 education.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Celebratory of the assets, strengths and the talents that our workforce brings to each other and to our mission.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Offer wellness programs, including on-site and remote exercise classes.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** Both are primary to the success of our organization and mission.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Promoting existing staff to retain and build upon the strengths and skills of our team, to recognize and reward employees' desire to advance and grow, and to strengthen engagement. ■

**R.I. Housing and Mortgage Finance Corp.**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **212**

CEO AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**CAROL VENTURA**

Questions answered by:  
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
**BARBARA FARRAND**

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS  
**BEST PLACES TO WORK**  
AWARDS  
*Winner 2021*

**AAA NORTHEAST EMPLOYEES, we celebrate YOU**

Throughout this challenging year, you continued to do what you do best — be there for our members. We appreciate our employees for going above and beyond, every day.

*AAA Northeast congratulates all the winners of PBN's Best Places to Work Awards.*



**HEALTHY HALLOWEEN:** Brown Medicine employees gather and dress in costume during a 2020 Halloween contest. COURTESY BROWN MEDICINE

**9** **What three words best describe your staff?** Dedicated, collaborative, strategic.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** Employee assistance program. Increased child care assistance. Behavioral health support specifically directed at clinicians. Remote working options.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Brown Medicine has a culture that fosters collaboration, innovation, teamwork and ownership.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Brown Medicine has made physical alterations to our offices, including barriers, additional space and a supplemental heating, ventilation and air conditioning system.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Brown Medicine's preference is to provide opportunities to grow within our organization. We see our employees as valuable assets to support and grow within our organization as a valuable attribute of our culture. ■

**Brown Medicine**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **436**

CEO  
**ANN M. KASHMANIAN**

Questions answered by:  
CEO  
**ANN M. KASHMANIAN**

**Crossroads Rhode Island is proud to be named a 2021 Best Places to Work Winner!**





**FEELING APPRECIATED:** A group of Chisholm Chisholm & Kilpatrick Ltd. employees volunteer their personal time to give back to the community on CCK Employee Appreciation Day 2020. COURTESY CHISHOLM CHISHOLM & KILPATRICK LTD.

**10** **What three words best describe your staff?** Highly motivated, committed, professional.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Around the holiday season, our team was encouraged to write thank-you and holiday cards to local veteran homes, donate to their local food pantries or donate to Wreaths Across America.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** Diversity, equity and inclusion have always played an integral role in our hiring process. In 2019, we partnered with a leadership and diversity consultant with deep roots in New England to share its expertise with us and act as an adviser. We formed a DE&I Committee to focus on our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as part of our community at CCK. ■



**Chisholm Chisholm & Kilpatrick Ltd.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 229

PARTNERS  
**ROBERT CHISHOLM, J. SCOTT KILPATRICK, BARBARA COOK, ZACHARY STOLZ, MASON WARING AND BRADLEY HENNING**

Questions answered by:  
**CCK PARTNERS**



**GETTING A LIFT:** Employees for Performance Physical Therapy hold up CEO Michelle Collie after the company received a past Best Places to Work award from Providence Business News. COURTESY PERFORMANCE PHYSICAL THERAPY

**11** **What three words best describe your staff?** Passionate, kind, tireless.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** A culture of connection to each other and our community, curious and collaborative, transparent and progressive.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Working at home as much as possible. Telehealth 100% from March 20, 2020, through to mid-April 2021, then very coordinated gradual return to the clinics. Flexible work schedules – to accommodate parents, those exposed who had to quarantine, etc. Lots of additional communication through weekly to monthly companywide newsletters.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Always prefer and attempt to hire existing staff, as this is how Performance was built. The premise and reason for growth was I wanted an organization that provided an opportunity for every individual to grow and reach their own professional goals. Ninety-five percent of our clinic directors and managers started their career at Performance in staff-level roles. ■

**Performance Physical Therapy**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 205  
CEO **MICHELLE COLLIE**  
Questions answered by:  
VICE PRESIDENT **JOSEPH KOTULA**

**OUR PEOPLE MAKE IT ALL HAPPEN.**

Headquartered in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, Dominion Diagnostics is a national medical laboratory providing clinical drug monitoring solutions that advance patient care and improve treatment outcomes. For over two decades, Dominion Diagnostics has been a leader in the industry working with addiction treatment centers, pain management centers, primary care centers, hospital systems and other specialties.

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We're so proud to be named a winner of the PBN's award for the Best Places to Work in 2021. Our technology, people, community involvement and flexibility are all reasons why we are...

**#KLRPROUD**

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**KAHNLITWIN.COM/ABOUT**





**GREAT OUTDOORS:** Employees at Children's Friend work remotely outside.  
COURTESY CHILDREN'S FRIEND

**12** What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic? We have provided a variety of supports to our employees. These have included on-site bonuses, emergency paid time off ... online stress management and wellness programs ... and access to an online meditation and mindfulness service.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** We have supported our kids and families with food, technology, linkages to benefits and mental health services brought on by the pandemic.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** At Children's Friend, we believe children achieve the best outcomes when they are supported by a strong and stable family. That supportive family environment is the culture of our workplace.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We introduced a Student Loan Payback Program for our employees this year. Employees receive free guidance on their student loans, and the agency makes a monthly payment on the student loans of our employees. ■



**Children's Friend**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **372**  
CEO  
**DAVID CAPRIO**  
Questions answered by:  
CEO  
**DAVID CAPRIO**



**KICKING THINGS OFF:** Narragansett Bay Commission Chairman Vin Mesolella kicks a soccer ball at the opening of a renovated Macomber Stadium in Central Falls, a joint project between the city and the Narragansett Bay Commission to transform contaminated land into a clean, usable facility.  
COURTESY NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION

**13** What three words best describe your staff? Committed, environmentalists, effective.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We offered flexible working situations, enhanced communications, employee appreciation gifts and free on-site COVID-19 tests.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** The culture here at Narragansett Bay Commission is guided by the critical work the agency does to protect the environment and public health.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We promote substantially from within to enhance our institutional knowledge and offer employees an opportunity to advance in their careers.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We instituted a \$100 wellness incentive for employees who received a complete COVID-19 vaccine. ■



**Narragansett Bay Commission**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **270**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**LAURIE HORRIDGE**  
Questions answered by:  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
MANAGER  
**JAMIE SAMONS**



**Being the Best Place to Work is the Best Medicine**

We applaud our frontline and behind-the-scenes team of employees for their commitment to patient care, innovation and excellence. It's what YOU do that makes Brown Medicine one of the 2021 "Best Places to Work in Rhode Island." Thanks for doing your part to maintain an exceptional work environment that provides high-quality care to the patients we serve.



**BROWN MEDICINE**  
BROWN PHYSICIANS, INC.



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**SPIRITED CREW:** Dominion Diagnostics LLC's special toxicology staff members show their spirit during National Lab Week in 2020.  
COURTESY DOMINION DIAGNOSTICS LLC




**PARTY TIME:** Crossroads Rhode Island employees gather after the non-profit's holiday party in 2019.  
COURTESY CROSSROADS RHODE ISLAND

**14** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** Work-from-home policies for all nonproduction staff. Employee testing. Families First Coronavirus Response Act paid leave for COVID-19-related medical issues.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We have offered virtual wellness programs through our employee assistance program, medical plan and also have offered employee-led wellness initiatives. Programs focus on financial, emotional and physical wellness.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Our preference is promoting existing staff. Since March 2020, we have promoted 15 employees.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We have initiated a recognition program that is posted daily on our "Impressions" Bulletin Board. Impressions allow workers to recognize one another for a job well done or to provide thanks. ■




**Dominion Diagnostics LLC**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **216**  
CEO  
**ROBERT GARVEY**  
Questions answered by:  
CEO  
**ROBERT GARVEY**

**15** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We committed to covering all employees for up to one month of pay through the use of COVID-19 pay and emergency pay, relaxed vacation and sick-pay usage policies, and paid \$100 bonuses to all nonexecutive-level employees to help cover the cost of purchasing cleaning supplies for their home.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We implemented a full-service cafe in our headquarters. Our on-site dining vendor offers healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner options, as well as a self-serve kiosk where employees can check calories and nutritional information before selecting their meal choice.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** We offer a volunteer program and a matching gift program where our employees can actively participate in the community by volunteering time and talents, and can have the club match their personal financial gift(s) to a qualifying 501(c)3 charitable organization in any amount between \$10 and \$250 per employee per year. ■



**Crossroads Rhode Island**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **180**  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**KAREN A. SANTILLI**  
Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**KAREN A. SANTILLI**



Hats off to all of the companies being honored this year.

Embrace Home Loans congratulates all of the winners of the 2021 Best Places to Work award.  
It's an honor to be among such a celebrated group.

We would also like to thank our employees, who helped us achieve this tribute for the 16th consecutive year.  
It's through our core values – Community, Courage, Empowerment, Fulfillment, Love, Innovation, and Achievement – that Embrace continues to be a great place to work, grow, and find purpose.



