

Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission
Draft Minutes of November 15, 2013
Quarterly Meeting



Commissioners & Designees:

Cola, Jeanne – Chair

Deluca, William; Representing Paul McGreevy
Fasano, Mary; Representing David Devault
Flynn, Kevin; Representing Richard Licht
Freese, Carleton
Garlick, Jr., Joseph F.
Hannifan, Chris
McGunagle, Joanne
Novais, Ana; Representing Dr. Fine

Reed, Jim
Reiner, Jon
Sneesby, Frederick; Representing Sandra Powell
Schwartz, Rhonda; Representing Catherine Taylor
Valliere, Albert
Ventura, Carol; Representing James DeRentis
Zaslow, Carrie

Staff:

House, June
Kue, Simon
Neirinckx, Ray
Price, Darlene

Sullivan, Laura
Tondra, Michael
Vittorioso, Dawn
Witcher, Pheamo

Guests:

Archambault, Laura
Rainone, Amy

Rauch, Kimberly

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Jeanne Cola, Chair at 9:03 a.m.

2. Welcome and New Member Introductions

Jeanne introduced and welcomed the newest Commissioner, Joseph Garlick, who represents the Non-Profit Development Corporations.

3. Approval of September 16, 2013 Meeting Minutes – for vote

Jeanne asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 16, 2013. Jim Reed moved to approve the minutes of September 16, 2013 as submitted. The motion was seconded by William Deluca. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

4. Report of the HRC Chair/Director

Jeanne introduced Mike Tondra who then discussed the following items:

Staffing

- Mike introduced Pheamo Witcher and said that she will be responsible for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) & Consolidated Homeless Fund (CHF) /Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program. Mike noted that she has also been assisting the Office of Homelessness.
- Housing Commission Coordinator vacancy; Mike said that interviews have been completed, and he is hopeful that the position will be filled by early December. The new coordinator will be responsible for the Office of Homelessness. Mike explained that Darlene Price was formerly responsible for this position and is now working with the Office of Healthy Housing.

HRC Membership

- HRC Designee Letters: Mike reminded the Commissioner's that have designees attend to submit an updated letter giving the designee the authority to participate on the agency's behalf and to vote.

State Consolidated Homeless Fund, Rental Subsidy Initiative

- The Distribution Plan award ceremony will be held on Wednesday, December 4th at 2:00 p.m. in the State Room at the State House. Mike and Jeanne strongly encouraged all of the Commissioners to attend and show their support.
- Mike announced that four agencies will receive the awards:
 - Crossroads received \$325K and will provide services to individuals and families;
 - Amos House received \$39K and will provide services to individuals that are participating in the Amos House Sober Program;

- House of Hope (in conjunction with Mental Health Association ACCESS Program) received \$200K and will provide services to the chronically and long term homeless populations;
- The Providence Center (in partnership with Riverwood) received \$175K and will provide services to the chronically and long term homeless populations.

The Providence Center

- Mike indicated that The Providence Center (TPC) has a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grant that will be used in conjunction with regular assistance funding to provide services to people and the units at no charge to the State. TPC offered their services free of charge to other recipients that have service needs and are unable to provide support from their own funding.

State Rental Subsidy Initiative Disbursement Schedule

- Mike explained that he met with the State's Fiscal Office and it was determined that the State will follow a process of offering working capital advances to administrative agencies with subsequent payments based upon actual documented disbursements. This will avoid cash flow and continuity of program issues if funding for the program continues in the next fiscal cycle.

Chronic/Universal wait list

- Mike encouraged the Commissioners that are employed by agencies that assist the homeless to focus on the universal wait list and assist the individuals to get into supportive housing.

Healthy Homes Alliance

- Mike explained that in June, 2013, the Healthy Homes Alliance formed, which was a merger from the OHCD collaborative, the HRC workgroup on Healthy Housing and the Green and Healthy Housing Steering Committee. Mark Kravatz, who works on healthy housing issues, prepared a summary (attachment 1) of the structure and the alliance's mission. Mike encouraged all the Commissioners to participate in the upcoming working groups. He then reminded the Commission that the new contact person for Healthy Housing is Darlene Price.

CDBG, Disaster Recovery

- Mike said that \$16M was received for Hurricane Sandy relief. The majority of the funding will be restricted for use within the Washington County area. He indicated that in a recent conference call with HUD, guidelines and timelines for the funding allocations are estimated to be released in early, 2014. Mike said that a suggestion was made to develop an elevation program, which would assist individuals that were impacted by Hurricane Sandy. However, for individuals that cannot have their property elevated and are experiencing increased insurance premiums, the OHCD will work with HUD to propose a model for creation of affordable housing opportunities within the effected counties. Mike noted that he will continue to keep the Commission updated throughout the application process.

