



# Housing Organizational Plan 2024

Prepared by the Rhode Island  
Department of Housing

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# Executive Summary

## Department of Housing Statutory Charge

Under Rhode Island General Law § 42-64.34-1, the Department of Housing is charged with developing and submitting a housing organizational plan to the General Assembly.

“On or before December 31, 2024, develop a housing organizational plan to be provided to the general assembly that includes a review, analysis, and assessment of functions related to housing of all state departments, quasi-public agencies, boards, and commissions. Provided, further, the secretary, with the input from each department, agency, board, and commission, shall include in the plan comprehensive options, including the advantages and disadvantages of each option and recommendations relating to the functions and structure of the department of housing, including suggested statutory revisions.”

## Why a Housing Organizational Plan?

RI continues to experience a housing crisis, which impacts individuals, families, communities, and the economy as a whole. While there has been progress in recent years – for example, in 2023, permitting for new housing increased to pre-Great Recession levels for the first time in over a decade – continued urgency is needed. The State’s ability to deliver on key housing strategies is determined in part by whether it is optimally structured to meet the moment. Implementing a governance structure that maximizes resources and aligns efforts will in turn facilitate progress on housing goals that improve Rhode Islanders’ lives.

## Housing Organizational Plan Approach

The development of the housing organizational plan occurred in four phases.

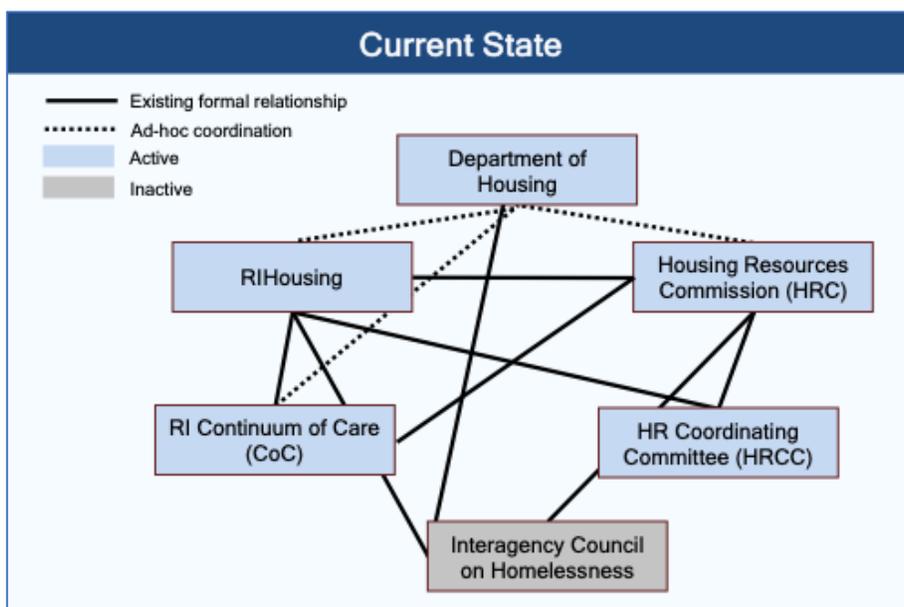


### Phase 1: Landscape Analysis

[\(See Phase 1: Landscape Analysis\)](#)

Phase 1 sought to understand the gaps and opportunities within the current system that should be addressed or built upon in an organizational plan. We conducted this landscape analysis by gathering data through stakeholder surveys, interviews, and a review of prior housing reports and current statutes. Through this process, we reviewed, analyzed, and assessed the current status of housing-related functions and identified the following general themes across policy areas, which were reviewed and affirmed by stakeholders.

1. The current governance structure is fragmented - the delineation of roles and responsibilities amongst entities is unclear and often duplicative - both in statute and in practice.
2. It is unclear how organizations are related to each other, causing a lack of cohesion and clarity in the function of housing development.
3. Several entities are charged with developing strategic plans for housing and for homelessness, but each plan has slightly different purposes and the interconnection and enforceability of the plans is unclear.
4. Entities are not structured or resourced optimally to achieve their goals.
5. Data is dispersed across agencies and programs, making it difficult to have a comprehensive picture of housing and homelessness gaps and opportunities.
6. The complexity of the current ecosystem - where authority and responsibility for policy and programs are dispersed across many entities - makes it difficult to track information or processes.



## Phase 2: Opportunity Criteria

*(See Phase 2: Initial Opportunity Criteria)*

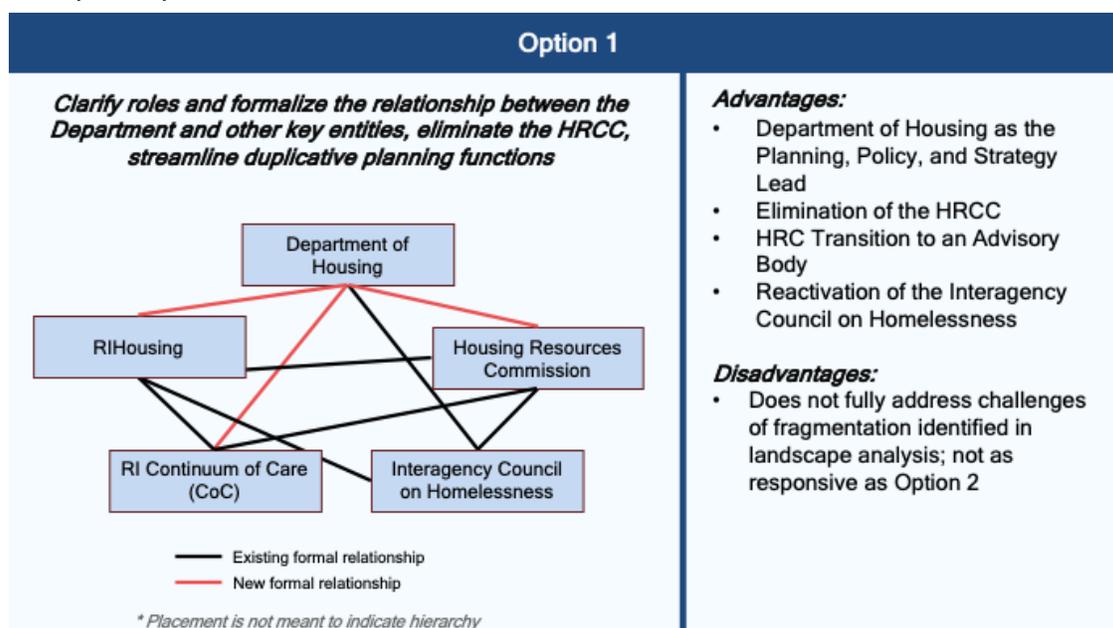
Having identified the gaps and challenges in the current structure, we then worked to define the qualities of a successful organizational structure. These “opportunity criteria” were shared with and affirmed by stakeholders. The final set of criteria are outlined below:

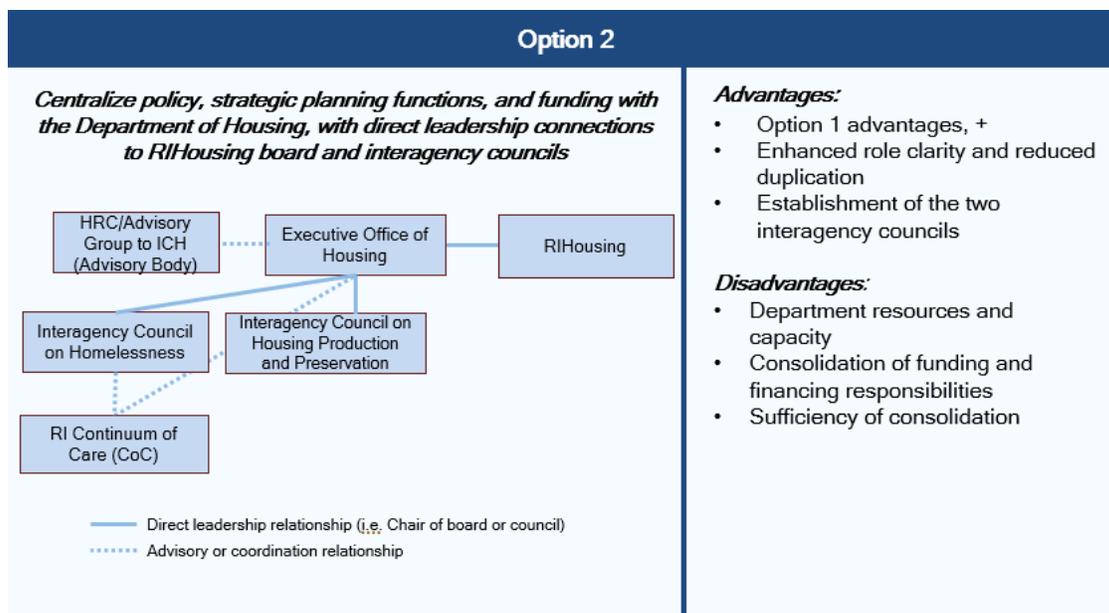
1. **Ensuring role clarity:** Reduce complexity for system users and establish clear roles, responsibilities, and relationships among housing and homelessness entities.
2. **Being proactive, not reactive:** Boost proactive and coordinated planning, program evaluation, innovation, and data activities.
3. **Maximizing resources and streamlining operations:** Ensure alignment in budgets, financing, and programs and state entities’ work on housing and homelessness.
4. **Ensuring transparency and accountability:** Clarify and streamline processes and systems for decision-making.