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BEST PLACES TO WORK - LARGE COMPANIES

(based on companies with 150-499 regional employees)

2021 rank	Company name	Person in charge	Type of business	No. of local employees	% of voluntary turnover	% of women employees	Flexible work hours	Holidays per year	Sick days for ill-dependent	Employees donating PTO time to others	Diversity training	401(k)/retirement plan	PTO for volunteering	Telecommuting options	Tuition reimbursement offered	Workplace fitness facilities	Stress and wellness programs	Support community service initiatives	Career-development programs
1	Rite-Solutions Inc.	Dennis McLaughlin	Technology	227	10%	26%	✓	9		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	Navigant Credit Union	Gary Furtado	Credit union	339	7%	76%		12	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Gilbane Building Co.	Thomas F. Gilbane Jr. and Michael McKelvy	Construction	250	0%	38%	✓	9		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Embrace Home Loans Inc.	Dennis Hardiman	Financial services	382	8%	50%	✓	10	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	BankNewport	John Murphy	Financial institution	261	8%	69%	✓	11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co. Ltd. <sup>1</sup>	Alan H. Litwin	Wealth management	205	7%	25%	✓	10		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc.	Lawrence Keefe	Insurance	150	5%	72%		12				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
8	R.I. Housing and Mortgage Finance Corp.	Carol Ventura	Financial services	212	5%	67%	✓	12	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Brown Medicine	Ann M. Kashmanian	Medical group	436	12%	69%	✓	10	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Chisholm Chisholm & Kilpatrick Ltd.	J. Scott Kilpatrick and Robert V. Chisholm	Legal services	229	19%	70%	✓	11			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Performance Physical Therapy	Michelle Collie	Health care provider	205	45%	73%	✓	7		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Children's Friend	David Caprio	Nonprofit	372	16%	92%	✓	11				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Narragansett Bay Commission	Laurie Horridge	Nonprofit	270	5%	36%	✓	11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Dominion Diagnostics LLC	Robert M. Garvey Jr.	Life sciences	216	24%	56%		10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Crossroads Rhode Island	Karen A. Santilli	Nonprofit	180	12%	66%	✓	12		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		

<sup>1</sup> Also known as KLR.





# Employees take ownership in Edward Jones' success

BY JOHN A. LAHTINEN | Contributing Writer

**ONE OF THE NATION'S** largest financial services firms with more than 14,500 locations and 7 million clients across the country, **Edward Jones** is passionate about making its team members feel like a part of the family.

"Edward Jones associates enjoy flexible, family-friendly workplaces and gratifying work helping clients in neighborhoods where they live and work," said Karen Lemke, a financial adviser in Providence with more than 20 years of industry experience. "Financial advisers and branch office administrator teams who serve clients well earn the firm's highest honors. Community involvement is encouraged, and associates embrace causes such as the Walk to End Alzheimer's – a firmwide effort."

An associate-owned company, Edward Jones offers its team long-term career and leadership opportunities. Success helping clients results in trimester bonuses, annual profit sharing and the opportunity to own a piece of the firm through limited partnership.

"Partnership is a unique reward that few companies offer. Any associate in good standing with three years of service can be offered partnership," and more than 50% of associates are owners, Lemke said. "Volunteerism is fundamental to our culture, and associates love the opportunity to give back. Home office associates get one paid Day of Caring annually and in our branches, volunteerism during the workday is common and expected."

Lemke reflects that effort through participation in several local community groups such as the Providence Preservation Society, Women's Fund of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Independence Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Wayland Square

Merchants' Association.

In addition to free wellness and preventative care, the firm's generous medical plan covers 100% of costs once deductibles are met. Recent plan updates include benefits for domestic partners and transgender associates, plus coverage for applied behavioral analysis for autism and infertility treatments.

The wellness program offers one-on-one health coaching in which associates can also opt for biometric screenings, mindfulness training, calorie tracking, nutrition and weight-management sessions, and tracking-device syncing to earn medical premium discounts.

Edward Jones has stood firmly behind its associates during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Recognizing the rapidly changing needs of those caring for themselves and families, the firm provided the option to take 10 additional paid days off in connection with the virus. Associates faced with COVID-19-related financial challenges can receive help from the Edward Jones Disaster Relief Fund to which associates have donated nearly \$1 million to assist colleagues.

To help ease concerns around health expenses, the Edward Jones medical plan has provided no-cost care for COVID-19-related testing and treatment, in addition to waiving the deductible for the treatment of COVID-19 from both in- and out-of-network providers.

**Edward Jones**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I. 67

CEO AND MANAGING PARTNER

**Penny Pennington**

Furthermore, the firm's employee assistance program has provided support to families struggling to balance child care, at-home learning and work, offering more than 60 resources for working parents, including free online webinars on topics such as helping kids cope with pandemic anxiety, how working parents can structure their day, and how to manage workspace and teaching space.

To keep associates connected to clients and to each other, Edward Jones adopted a digital acceleration strategy that has enabled associates nationwide to access new technology, including Zoom for videoconferencing, and social media resources to allow for connection when face-to-face contact was not possible.

"We take care of each other in tough times, whether it is the pandemic, a cancer diagnosis or a family crisis," said Michael Paolino, a second-generation financial adviser in South Kingstown. "Leaders are authorized to do the right thing to help associates navigate personal difficulties, whether that means extra time off, special pay arrangements, a loan, a health benefits exception or preventative programs to head off a crisis. I am proud to continue the family tradition of helping individuals and families make sound financial decisions throughout every chapter of their lives." ■

1

**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

**Volunteerism is fundamental to our culture, and associates love ... to give back.'**

KAREN LEMKE, Edward Jones financial adviser in Providence





**NICE TREATS:** Sansiveri, Kimball & Co. LLP employees gather at a recent cookie swap.  
COURTESY SANSIVERI, KIMBALL & CO. LLP

**2 What three words best describe your staff?** Professional, dedicated, team players.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Sansiveri's culture is unique in that it offers a flexible and balanced atmosphere in which technical excellence and exceptional client service are achieved in a culture that is positive, collaborative and inclusive.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** During the pandemic, while all employees were required to work remotely, we mailed 22 fleece blanket kits to our employees for them to use to make blankets with their families for the Meals on Wheels Senior Wish program. We also ... raised over \$1,300 to benefit the Federal Hill House food drive.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Our preference is to promote existing staff before considering hiring employees from the outside. We believe that our employees are our most valuable resource, and we are committed to investing in training and developing them to grow both professionally and personally. ■



### Sansiveri, Kimball & Co. LLP

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 58

MANAGING PARTNER

**JASON DAPONTE**

Questions answered by:  
DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
**FRAN CLERK**



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**CREATIVE MINDS:** Lab workers at Rubius Therapeutics Inc. work together on creating new products.  
COURTESY RUBIUS THERAPEUTICS INC.

**3 What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We put an enhanced employee assistance program in place, offered a home office stipend and child care enrichment reimbursement benefit to support employees in the current work environment.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** In 2020, Rubius employees led an effort to donate surplus personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to the local Smithfield community. Additionally, Rubius led a fundraising campaign to support local nonprofit and community organizations that were providing critical services, including Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island and Smithfield COVID-19 Support Fund.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our culture is inspiring, dynamic, diverse, collaborative and fun.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Each year we have an Annual Community Service Day and Rubius employees have the opportunity to donate eight hours of paid time per year to any 501(c)(3) charity of their choice across any cause. ■

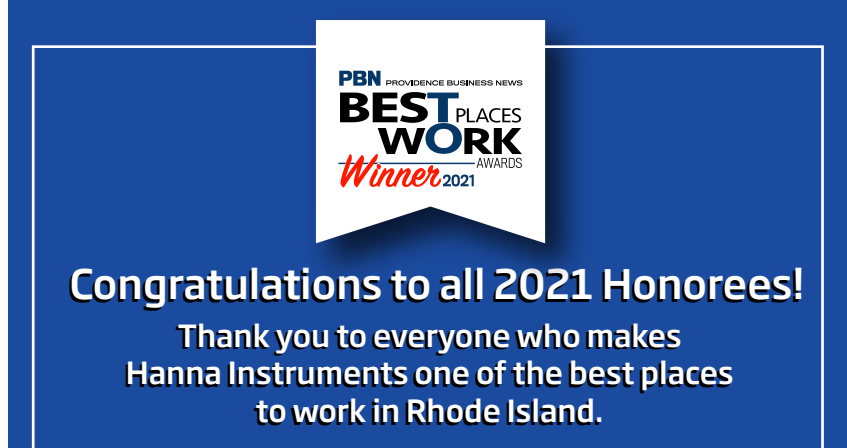


### Rubius Therapeutics Inc.

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 72

CEO  
**PABLO CAGNONI**

Questions answered by:  
HUMAN RESOURCES SITE HEAD  
**BRIANNE MEEHAN**







**STROLLING ALONG:** Marasco & Nesselbush LLP employees and their families participate in a Tomorrow Fund Walk in Cranston.  
COURTESY MARASCO & NESSELBUSH LLP

**4** **What three words best describe your staff?** Dedicated, motivated, compassionate.  
**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We are a tight-knit group of people who love working together and we strive every day to inspire each other in our common mission to obtain extraordinary legal results for our clients.  
**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Masks and gloves are required and available at all times, except for individuals in their own offices. Sanitizing supplies are available. Plexiglass dividers have been installed in the two conference rooms that are being used. Additionally, we offer a 100% remote option for those who are not comfortable being in the office.  
**How do you support community service work by your employees?** In addition to being committed to providing extraordinary legal care, our mission includes serving our community. Each year, through the Marasco & Nesselbush Charitable Foundation, we support numerous charitable efforts and organizations that improve the lives of people throughout our communities. ■



**Marasco & Nesselbush LLP**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 62  
PARTNER  
**JOSEPH MARASCO**  
Questions answered by:  
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING  
**SCOTT LAFFERTY**



**SAILING AWAY:** Custom Computer Specialists Inc. employees about to embark on a recent cruise in Boston.  
COURTESY CUSTOM COMPUTER SPECIALISTS INC.