Homelessness

- Continuum of Care (COC): Mike announced that the first COC meeting was cancelled. HUD has not issued the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), which would have required that group to meet. Mike expects that the NOFA will be issued in the near future
- Crossroads Report: Mike announced that Crossroads recently released their annual report. The report generally places focus on a subpopulation. Mike stated that this year's report focuses on Aging & Homelessness. The report indicates that homeless individuals over the age of fifty are increasing, which is also consistent with the general homeless population's increasing numbers throughout RI.
- Opening Doors Report Card (attachment 2): The Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless released a report card for the State's progress on meeting the Opening Doors' goals. This report is consistent with the Opening Doors Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. Mike noted that the report will be presented and discussed at the next HRC meeting. He stated that although the HRC has had some successes this past year with the passage of the Affordable Housing Bond and the Rental Subsidy Initiative, the HRC still has a way to go to meet the State's goals and the Opening Doors' goals.

Jeanne asked if anyone had any questions or comments for Mike. Jim Reed asked Mike to send an updated contact listing for OHCD staff. Mike said that he would email the Commission with an updated contact listing and said that he will also include the information for the Rental Subsidy award ceremony. There being no further questions, Jeanne thanked Mike and took a moment to introduce and welcome Fred Sneesby, who represented Director Sandra Powell.

5. Building Homes Rhode Island – for vote – Resolution #1

Jeanne asked Mike to discuss the projects that are being recommended for approval. Mike then summarized the items below:

BHRI Available Funds

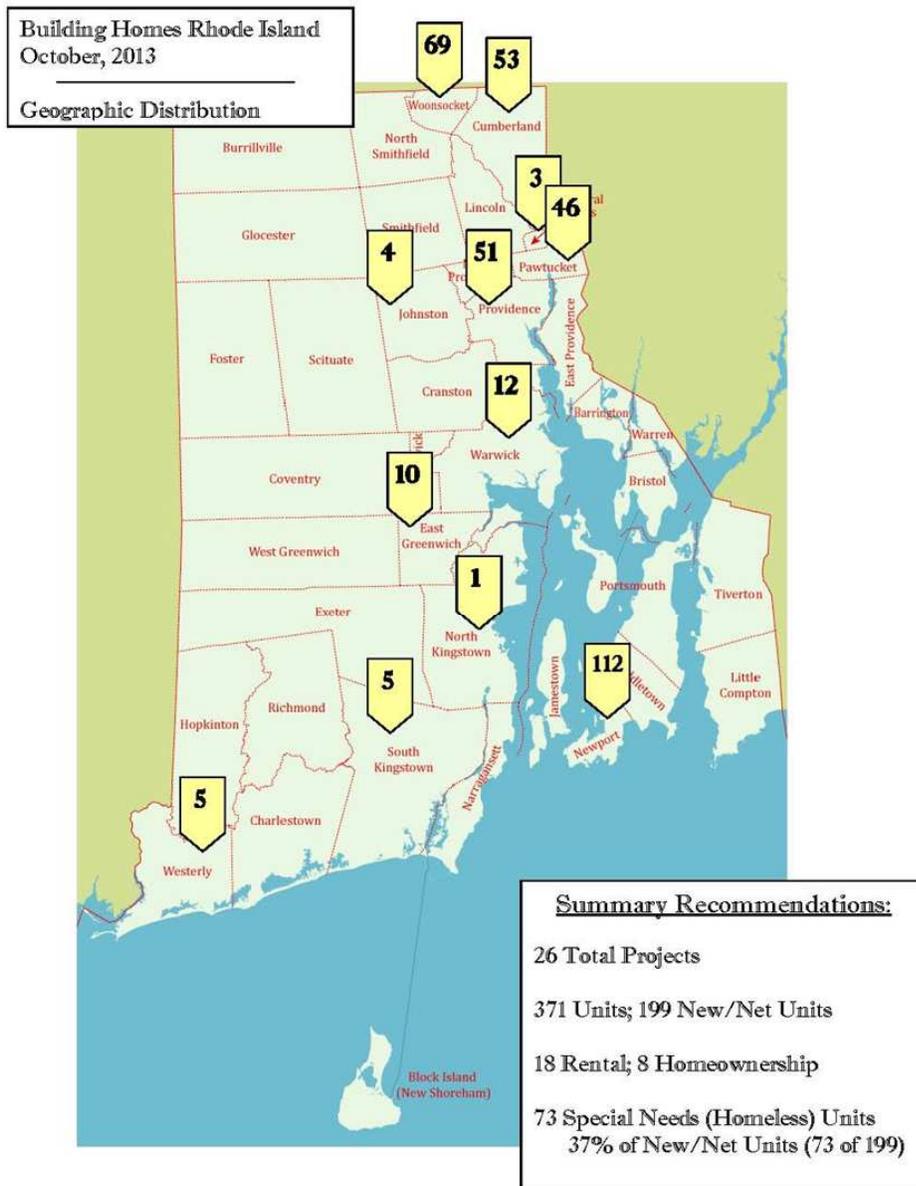
- Mike explained that \$25 million to be disbursed FY'2014 & FY'2015 (\$12.5 million each year).
- Adjustments: Mike said that additional funding in the amount of \$477,503 has been incorporated from prior BHRI deobligated project funding minus \$50,000 due to the cost of bond issuances.