## Phase 3: Options Development

*(See Phase 3: Options Development)*

Building on the findings from Phase 1 and the opportunity criteria from Phase 2, we developed two potential options for consideration. These options focused on leveraging the core capacities of the core housing entities: Department of Housing, RIHousing, Housing Resources Commission (HRC), Housing Resources Coordinating Committee (HRCC), RI Continuum of Care (RiCoC), and the Interagency Council on Homelessness. Through discussions with stakeholders, we gathered perspectives on each of the options’ advantages and disadvantages. The two options presented are detailed below:





#### Phase 4: Recommendations for Housing Organizational Plan

[\*\(See Phase 4: Recommendations for Housing Organizational Plan\).\*](#)

The Department of Housing analyzed and incorporated stakeholder feedback on the options into a final recommendation that is responsive to the identified opportunities and stakeholder input.

The Department of Housing recommends moving forward with a consolidated governance model that aligns authority and responsibility to drive meaningful coordination across policy, planning, and financing, and in so doing, advance transparency and accountability. The Department of Housing recommends:

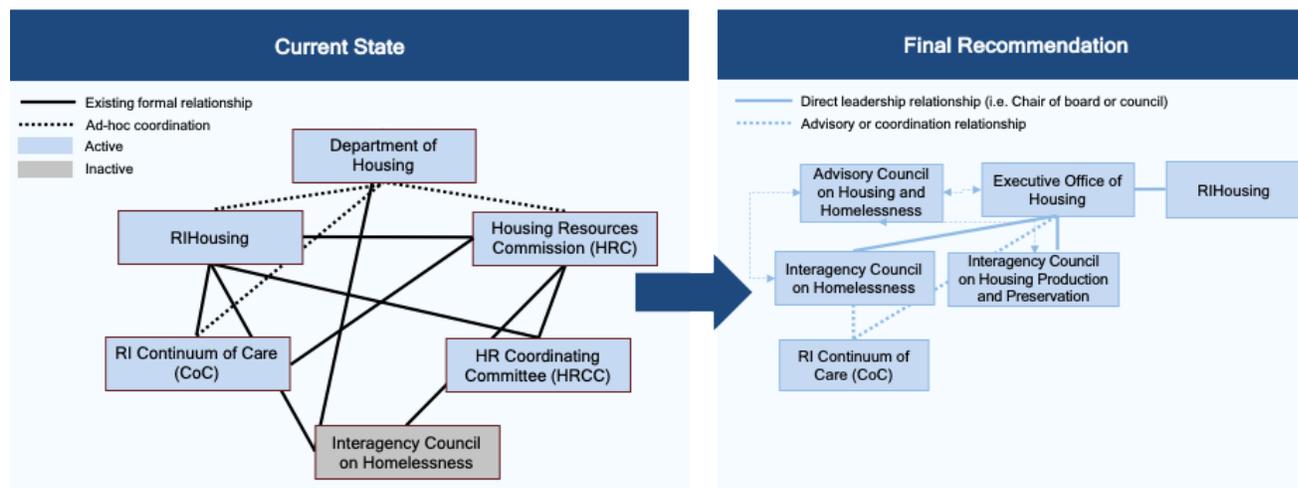
- Evolving the Department of Housing to become the Executive Office of Housing (EOH) with consolidated authority to lead statewide housing and homelessness strategy, drive interagency coordination, coordinate financing to achieve strategic plan goals, and support municipalities in navigating state systems and gaining technical assistance.
- Appointing the Secretary of Housing as the statutory chair of RIHousing to ensure a substantive tie between policymaking and financing. To maintain the current size and balance of RIHousing’s board of ex officio and appointed members, the Secretary of Housing would replace the Director of the Department of Business Regulation.
- Establishing two interagency councils to drive interagency coordination by reactivating the Interagency Council on Homelessness and creating an Interagency Council on Housing Production and Preservation.
- Consolidating the HRC and the Advisory Council to the Interagency Council on Homelessness into an overarching Advisory Council on Housing and Homelessness.

This body, comprised of community members, advocates, practitioners, impacted communities, and others would be charged with identifying emerging issues, providing input on key planning and policy decisions, and advancing transparency.

- Eliminating the Housing Resources Coordinating Committee (HRCC), with the Department of Housing taking on the responsibility for interagency coordination and the Housing Production Fund (HPF).
- Recommending that the RI Continuum of Care consider potential updates to the governance charter to ensure alignment with these state organizational plan changes, including using the Interagency Council on Homelessness for its ratification committee and, in the long-term, considering utilizing the Executive Office of Housing as the collaborative applicant to bring further alignment between CoC and Executive Office of Housing statewide planning functions.

We want to emphasize that this recommendation is meant to be a proposed “end-state” for housing governance at the state level. Of note, the Department of Housing believes that successful implementation will require a phased and comprehensive transition plan that ensures continuity of operations and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

### Final Recommendation



# HOUSING ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN OVERVIEW

## Housing Organizational Plan Purpose

In the FY25 Enacted Budget, the Department of Housing is charged with the following: “On or before December 31, 2024, develop a housing organizational plan to be provided to the general assembly that includes a review, analysis, and assessment of functions related to housing of all state departments, quasi-public agencies, boards, and commissions. Provided, further, the secretary, with the input from each department, agency, board, and commission, shall include in the plan comprehensive options, including the advantages and disadvantages of each option and recommendations relating to the functions and structure of the department of housing, including suggested statutory revisions.”

RI continues to experience a housing supply shortage, with the number of new units permitted annually still far below the current and anticipated need for housing. As a result, a significant portion - approximately one-third of households - faces critical housing affordability challenges, being rent burdened or cost burdened as homeowners. In addition, more Rhode Islanders are experiencing homelessness due to a lack of affordable, available housing options. A state housing planning process - *Housing 2030* - is underway to identify the current state of housing in Rhode Island, set statewide goals, and develop strategies to reach those goals. Please find more about the state housing plan here: <https://housing.ri.gov/data-reports/state-housing-plan-housing-2030>.

Where *Housing 2030* will help to define *what* needs to be done to preserve and grow accessible and affordable housing options, the development of a housing organizational plan will help to answer the question of *how* the executive branch of state government can best achieve its goals and implement its strategies:

- What structure at the state level will allow us to maximize efforts and resources across entities?
- How can we as a state continue to iterate to ensure the core capacity of each entity is being leveraged and clarify the roles and responsibilities across entities?

While the State plays a critical role in housing and homelessness policy, significant work to address housing and homelessness occurs beyond state government within communities, municipal governments, and the federal government. The intent of this report is to focus on the executive branch of state government's role and structure in further supporting local efforts and maximizing federal resources and policy. As a result, entities outside of the executive branch of state government are not addressed in this report.

## Housing Organizational Plan Approach

Three principles guided how the Department undertook the development of this housing organizational plan:

1. **Build on previous efforts:** There has been significant work done to review and consider the best approach for governance of housing functions in Rhode Island. This report builds on these efforts, instead of starting from scratch. Recent efforts include:
  - Boston Consulting Group Report, 2023
  - Visualizing RI's Ecosystem, 2022
  - Housing Department Governance Report, 2022
  - Previous Legislative Proposals, SFY 2021 and 2022
2. **Frame opportunities and trade-offs for consideration:** The Department did not come to this process with pre-defined answers; the Department aimed to ask many questions throughout this process, with the goal of framing opportunities and their tradeoffs.
3. **Iterative approach:** The Department continually provided updates on the report and had a process of iteration to ensure ongoing stakeholder engagement and input. The process was documented continuously on the Department of Housing website, including presentations from public meetings and open Zoom sessions for discussion. <https://housing.ri.gov/data-reports/housing-governance-report-2024>

## Housing Organizational Plan Process

The development of the housing organizational plan occurred in four phases.



# PHASE 1: LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

## Landscape Analysis Purpose

The goal of the landscape analysis phase of the housing organizational plan is to:

1. Review, analyze, and assess the current status of housing-related functions; and
2. Identify what is working well and what are opportunities for improvement in the current governance model.

It is important to emphasize that the landscape analysis looks at systems and structures, and how those systems and structures either support or impede housing functions. The identified opportunities for improvement informed the future phases of this process by defining what problems need to be addressed.

Of note, a critical strength of Rhode Island's housing ecosystem that came through in every part of the process is the exceptional people working in this field -- the dedicated professionals inside and outside of government and volunteers whose commitment to addressing housing and homelessness represents the state's greatest asset. This landscape analysis aims to identify structural gaps and opportunities for enhancement while preserving and further supporting these professionals and volunteers.

## Landscape Analysis Approach

To define the housing-related functions to review, we reviewed prior reports. In the *2023 Housing Supply and Homelessness in Rhode Island*, prepared for the RI Foundation by Boston Consulting Group (BCG), BCG identified four functions across six policy areas that housing departments may perform:

- **Functions:** strategy, enforcement, programs, and data tracking
- **Policy areas:** housing development, housing affordability, housing preservation, individual/family supports, climate/safety, and homelessness

We iterated on this framework and conducted a by-function review of the current state of housing governance, updating the policy areas to include:

1. **Housing Development:** Activities involving creation, redevelopment, and production of housing, including land use; construction; financing; permitting; infrastructure; predevelopment; and land assembly and disposition processes.
2. **Homeownership:** Activities supporting individuals or families in becoming homeowners, encompassing mortgage financing, real estate services; payment assistance; financial literacy; homeowner education; and homeownership data analysis.