**5** **What three words best describe your staff?** Client-focused, committed, innovative.  
**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our company is based on integrity, fairness and respect. Our culture is about our people and one of teamwork, support and commitment. Our commitment to client satisfaction and employee retention is a top priority for our organization.  
**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We have made several modifications in our offices, including a new air filtration system ... installed enhanced sanitization systems, rearranged workspaces to allow for greater social distancing, and perform daily health screenings.  
**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Employee retention and growth is a key focus area of ours. We do prefer to promote from within and attribute much of our success to this, allowing employees to grow alongside the company. ■



**Custom Computer Specialists Inc.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 50  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**GREGORY GALDI**  
Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**GREGORY GALDI**



Justrite Safety Group



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**WELCOMING ALUMNI:** Hinckley Allen & Snyder LLP recently hosted a reception for its Providence-based litigation group's alumni.  
COURTESY HINCKLEY ALLEN & SNYDER LLP



**A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT:** Employees with DiSanto, Priest & Co. perform a cleanup at Camp Hoffman in South Kingstown.  
COURTESY DISANTO, PRIEST & CO.

**6** **What three words best describes your staff?** Collaborative, inclusive, committed.  
**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** Providing employees with the tools and ability to work remotely from the outset of the pandemic has given them a sense of financial security, personal safety and a renewed assurance that their well-being is always our No. 1 priority.  
**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** The culture of our firm is one of collaboration, teamwork and partnership. Our employees have a long history of working collaboratively in a team environment to tackle problems together and support the needs of their colleagues and our clients.  
**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** The firm has responded in many ways, including increased communications on wellness and health benefits that can be accessed remotely, virtual seminars and trainings, and access to a robust employee assistance program designed to support emotional, physical and spiritual wellness. ■



**Hinckley  
Allen &  
Snyder LLP**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 97  
MANAGING PARTNER  
**DAVID RUBIN**  
Questions answered by:  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
MANAGER  
**SARAH  
WILLIAMSON**

**7** **What three words best describe your staff?** Smart, passionate, driven.  
**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our culture is to have our people perform at a high level as one team, from a desire to excel rather than a fear of failure.  
**How do you support community service work by your employees?** We allow our employees to serve as board members of the DiSanto Priest Charitable Foundation to achieve the mission of making a positive impact in our local community.  
**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We believe it is best practice to promote existing staff who share the firm's core values and thrive in our culture.  
**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We rolled out a new remote work policy to further enhance our goal of providing our people with the independence and flexibility necessary to maintain a healthy work-life balance. ■



**DiSanto,  
Priest & Co.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 85  
MANAGING PARTNER  
**EMILIO  
COLAPIETRO**  
Questions answered by:  
MANAGING PARTNER  
**EMILIO  
COLAPIETRO**

# THANK YOU TO OUR SMITHFIELD RUBIES FOR THEIR COMMITMENT TO OUR CULTURE

which is fueled by our purpose to create life-changing cellular therapies for people with cancer and autoimmune diseases.

Rubius is the only company in the world that can genetically engineer and manufacture red blood cells into medicines, which takes place right here in Rhode Island at our Smithfield manufacturing facility.



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**WINNING TEAM:** Members of the Swarovski Optik North America team celebrate being awarded 2020 Best Places to Work in Rhode Island by Providence Business News.  
COURTESY SWAROVSKI OPTIK NORTH AMERICA

**8 How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Swarovski Optik North America has an inclusive workplace culture that fosters a strong sense of family. Swarovski Optik is a team that emphasizes respect, trust, cooperation and collaboration.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Swarovski Optik provided on-site and remote activities to encourage participating in a healthy lifestyle and meet wellness program requirements. Utilization of telemedicine and employee assistance program benefits were strongly encouraged, as well as the addition of retirement educational services to support financial wellness.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** During the past year, employees have participated with fundraising or volunteer initiatives with the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island, Operation Stand Down Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, and Westbay Community Action. ■



**SWAROVSKI OPTIK**

**Swarovski Optik North America**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 100

CEO  
**ALBERT WANNENMACHER**

Questions answered by:  
CEO  
**ALBERT WANNENMACHER**



**RUNNING START:** Members of the CBIZ Road Warriors run club pose as they participate in a recent Providence Downtown 5K road race.  
COURTESY CBIZ & MAYER HOFFMAN MCCANN PC

**9 What three words best describe your staff?** Resilient, collaborative, client-centric.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** CBIZ & MHM offers a culture that is flexible and supportive of team members, both personally and professionally. Guided by our corporate values, we offer an environment where our people matter, we do the right thing and we are dedicated to the success of our clients.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We provide positive physical and mental health support for our employees, ranging from educational resources to help alleviate anxiety, stress or health concerns, to resources that help relieve financial pressures.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We are proud to support our team members as they grow their families. As of Jan. 1, 2021, we enhanced our leave benefits for working parents by increasing the amount of paid time off for pregnancy disability leave, parental leave and adoption leave. ■



**CBIZ & Mayer Hoffman McCann PC**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 80

SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR  
**SCOTT A. WRAGG**

Questions answered by:  
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR  
**SCOTT A. WRAGG**

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AWARDS

**JULY 22**

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PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

**HEALTHIEST EMPLOYERS**

of Rhode Island

AWARDS

**AUGUST 5**

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#PBNHealthiestEmployers



PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

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2021 AWARDS

**AUGUST 26**

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**HIGH PERFORMANCE:** Shawmut Design and Construction project team members overlook the construction of Brown University's performing arts center.  
COURTESY SHAWMUT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

**10** **How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our people are the key element of what makes Shawmut a great place to work. Every employee has a vested interest in the success of the company and the success of our clients' projects, as we are all employee owners.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** We work to create an inclusive environment where everyone reaches their fullest potential, with a Diversity Leadership Council driving our journey toward diversity, equity and inclusion.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** With the goal of expanding and diversifying the talent pipeline within the construction and engineering industries, Shawmut launched the Shawmut Scholars program with Roger Williams University ... providing three RWU students with four-year scholarship support, paid internships at Shawmut, career and professional development, and an additional stipend for housing and transportation costs. ■



### SHAWMUT

**Shawmut Design and Construction**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 72  
CEO **LES HISCOE**  
Questions answered by:  
RHODE ISLAND SENIOR DIRECTOR AND PROJECT EXECUTIVE **CHRIS MAURY**




**DRESS FOR SUCCESS:** Province Mortgage Associates Inc. employees dress up in costume for a company Halloween party.  
COURTESY PROVINCE MORTGAGE ASSOCIATES INC.

**11** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We created our first Province Family Game Night event for all employees using Zoom. We played games such as bingo, trivia and scavenger hunts and gave away thousands of dollars in prizes. It was a blast and reconnected us even though we were apart.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** In April 2020, we started donating to Project Hand Up, which helps provide food to families in need in the Rhode Island community. We were able to help feed 25 families per week (almost 900 for the year), while creating a social media buzz that sparked even more attention to their important cause.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We are a culture of family, driven by the goal of providing the best mortgage experience available in our market. We accomplish this by working hard, enjoying our time together and helping each other succeed through unprecedented peer support. ■



### Province Mortgage Associates Inc.

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 57  
PRESIDENT **DAVID CURRIE**  
Questions answered by:  
MARKETING DIRECTOR **DON WILSON**

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**ALL IN THE FAMILY:** From left, Pariseault Builders Inc. employees and family members Dan Menard, Brian Menard, Jake Menard and Rick Menard represent multiple generations working for the company. COURTESY PARISEAULT BUILDERS INC.



**BOUNCING AWAY:** Landings Real Estate Group employees race each other on bouncing balls during a company outing. COURTESY LANDINGS REAL ESTATE GROUP

**12** **What three words best describe your staff?** Committed, fearless, compassionate.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We're problem-solvers. If someone needs help finding a solution, then the resources are here to provide assistance. We operate as a team and pick each other up when needed.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We always look to promote internally first. However, the new perspective that someone brings with them from the outside can be equally as valuable.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We increased the vacation time for all employees. We also upgraded our 401(k) program. ■



**Pariseault Builders Inc.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 67  
PRESIDENT **BRIAN CASEY**  
Questions answered by: PRESIDENT **BRIAN CASEY**

**13** **What three words best describe your staff?** Energetic, hustle, positive.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We have done intercompany competitions, such as what of-ice could grow the best Amaryllis flower; increased communication from managers; and offered employees flexibility to work from home.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Interconnected teamwork and supportive. We operate as a mesh knowledge network for professional advice and, at times, personal challenges. We are positive, entrepreneurial, energetic, adaptive, grateful and innovative.

