

LIL  
RHODY  
LAUGH  
RIOT

# LIL RHODY LAUGH RIOT

ECONOMIC  
IMPACT

MARCH 26-29, 2026  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## LIL RHODY LAUGH RIOT 2026

The 2026 Lil Rhody Laugh Riot welcomed 20,000 attendees, marking an increase of over 10% from 2025, across 42 events featuring 60 comedians. The festival generated an estimated \$2 million in direct economic impact, engaged 25 local businesses, received 300 comedian submissions, and was supported by 125 staff. Beyond the shows, the festival delivered real community impact, distributing \$150K in food and essentials to over 500 families on opening day in partnership with the PWCVB and Feed the Children.

## ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

Lil Rhody Laugh Riot is a multi-day, citywide comedy festival in Providence, Rhode Island, produced by The VETS and Providence Performing Arts Center. Showcasing a mix of nationally recognized headliners and emerging comedic talent, the festival activates venues and businesses across the city while celebrating Providence's arts, culture, and culinary scene. In just its second year, Lil Rhody Laugh Riot has rapidly grown into the largest comedy festival in New England, drawing audiences from across the region and beyond while establishing Providence as a destination for live comedy and cultural tourism.

**ACROSS  
4 DAYS**

**20K  
ATTENDEES**

**42  
EVENTS**

**62  
COMEDIANS**

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

The 2026 Lil Rhody Laugh Riot delivered a significant cultural and economic boost to Providence, building on the success of its inaugural year and continuing to expand its regional and national profile. Over the course of four days, the festival welcomed more than 20,000 attendees across 42 events, featuring over 60 comedians performing in venues throughout the city. The festival's execution was supported by a workforce of more than 125 staff, crew, and event personnel, contributing to both its operational success and local employment opportunities. This growth in attendance, including an increase of more than 10% over 2025, reflects rising demand and the festival's emergence as a must-attend event.

The festival generated an estimated \$2 million in direct spending by attendees, benefiting Providence's hospitality and service sectors, including hotels, restaurants, transportation providers, and retail establishments. With participation from more than 25 local businesses and a collaborative partnership with the Providence Culinary Collective, the event created a citywide footprint that encouraged visitors to explore multiple neighborhoods, extending the economic impact beyond primary performance venues.

**ACROSS  
4 DAYS**

**2M  
DOLLARS IN  
DIRECT SPENDING**

**25  
LOCAL BUSINESSES  
ENGAGED**

## PROGRAMMING

Programming for the 2026 festival featured an impressive lineup of nationally recognized talent, including John Mulaney, Andrew Santino, Chelsea Handler, Marc Maron, Andrew Schulz, Zarna Garg, Mark Normand, Jessica Kirson, Jay Pharoah, Bob the Drag Queen, and Monet X Change. The caliber and diversity of performers contributed to strong ticket sales, increased travel into the market, and elevated national visibility for the festival.





# ECONOMIC IMPACT CONT.

## SUBMISSION PROGRAM

A key addition in 2026 was the introduction of a submission-based program for emerging comedians, which received over 300 entries from performers across the country and within Providence. Selected comics were given the opportunity to perform during the festival, including opening slots for headlining acts. This initiative strengthened the festival's role as a platform for new talent while providing meaningful opportunities for local artists to gain exposure.

## WORK FORCE DEVELOPMENT

In addition to its economic and entertainment impact, the festival also contributed to workforce development and education through a partnership with Johnson & Wales University. Student volunteers from the university's Sports, Entertainment, and Event Management program were integrated into festival operations, gaining valuable real-world experience working in live event production. These students supported various aspects of the festival, from event logistics to guest services, while also benefiting from meaningful networking opportunities with industry professionals, talent, and event staff as they begin their careers.



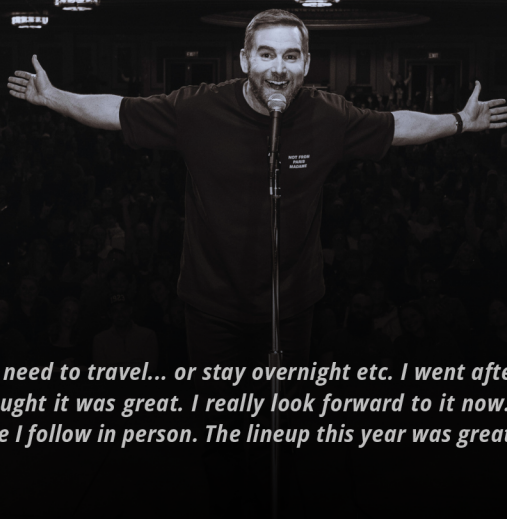
## FESTIVAL VALUES

Beyond its economic and entertainment value, the festival made a meaningful community impact through its partnership with the Providence Warwick Convention and Visitor Bureau and Feed the Children and Price Rite. The joint charity kickoff event resulted in the distribution of more than \$150,000 worth of food and household essentials to over 500 families in the local community, reinforcing the festival's commitment to giving back.