3. **Housing affordability and access:** Activities that ensure housing affordability and stability, including housing vouchers; housing navigation support; state or federal programs to maintain housing (e.g., LIHEAP); landlord-tenant relationships; eviction prevention; monitoring deed restrictions; financing related to affordability requirements; housing affordability monitoring, and related financial mechanisms.
4. **Specialized housing:** Housing designed for specific populations or purposes, such as Assisted Living facilities, Transitional Housing, and Recovery Housing.
5. **Preservation, health, and safety of existing housing stock:** Activities related to maintaining housing habitability through home repair programs; programs that address health hazards (e.g., lead, radon, asbestos); building inspections; and enforcement of code requirements.
6. **Climate and energy:** Housing-related activities addressing climate resilience, climate adaptation, renewable energy, energy infrastructure, and energy efficiency.
7. **Homelessness:** Comprehensive activities related to addressing homelessness, including prevention, intervention, and planning activities.

Similarly, we refined the original BCG functional categories to include:

1. Strategic Planning
2. Enforcement/Regulation
3. Programs/Financing
4. Data

## Landscape Analysis Process

This landscape analysis included a detailed review of organizational survey results, state statute, prior report findings, and stakeholder interviews. The following sources were reviewed as part of the process of compiling information and perspectives on the existing housing governance landscape. A comprehensive list of all sources included in the Landscape Analysis can be found in [Appendix B](#).

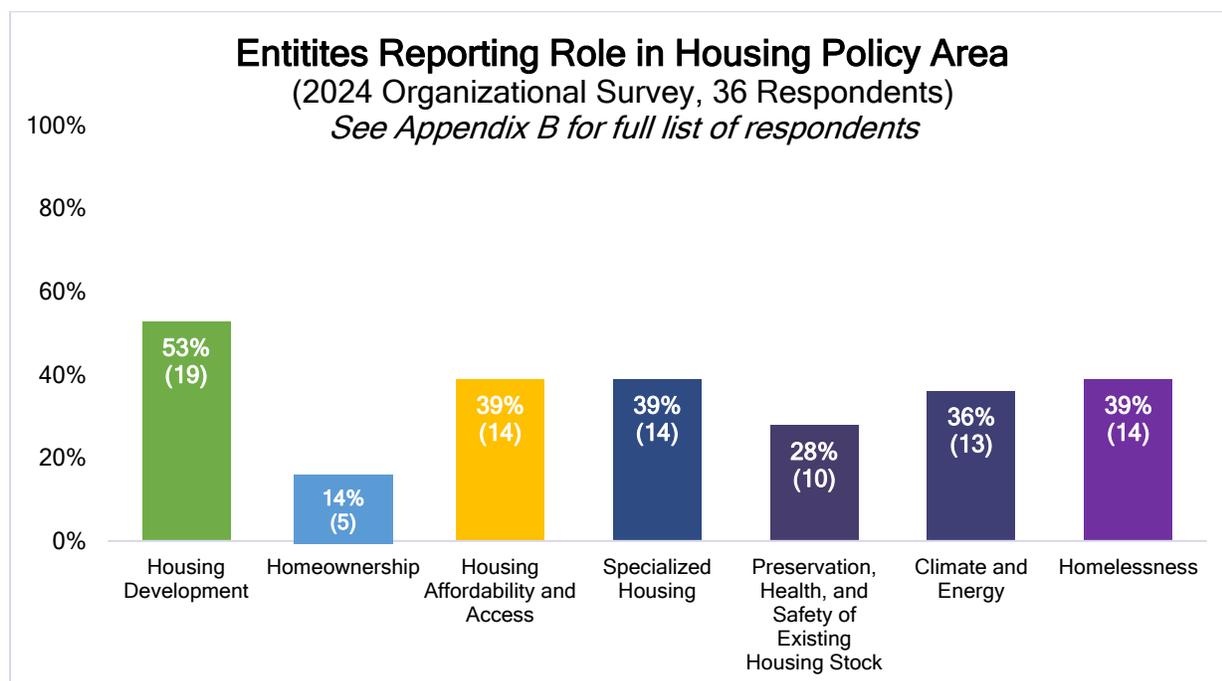
- **Survey of state departments, quasi-public agencies, commissions, and boards:** This survey was distributed to all state agencies and to relevant commissions, boards, and quasi-public entities, with some respondents indicating they do not have a direct role in housing and homelessness initiatives. There were 36 survey responses received as of November 2024.
- **Stakeholder survey:** There were four stakeholder survey responses received.
- **Stakeholder interviews:** 12 individual stakeholder interviews were conducted.

- **Review of existing reports:** Five reports were reviewed for analysis and inputs of current landscape and gaps/opportunities.
- **Review of existing statutes:** Five statutes were reviewed.

All of the above sources were analyzed by policy area and by function. Findings from across sources were synthesized to generate emerging analysis for each policy area. Detailed qualitative data is compiled in [Appendix A](#) to ensure that all readers have an opportunity to review the underlying inputs that led to the analysis.

## Review, Analysis, and Assessment of Current Housing-Related Functions

Currently, many state departments, quasi-public agencies, boards, and commissions (together “housing entities”) are involved in each function and policy area, demonstrating the complexity of the current landscape. Where some policy areas - such as housing development, housing affordability and access, specialized housing, and homelessness - have many entities involved, others such as homeownership have less engagement.



A summary of findings within each policy area is included below. Across all policy areas, a few general themes emerged:

1. **The current governance structure is fragmented - the delineation of roles and responsibilities amongst entities is unclear and often duplicative - both in statute and in practice.** Stakeholders identified the need for centralizing authority and resources to align efforts across all housing policy areas and enable proactive policymaking and innovation, with the Department of Housing serving as a primary facilitator among agencies.

2. **It is unclear how organizations are related to each other, causing a lack of cohesion and clarity in the function of housing development** - for example, the Department of Housing and RI Housing do not have a formal statutory relationship, except for the Secretary's charge to 'oversee all housing initiatives in the state of Rhode Island.' While the Department staffs the Housing Resources Commission (HRC), the Department and HRC similarly do not have a statutory relationship.
3. **Several entities are charged with developing strategic plans for housing and for homelessness, but each plan has slightly different purposes and the interconnection and enforceability of the plans is unclear.** As a result, programs and financing are not being implemented in a cohesive manner, potentially limiting the impact of the state's resources.
4. **Entities are not structured or resourced optimally to achieve their goals.** The Department of Housing has limited formal or informal structures to coordinate across housing and homelessness programs managed by other state agencies to fulfill its charge as the lead agency for housing, homelessness, and community development. The HRC in its current state is not optimally structured to execute on its broad mandate (of note, the Department and HRC have highly duplicative statutory roles). Resource gaps in staffing and funding are preventing entities from effectively executing their missions. Among other things, these resourcing challenges lead to long wait times for permitting, funding, and support, which in turn impedes municipalities, developers, and others from advancing their projects.
5. **Data is dispersed across agencies and programs, making it difficult to have a comprehensive picture of housing and homelessness gaps and opportunities.** Currently, many entities are required to produce regular reports, but the utility of these reports to drive policymaking is unclear. Enhanced data sharing between state agencies, community organizations, and boards and commissions could reduce duplicative work while providing a more comprehensive view of overall housing needs.
6. **The complexity of the current ecosystem - where authority and responsibility for policy and programs are dispersed across many entities - makes it difficult to track information or processes.** Stakeholders noted that this can lead to a sense of low government transparency and accountability. In addition, the dispersion of responsibility limits effective, regular communication and feedback opportunities about policies and programs, as it is unclear which entities are responsible for proactive communication of which opportunities.

## Emerging Analysis by Policy Area

### 1. Housing Development

- The relationship between various planning functions is unclear, including the hierarchy of plans, the responsibility and authority for creating plans, the authority to require

adherence to the plans, and the responsibility for implementing the plans. As a result, it is unclear where priorities are being set and how those priorities translate into policy and financing decisions. This leads to a dispersion of responsibility and misalignment in program priorities based on where a program/financing stream is situated. For example, the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) by statute is supposed to align to the State Guide Plan Element for housing, but there has not been a state housing plan adopted as the State Guide Plan Element since 2006. While the Department of Housing is developing a new one currently (Housing 2030), it is unclear how the QAP will be reviewed and approved to support alignment to the new guide plan element. In addition, the Housing Resources Commission is charged with broad strategic planning responsibilities, which are duplicative with the Department's strategic planning responsibilities.