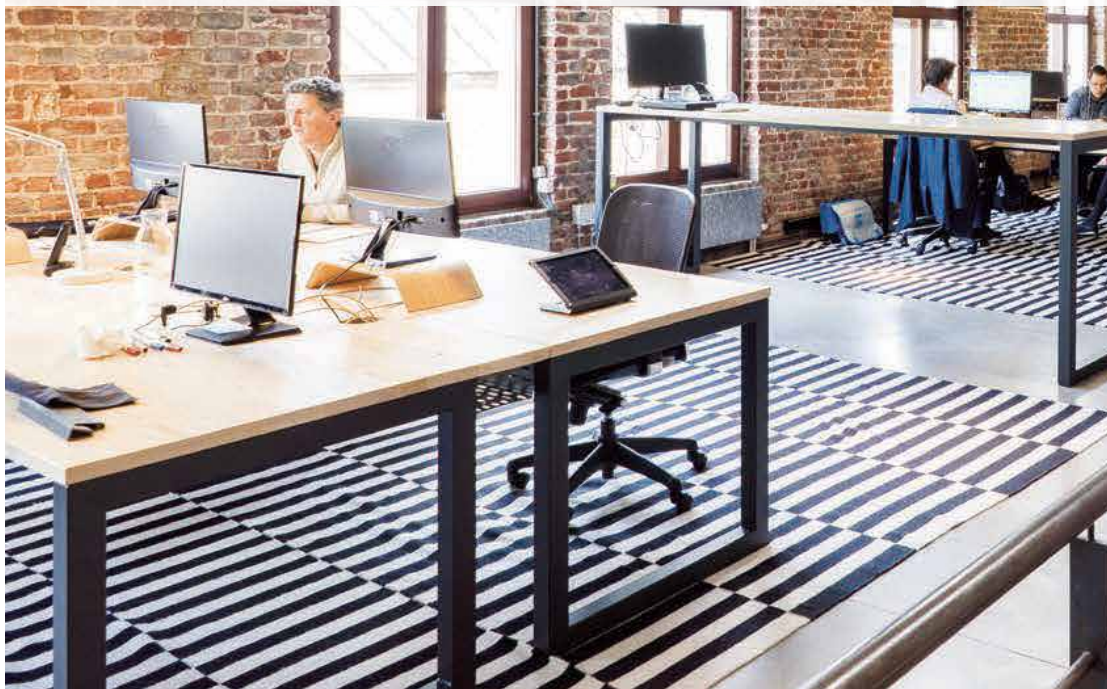
**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We promote mental health, as well as physical health. Allowing for work-at-home flexibility and mental health days, communication of certainty for our business health and job security. We also allow employees to donate paid time off to help one another during these ... quarantines and forced work stoppages. ■



**Landings Real Estate Group**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 73  
PRESIDENT **CHRISTOPHER BICHO**  
Questions answered by: PRESIDENT **CHRISTOPHER BICHO**



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**SUPERHEROES:** Employees at Rhode Island Parent Information Network dress up as comic book superheroes at the office.  
COURTESY RHODE ISLAND PARENT INFORMATION NETWORK

**14** **What three words best describe your staff?** Knowledgeable, compassionate, peers.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Distance learning hit families of children with special needs particularly hard. Our special education team helped parents in every school district in the state access the services and supports their children needed to continue to learn.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** RIPIN is an inclusive, welcoming, supportive workplace. Nearly three-fourths of our staff are parents or caregivers of a loved one with special needs. Their experience as peers is a huge part of the foundation of empathy and understanding upon which RIPIN's culture is built.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** RIPIN peer professionals formed a permanent steering team to spearhead efforts to promote racial justice, both in our workplace and in our community. ■



**Rhode Island Parent Information Network**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 106

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**SAM SALGANIK**

Questions answered by:  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**SAM SALGANIK**

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**ENCOURAGING VOLUNTEERING:** EMC Insurance Cos. encourages its employees to volunteer in the community by offering paid time off to employees who perform such service.  
COURTESY EMC INSURANCE COS.

**15** **What three words best describe your staff?** Engaged, motivated, accountable.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** When you are part of this group, you feel important and valued. Every team member is important, and it shows in the dedication and commitment to one another experienced every day.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** We are a company of choice because we embrace diversity, equity and inclusion in everything we do, creating a culture where all team members feel valued, respected and empowered, resulting in high-performing teams who deliver exceptional products and services.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Through our philanthropic efforts and team member volunteers, we're helping create brighter, stronger futures for the communities in which we live and work. EMC encourages our team members to get involved in causes important to them, and we make it easy to do by giving paid volunteer time off each year. ■



**EMC Insurance Cos.**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 51

VICE PRESIDENT AND  
BRANCH MANAGER

**PAULA FINKELMAN**

Questions answered by:  
HUMAN RESOURCES BUSINESS PARTNER MANAGER  
**ADAM COURI**

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**BIRD OF ANOTHER FEATHER:** Kyle Cabral, network administrator for The Providence Mutual Fire Insurance Co., participates in a virtual "Chicken Run" during the COVID-19 pandemic. COURTESY THE PROVIDENCE MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE CO.



**FEELING FISHY:** The Town Dock employees and families celebrate with squid hats on the water. COURTESY THE TOWN DOCK

## 16 What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?

Access to an employee assistance program for employees and any member of the household. Remote work and flexibility with personal obligations. Access to hard-to-get supplies: toilet paper, sanitizer and wipes.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Yes, the company made donations to the Rhode Island COVID-19 Response Fund, Anxiety & Depression Association of America, and the American Nurses Foundation.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Annual flu clinics for all employees and members of their households. Free immunizations for all employees and members of the household. Annual employee health and wellness benefit education sessions. Town hall meetings to review and advise employees on the health and wellness plans available. Raised company percentage of cost-sharing for health and wellness benefits. ■



### The Providence Mutual Fire Insurance Co.

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 81

CEO AND PRESIDENT

**MICHELE STRETON**

Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**MICHELE STRETON**

## 17 What three words best describe your staff? Driven, committed, passionate.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We have increased our communication with our team about the availability of our employee assistance program, emphasized the need for constant communication, stressed the use of wellness in conjunction with our medical plan and fortified our work-from-home policy.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our culture is built on values that foster growth, community, collaboration and mutual respect. Everything we do at The Town Dock is through a team focus where each person understands the value they bring to the team.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** The Town Dock is committed to hiring the right candidate regardless of sex, color, religion, national ancestry, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, military status, age, disability or pregnancy. We pride ourselves on giving all candidates equal access to apply, be considered and evaluated for the open opportunity. ■



### The Town Dock

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 55

CEO AND PRESIDENT

**RYAN CLARK**

Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**RYAN CLARK**



**BEING UNITED:** Diversity and inclusion are at the center of United Way of Rhode Island's hiring and promotion decisions in alignment with its mission to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders. COURTESY UNITED WAY OF RHODE ISLAND



**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Marcum LLP employees work out in the community as part of the company's Day of Service initiative. COURTESY MARCUM LLP

## 18 Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?

United Way of Rhode Island has served as an anchor institution for the state during the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw a 50% increase in calls to 2-1-1 as community members looked for assistance with housing, food and many other urgent needs. In partnership with the Rhode Island Foundation, we created the COVID-19 Response Fund and distributed more than \$7 million in grants during the first six months of the pandemic.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We foster a culture that embraces equity, encourages individual leadership, leverages strengths, fosters accountability and enhances cross-organizational connection to the mission, vision, values and fundamentals of United Way of Rhode Island.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Our investment in ongoing training and development allows staff to advance their careers at United Way of Rhode Island. We balance internal promotions with external hires to infuse diverse perspectives across several dimensions of diversity and subject expertise. ■



### United Way of Rhode Island

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 79

CEO AND PRESIDENT

**CORTNEY NICOLATO**

Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**CORTNEY NICOLATO**

## 19 What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?

Marcum offers telecommuting and other alternative work arrangements to assist our associates who are juggling both their professional and family roles. Marcum also provides an employee assistance program benefit and a variety of wellness information seminars on a firmwide basis.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?**

Marcum is committed to fostering a culture that is both diverse and inclusive – one that encourages and enables all associates and partners to be successful. This is a key thrust of our recruitment and professional development programs, and is the platform for our robust national Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiative.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** Core hours have been implemented so our associates have a more balanced work life in handling the needs of their family and themselves personally. Associates have also been provided with additional paid time off for those who decided to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. ■



### Marcum LLP

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 58

OFFICE MANAGING PARTNER

**THOMAS LISI**

Questions answered by:  
OFFICE MANAGING PARTNER  
**THOMAS LISI**





**DESSERT TIME:** Tockwotton on the Waterfront employees take a few bites of ice cream at the nonprofit.  
COURTESY TOCKWOTTON ON THE WATERFRONT



**HAVING 'PHUN':** Hanna Instruments Inc. employees worked together to escape a vault activity during a pHun Club event.  
COURTESY HANNA INSTRUMENTS INC.