## KEY PARTNERS

The festival's continued growth and citywide activation are further supported through collaboration with key community and industry partners, including Providence Tourism Council, Cox Communications, Mother Earth & Wellness, The Malted Barley, Aloft Hotel Providence, Rhode Island Lottery, and Coast Cannabis. These partnerships enhance the festival experience, expand marketing reach, and strengthen connections across Providence's business and tourism ecosystem.





*"I live in Providence, which is why I didn't need to travel... or stay overnight etc. I went after work and I'm so glad I did :). This is my 2nd year coming to the festival, and I thought it was great. I really look forward to it now. I saw Andrew Santino, who I knew from TikTok, and it was amazing to see someone I follow in person. The lineup this year was great!"*

# MARKETING

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The 2026 festival saw strong marketing performance and audience engagement, with over 21 million social media views, 1.7 million interactions, and a total reach of 8.6 million people across digital platforms. This level of visibility significantly expanded the festival's footprint and contributed to increased attendance and regional awareness



## INFLUENCER IMPACT

Lil Rhody Laugh Riot also partnered with a curated group of local influencers and creators to drive authentic engagement across platforms. Through short-form content, giveaways, and podcast integrations, these collaborations generated 460,000+ additional views, further amplifying the festival's reach.

<b>IEWS</b>	<b>REACH</b>
<b>21M</b>	<b>8.6M</b>



**@NOBODYCARESANTHONY**  
115,602 VIEWS



**@BUNSANDBITES**  
140,700 VIEWS



**@CLUBAMBITIONPODCAST**  
65,900 VIEWS



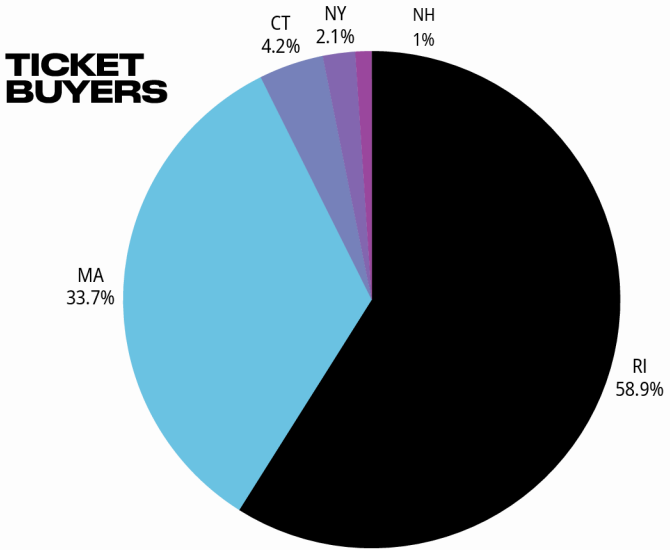
**@CASHDROPPROVIDENCE**  
139,500+ VIEWS



# AUDIENCE

## SURVEY DATA

Audience data highlights the festival's strong regional draw, with attendees traveling primarily from Rhode Island (56%) and Massachusetts (32%), along with visitors from Connecticut (4%), New York (2%), and New Hampshire (1%). This mix reflects both strong local engagement and growing out-of-market appeal. Survey data also underscores the festival's economic impact on the local hospitality industry, with 63% of attendees reporting dining in Providence, while others explored surrounding areas. Additionally, 8% of attendees reported staying overnight in Providence, contributing to hotel occupancy and extended visitor spending during the festival weekend.



## DURING THE FESTIVAL

<p><b>95%</b> of ticket buyers came from across the Northeast</p>	<p><b>63%</b> of ticket buyers dined in Providence</p>	<p><b>15%</b> of ticket buyers shopped locally in Providence</p>
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# CONCLUSION

***“In just two years, Lil Rhody Laugh Riot has become a cornerstone event driving economic activity, tourism, and cultural vibrancy in Providence.”***

The 2026 Lil Rhody Laugh Riot demonstrated measurable growth in attendance, programming, economic contribution, and marketing reach, while deepening its connection to the local community, business ecosystem, and future workforce. With continued momentum and expanding partnerships, the festival is well positioned to further enhance its impact on Providence’s economy and cultural landscape in the years ahead.

*For more information, visit [lilrhodylaughriot.com](http://lilrhodylaughriot.com), and mark your calendars for the festival’s return in March 2027, with an announcement coming this fall featuring next year’s incredible lineup of talent.*