- There is significant overlap in the statutes between several organizations, creating duplication of responsibility and lack of clarity of “who’s on first.” In particular:
  - Strategic Planning & Policy
    - Both the Department of Housing and Housing Resources Commission are tasked with developing state housing plans and policies
    - The Housing Resources Commission and Statewide Planning both have roles in the State Guide Plan for housing
    - Multiple entities (Department of Housing, HRC, RIHousing) must ensure their activities align with the State Guide Plan
  - Coordination Role
    - Both the Department of Housing and Housing Resources Commission are given broad mandates to coordinate housing activities across state agencies
    - The Department of Housing is designated as the "lead agency" while the HRC is tasked with "coordination of state housing functions"
    - Both are supposed to coordinate with municipalities and other state departments
    - The state maintains overarching policy-setting and guidance capabilities. Within this framework, the state grants municipal and local governments autonomy over zoning and land use decisions.
  - Housing Development & Financing
    - Both RIHousing and the Department of Housing have authority to acquire property and accept federal funds (of note, this is common for state agencies and quasi-public entities)

- RIHousing, the HRC, the Department of Housing, and the Housing Resources Coordinating Committee (via the Housing Production Fund) have roles in housing production and rehabilitation
    - Multiple entities can provide technical assistance to municipalities
  - Data Collection & Reporting
    - The Department of Housing, Housing Resources Commission, and RIHousing have research and reporting duties
    - Multiple entities collect and maintain housing-related data, with some overlap in metrics tracked
- Currently, development financing is available across several entities and a developer seeking to build affordable housing must navigate multiple separate processes. Organizations have worked to coordinate - especially in recent years - to do joint solicitations for programs or align timelines to minimize the burden on applicants, such as the consolidated funding rounds between RIHousing and the Department of Housing. While this structure has benefits - such as providing varying opportunities for developers and checks and balances within the system - overall, the dispersion of programs and varying timelines, rules, processes, and governance creates a confusing experience for users. While some of this variation may be due to federal requirements, there is an opportunity for the state to better align and optimize resources. In addition, the varying priorities of these funding streams seems to reflect organizational priorities rather than a comprehensive strategy for the state.
- Housing development programs are dispersed across entities based on the history of when the programs came into existence and which entities were able to administer them at the time. There is an opportunity in this housing organizational plan to define a more intentional approach going forward to the placement and/or governance of programs within the state structure so that programs that should be mutually reinforcing, braided/blended, or administered collectively sit together.
- Both the Department of Housing and RIHousing offer development-focused technical assistance programs for municipalities. Aligning these efforts could create a more robust municipal engagement platform and reduce complexity for municipalities seeking support from state government.
- Data is dispersed across agencies and programs, making it difficult to have a comprehensive picture of housing development gaps, opportunities, progress, and type to inform policymaking.

## 2. Homeownership

- Where other policy areas have several entities involved in ways that are duplicative, homeownership has many fewer entities involved (14% of survey respondents). Various

homeowner programs are owned by different entities: RIHousing provides mortgages, down payment assistance, and counseling; HRC funds counseling programs (administered by RIHousing); and the Department of Housing funds home repair programs.

- Homeownership is an important goal for the state, but in current statute and practice, there are not clearly defined roles and responsibilities, goals, or implementation strategies. There is an opportunity to more clearly identify and support innovative homeownership models and address proactive policy needs (i.e. re expansion of condos), etc. Across respondents, there is limited capacity or functions focused on foreclosure prevention or supports.

### 3. Housing Affordability and Access

- Housing affordability and access has similar challenges to housing development. There is fragmentation across state agencies, boards, and commissions with an unclear delineation of roles, and both the Department of Housing and the HRC are statutorily responsible for interagency/stakeholder coordination. This disconnect leads to information gaps, inefficient provision of programs, and fragmented service delivery. There is limited authority for incentivizing and/or enforcing housing affordability goals for municipalities across the state. Coordination with municipalities and public housing authorities is limited and ad-hoc.
- There may be additional opportunities to leverage technology to centralize and streamline processes for both employees and clients.
- Many priority populations - such as seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, etc. - are struggling to access affordable housing that meets their needs. However, there has historically been a gap in capacity or authority to convene partners and stakeholders to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to address these gaps. Stakeholder interviews note this as a role for the Department of Housing to fulfill.
- Clients often encounter multiple entry points into the housing system and are required to provide the same information to various agencies.
- Many entities are funding housing supports and housing navigation, but those efforts may be fragmented and resources available to clients may depend on which 'door' the client enters through due to a lack of coordination across entities. In particular, the Department of Human Services (DHS) notes a significant role in housing supports and navigation, as does RIHousing, RICoC, the HRC, and the Department of Housing through the Consolidated Homelessness Fund.

### 4. Specialized Housing

- The current structure of specialized housing programs has many gaps, for example in transitional housing services, leaving populations ineligible for supports. Additionally,

individuals and families experiencing urgent or unexpected housing challenges/needs may face barriers in accessing timely assistance. More coordinated policy development could ensure a continuum of services. This could include a review of current programs and eligibility criteria to identify areas for strengthened coordination or enhancements.

- State agencies that identify the needs for specialized housing and regulate specialized housing (for example, nursing homes or assisted living) are often not directly building or financing the development of that housing. As a result, data, policy, and financing for development and ongoing operations needs to be coordinated across a broader set of partners than traditional market rate or affordable housing development requires. The current system makes this type of coordination difficult, as many entities must be involved and align policy and resources for development and operations.

## 5. Preservation, Health, and Safety of Existing Housing Stock

- Similar to other housing policy areas, there are ongoing workforce and resource challenges within some agencies. Limited capacity combined with reactive responses to immediate housing needs impacts the ability to develop strategic, long-term solutions and meet housing objectives.
- Several agencies are engaged in regulatory oversight of health and safety, including the Department of Business Regulation, Department of Health, and the Department of Environmental Management. The HRC has statutory responsibility for lead hazard mitigation, which it has delegated to the Department of Health via MOU. There are regulatory gaps, as the Department of Health does not have authority over one- and two-family homes for asbestos or authority for regulating radon in any residential dwelling. There may be opportunities to reduce fragmentation and streamline regulatory oversight.
- Coordination and advancement of state priorities in preservation of federally assisted affordable housing involves regulatory requirements and encumbrances of federal agencies, generally HUD, and of RIHousing. This involves both federal public housing as well as housing owned by private non-profits and for-profit developers. This diverse portfolio of potentially at-risk housing has a considerable impact.

## 6. Climate and Energy

- The state could benefit from enhanced coordination and strategic planning that integrates climate and energy considerations, clearly defining roles and responsibilities across agencies and stakeholders for coordinated implementation.

## 7. Homelessness

- The current organizational structure and relationship between agencies/entities is unclear, contains potential redundancies, and presents administrative and authority challenges, suggesting a need to review and realign roles and responsibilities. For example, while the Department of Housing is statutorily the “lead agency for

homelessness” and operates the Consolidated Homelessness Fund, the RI Continuum of Care is based in RIHousing and its governance charter includes bringing funding decisions to the Housing Resources Commission for ratification.

- Similar to other policy areas, several entities have overlapping responsibilities to develop strategic plans for homelessness: the Department of Housing, the Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the RI Continuum of Care. These plans are currently out of date or under development, and there is currently no mechanism for ensuring that efforts are aligned rather than duplicative and that strategies are reflected in policy and funding decisions.
- Federal regulations that govern significant portions of the homelessness funding and programs in Rhode Island are multifaceted and must be carefully considered to ensure continued compliance while also pursuing system-wide improvements. Maximizing the use of this funding to achieve state-level goals across entities requires thoughtful coordination. Federal statute requires coordination activities, such as coordination between CoC and ESG recipients, and all CoC-funded projects must also seek Certification of Consistency with the Consolidated Plan of the relevant entitlement jurisdictions. RI has historically pursued collaboration through a joint funding committee, and stakeholders noted that updated or additional structural approaches to coordination would be beneficial.
- Clients may be working with several caseworkers simultaneously from various programs from Health and Human Services agencies and homelessness services. Several stakeholders noted the potential role of the Interagency Council on Homelessness, which has not met in several years, to support increased collaboration.
- The current data collection processes are fragmented, with agencies/entities collecting different metrics related to homelessness and housing insecurity. Integrating and centralizing data across the multiple sources that allows for more rapid self-serve analytics could support real-time data sharing, trend analysis, and program evaluation across agencies and stakeholders.

## PHASE 2: OPPORTUNITY CRITERIA

From the analysis, the following opportunity criteria have emerged for what a successful housing organizational plan would entail:

- 1. Ensuring role clarity: Reduce complexity for system users and establish clear roles, responsibilities, and relationships among housing and homelessness entities.**
  - Clarify roles and responsibilities, beginning with areas of statutory duplication and then identifying gaps and defining decision-making processes.
  - Modernize statutes to reflect organizational structure, scopes, and constitutional realities.
  - Establish governance structures that prevent conflicts of interest, align with best practices, and streamline communication with municipalities, providers, developers, clients, and other key stakeholders
  - Clarify and/or develop mechanisms for municipal partnership and coordination.
- 2. Being proactive, not reactive: Boost proactive and coordinated planning, program evaluation, innovation, and data activities.**
  - Strengthen strategic planning processes, ensuring that strategic plans are kept up to date.
  - Clarify coordination of and accountability for strategic planning functions and policymaking, including hierarchy and relationship among strategic plans.
  - Enhance data sharing, collaboration, and reporting between state agencies, community organizations, and boards and commissions to reduce duplicative work while providing a more comprehensive view of overall housing needs in the state.
  - Establish program evaluation process with performance metrics to track progress, identify bottlenecks, and inform process improvements.
  - Ensure meaningful role for stakeholders in planning processes and policy development.
- 3. Maximizing resources and streamlining operations: Ensure alignment in budgets, financing, and programs and state entities' work on housing and homelessness.**
  - Coordinate or consolidate budget processes to strengthen alignment with statewide strategy and policy goals.

- Coordinate or consolidate program application processes and program requirements to ensure funding sources are effectively leveraged and minimize complexity for applicants.
- Address resource gaps in staffing and funding to ensure housing organizations can effectively execute their missions.

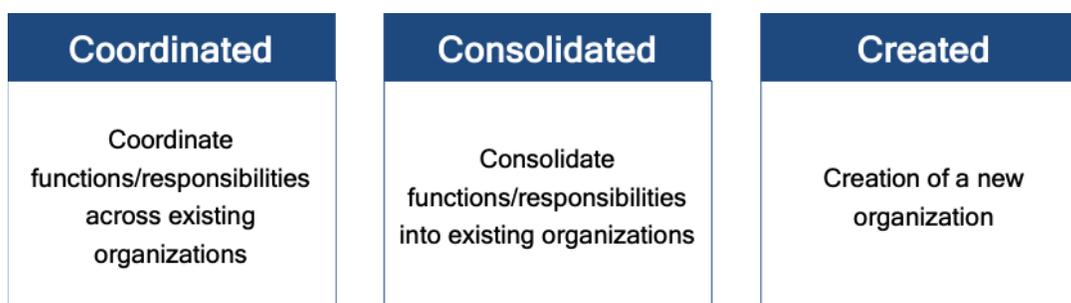
**4. Ensuring transparency and accountability: Clarify and streamline processes and systems for decision-making.**

- Align responsibility and authority across housing policy areas.
- Develop clear frameworks that empower stakeholders with the tools and resources they need to engage meaningfully.
- Standardize metrics for evaluating success of the housing and homelessness systems.