BHRI Applications

- 90 applications were received totaling approximately \$50 million.
- OHCD staff & staff from RI Housing reviewed the applications and eliminated those that did not meet the BHRI Regulations threshold criteria. Mike said that applications totaling \$30 million did not meet the threshold. The primary reason for the project elimination was due to construction not being able to proceed within six months of the financing commitment.
- Applications that were fully-funded by the City of Providence's Home Program were also eliminated.

Jeanne took a moment to point out the Commissioners that will abstain for this agenda item. She said that they represent the organizations that are being recommended for funding allocations and noted that did not participate in the meetings or the application review process. The Commissioners that will abstain from voting and discussion will be Jim Reed who represents the Newport Housing Authority, Carleton Freese who represents House of Hope and Joe Garlick who represents NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley (NWBRV).

Mike continued discussing the funding allocations and demonstrated the geographic distribution map and detailed funding recommendations spreadsheet as shown below.



BHRI Funding Distribution Committee Recommendations

Applicant	Project	Municipality	Rental or Homeownership	RECOMMENDATION	Total Units	Net/New Units	Special Needs (Homeless)	
AIDS Care Ocean State	24 Tecumseh St.	Providence	Rental	\$116,212	3	3	3	
ARC Blackstone Valley	Vets for Tomorrow, 1115 Douglas Ave.	Providence	Rental	\$320,000	20	20	20	Additional BHRI investment.
Church Community Housing Corporation	25 ^{1/2} Burdick Ave.	Newport	Homeownership	\$70,000	1	1	0	
Church Community Housing Corporation	400 Tower Hill Rd.	North Kingstown	Rental	\$65,000	1	1	0	
Domestic Violence Resource Center	Safe House, High St.	Wakefield	Rental	\$270,000	4	4	4	
East Greenwich Housing Authority	2880 South County Trail	East Greenwich	Rental	\$300,000	10	10	0	
House of Hope CDC	Fair St.	Warwick	Rental	\$1,152,554	10	10	10	
House of Hope CDC	3192 Post Rd.	Warwick	Rental	\$90,000	1	1	1	
House of Hope CDC	6 Barber Ave.	Warwick	Homeownership	\$45,000	1	1	0	
NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley (NWBRV)	Constitution Hill, Scattered Site	Woonsocket	Rental	\$1,193,940	63	19	8	Prevent loss of affordable units (w/expansion).
Newport Housing Authority	Park Holm:Hillside Ave.	Newport	Rental	\$1,449,127	111	19	0	Portion of large public housing project.
OMNI Development Corp.	Turning Point II, 3-5 Convent St.	Providence	Rental	\$604,951	13	13	13	
OMNI Development Corp.	Four Sisters	Providence	Rental	\$152,000	5	0	0	Prevent loss of affordable units.
Pawtucket Citizens Development Corporation (PCDC)	Blackstone Valley Gateway II	Pawtucket	Rental	\$1,614,233	41	41	5	
Pawtucket Citizens Development Corporation (PCDC)	93-95 Tremont St.	Pawtucket	Rental	\$275,000	5	5	5	
Providence Revolving Fund	243 Adelaide Ave.	Providence	Homeownership w/Rental	\$240,000	2	2	0	
Realty Endeavors for Affordable Community Housing (REACH)	33 Mowry St.	Central Falls	Homeownership	\$76,700	1	1	0	
Realty Endeavors for Affordable Community Housing (REACH)	14 Beacon St.	Central Falls	Homeownership w/Rental	\$58,800	2	2	0	
Smith Hill CDC	46 Pekin Ave.	Providence	Rental	\$150,000	3	3	3	
Stop Wasting Abandoned Properties	65 Potters Ave.	Providence	Homeownership w/Rental	\$81,377	2	2	0	
Trinity Woonsocket LP	Glenark-Ashley	Woonsocket	Rental	\$150,000	6	0	0	Prevent loss of affordable units.
Valley Affordable Housing	Ashton Village	Cumberland	Rental	\$1,965,831	53	53	0	
West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation	42 Hanover St.	Providence	Homeownership w/Rental	\$183,700	2	2	0	
West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation	21 Constitution Ave.	Providence	Homeownership	\$50,000	1	1	0	
TOTAL				\$10,674,425	361	195	64	
<i>After review of meeting notes, it was discovered discussion on the following projects was not entirely concluded. Discussion/recommendation from the HRC is advised.</i>								
Operation Standdown RI	1006-1008 Hartford Ave.	Johnston	Rental	\$471,744	4	4	4	Added to list for consideration with no final funding decision. Subsidies not identified in application.
Westerly Area Rest & Meals (WARM)	56 Spruce St.	Westerly	Rental	\$392,883	5	0	5	Generally recommended. BHRI would be additional subsidy on units with existing affordability restrictions.
TOTAL				\$864,627	506	324	99	
<p>26 total projects (18 rental - 8 homeownership, half of which include a rental unit). Special needs units represent approx. 37% (73/199) of total (new/net) units supported (20% of all units in projects - including those not supported by BHRI). Projects are being undertaken in 12 (31%) of the State's 39 municipalities. Funds are disbursed geographically with projects throughout RI (Providence Metro, Kent County, Northern RI, Southern RI and Newport County). \$1,388,451 remains unobligated. A second funding round will occur in FY'14 (coordinated with other resources).</p>								