20

**What three words best describe your staff?** Compassionate, team players, dependable.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We are family here at Tockwotton. The staff and residents have strong bonds similar to a family relationship.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Wellness program through our health insurance that incentivizes staff to exercise.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** They play a big role, as our workforce is extremely diverse.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We prefer to promote from within. Our staff members are hard, dedicated workers and we would like to see them grow with our company.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** Student loan repayment; COVID-19 bonuses; refer a friend bonus; work from home. ■



### Tockwotton on the Waterfront

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 119

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**KEVIN MCKAY**

Questions answered by:  
HUMAN RESOURCE  
DIRECTOR  
**SANDRA BOTELHO**

21

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** We donated a percentage of our website sales to the United Way of Rhode Island COVID-19 Response Fund.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** When recruiting, we place ads in multiple publications to draw a diverse pool of candidates. We also offer mandatory compliance training that addresses diversity and inclusion.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We are launching a career development program and have a robust talent management philosophy to promote from within when possible. However, in certain situations we need to bring in outside talent with fresh ideas and perspectives.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** Bonuses were paid to all "essential" workers during the pandemic. It should be noted that Hanna pays 100% of all health care costs for all employees and has recently implemented a flexible spending option. ■



### Hanna Instruments Inc.

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 97

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**MARTINO NARDO**

Questions answered by:  
VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL HUMAN RESOURCES  
**ANGELA IACUELE**



**SUPPORTING SENIORS:** Ocean State Credit Union team members dress casually in showing support for Meals on Wheels of Rhode Island.  
COURTESY OCEAN STATE CREDIT UNION

22

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Yes, our team collected and donated to Coventry,

West Warwick and North Kingstown food drives, and participated in the Warm Hands Warm Hearts program supplying hats, gloves and coats for children in need throughout Rhode Island.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Sponsor the Golden Apple Award program recognizing great teachers throughout Rhode Island. Our employees support local outreach programs, identifying community-based programs each month for sponsorship and contributions.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We are always looking to promote from within. The majority of our leaders and managers have held positions of increasing responsibility through internal promotions and developmental assignments.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** For the 2021 benefit plan year, OSCU absorbed all increased costs and froze employee contributions for all plans. During the pandemic year, all team members received a well-deserved bonus. ■



### Ocean State Credit Union

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 61

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**DAVID ROOT**

Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**DAVID ROOT**

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**FAMILY-FRIENDLY:** Employees at LFI Inc. describe the company's workplace culture as friendly and family-supportive.  
COURTESY LFI INC.



**LENDING A HAND:** Team members at Westerly Community Credit Union who volunteer their time are entered in a quarterly raffle and the company makes an effort to support organizations the members work with.  
COURTESY WESTERLY COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION

23

**What three words best describe your staff?** Caring, diligent, self-reliant.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** Work from home; paid time off, if needed; and appointment setting for testing and vaccines.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** The culture at LFI is friendly, multi-ethnic and family-supportive.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We installed air filtrations in accordance with the ... R.I. Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; desks were moved to spread apart and create socially distanced areas; and we implemented staggered lunches/breaks.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** We strive to make the most of everyone's talent no matter gender, race or ethnic backgrounds. ■

LFI Inc.

**LFI Inc.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 62

CEO  
**ROLAND BENJAMIN**

Questions answered by:  
CEO  
**ROLAND BENJAMIN**

24

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Yes, we donated \$55,000 in 2020 to local hospitals and social service organizations to help offset their COVID-19-related expenses.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Professional, relaxed, caring and learning.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Team members who volunteer their time to community activities are entered in a quarterly raffle and annually we give out a Volunteer of the Year award. Additionally, we make an effort to support the community service organizations our team members are involved with.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Our preference is to promote from within. We believe it is important that our team members know that if they excel at their job that they will be considered for advancement. ■

Westerly Community Credit Union

**Westerly Community Credit Union**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 71

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**STEPHEN WHITE**

Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**STEPHEN WHITE**



**SPORTS FEVER:** Elite Physical Therapy Inc. employees pose with the mascots of the University of Rhode Island, Providence College and Brown University athletic teams.  
COURTESY ELITE PHYSICAL THERAPY INC.



**SUPPORTING AUTISM AWARENESS:** National Marker Co. employees wear blue to raise awareness for autism.  
COURTESY NATIONAL MARKER CO.

25

**What three words best describe your staff?** Passionate, achievers, elite.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** During the pandemic, Elite Physical Therapy created multiple outreach efforts to assist with community projects. We held a community cleanup day in three separate locations, as well as a blood drive and participated in the Virtual Gloria Gemma Gloridays walk.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Elite has a warm, caring, connected culture. We want our employees to have the same experience that we have in place for our patients. There is a sense of unity and family at each location, and communication flows from the top down to each location, aligning the company with the same mission and goals.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** When a leadership position in the organization becomes available, Elite welcomes the opportunity to elevate another team member to step up to the plate. Elite has a wonderful mentor program allowing employees to continue to grow professionally and personally. ■

**ELITE**  
PHYSICAL THERAPY  
Your Health. Your Choice.

**Elite Physical Therapy Inc.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 116

CEO  
**DR. MICHAEL NULA**

Questions answered by:  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
GENERALIST  
**SARAH BRUSHETT**

26

**What three words best describe your staff?** Passionate, assertive, committed.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Associates treat each other like family and know it takes the whole team to win.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** During the COVID-19 pandemic, we sent all nonessential associates home to work remotely. We also extended shifts to be 10 hours, four days a week.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We definitely promote from within the organization before hiring from the outside.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** NMC brought in lunch once a week for the essential manufacturing associates. ■

**NMC**  
National Marker Company

**National Marker Co.**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 80

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**MARK MCELHINNY**

Questions answered by:  
HUMAN RESOURCE  
MANAGER  
**MARIE LOWRE**





**GETTING A LOAN:** Banneker Supply Chain Solutions Inc. implemented interest-free loans to team members and families who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.  
COURTESY BANNEKER SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS INC.

27

**What three words best describe your staff?** Energetic, motivated, skilled.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** We implemented interest-free loans to team members and families who were affected by the pandemic.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We operate with a spirit of thankfulness, recognition, and appreciation for individual and collective accomplishments of all sizes. We have a culture that seeks to foster a sense of belonging, empowerment and success.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?**

We added another shift so that people would be in smaller groups and be able to social distance. We started doing daily temperature checks and daily COVID-19 questionnaires. We also implemented weekly rapid testing. ■



**Banneker Supply Chain Solutions Inc.**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 50

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**JUNIOR JABBIE**

Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**JUNIOR JABBIE**



**COURSE WORK:** Local high school students visit Yushin America Inc. in Cranston in 2018 as part of the company's Manufacturing Day.  
COURTESY YUSHIN AMERICA INC.

28

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** The culture around Yushin America has always been family-oriented. We take care of our employees' health and well-being at all times.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Even though former Gov. Gina M. Raimondo did not shut our manufacturing facility down, we had employees working remotely from home. We offered rapid COVID-19 testing on-site and made appointments for our employees to get vaccinated during work hours.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?**

Yushin's policy is to promote from within the company. We offer a \$500 referral bonus to our staff if they can help us fill a vacant position. After two weeks posting in-house, we advertise the position to the public.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We now provide a loan forgiveness program in which we help employees pay for their student loan debt along with our tuition reimbursement programs. ■



**Yushin America Inc.**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 80

PRESIDENT  
**TAKAYA SUGIMURA**

Questions answered by:  
PRESIDENT  
**TAKAYA SUGIMURA**

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\*Reader comments from the July 2020 CVC PBN subscriber survey.



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BEST PLACES TO WORK - MIDSIZE COMPANIES

(based on companies with 50-149 regional employees)