## PHASE 3: OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT

The analysis of the current housing and homelessness landscape in Rhode Island revealed a complex structure characterized by fragmented governance, overlapping responsibilities, and systemic inefficiencies. The goal of the options development phase was to rethink how departments, quasi-public agencies, commissions, and boards collaborate and align their efforts to create a more efficient, responsive system that effectively addresses the state's housing challenges.

To translate the findings from Phase 1 and 2 into actionable governance model options, we developed a framework that outlines three major governance approaches, as shown below. These approaches are not mutually exclusive and may be blended as needed to address various parts of building a governance model. At a high level, Coordinated is best suited to areas where different organizations each can bring unique advantages; Consolidated is best suited to reducing duplicative efforts; and Created is best suited to areas where no entity is currently fulfilling a gap or is positioned to do so.



### Assessment of Governance Model Types

We then assessed each of the three major governance model types against the four key opportunity criteria identified in Phase 2.

	Coordinated	Consolidated	Created
Opportunity Criteria	Coordinate functions/responsibilities across existing organizations	Consolidate functions/responsibilities into existing organizations	Creation of a new organization
Ensuring role clarity	✓ Clarifies, but does not reduce duplication/complexity in the system	✓+ Centralizes authority and resources, reducing duplication and complexity	- Risks more fragmentation/dispersion of roles and responsibilities
Being proactive, not reactive	✓ Aligns, but retains duplication in strategic planning roles and fragmentation in data collection	✓+ Centralizes responsibility for planning, evaluation, and data collection	- Risks more duplication/ fragmentation in planning, evaluation, and data collection
Maximizing resources and streamlining operations	✓ Aligns, but does not streamline operations and financing	✓+ Streamlines operations and maximizes resources	- Risks exacerbating resource gaps in staffing/funding
Ensuring transparency and accountability	✓ Aligns, but retains distributed decision-making and accountability	✓+ Streamlines decision-making processes and clarifies accountability	- Risks further distributing decision-making and accountability
	<b>Somewhat Responsive</b>	<b>Highly Responsive</b>	<b>Limited Responsiveness</b>

Recognizing that both the Coordination and Consolidation models demonstrated at least partial responsiveness to the opportunity criteria, the options development process focused on primarily leveraging these two approaches. The Creation approach was mostly excluded due to its potential to exacerbate existing governance challenges, but was considered for areas where no entity was positioned to fill a gap.

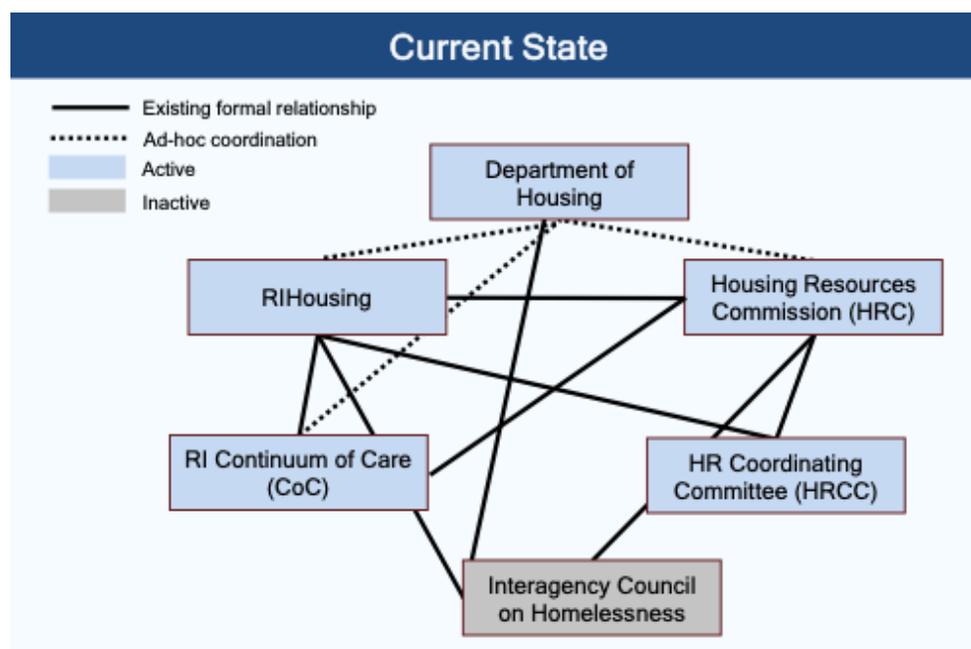
## Development of Options

A wide array of state departments, quasi-public agencies, boards, and commissions are involved in housing functions in the state, as documented in Phase I. Options development focused on the key housing entities at the core of RI's executive branch housing governance model. The first step was to identify the core capacity of each entity, based on its structure (details about the structure of each entity are outlined in **Appendix D**):

- **Department of Housing, *State Agency*.** As a state agency, the Department of Housing is best positioned to lead housing and homelessness policy development, convene and coordinate cross-agency initiatives, and ensure policy alignment and accountability across state entities related to housing. Among housing entities, the Department is unique in having the role of submitting state budget requests, which inform the Governor's annual budget proposal. It also is subject to oversight from the Governor and General Assembly.
- **RIHousing, *Quasi-public, Housing Finance Agency (HFA), and Public Housing Authority (PHA)*.** As a quasi-public agency, HFA, and PHA, RIHousing is best positioned to manage and monitor financing for housing development, preservation, and homeownership in a nimble manner as well as engage directly with clients and customers.
- **RI Continuum of Care (RiCoC), *Federally-Defined Entity*.** RiCoC is best positioned to fulfill the Federal CoC requirements, which include operating the CoC, designating the HMIS, and conducting CoC planning.
- **Housing Resources Commission (HRC), *Cross-Sector Commission Established by Statute*.** The HRC is best positioned to assemble stakeholders to address emerging and priority needs from diverse perspectives and advise the State on housing and homelessness planning and policy.
- **Interagency Council on Homelessness, *Council Established by Statute*.** The Interagency Council is best positioned to facilitate interagency collaboration to prevent homelessness and advise on policy development and strategic planning to address homelessness across agencies, with the Advisory Group providing advisory recommendations to the Interagency Council.

- **Housing Resources Coordinating Committee (HRCC), *Committee Established by Statute***. At this time, the HRCC’s purpose is unclear, and duplicative of the Department of Housing.

For reference, a simplified visualization of how these entities currently relate to each other is provided below.



*\*Spatial orientation of entities in this graphic does not imply hierarchy*

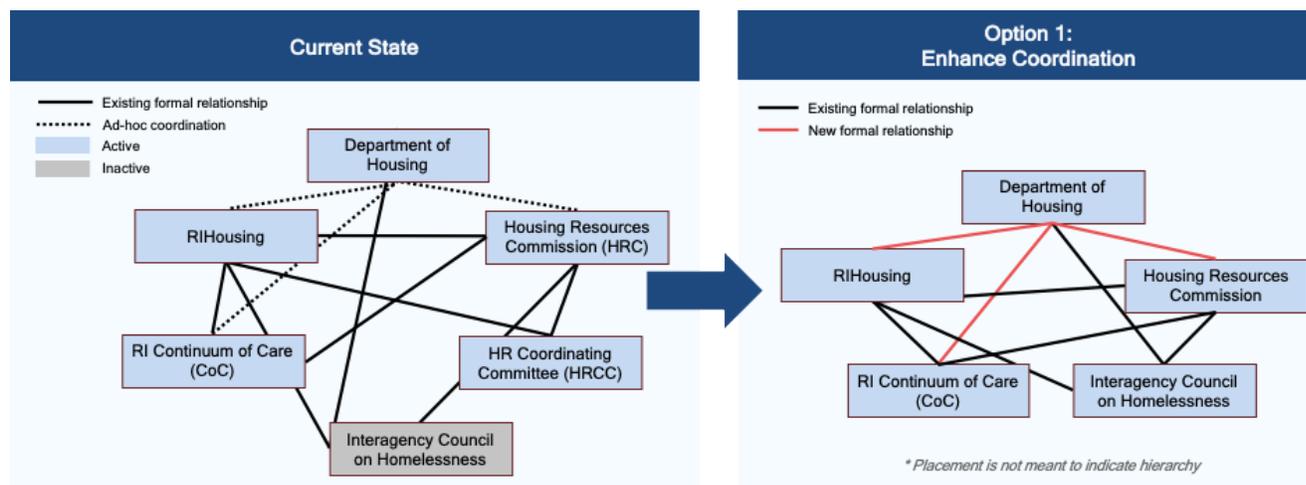
With this foundation, we developed options for consideration that leverage the core capacity of each of the entities. It is important to note that the proposed options described below represent potential “end states” for housing governance. Implementation would require a comprehensive, phased change management plan, with ongoing stakeholder engagement and flexibility to adapt to evolving housing needs and challenges. The Department of Housing anticipates that a detailed transition plan will need to be developed once an end state goal is defined. That transition plan will require focused and thoughtful attention and should be carefully and incrementally managed to ensure continuity of operations.