At this time, Jeanne asked if anyone had any questions or comments. Al Valliere indicated that he participated in several projects that are being recommended for funding allocations and therefore, he recused himself from the vote.

Ray Neirinckx took a moment to thank the Distribution Committee for their support and assistance. He then took a moment to recognize Bank of America and Citizens Bank for their generous contributions. Chris Hannifan said that she will abstain from voting.

As there were no further questions, Jeanne took a moment to thank the individuals that participated in the Distribution Committee and asked for an amended vote for the HRC to approve the Building Homes Rhode Island recommendations as presented in chart to include the Operation Standdown RI and Westerly Area Rest & Meals (WARM) as indicated on the above worksheet. Ana Novais motioned to approve and the motion was seconded by Frederick Sneesby. There were five abstentions made by Al Valliere, Joseph Garlick, Chris Hannifan, Carleton Freese and Jim Reed and the motion passed.

6. Financial Plan for Housing FY'2015 – vote - Resolution #2

Next, Jeanne asked the Commission to direct their attention to the FY'2015 Financial Plan for Housing as contained in the HRC meeting packet. She reminded the Commission that last year a letter of recommendation was submitted to the Governor that aligned resources with the budgeted plan for funding housing resources that was recommended by the HRC.

Jeanne asked if anyone had any questions or comments. There being none, Jeanne asked for a motion for the HRC to approve the transmittal of the FY'2015 Financial Plan for Housing to the State's leadership. Jim Reed motioned to approve. The motion was seconded by William DeLuca. The motion passed unanimously and there was no further discussion.

7. Public Comment Period:

There were none.

8. Announcements:

Amy Rainone encouraged the Commission to communicate to the Governor's office and show their support for supportive housing.

In closing, Mike indicated that a copy of the finalized letter that was submitted to the Governor's office will be included as an attachment to the November meeting minutes (attachment 3). Jeanne also indicated that the 2014 meeting schedule will also be included as an attachment (attachment 4).

Kevin Flynn encouraged the Commission to begin working on the Bond for the next fiscal year and pointed out the upcoming gubernatorial election. He reminded the Commission that the funding allocations from the 2006 bond were exhausted.

9. **Adjourn:**

As there were no further comments, Commission member Chris Hannifan motioned to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commission member Jim Reed and approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:47 a.m.

Attachment 1

Rhode Island Alliance for Healthy Homes

In June of 2013, the Rhode Island Alliance for Healthy Homes (Alliance) formed as a merger of the Department of Health's Healthy Housing Collaborative, the Housing Resource Commission's Healthy Housing Work Group, and the Green & Healthy Homes Initiatives Steering Committee. With a mission to align, braid and coordinate information, resources, and services for improving the health, safety and energy efficiency of all Rhode Island homes, the Alliance aims to provide a well-coordinated and collaborative structure to address GHHI related issues throughout all of Rhode Island. GHHI is the lead coordinating agency for the Alliance and supported by a Steering Committee representing the Rhode Island Office of Housing & community Development, the Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission, the Rhode Island Department of Health Office of Healthy Housing, Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources, Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Weatherization Assistance Program, Rhode Island Energy Efficiency Resource Management Council, Rhode Island Attorney General's Office and Rhode Island Housing.



Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

Rhode Island Alliance for Healthy Homes Public Forum

On October 22, 2013 more than 100 participants representing physicians, contractors, housing specialists, higher education, public health, energy auditors, community health workers, weatherization contractors, students, healthy homes advocates, home visiting professionals, nurses, community developers, planners, federal agencies, utilities, data specialists, construction specialists, asthma educators, and many more gathered at Rhode Island College to learn about the mission, vision and objectives for the Rhode Island Alliance for Healthy Homes.

What happened at the forum?

Participants heard presenters from the Rhode Island Department of Health, the Housing Resources Commission, and the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources who effectively presented the benefits and opportunities of having an Alliance in Rhode Island. We also learned about the work that has been completed to date by the steering committee including draft organizational bylaws, a member workbook, and a 360+ page healthy homes data compendium created by 18 undergraduate students this past summer. Participants also broke out into small groups to discuss our collective assets, opportunities, as well as gaps related to healthy homes data/ evaluation, policy & standards, workforce, systems & resource coordination, and communications.