2021 rank	Company name	Person in charge	Type of business	No. of local employees	% of voluntary turnover	% of women employees	Flexible work hours	Holidays per year	Sick days for ill-dependent	Employees donating PTO time to others	Diversity training	401(k)/retirement plan	Bonus or incentive programs	Telecommuting options	Tuition reimbursement offered	Stress and wellness programs	Workplace fitness programs	Support community service initiatives	Career-development programs
1	Edward Jones	John E. Leary	Financial services	67	6%	50%	✓	9	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Sansiveri, Kimball & Co. LLP	Jason DaPonte	Accounting	58	5%	60%	✓	11		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Rubius Therapeutics Inc.	Pablo J. Cagnoni	Biopharmaceutical manufacturer	72	22%	38%		18			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Marasco & Nesselbush LLP	Joseph Marasco and Donna Nesselbush	Law firm	62	1%	73%	✓	11	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
5	Custom Computer Specialists Inc.	Gregory Galdi	Information technology services	50	28%	30%		8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Hinckley Allen & Snyder LLP <sup>1</sup>	David Rubin	Legal	97	7%	63%	✓	11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	DiSanto, Priest & Co.	Emilio N. Colapietro	Accounting	85	2%	60%		9	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Swarovski Optik North America Ltd.	Albert Wannenmacher	Manufacturer	100	2%	41%	✓	12			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	CBIZ & Mayer Hoffman McCann PC <sup>2</sup>	Scott A. Wragg	Accounting	80	13%	65%	✓	10	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Shawmut Design and Construction	Les Hiscoe	Construction	72	0%	26%	✓	11			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Province Mortgage Associates Inc.	David Currie	Residential mortgage lender	57	11%	72%	✓	7			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Pariseault Builders Inc.	Brian Casey	Construction management firm	67	3%	13%	✓	7	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
13	Landings Real Estate Group	Christopher Bicho	Property management	73	22%	58%		9		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
14	Rhode Island Parent Information Network	Samuel Salganik	Nonprofit	106	14%	81%	✓	11			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	EMC Insurance Cos.	Scott R. Jean	Insurance	51	2%	53%		11			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	The Providence Mutual Fire Insurance Co.	Michelle Streton	Insurance	81	5%	69%		10				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
17	The Town Dock	Ryan Clark	Seafood manufacturer	55	11%	45%	✓	9	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	United Way of Rhode Island	Cortney Nicolato	Nonprofit	79	20%	90%	✓	16	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Marcum LLP	Thomas E. Lisi	Financial services	58	20%	47%	✓	7			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Tockwotton on the Waterfront	Kevin McKay	Assisted living	119	24%	86%		10	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Hanna Instruments Inc.	Martino Nardo and David Minsk	Manufacturer of analytical instrumentation	97	9%	42%	✓	8			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Ocean State Credit Union	David Root	Credit union	61	2%	80%		12	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	LFI Inc.	Kip Brockmyre III	Manufacturing	62	2%	23%	✓	9	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
24	Westerly Community Credit Union	Stephen White	Credit union	71	11%	79%		11	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Elite Physical Therapy Inc.	Michael Nula	Health care	116	20%	81%		7	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
26	National Marker Co.	Michael Black	Manufacturing	80	15%	39%		10				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
27	Banneker Supply Chain Solutions Inc.	Junior Jabbie	Supply chain	50	23%	38%		10		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
28	Yushin America Inc.	Mayumi Kotani, Takaya Sugimura and Michael Greenhalgh	Manufacturing	80	2%	15%		11	✓			✓	✓		✓				✓

<sup>1</sup> Also known as Hinckley Allen.  
<sup>2</sup> Also known as CBIZ & MHM Inc.





**HEAPING HELPING:** Bags of donated clothing tower over staffers at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island. COURTESY BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF RHODE ISLAND

# Big Brothers Big Sisters staff thrives with family-first approach

BY ELIZABETH GRAHAM | Contributing Writer

**DURING THE HEIGHT** of the COVID-19 pandemic when most Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island employees were working from home, they were occasionally asked to add another item to their to-do lists.

They were told to take some time, get off the computer and do something for themselves.

The breaks, or “mental health time,” as CEO Katje Afonseca calls them, reflect the working environment that she and other leaders at the nonprofit strive to maintain.

“Create a great work environment and they’ll want to be there. ... If you have happy, healthy employees who can focus on their lives, they’re going to come to work and do good work,” Afonseca said. “Not only do we enable our employees to put their families first but when they come to work, we’re a mission-based organization. Those two things combined make [Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island] a really great place to work.”

Afonseca leaned on that philosophy during the stress and uncertainty created by the pandemic, as the nonprofit sought to meet each employee’s needs.

Extra leave time was created to ensure that employees were not penalized for COVID-19 scares that resulted in quarantine or recovery time.

Virtual meetings now include more faces because nearly all staff members who were laid off at the beginning of the pandemic are back at work.

During the spring of 2020, when Rhode Island locked down as COVID-19 cases rose, 75% of the staff at Big Brothers Big Sisters lost their jobs. The organization is now fully staffed, hav-

ing rehired 70% after consolidating several positions.

The fact that each employee who was offered their job back returned, despite the option of receiving unemployment benefits that at the time exceeded some salaries, is a testament to the culture at the nonprofit, Afonseca said.

Dedication to the children served by the organization resulted in at least one bright spot even while it was operating with a skeleton staff.

Once schools closed last year due to the pandemic, mentors reached out to families, asking whether kids were able to log into virtual classes.

As it turned out, 22 children in the program needed devices, and Big Brothers Big Sisters responded by distributing new Chromebooks, donated by Cox Communications, to each child.

“It was such a dark time; that was really a light for them,” Afonseca said. “The kids were just so excited to have this shiny, brand-new device to connect with their friends and do their schoolwork.”

With 31 employees, the nonprofit is not large enough to be required to adhere to the Family and Medical Leave Act, but since Afonseca took the lead as CEO in 2016, her family paid leave policy covers both men and women.

In fact, she was pregnant with her first child when she was promoted from development director to executive director, a position that

**Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of Rhode Island**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 31

CEO

**Katje Afonseca**

was later renamed CEO, and she had good company.

Ten employees have had babies over the past decade, and two more are expecting now.

Alongside the family-friendly vibe, a set of core values and an operational strategic plan, both initiated by Afonseca, lend a unified sense of purpose to the organization.

“We’re all working toward five priority goals together,” said Afonseca, who is also CEO of The Donation Center, a partner organization that fields donations to support Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Now serving 150 children and their families, the growing organization can provide improved training and workspaces for employees, while considering a move from its current Cranston location to Providence.

Big Brothers Big Sisters employees are also able to benefit, as the group makes a point to promote from within, a practice that’s resulted in Afonseca’s rise from director of development, as well as three other recent promotions into leadership roles. Advancement for four other employees is also on the horizon.

“There’s a level of comfort to know promotions are going to be from within,” Afonseca said. ■



‘There’s **a level of comfort** to know promotions are going to be from within.’

KATJE AFONSECA, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island CEO





**HIGH-FIVE:** Brave River Solutions Inc. employees hold their hands up in a fun gesture at the office.  
COURTESY BRAVE RIVER SOLUTIONS INC.



**GIVING SEASON:** DarrowEverett LLP in the past year increased its giving to several food banks to help those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.  
COURTESY DARROWEVERETT LLP

**2 What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We have allowed greater flexibility on schedules to help parents with home-schooling children. We offer a health and wellness program that includes online counseling and coaching.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** We provided free tech support and marketing consultation to small businesses through the R.I. Commerce Corp./Innovation Studio Small Business Hotline. We are proud sponsors of the United Way of Rhode Island and ... donated in-kind services as part of the 401Gives event.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We always want to support and encourage the career growth of our existing staff and promote often from within. However, we also recognize the value of hiring someone with experience and success in a different company and the fresh perspective that they bring. ■



### Brave River Solutions Inc.

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 30

PRESIDENT

**JIM MCASSEY**

Questions answered by:

PRESIDENT

**JIM MCASSEY**

**3 What three words best describe your staff?** Dynamic, dedicated, passionate.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** We worked regularly to accommodate those clients adversely impacted by the pandemic. The firm also significantly increased its giving to several community food banks over the past year in an effort to help those in need.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We are a hard-working and high-energy team of talented professionals. We all take to heart our clients' needs and goals, and feel a personal responsibility to deliver upon those needs and goals.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** We embrace and encourage our employees' and prospective employees' differences in age, color, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics that make our employees unique. ■



### Darrow- Everett LLP

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 30

CHAIRMAN

**ZACHARY DARROW**

Questions answered by:

CHAIRMAN

**ZACHARY DARROW**



**GIFT GIVING:** RIKB Design Build team members raise donations for Toys for Tots of Rhode Island during the holiday season.  
COURTESY RIKB DESIGN BUILD



**ON THE LINKS:** Compass IT Compliance LLC employees compete in the company's inaugural golf tournament.  
COURTESY COMPASS IT COMPLIANCE LLC

**4 What three words best describe your staff?** Engaging, talented, smart.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We were a virtual company before the pandemic, so the transition was fairly seamless. We supported our staff with whatever they needed to work from home effectively and had daily, weekly check-in calls with staff. Anyone whose family or themselves fell ill were sent a COVID-19 care package with pulse oximeter, vitamins and goodies.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** This year was challenging since we were under strict mandates, but we encouraged our team to take time out of the day for self-care, whether it's a walk, bike ride or just some meditation time. We set up our outdoor patio for social distancing small gatherings/lunch as the mandates became more relaxed and set up patio heaters for comfort.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** We encourage all types of community service and will pay anyone for time during the week for volunteer efforts. This year we supported a home being built for a veteran and our team supported and installed the cabinetry and countertops. ■



### RIKB Design Build

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 32

OWNER AND CEO

**TANYA DONAHUE**

Questions answered by:

OWNER AND CEO

**TANYA DONAHUE**

**5 Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** To honor the brave men and women fighting on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, Compass IT Compliance donated 100 lunches to the doctors, nurses and staff of Rhode Island Hospital.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** Standing desks, healthy snacks and drinks, free bottled/spring water, virtual exercise competitions.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We make a commitment to our employees on the day we hire them. From that day forward, they are part of the Compass family. We would always love to promote from within if an internal candidate had the skills that were needed.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** Being a security company, we decided to provide free Norton Life Lock coverage for all employees, so they can monitor their personal information and be notified if any of it has been used in a nefarious way. ■



### Compass IT Compliance LLC

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 17

MANAGING PARTNERS

**WILLIAM DEPALMA AND JERRY HUGHES**

Questions answered by:

WILLIAM

**DEPALMA**





**DELICIOUS DAY:** AVTECH Software Inc. employees enjoy a meal during a company outing.  
COURTESY AVTECH SOFTWARE INC.



**SEEING RED:** Barnum Financial Group employees collectively wear red to support heart and cardiovascular health.  
COURTESY BARNUM FINANCIAL GROUP