## Option 1

Option 1 focuses on clarifying existing relationships, enhancing structural connections to enable coordination, and includes some consolidation of functions. At a high level, Option 1 would consolidate planning and policy development functions into the Department of Housing by eliminating the HRCC and updating the HRC’s statute to become an advisory body. The Department’s connection with RIHousing would be formalized as a statutory member of the board. The Interagency Council on Homelessness would be reinstated, with the Department officially chairing the body to drive interagency coordination on homelessness strategies and

goals. To address role clarity in homelessness, Option 1 recommends the development of a formal coordination MOU among entities.

The model recognizes the value of existing entity expertise and experience and allows each housing entity to retain a level of autonomy and independence, potentially offering a more incremental governance restructuring option while also creating more direct pathways for interagency coordination.



## Option 1 Proposed Changes by Entity

### Department of Housing

This proposed option will align responsibility and authority for strategic planning and policy development under the Department of Housing. Under this option, the Department will become responsible for conducting the Consolidated Plan, developing the State Housing Guide Plan Element, and creating the strategic plan to end homelessness. In order to align state financing for housing and homelessness, the Housing Production Fund will move under the purview of the Department. The Department will also become a statutory member of both the RIHousing Board and the HRC, with the latter transitioning to become an advisory body to the Department and being staffed by it. Additionally, the Department will chair and staff the Interagency Council on Homelessness, taking over its policy and planning responsibilities to more effectively execute the homelessness strategy.

### Housing Resources Commission (HRC)

The HRC will become the core advisory body for housing to the State, with the power to assemble relevant stakeholders to advise on emerging or priority needs. Its planning and policy development functions will be consolidated into the Department of Housing. In addition, the HRC's direct management responsibilities will move to executive branch agencies that have staff capacity (e.g., lead mitigation moves to RIDOH).

### **Housing Resources Coordinating Committee (HRCC)**

The HRCC will be eliminated, with the Department of Housing taking on the responsibility for interagency coordination and the Housing Production Fund (HPF).

### **RIHousing**

The Department of Housing will become a statutory member of the RIHousing Board and will take on the responsibility for conducting the Consolidated Plan.

### **RI Continuum of Care (RiCoC)**

The proposed changes will enhance current federally required coordination activities by establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clearly defines the roles, responsibilities, and collaborative framework across the Department, Continuum of Care, and Interagency Council on Homelessness, with a specific focus on formalizing the Funding Committee.

### **Interagency Council on Homelessness**

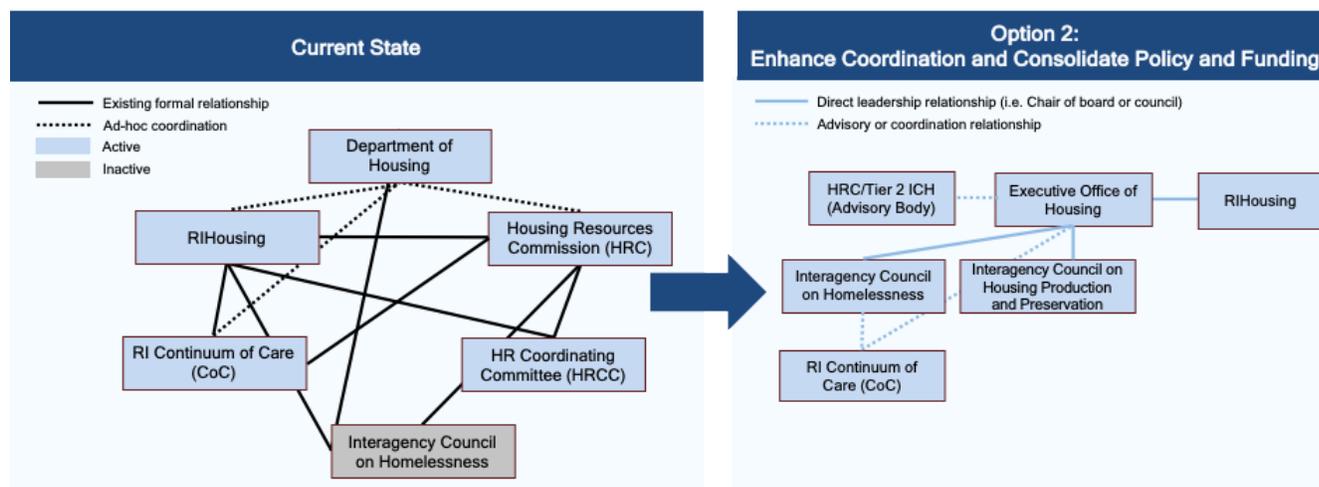
The Interagency Council on Homelessness will be reactivated, with the Department chairing and staffing the council. All policy and planning responsibilities for the Council will transition to the Department to support the execution of the homelessness strategy that the Department will develop, in collaboration with the Interagency Council and the Advisory Committee.

## **Option 2**

Option 2 builds upon aspects of Option 1 and further consolidates policy, strategic planning, and funding functions within the Department of Housing, with direct leadership connections to RIHousing's board and interagency councils. By consolidating functions within an Executive Office of Housing, this proposed model aims to address current system fragmentation and reduce existing duplication of roles and responsibilities, as well as increase accountability by aligning authority and responsibility. This approach is intended to create a more unified housing organizational structure that would streamline operations and decision-making while also leveraging existing organizational experience and expertise, enabling a more efficient and coordinated response to the housing challenges identified in the landscape analysis.

Option 2 would evolve the Department of Housing into an Executive Office of Housing in which authority and responsibility for driving housing and homelessness planning and policy across state government is explicit. This is achieved by having the Secretary of Housing chair the reinstated Interagency Council on Homelessness, a new Interagency Council on Housing Production and Preservation, and the RIHousing board. In addition, similar to Option 1, the HRCC would be eliminated and the Housing Production Fund would be moved to the Executive Office of Housing, streamlining management of state funding. Option 2 also recommends that federal programs at RIHousing be reviewed for potential transition to the Executive Office of

Housing. Similar to Option 1, the Housing Resources Commission would become advisory, but its membership would be updated to only include non-governmental partners and it would be merged with the advisory body to the Interagency Council on Homelessness, thereby creating an overarching community advisory body that has the same scope for housing and homelessness as the Executive Office of Housing.



## Option 2 Proposed Changes by Entity

### Department of Housing

As described in Option 1, the Department will become responsible for conducting the Consolidated Plan, developing the state housing guide plan element, and creating the strategic plan to end homelessness. In order to align state financing for housing and homelessness, the Housing Production Fund will move under the purview of the Department.

In addition, the Department of Housing will become an "Executive Office of Housing" with statutory requirements for coordinating other housing agencies and entities. The Secretary of Housing will chair the Interagency Council on Homelessness and a new Interagency Council on Housing Production and Preservation. Through these councils comprised of relevant state agencies, the Executive Office of Housing will drive interagency coordination and implementation of state housing and homelessness plans. The Executive Office of Housing and RIHousing will collaboratively determine which federal housing programs should be transitioned to the Executive Office, and the Secretary of Housing will assume a leadership role as chair of the RIHousing board. To streamline governance, the HRC and the Advisory Council to the Interagency Council on Homelessness will be consolidated into an overarching Advisory Council on Housing and Homelessness, with administrative support provided by the Executive Office.

## **HRC**

The HRC and the Advisory Council to the Interagency Council on Homelessness will be consolidated into an overarching Advisory Council on Housing and Homelessness. This new council's membership will be updated to focus on community partners, impacted communities, experts, and advocates, with the Executive Office providing administrative support. This body will have the power to assemble relevant stakeholders to advise on emerging or priority needs. The HRC's direct management responsibilities will move to executive branch agencies that have staff capacity (e.g., lead mitigation moves to RIDOH).

## **HRCC**

As described under Option 1, the HRCC will be eliminated, with the Department of Housing taking on the responsibility for interagency coordination and the Housing Production Fund (HPF).

## **RIHousing**

To enable stronger alignment between the state policy and housing financing decisions, the Secretary of Housing will have a direct leadership connection, serving as the statutory chair of the board. The Executive Office and RIHousing will collaboratively determine which federal housing programs should be transitioned to the Department, and moving forward, the Executive Office will be responsible for developing future Consolidated Plans.

## **RICoC**

In Option 2, it is recommended that, during the next federal cycle, the RCoC consider naming the Department as the collaborative applicant to further consolidate and enhance coordination, especially in regards to strategic planning activities. Additionally, given that the HRC would be an advisory body in this option, it is recommended that the RCoC consider engaging the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) as the body to ratify funding decisions. This would help ensure stronger coordination between the CoC's funding and the various funding streams overseen by the members of the Interagency Council that can support homelessness prevention and response, such as TANF.

## **Interagency Council on Homelessness**

As described in Option 1, the Interagency Council on Homelessness will be reactivated, with the Executive Office chairing and staffing the council. All policy and planning responsibilities will be consolidated into to the Executive Office, and the Interagency Council will advise on the development of the plan and support the execution of the homelessness strategy.

Under Option 2, the Housing Resources Commission and the Advisory Council to the Interagency Council on Homelessness will be consolidated into an overarching Advisory Council on Housing and Homelessness. The new council's membership will be updated to focus on community partners, impacted communities, experts, and advocates, with the Executive Office providing administrative support.