Overall, the morning created a swell of positive energy and affirmed for us that this work is important!

What value does the Alliance bring to Rhode Island?

The Alliance aims to coordinate the professional healthy homes community in Rhode Island. Value added for participants includes:

- Statewide leadership, planning and coordination on all GHHI related issues/ topics
- Healthy Housing braiding to meet GHHI standards
- Braiding of housing, health, education, and energy efficiency data
- Key reports/ documents (compendium, annual report(s), etc.)
- Professional community development/ networking
- Access to primary healthy housing leadership
- Leveraging Partnerships
 - More competitive for funding
 - Stronger policy coordination
 - Streamlining GHHI supplemental services (resident education, housing assessments, behavioral health specialists, etc.)
- Development of best practices/ standards
- Professional training, learning and development
- Coordination of healthy housing expertise and knowledge
- Communicating the story of families most in need of GHHI standard housing and raising awareness on social justice issues related to unhealthy housing

Structure

The Alliance is structured into a Leadership Committee and five Working Group committees which includes:

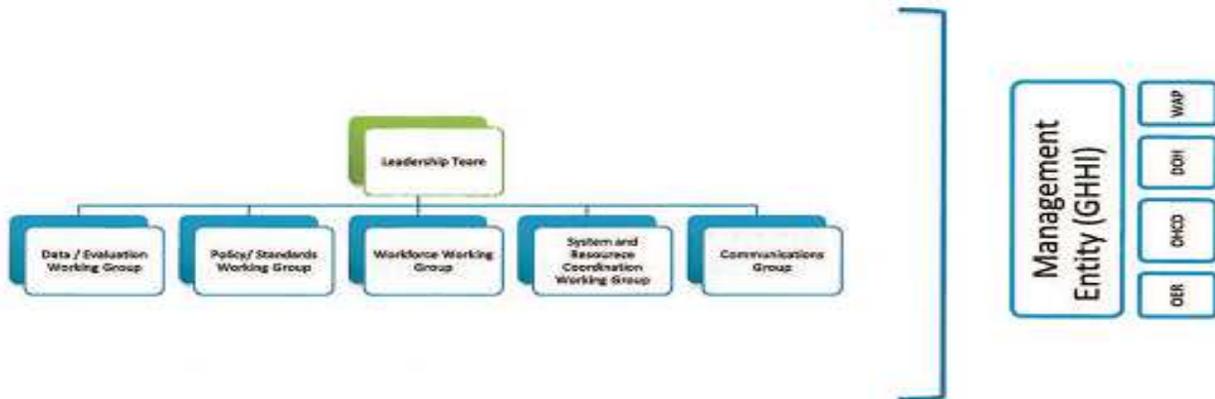
- **Data/ evaluation**
 - **Mission/ Vision**
 - To define, develop and maintain relevant healthy housing data that informs the work of the Alliance and provide a structure to evaluate and assess the health, safety and energy efficiency of all Rhode Island homes.
 - **Objectives**
 - Coordinate and manage Healthy Housing Data
 - Identify data gaps
 - Inform the community about data findings
 - Identify key insights, trends and understandings particularly focusing on:
 - Socio/ economic impact of healthy housing
 - Environmental impact of healthy housing
 - Public health impact of healthy housing
 - **Key Deliverable(s)**
 - Annual Healthy Homes Factbook/ Report

- **Policy/ standards**
 - **Mission/ Vision**
 - To define, develop and maintain relevant healthy housing policies and standards that contributes to the health, safety and energy efficiency of all Rhode Island homes.
 - **Objectives**
 - Define and assess the state of healthy homes related policies/ laws in Rhode Island;
 - Map out and define existing healthy housing policies in Rhode Island
 - Identify healthy housing policy gaps
 - Submit policy ideas/ bills to legislative leaders
 - Prepare communications to Rhode Islanders about key healthy housing policies
 - Provide technical assistance in policy implementation
 - **Key Deliverable(s)**
 - Annual healthy housing policy slate
 - Annual briefing report

- **Workforce training/ development**
 - **Mission/ Vision**
 - To define, develop and maintain a vibrant healthy housing workforce, help maintain quality workforce training coordination, and ensure the highest quality training standards for all healthy housing professional workers.
 - **Objectives**
 - Define the state of the healthy housing workforce of Rhode Island
 - Establish a clear healthy housing workforce career track(s)
 - Define necessary healthy housing professional certifications/ credentials
 - Identify workforce gaps
 - Identify training gaps
 - Define the economic impact of the healthy housing workforce of Rhode Island
 - **Key Deliverable(s)**
 - Annual healthy housing workforce conference
 - Annual workforce report

- **System and resource coordination**
 - **Mission/ Vision**
 - To more effectively align, braid and coordinate housing resources so that all Rhode Islanders can more easily navigate and secure all housing rehab opportunities available to them.
 - **Objectives**
 - Analyze and evaluate how well Rhode Island access and receive healthy housing intervention support in Rhode Island
 - Make recommendations on ways to improve the delivery of healthy housing interventions support
 - Identify opportunities to align, braid and coordinate resources to make a deeper impact on families being served by programs
 - Identify new funding and financing opportunities to scale up healthy housing production
 - **Key Deliverable(s)**
 - Inaugural Analysis Report
 - Annual Report