**6** **What three words best describe your staff?** Dedicated, friendly, innovative.  
**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** AVTECH has always promoted open communication and has fostered a culture of collaboration between departments and staff.  
**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Team members are encouraged to work with groups and causes that are important to them, and AVTECH often helps sponsor events and organizations that our employees volunteer with.  
**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We strongly prefer to promote from within because those employees understand the company's mission and culture, and have also proven that they are knowledgeable, dependable and committed to our mission.  
**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We are now offering employees the option of hybrid or remote work schedules with the approval of their department heads. ■



**AVTECH**  
Software Inc.

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **32**

FOUNDER AND CEO  
**MICHAEL SIGOURNEY**

Questions answered by:  
MARKETING AND CHANNEL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER  
**RUSSELL BENOIT**

**7** **What three words best describe your staff?** Engaged, committed, caring.  
**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Barnum's Foundation for Life ran a COVID Relief fundraiser and donated a total of \$40,000 to benefit front-line health care workers at four hospitals located in Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York.  
**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Barnum has a culture of caring: for each other, for our clients, and for the communities that we serve. Barnum has a culture of collaboration: valuing the unique knowledge, skills and approach each employee brings to their role and believing that bringing employees together to focus on a common purpose yields great results for our clients and our organization.  
**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We have implemented quarterly Wellness Weeks to promote and encourage use of all available resources, as well as provide opportunities for our associates to meditate, join a fun workout or yoga session together, and learn from different financial education presentations. ■



**Barnum**  
Financial Group

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **41**

FOUNDER AND CEO  
**PAUL BLANCO**

Questions answered by:  
VICE PRESIDENT  
**JOSEPH KOTULA**



**NICE AND TIDY:** Rhode Island Foundation employees and their families perform a community cleanup.  
COURTESY RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION



**CHRISTMAS SPIRIT:** New England Construction employees gather for a holiday party.  
COURTESY NEW ENGLAND CONSTRUCTION

**8** **What three words best describe your staff?** Dedicated, passionate, mission-driven.  
**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We are very fortunate that much of our day-to-day operation lends itself to telework, and we've been able to provide employees with supplemental internet access and ... new desktop or laptop computers and phones and other office equipment to facilitate work from home. We've also adapted paid-leave policies as needed.  
**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Our culture is service-oriented, mission-driven and performance-focused. As Rhode Island's community foundation, we understand the responsibility we have to provide leadership and meet the needs of all Rhode Islanders.  
**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** Diversity and inclusion are crucial factors in our hiring and promotion decisions. The goal is for our team to reflect every community we serve, with an eye toward building trusting relationships across the diverse cross-section of people, institutions, organizations and sectors that we interact with while celebrating the cultural diversity of the state. ■



**Rhode Island**  
Foundation

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **47**

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**NEIL D. STEINBERG**

Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**NEIL D. STEINBERG**

**9** **What three words best describe your staff?** Collaborative, driven, family.  
**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We have unlimited paid time off and encourage employees to use it. At the start of the pandemic, we added a Peloton to our corporate fitness center. This allowed employees to set up accounts where they can access the content anywhere.  
**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** We are steadfast in our commitment to create a more diverse and inclusive workspace. Our anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion strategy is focused on four pillars: talent, education, culture, service. In an industry with only 10% women, the NEC team is made up of 30% women.  
**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** In 2020, we piloted an unlimited PTO policy. We officially adopted this policy for 2021. Flexible work arrangements have been fully implemented across the organization and we will continue our commitment to flexibility when it comes to work-life integration. ■



**New England**  
Construction

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **44**

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**MATT SLUTER**

Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**MATT SLUTER**





**WORKING TOGETHER:** Employees at Secure Future Tech Solutions collaborate with one another inside the company’s conference room.  
COURTESY SECURE FUTURE TECH SOLUTIONS



**START YOUR ENGINES:** Technology Advisory Group employees sit in their go-karts at the starting line at R1 Indoor Karting Inc. in Lincoln.  
COURTESY TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY GROUP

**10** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We offered a flexible work schedule and paid time off for employees dealing with COVID-19-related issues.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** We are proud of the work we did. We worked with R.I. Commerce Corp. to provide free technical support services to small businesses. We also delivered webinars through the Tech Collective on a variety of work-from-home topics.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We have a culture and mindset of collaboration. We are always willing to help each other and work together to meet our clients’ needs.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We believe in rewarding growth and dedication by promoting from within first. However, I also recognize when my team needs more help and that’s when we search for candidates externally. ■



**Secure Future Tech Solutions**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **21**  
PRESIDENT  
**ERIC M. SHORR**  
Questions answered by:  
VICE PRESIDENT  
**LISA SHORR**

**11** **What three words best describe your staff?** Dedicated, collaborative, supportive.  
**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We provide our staff the flexibility to work from home whenever possible, flex time when family needs arise and time off to get their vaccines.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** During 2020, TAG volunteered to staff the Venture Cafe (free tech support to companies in need) and hosted Q&A sessions with the local chamber to offer support to companies that were looking for help adapting to working remotely.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** To keep everyone safe, we have maintained our work-from-home policy and limit the amount of client exposure whenever possible.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** We offer our employees up to two days per year to volunteer in the community. ■



**Technology Advisory Group**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **22**  
PRESIDENT  
**GARY HARLAM**  
Questions answered by:  
PRESIDENT  
**GARY HARLAM**



**GETTING SOME SUN:** CompuClaim Inc. employees relax together and enjoy the sunshine.  
COURTESY COMPUCLAIM INC.



**GROWTH-DRIVEN:** MAS Medical Staffing employees work together to promote both personal and professional growth by offering different workshops and training.  
COURTESY MAS MEDICAL STAFFING

**12** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** Flexible work schedules to allow employees to care for their children and families. COVID-19 bonus to help with expenses while working from home.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We are a team of engaging, motivated and energized employees who work hard and play hard. Our commitment to client satisfaction and the welfare of our employees are key.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** We have recruited a diverse workforce, which includes a range of ages, ethnicities, religions and worldviews. Identifying and hiring skilled people with such diverse backgrounds and characteristics is an achievement that we reflect on with pride.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** All roles are posted internally first to allow for growth potentials in existing staff. We provide learning and training opportunities to position our staff for growth with the philosophy of then bringing in lower-level talent to backfill for them. ■



**CompuClaim Inc.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **25**  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
**MICHELLE POPE**  
Questions answered by:  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
**NORMA SABINS**

**13** **How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Inviting and growth-driven. We really work to promote both personal and professional growth by offering different workshops and training. We have fun at work and are always connected, whether in the office or remote through virtual events and video calls. We also are known to do some virtual lip-sync competitions.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We have been working on changing some of the empty and unused office areas to wellness areas. We are currently adding a punching bag and yoga/meditation space to our office to promote stress relief.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We promote the growth of our internal employees and love to see them move up the career ladder. They know us best, and if they are driven to grow, we will provide the resources to get them there. We also do hire outside. It is nice to get a fresh perspective and new faces here in our offices. ■



**MAS Medical Staffing**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: **16**  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**KENNETH JOHNSON**  
Questions answered by:  
SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
**DAWN PORRECA**





**SCREEN TIME:** Envision Technology Advisors LLC employees take in a movie at Rustic Drive-In in North Smithfield.  
COURTESY ENVISION TECHNOLOGY ADVISORS LLC



**ENJOYING NEWPORT:** The Brokers' Service Marketing Group II LLC team gathers at its annual corporate meeting in Newport.  
COURTESY BROKERS' SERVICE MARKETING GROUP II LLC

14

**What three words best describe your staff?** Innovative, creative, human-centric.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** Prior to the pandemic, we invested in telemedicine services, including physical and mental wellness, for not only our employees but for their extended families as well ... at no cost to themselves.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Envision has always been known as a "fun" place to be, with companywide Halloween costume contests, Nerf-gun challenge game days, slushie machines, and more. Beyond the fun and games, however, the culture of Envision is also one of support, both for our people and our clients.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Envision has had an employee-led "Charity Committee" for the past four years. The company allows this team, and any employee who would like to join or contribute, to dictate where we spend our charitable time and resources. ■



**Envision  
Technology  
Advisors LLC**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 45

CEO  
**TODD S. KNAPP**  
Questions answered by:  
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING  
**JEREMY GIRARD**

15

**What three words best describe your staff?** Hardworking, adaptable, excellent.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Yes, we financially support two local charities, Day One and Amos House.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** We care deeply about our mission of protecting families and businesses. We believe in creating exceptional experiences for our brokers and their clients. We want to be innovative, kind, the best at what we do and have fun while doing it.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We have fun virtual events, lots of communications, employee COVID-19 care packages, and always try to be supportive of everyone's unique needs.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We do both – there's a lot of value in finding people from within to move up as our business grows and our needs evolve. Hiring from outside has more recently been focused on sales and sales support roles. ■



**Brokers'  
Service  
Marketing  
Group II LLC**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 40

CEO  
**JASON LEA**  
Questions answered by:  
CEO  
**JASON LEA**



**COMMUNITY SUPPORT:** Rhode Island Quality Institute team members worked with Brown University and Progreso Latino to support the hiring of community health workers for supporting COVID-19-related needs in the Hispanic/Latino communities in the state.  
COURTESY RHODE ISLAND QUALITY INSTITUTE

16

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** With funding from the National Institutes of Health

Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics – Underserved Populations program, our team worked with Brown University and Progreso Latino to support the hiring of community health workers for supporting COVID-19-related needs in Hispanic/Latino communities.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We promote flexible working hours to accommodate family schedules, and during the summer months we modify our work week to wrap up by noon on Fridays to transition from the work week to the weekend.