## Options Assessment and Stakeholder Feedback

To review the options and discuss benefits, considerations, and overall feedback, the Department posted a summary presentation of the options on its website, emailed the slides to stakeholders, and hosted three virtual, open forums for discussion. Across the three forums, 44 participants from various agencies, organizations, and advocacy groups joined to discuss and provide feedback on the proposed governance model options. During these forums, participants actively engaged with the department and had the opportunity to offer suggestions, raise concerns, ask any clarifying questions, and provide ideas for further consideration.

In addition to the virtual forums, the Department shared the drafted options and provided alternative feedback channels. Stakeholders who could not attend the scheduled forums were invited to submit comments via email or schedule individual calls with the Department of Housing.

The engagement process generated feedback representative of the diverse perspectives of participating stakeholders. The following summary captures the key feedback that emerged from this process.

### General Feedback

Stakeholders highlighted a few general concerns:

- Stakeholders generally highlighted the need for additional details on proposed role and responsibility changes. For example, they expressed interest in seeing additional details regarding statutes the Department is considering modifying, proposed membership of new and existing advisory/interagency bodies, and details on any changes in administration of existing housing programs.
- Stakeholders expressed concerns about potential federal policy shifts associated with the incoming administration that could affect state-level housing initiatives and urged the department to prepare for potential impacts.
- Stakeholders raised concerns about the report submission timeline, highlighting the need for extensive stakeholder engagement and suggesting that more time would be needed to develop a more specific proposal.

### Option 1 Stakeholder Feedback

There was general consensus around key organizational changes proposed under Option 1, with stakeholders agreeing that this option would help to reduce some duplication and create further role clarity among the existing housing entities. However, many stakeholders saw this option as an incremental approach and too limited to address the significant challenges identified in the landscape analysis. While this proposed option would avoid significant organizational disruptions, it could also continue to perpetuate existing system inefficiencies.

## Advantages

Stakeholders generally voiced support for the following key aspects of Option 1.

### 1. Department of Housing as the Planning, Policy, and Strategy Lead

- Stakeholders commented that the Department is appropriately positioned to lead the development of housing planning documents, including the State Strategic Housing Plan, Plan to End Homelessness, Consolidated Plan, and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing. Centralizing these planning functions under the Department will ensure strategic alignment and coordination across entities.

### 2. Elimination of the HRCC

- Stakeholders generally supported the elimination of the HRCC and transition of responsibilities to the Department of Housing in order to further formalize relationships and reduce existing system duplication of roles and responsibilities, leading to a more streamlined and coordinated approach to housing policy and strategy.

### 3. HRC Transition to an Advisory Body

- Stakeholders generally supported the proposal to transform the HRC into an advisory body, leveraging existing expertise and recognizing its potential to provide strategic guidance to the Department as it relates to housing policy and strategic plan development.

### 4. Reactivation of the Interagency Council on Homelessness as an Advisory Body

- Stakeholders generally supported the reactivation of the Interagency Council on Homelessness, recognizing the opportunity to align departmental responsibilities for housing and homelessness. The Department of Housing would chair and staff the council, which has been inactive for multiple years, creating a more coordinated and strategic approach.

## Disadvantages

- Many stakeholders noted that Option 1 was not as responsive as Option 2 in addressing the full range of challenges related to the fragmentation of entities and duplication of roles and responsibilities that exists in the current system.

## Option 2 Stakeholder Feedback

Stakeholders who voiced a preference generally preferred Option 2, noting that this option would provide greater role clarity and formalize alignment of key entities. Stakeholders noted

that this option was a more substantive change to governance that had the potential to more fully address the fragmentation identified in the landscape analysis. Stakeholders debated certain aspects of the proposal, expressed reservations about specific aspects, and offered considerations that the Department of Housing would need to carefully examine if moving forward with Option 2.

### **Advantages**

There was general consensus around the key organizational changes proposed under Option 1, which were extended to Option 2 as well. In addition to the advantages of Option 1, stakeholders highlighted the following key advantages of Option 2.

#### **1. Enhanced Role Clarity and Reduced Redundancy**

- Stakeholders spoke to the benefits of further role and responsibility clarity, noting the duplicative work being done across housing entities, and the level of confusion and frustration it generates amongst all stakeholders, including but not limited to developers, municipalities, and individuals accessing housing services. Stakeholders noted that Option 2 had the potential to reduce redundancy and drive greater alignment and integration than Option 1 by explicitly positioning the Department of Housing to play a leadership role in ensuring alignment and coordination across agencies and entities on key policy, planning, and funding priorities. Option 2 was noted as aligning responsibility and authority into the Department, a key challenge of the current system.
- Some stakeholders expressed that having the Secretary be the statutory chair of RIHousing would ensure that funding decisions aligned with the high-level housing goals and policies of the state.

#### **2. Establishment of Interagency Councils**

- While stakeholders debated the merits of combining or separating housing and homelessness (as noted in the Considerations section below), they generally saw the establishment of the proposed interagency councils as an effective mechanism for ensuring the Department could drive interagency alignment and coordination and noted the importance of having a forum for all involved state agencies to align and cohere on priorities.

### **Disadvantages**

Stakeholders voiced concerns about certain aspects of Option 2, highlighting the following disadvantages in particular.

#### **1. Department of Housing Capacity and Resources**

- Stakeholders raised some concerns about the Department of Housing's capacity to take on additional responsibilities, citing particular concerns about the recent creation of the Department and leadership transitions since establishment of the Department.
- Stakeholders highlighted concerns about the need for the state to resource the Department adequately to take on new responsibilities. Some expressed concern that consolidation and centralization within the Department of Housing may reduce the available pool of staffing resources for existing housing entities.

## **2. Consolidation of Financing and Funding Responsibilities**

- Some stakeholders expressed reservations about the proposal to statutorily make the Secretary of Housing the Chair of the RIHousing Board due to potential political influence on decisions, expressing a preference for the Option 1 alternative in which the Secretary would join as a board member. Stakeholders noted the importance of maintaining RIHousing's independence as an HFA to uphold its credibility in the national development community.
- Stakeholders noted concern about the RICoC funding decisions being ratified by the ICH, because it should have independence from state government. However, with the HRC becoming advisory, discussion should occur about where funding decisions would be elevated.

## **3. Sufficiency of Consolidation**

- Some stakeholders expressed reservations that Option 2 did not go far enough in pursuing consolidation of responsibilities, and encouraged a more direct oversight role for the Department of Housing over all housing and homelessness programs, especially over funding and financing decisions.

### **Other Considerations**

While stakeholders who voiced a preference in conversations generally preferred Option 2, they debated certain aspects of the proposal and urged the Department to carefully consider the following elements.

#### **1. Transition of Federal Programs from RIHousing to the Department of Housing**

- Stakeholders raised concerns about the State's ability to distribute resources in a nimble manner that would be responsive to development timelines. Some cautioned that the State should carefully consider what programs will be transitioned from RIHousing to the Department, noting the following considerations:
  - Staffing expertise
  - Organizational capacity and authority

- Avoiding duplication of roles/responsibilities associated with transferring programs
- Articulating an overall criteria for selecting which programs would be considered for transition.

## **2. Combining vs. Separating Housing and Homelessness**

- Stakeholders discussed the proposed creation of two distinct interagency councils under Option 2 - one focused on housing production and preservation and one focused on homelessness. Some stakeholders were supportive of this distinction as it would provide a forum for discussion of relevant issues and protect against the risk of de-prioritizing homelessness in the case that housing and homelessness were combined under one entity.
- Other stakeholders voiced a preference for consolidating housing and homelessness into a single interagency council in order to emphasize the importance and interconnectedness of both issues, raising concerns that participants and conversations would be redundant across two separate entities.

## **3. Department of Housing's Relationship with RICoC**

- Acknowledging that designation of the collaborative applicant is the decision of the CoC, stakeholders noted that the CoC is currently supported by staff at RIHousing, which serves as the CoC's collaborative applicant. RIHousing provides in-kind administrative support for CoC operations that may not be replicable in a state agency. Stakeholders noted that the CoC is subject to distinct federal rules and requirements, which would need to be deeply considered in any potential change.

## **4. Defining Advisory Body Roles, Responsibilities, and Representation**

- Stakeholders requested additional detail around the envisioned roles, responsibilities, and representation of the proposed interagency councils and the HRC under Option 2. Stakeholders noted that advisory groups are most useful when there is specificity provided about their purview and tasks.

## **5. Interagency and Municipal Engagement and Coordination**

- Stakeholders commented that the Department should also consider playing a leadership role in engaging with municipalities and that there should be consolidation of municipal programs as they relate to housing within the Department.