- **Communications**
 - **Mission/ Vision**
 - To organize, coordinate, and streamline healthy housing information and to strategically coordinate efforts to fully engage, support and educate Rhode Island residents about the personal, familial and economic benefits of creating and maintaining a healthy home
 - **Objectives**
 - Provide an overall communication strategy for the Alliance and specific stakeholders including:
 - Residents, Workforce, Policy Makers and Community Based Organizations
 - Provide graphic design support for all Alliance publications and materials
 - Maintain a comprehensive web-based portal of healthy housing information
 - Create products that helps to educate Rhode Islanders about relevant healthy housing topics
 - **Key Deliverable(s)**
 - Development of an Alliance website
 - Create promotional communication materials (logo, brochure, one-pagers, etc.)
 - Creation of healthy homes educational materials (educational videos, kids coloring books, etc.)
 - Annual Communications Report



Key Upcoming Milestones

Between now and then, the Steering Committee along with three Public Policy Graduate students from Brown U. will be working on the following:

- **January, 2014:**
 - Initial Working Group meetings
 - Final Draft, Bylaws
 - Final Draft, Member Workbook
 - Final Draft, RI Healthy Homes Information Compendium
 - Analysis Report of the Surveys Completed
 - 1st Draft: Alliance Business/ Strategic Model Draft
 - 1st Draft: Alliance Compact
- **February, 2014:** Second Working Group meetings
- **March, 2014:** Third Working Group meetings
 - Final Draft: Alliance Business/ Strategic Model
 - Final Draft: Alliance Compact
- **April:** Official Public Launch of the Alliance
- **June, 2014:** Planning 2014/2015's agenda (Each Working Group to meet separately)

Attachment 2

Report Card on OPENING DOORS RHODE ISLAND

GOAL	PROGRESS	NEEDS	GRADE
Increase the supply of and access to permanent housing that is affordable to very low-income households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$750,000 provided for rental vouchers • Housing Bond passed • Partnerships with public housing authorities improving • Federal funding sought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing commitment to fully fund very low income housing • A systematic process for pursuing federal funds 	
Retool Homeless Crisis Response System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating coordinated intake and assessment process • Developing fair system for prioritizing housing placement for homeless persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the capacity to rapidly re-house all individuals and families entering the system 	
Increase Economic Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising minimum wage • Improved access to public assistance for disabled • Streamlined access to mainstream benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More emphasis on homelessness from DLT • Close gap between incomes and housing costs • More job opportunities for homeless persons 	
Improve Health and Housing Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment of BHDDH to addressing needs of homeless persons • Implementation of Housing First approach • Medicaid expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that homeless individuals are enrolled in Medicaid through Affordable Care Act • Use of Medicaid for housing stabilization 	
Increase Leadership, Collaboration and Civic Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring homeless service system to focus on <i>Opening Doors</i> • Use of administrative databases for cost-benefit analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift focus from shelter to affordable housing • Fully fund <i>Opening Doors</i> • Ongoing commitment from key leaders 	

Issued October 24, 2013

For more information:
www.rhomeless.org
 401-721-5685
info@rhomeless.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT OPENING DOORS

Opening Doors Rhode Island: Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness ("the Plan") is a realistic plan to end homelessness in our state. Consistent with *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness*, the Plan seeks to sharply decrease the numbers of people experiencing homelessness and the length of time people spend homeless.

The Plan proposes to:

- End chronic homelessness by 2018
- Prevent and end homelessness among veterans by 2018
- Prevent and end homelessness for families, children, and youth by 2023
- Dramatically reduce, at least cut in half, all forms of homelessness in the state by 2023

CONCLUSIONS

- There have been positive changes in the way we respond to homelessness in our state, particularly in the areas that involve process, coordination and strategies to better serve Rhode Islanders experiencing homelessness.
- We must continue to shift the focus from short-term crisis responses, like shelters, to the long-term solution of affordable housing.
- Systems reform alone cannot end homelessness. Fully funding the Plan will help the State improve its economy, realize long-term cost savings, and improve the lives of thousands of Rhode Islanders who are currently experiencing homelessness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Governor's Office:

- Include funding for \$3.4 million in the State Budget for rental assistance
- Increase funding by \$439,000 in the State Budget for homeless prevention and assistance
- Take advantage of federal funding opportunities, such as Medicaid expansion and grant-funded programs for services

For the State Departments:

- Commit staff and resources to the Plan and allocate funding for the Plan in departmental budgets
- Work with the Governor's Office and the Department of Administration's Budget Office to coordinate funding for the Plan across State Departments
- Take advantage of federal funding opportunities, such as Medicaid expansion and grant-funded programs for services