**What was a new employee benefit(s) or initiative(s) in the past 12 months?** We launched a new Engagement, Performance, and Development Program that includes monthly check-ins with each employee on specific topics, including our climate, the employee's strengths and talents ... and innovation and continuous improvement. This new program fosters and opens up lines of communication with leadership and staff much more frequently and captures real-time data and experiences. ■



**Rhode Island  
Quality  
Institute**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 32

CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**NEIL SARKAR**  
Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**NEIL SARKAR**



**BONDING TIME:** Employees from Connectivity Point Design & Installation LLC spend time with a giraffe while working at Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence.  
COURTESY CONNECTIVITY POINT DESIGN & INSTALLATION LLC

17

**What three words best describe your staff?** Dedicated, knowledgeable, rock stars.

**What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We offer flexible scheduling and paid time off, as well as a bonus for COVID-19 vaccination.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** The culture at Connectivity Point Design & Installation is both flexible and family-oriented.

**What modifications have you made to your workplace to support employee wellness?** We offer remote working over workplace working.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We prefer to promote from within and always give our employees first notification of open positions. ■



**Connectivity  
Point Design  
& Installation  
LLC**

EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 27

OWNER AND PRESIDENT  
**DOUG WATT**  
Questions answered by:  
OWNER AND PRESIDENT  
**DOUG WATT**



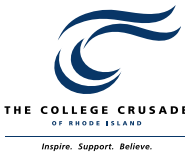


**HAVING A BALL:** The College Crusade of Rhode Island staff members face off in a volleyball game during Staff Appreciation Day at Mulligan’s Island in Cranston.  
COURTESY THE COLLEGE CRUSADE OF RHODE ISLAND

**18** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** We have invested significantly in employee assistance programming and hosted a variety of virtual events that provide staff with the opportunity to talk about our collective goals for social justice and racial equity.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** The College Crusade provided \$75,000 of emergency grants to college students in our program to help them with a variety of expenses so they could stay enrolled in college – rent, food, technology, etc.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** The College Crusade is a dynamic workplace that thrives on new ideas, taking risks and valuing innovation in pursuit of our mission to prepare and inspire young people to become the first in their families to attend and complete college. ■



**The College Crusade of Rhode Island**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 45  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**ANDREW BRAMSON**  
Questions answered by:  
CEO AND PRESIDENT  
**ANDREW BRAMSON**



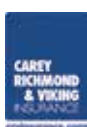
**HEARTS OF GOLD:** Employees with Carey, Richmond & Viking Insurance hold up paper hearts in support of fighting cardiovascular disease.  
COURTESY CAREY, RICHMOND & VIKING INSURANCE

**19** **What three words best describe your staff?** Caring, conscientious, dedicated.

**What role do diversity and inclusion play in your hiring and promotion decisions?** We recognize that diversity is good for business and a critical driver of growth. We hire and promote the most qualified person for the job, consistent with our business objectives.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** Full-time employees have paid community service time off to work voluntarily on projects that benefit the community. Our Charitable Giving Committee actively seeks out causes to support financially and with volunteerism.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** We are excited to recognize the loyalty and efforts of our existing staff but recognize that there are benefits to hiring from the outside, such as exposure to new approaches, new ideas and a fresh perspective. ■



**Carey, Richmond & Viking Insurance**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 48  
PRESIDENT  
**V. DAVID ANDRADE**  
Questions answered by:  
PRESIDENT  
**V. DAVID ANDRADE**



**GIVING THANKS:** Davitt Inc. employees deliver turkeys and gift bags to all company employees in 2020.  
COURTESY DAVITT INC.

**20** **What support programs has your company offered employees to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?** In addition to providing increased workplace flexibility and job-site safety protocols during the pandemic, Davitt became registered as a state laboratory to offer our staff in-office COVID-19 testing.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Davitt partnered with South County Hospital’s sanitation crew to provide disinfecting and fogging services to the SCH Cancer Center free of charge and then jointly marketed this effort throughout the hospital.

**How would you describe the culture of your workplace?** Davitt’s culture is built on teamwork and camaraderie. Each employee offers a unique skill set, working together with an underlying foundation of trust toward a common goal of designing and building beautiful homes.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** At Davitt we have a preference for promoting existing staff, as they understand the culture and spirit of teamwork within the organization. ■



**Davitt Inc.**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 31  
PRESIDENT  
**MATT DAVITT**  
Questions answered by:  
VICE PRESIDENT AND  
GENERAL MANAGER  
**DAVID WHITNEY**



**EARNING THEIR STRIPES:** Employees at Vertikal6 participate in a recent Stripe Shirt Day at the office.  
COURTESY VERTIKAL6

**21** **What three words best describe your staff?** Intelligent, driven, caring.

**Did your organization offer funding or other assistance to the community during the pandemic?** Yes. Our team provided free technical support via video or phone in an effort to help small businesses across Rhode Island become more capable of conducting work remotely.

**How do you support community service work by your employees?** The team volunteers extensively for various nonprofits, donated computers to Goodwill Industries International Inc. and Clinica Esperanza/Hope Clinic – a free, volunteer-run clinic for the uninsured. In addition, our team is involved with the Junior Achievement of Rhode Island ... educating students about workforce readiness, entrepreneurship and financial literacy.

**Do you have a preference for promoting existing staff or hiring from outside and why?** Our promote-from-within philosophy has had a great impact on retention and is definitely our preference. In fact, through our apprentice program, new team members start with Vertikal6 and receive just the right combination of education and on-the-job experience from the ground up but also get a feel for our company culture. ■



**Vertikal6**  
EMPLOYEES IN R.I.: 48  
CEO  
**RICK NORBERG**  
Questions answered by:  
CEO  
**RICK NORBERG**



# BEST PLACES TO WORK - SMALL COMPANIES

(based on companies with 15-49 regional employees)

2021 rank	Company name	Person in charge	Type of business	No. of local employees	% of voluntary turnover	% of women employees	Flexible work hours	Holidays per year	Sick days for ill-dependent	Employees donating PTO time to others	Diversity training	401(k)/retirement plan	Bonus or incentive programs	Telecommuting options	Tuition reimbursement offered	Stress and wellness programs	Workplace fitness facilities	Support community service initiatives	Career-development programs
1	Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island	Katje Afonseca	Nonprofit	31	14%	65%	✓	12	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	Brave River Solutions Inc.	Jim McAssey	Technology	30	0%	40%		9				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	DarrowEverett LLP	Zachary Darrow and Joshua Berlinsky	Law firm	30	10%	50%	✓	11	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
4	RIKB Design Build	Michael Donahue and Tanya Donahue	Construction, design and remodeling	32	0%	56%	✓	9	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
5	Compass IT Compliance LLC	Jerry Hughes and William DePalma	Information technology services	17	0%	24%	✓	11					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	AVTECH Software Inc.	Michael Sigourney and Richard Grundy	Manufacturer	35	0%	38%	✓	8	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Barnum Financial Group	Paul Blanco	Financial services	41	10%	20%		11			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Rhode Island Foundation	Neil D. Steinberg	Nonprofit funder	47	11%	66%		12	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
9	New England Construction	David Sluter and Matt Sluter	Construction	44	6%	25%	✓	11			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Secure Future Tech Solutions	Eric M. Shorr and Lisa A. Shorr	Information technology services	21	0%	33%		13	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
11	Technology Advisory Group	Gary Harlam	Technology services	22	15%	14%		10				✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	
12	CompuClaim Inc.	Peter Carson	Technology	25	0%	72%	✓	11	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	MAS Medical Staffing	Kenneth Johnson	Staffing	16	0%	81%		8		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14	Envision Technology Advisors LLC	Todd Knapp	Business and information technology consulting	45	1%	18%	✓	10	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Brokers' Service Marketing Group II LLC	Jason Lea	Insurance	40	7%	50%		10	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
16	Rhode Island Quality Institute	Indra Neil Sarkar	Nonprofit	32	11%	66%		13	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
17	Connectivity Point Design & Installation LLC	Doug Watt	Telecommunications	27	0%	7%	✓	11		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	The College Crusade of Rhode Island	Todd Flaherty	Nonprofit	45	29%	64%	✓	12	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		
19	Carey, Richmond & Viking Insurance	V. David Andrade	Insurance	48	4%	75%		12				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
20	Davitt Inc. <sup>1</sup>	Matt Davitt	Construction	31	3%	16%		8			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
21	Vertikal6	Rick Norberg	Information technology services	48	4%	13%	✓	11	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

<sup>1</sup> Also known as Davitt Design Build





# CONGRATULATIONS!

TO ALL THE HONOREES OF THE  
**2021**  
**BEST PLACES  
TO WORK**

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