For the General Assembly:

- Include funding for \$3.4 million in the State Budget for rental assistance
- Increase funding by \$439,000 in the State Budget for homeless prevention and assistance
- Support legislative initiatives that will facilitate implementation of the Plan

For the Homeless Service Provider Community:

- Coordinate and collaborate to realize the goals of the Plan
- Shift the focus from sheltering those who experience homelessness to housing them
- Plan for the transition from sheltering to housing

OVERALL GRADE: C+

Attachment 3



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

**Department of Administration
OFFICE OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Housing Resources Commission
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908**

November 15, 2013

The Honorable Lincoln D. Chafee
Governor, State of Rhode Island
Office of the Governor
222 State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Governor Chafee:

The Housing Resources Commission (HRC) is charged with the responsibility for establishing housing policy and planning for the State of Rhode Island. The HRC members represent a broad cross section of housing interests across the state and have identified a number of issues ranging from keeping seniors housed, assuring healthy housing for our families, and reinvigorating the residential construction industry. As we work to find solutions to a myriad of housing issues, we have focused on eliminating homelessness as the most immediate concern. In 2012 the HRC and the Interagency Council on Homelessness adopted Opening Doors – A Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. This plan creates a realistic opportunity for the state to significantly reduce homelessness over the next several years.

The plan includes very specific goals for prevention, rapid re-housing, and development and leasing of additional permanent supportive housing. Successful implementation relies on the availability of capital, rental assistance, and services. The passage of the Affordable Housing Bond provides a much needed piece of the capital investment necessary over the next two years. However, in order to house homeless families and individuals with extremely low incomes it is necessary to couple rental assistance and services with housing. To take advantage of the housing bond funds it is critical that additional rental assistance be available in 2015 and that we continue to prevent homelessness and implement rapid re-housing initiatives to reduce our emergency shelter population.

The Housing Resources Commission appreciates the inclusion of \$12.5 million in bond funding in the 2014 budget for the rehabilitation and construction of new affordable homes, but we respectfully request that the HRC budget be increased by an additional \$3,089,000 as described in the attached document, FY 2015 Financial Plan for Housing, to enable homeless families and

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individuals to receive the assistance necessary to live in safe and stable homes. Note the \$25 million affordable housing bond will be fully obligated in FY 2015 and FY 2016, after which it will be necessary for the State to budget for additional funding to meet capital financing needs.

The Housing Resources Commission also appreciates the inclusion of \$750,000 in State funding to support a new rental subsidy initiative. Funds will be distributed over the next several months, providing much need rental assistance to households experiencing the crisis of homelessness, consistent with the State's homelessness plan. Accomplishments of these resources will be transmitted to the Administration once available. We hope to continue, and expand, this initiative in the years to come.

While the addition of funding for the renovation of the Harrington Hall emergency shelter in Cranston was greatly received, we want to acknowledge the ultimate plan for best serving persons in the crisis of homelessness is the creation of adequate permanent supportive housing. Over time, we hope that the need for large congregate shelters will be eliminated, consistent with the State's Opening Doors RI plan.

We know how to end homelessness and we have a plan to do so. Working together we can succeed in substantially reducing our shelter population over the next five years.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Cola
Chair

Attachments:
*Housing Resources Commission
FY 2015 Financial Plan for Housing*

FY 2015 Financial Plan for Housing

Background

Rhode Island is one of the least affordable places to live in the country. The gap between what people earn and what it costs to rent or own is large. Rhode Island also has some of the oldest housing stock in the country, which when combined with its high cost, means that housing conditions often present problems of health, safety and energy efficiency. The recent recession has placed more homeowners and renters at risk, with foreclosure and homelessness growing.

Fortunately Rhode Island has a strong non-profit sector that addresses many of the housing challenges. It also has a larger than average supply of deeply subsidized homes, several strong local housing authorities and a state housing finance agency that has a broad mission and long track record of success. These sectors have been strongly supported by various federal housing programs. The state also has good inter-agency cooperation so that a comprehensive approach to housing issues can be achieved. In consideration of these resources, state appropriations for housing in Rhode Island have traditionally been smaller than in other urban and industrial states, including Massachusetts and Connecticut.

In 2012, the Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission adopted "Opening Doors RI- a Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness". That plan provides the blueprint for the financial plan proposed here and envisions the creation of 898 additional supported homes of which 499 are newly constructed and the remainder are re-purposed existing homes.

This FY15 financial plan for housing outlines the resources that are needed to implement Opening Doors RI, what resources can be leveraged through other private and federal sources and the gap which state funding is needed to fill.

Looking Forward

The future of federal funding for housing programs is unclear but the recent trend has been toward significantly reducing funding levels. As a result of the recession, Rhode Island non-profit organizations are also experiencing reduced funding levels. Rhode Island Housing has seen its resources dramatically impacted by struggling borrowers, lower levels of homeowner lending and federal cuts. Its revenues are expected to recover along with the overall housing economy and can be used to cover a portion of the additional funding needs moving forward. However, if Rhode Island is to meet the housing needs proposed in Opening Doors, increased State appropriations are also required. This outline will summarize those estimated needs for the next several years across various elements of the housing need spectrum.

A. Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Assistance (FY 2015 request \$1,969,000)

The goal has long been to reduce the need for emergency shelters and apply those funds toward permanent supportive housing. While major progress has been made in increasing the number of supportive homes, the financial crisis of the past 6 years, has offset this gain with more families losing their homes. Therefore we need to maintain our shelters and increase support for rapid re-housing until the economy sufficiently improves and we have made further progress in creating affordable homes, especially including those with necessary supportive services. The Opening Doors report projects increased needs for Prevention and Rehousing starting at \$404,000 in FY'2014 (2013) and much smaller increases in following years. Therefore the requested state appropriations are:

Fiscal Year	Increase Requested	Total Appropriation*
FY'15	\$439,000	\$1,969,000
FY'16	\$87,000	\$2,056,000
FY'17	\$36,000	\$2,092,000

*reflects funding levels recommended in Opening Doors RI. This amount includes State support of homeless shelter/service programs as well as assistance for Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing initiatives.

B. Permanent Supportive Housing (FY 2015 request of \$3,400,000)

1. *Rental Assistance.* Our lowest income tenants need rent subsidies. The Housing Resources Commission appreciates the inclusion of \$750,000 in State funding to support a new rental subsidy initiative. The "Opening Doors" plan calls for an increase of 898 rent subsidized apartments. About half of the funding is anticipated to be raised by Rhode Island Housing and other PHAs.

FY	Rental Assistance Needed*	Funding from Others	State Funds Needed
2015	\$6,000,000	\$2,600,000	\$3,400,000
2016	\$8,200,000	\$4,100,000	\$4,100,000
2017	\$10,300,000	\$5,500,000	\$4,800,000

* reflects funding levels recommended in Opening Doors RI

2. *Supportive Services.* In addition to the operating funds (discussed above) and capital costs (discussed below), supportive housing requires services dedicated to the residents in these apartments. The Opening doors report identifies service costs but projects that they can be identified within the existing budgets of the departments already serving these residents. The HRC and ICH has the responsibility of achieving this linkage.

C. Creating Safe, Affordable Homes (FY'2015 - \$12,500,000 bond funds)

The State, through the office of Statewide Planning, is currently updating its housing plan. However, the previous report showed a deficit of 13,000 affordable homes and that several thousand homes have been permanently lost to foreclosure, abandonment and deterioration. The housing bond approved by voters in 2012 will provide \$12.5 million annually over the next 2 years (FY'14 & FY'15) to increase the supply of safe, affordable homes. This will be matched 5 times over to create 600 or so homes that will be safe and affordable to individuals and families for 30 or more years. Yet, more homes will likely need to be created in 2016 and beyond. Rather than issuing bonds every 2-4 years to the state should create a specific line item in the budget for housing creation. Hopefully federal and private funds will match this investment many times over to create job and good homes.

D. Lead Abatement - making homes safer (FY 2015 - Level funding at approx. \$500,000)

Rhode Island, while having some of the oldest and most lead painted homes in the country, has made major progress in reducing childhood lead poisoning. Maintaining level funding will also sustain the match needed to other federal lead abatement funds.

E. Homeownership Counseling (FY 2015 - Level funding at \$40,000)

In these challenging times, homeownership counseling for prospective and existing homeowners is critical to increasing successful homeownership levels.

Starting Point.

The Housing Resources Commission Budget for FY 2014 breaks down as follows:

Homeless Prevention and Assistance*	\$1,530,000
Rental Subsidy Initiative	\$750,000
Lead Abatement	\$500,000
Housing Counseling	\$40,000
Total State Appropriation	\$2,820,000

*Plus homeless prevention and assistance (Federal Funds): \$1,883,481
(\$1,368,000 - Title XX & \$515,096 - ESG)

2015 Housing Resources Commission Budget Request

A. Homeless Prevention and Assistance*	\$1,969,000
B. Rental Assistance	\$3,400,000
C. Creating Safe, Affordable Homes	**
D. Lead Abatement	\$500,000
E. Housing Counseling	\$40,000
Total State Appropriation	\$5,909,000

*Plus homeless prevention and assistance (Federal Funds): \$1,883,481.

** Plus Bond Funds at \$12,500,000.

Attachment 4

**RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE PLANNING PROGRAM
STATE PLANNING COUNCIL
One Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908
(401) 222-7901**

**RHODE ISLAND
HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION**

2014

RI Housing Resources Commission	
<i>Month</i>	<i>Date</i>
January	10th
March	28th
June	13th
October	10th
Conference Room A	
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	
Quarterly	

January						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
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February						
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April						
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July						
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October						
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December						
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28	29	30	31			