## **6. Department of Housing Research and Data Analysis Capacity and Resources**

- Stakeholders also commented on the need for the Department to establish a research and data analysis function which would serve the following purposes:

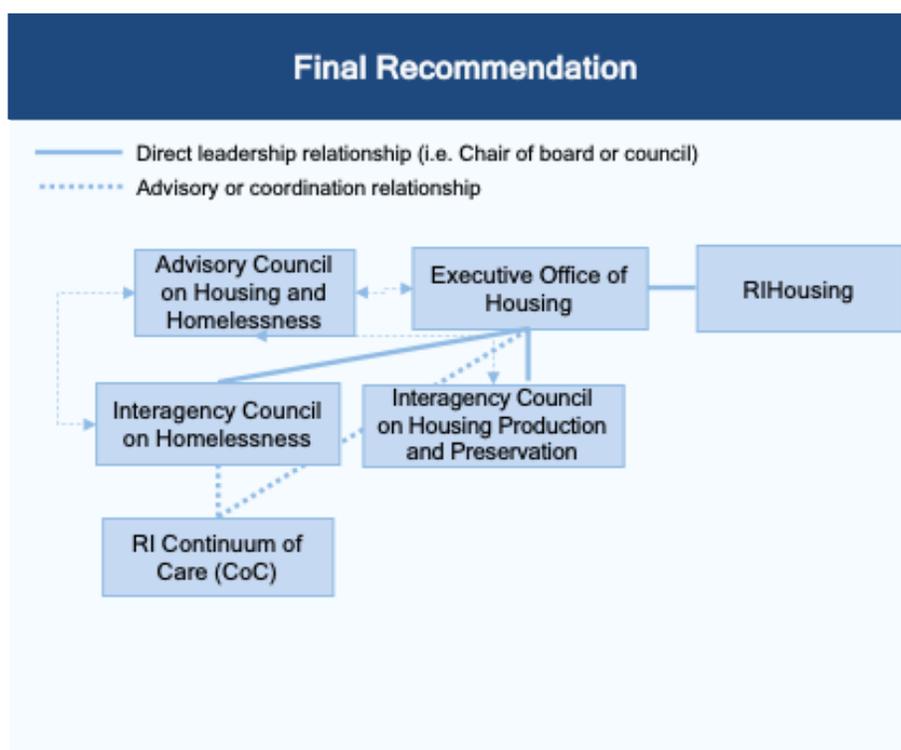
providing insights to guide strategic planning, informing housing policy decisions, ensuring accountability, and enabling tracking of strategy and policy implementation effectiveness.

- Stakeholders noted that more specifics should be added regarding reporting requirements, with the goal of streamlining the number of reports and ensuring that all data collection is relevant.

## PHASE 4: RECOMMENDATION FOR HOUSING ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

The options developed through this process represent potential governance models to further advance goals in housing and homelessness in Rhode Island.

Upon reflection on the feedback from stakeholders and the advantages and disadvantages of potential models, the Department recommends moving forward with a modified version of Option 2, as visualized below.



This model would align authority and responsibility in the Executive Office of Housing in a way that it could fulfill the goal of driving meaningful coordination across state government to achieve shared housing and homelessness goals, as well as ensure a substantive tie between policymaking and financing through the Chair position on RI Housing's board. Transparency and accountability would be strengthened by identifying the state leader on housing and homelessness who has both responsibility and authority, rather than the current dispersion across entities. The community advisory council will have a meaningful role in identifying emerging issues, providing input on key planning and policy decisions, and ensuring transparency.

Based on stakeholder feedback, the Department recommends the following modifications to Option 2:

- *Advisory Council on Housing and Homelessness*: Provide specific tasks for the Advisory Council that are substantive, discrete, and leverage the broad range of experience at the Council. In addition, make explicit that recommendations from the Advisory Council can be directed to the Executive Office or either of the Interagency Councils for consideration.
- *RIHousing Board*: To maintain the current size and composition of the body, recommend replacing the Department of Business Regulation Director as a statutory member and replacing with the Secretary of Housing, who would be the statutory chair.
- *Municipal support consolidation*: Consolidate municipal support into the Executive Office of Housing to have a 'one-stop-shop' as much as possible to support municipalities in navigating state systems and gaining technical assistance.

Below, the Department has provided a more specific write-up of the proposed housing organizational plan, which includes notations on which aspects would require statutory changes (*denoted ▲*):

#### **Executive Office of Housing**

- ▲ The Department of Housing would become the Executive Office of Housing (EOH), and agencies would be statutorily required to coordinate with the EOH on matters relating to housing and homelessness.
- ▲ EOH would lead strategy and policy on housing and homelessness for the state, including being responsible for core planning activities:
  - Consolidate current HRC planning, policy, and programmatic statutory responsibilities into EOH
  - Develop the statewide housing guide plan element on a regular basis, such as requiring completion one year before the next HUD-required Consolidated Plan is due
  - Take on responsibility for the development of the Consolidated Plan and the Qualified Allocation Plan, in collaboration with RIHousing
  - Consolidate current Interagency Council on Homelessness statutory planning and policy responsibilities into EOH
- ▲ EOH would drive interagency coordination to implement the statewide goals on housing and homelessness through chairing two interagency councils, comprised of relevant state agencies (see below). Relevant language in the HRC and HRCC statutes would be removed or updated to reflect EOH's lead role in interagency coordination.

- ▲ State funding for housing and homelessness would be streamlined within EOH to ensure alignment between strategy and program/financing decisions, including Housing Production Fund and general obligation bond funding for housing. EOH and RIHousing will collaboratively determine which federal housing programs should be transitioned to EOH.
- ▲ To ensure alignment between strategy/policy and development financing, the Secretary of Housing would become the statutory chair of the RIHousing Board. To maintain the existing balance of ex officio and appointed board members, the Secretary of Housing would replace the Director of Business Regulation on the board.
- ▲ EOH would assume responsibility and ongoing maintenance of the State's Low- and Moderate-Income Housing chart. Relevant language in the EOH and RIHousing statutes would be removed or updated to reflect this modification.
- ▲ Municipal support on housing would be consolidated into EOH, with the Municipal Technical Assistance Program moving from RIHousing to EOH. In addition, EOH would share responsibility for review of municipal comprehensive plans with the Chief of Statewide Planning.
- ▲ EOH would be advised by the Advisory Council on Housing and Homelessness (see below).

#### **Advisory Council on Housing and Homelessness**

- ▲ The HRC and the Advisory Council to the Interagency Council on Homelessness would be consolidated into an overarching Advisory Council on Housing and Homelessness by statute.
- ▲ Membership would be updated to solely include community partners, impacted communities, experts, and advocates that represent many perspectives on housing and homelessness. EOH would provide administrative support.
- ▲ The Advisory Council would be specifically empowered to:
  - Advise on the development of state strategic plans - such as by serving as the Steering Committee for the State Guide Plan Element -- and reviewing updates on progress in achieving the goals of the strategic plans;
  - Consider and make recommendations on all matters submitted to the Committee by the EOH or either of the Interagency Councils;
  - Advise and make recommendations to EOH on the preparation and promulgation of guidelines, rules and regulations;
  - At the request of EOH, assemble relevant stakeholders - including those not officially on the Advisory Council -- into subcommittees or task forces to address

emerging or priority needs, and make relevant recommendations to EOH or the Interagency Councils.

- ▲ The Council would meet at least quarterly.

#### **Interagency Council on Housing Production and Preservation**

- ▲ As a new interagency council, the Interagency Council on Housing Production and Preservation would need to be established in statute. The Council would be charged with accomplishing strategic goals related to housing production and preservation identified in the state housing plan. This would include but not be limited to issues of reducing barriers to development, with a focus on development of affordable housing; aligning policy and programs to accelerate housing production; addressing housing preservation; collaborating on healthy homes initiatives; and projecting future needs for housing, with a focus on identifying the types of housing needed for priority populations. The Council will also consider recommendations made by the Advisory Council.
- ▲ Membership of the Council would, at minimum, include the following state departments or quasi-public agencies with direct production or preservation roles: RI Housing, Department of Business Regulation (DBR), Department of Environmental Management (DEM), Executive Office of Commerce (EOC), Department of Labor and Training (DLT), Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), Department of Health (RIDOH), Office of Healthy Aging (OHA), Office of Veterans Affairs (VETS); Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH); Department of Administration (DOA); and Department of Corrections (DOC). Additional attendees could include the Public Finance Management Board and the Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.
- ▲ The Council would meet at least quarterly.

#### **Interagency Council on Homelessness**

- ▲ The Interagency Council on Homelessness would be charged with taking a whole-of-government approach to ending homelessness by advising on the development of and supporting implementation of the strategic plan to end homelessness. This would include but not be limited to identifying gaps in services that lead to people experiencing homelessness; reducing inflow into the homeless emergency response system; aligning policy and programs to maximize resources and remove barriers to supports; and prioritizing people experiencing homelessness for programs and opportunities that would sustainably move them out of homelessness. In addition, the Council would support homelessness response during winter or emergency events, such as pandemics or natural disasters. The Council will also consider recommendations made by the Advisory Council.

- ▲ The Interagency Council on Homelessness membership would be updated in statute to include: Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS); Medicaid Director; Department of Human Services (DHS); Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF); Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (BHDDH); Department of Health (RIDOH); Office of Health Aging (OHA); Office of Veterans Services (VETS); Department of Labor and Training (DLT); Department of Education (RIDE); and the Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA). In addition, the Chair of the RI Continuum of Care would be a member of the Council to support coordination and alignment with the CoC.
- ▲ The Council would meet at least quarterly.

### RIHousing

- ▲ To support alignment between the state housing plan and development financing priorities, the Secretary of Housing would become the statutory chair of RIHousing. To maintain the existing balance of ex officio and appointed board members, the Secretary of Housing would replace the Director of Business Regulation on the board. Development of the Consolidated Plan and Qualified Allocation Plan would be led by the EOH, in collaboration with RIHousing.
- ▲ EOH would assume responsibility and ongoing maintenance of the State's Low- and Moderate-Income Housing chart.
- ▲ EOH and RIHousing will collaboratively determine which federal housing programs should be transitioned to EOH. At minimum, annual action plans for federal programs that are part of the Consolidated Plan should be collaboratively reviewed for consistency with the state housing plan.

### RI Continuum of Care

- While not a state entity, the RICoC plays a critical role in RI's homelessness response system and is unique in serving as a unified CoC for an entire state. CoC's are required by federal law to coordinate with Emergency Solutions Grantees in their catchment areas, as well as seek certification of consistency with the Consolidated Plans of relevant geographic areas. As this governance proposal would change how state government is structured related to these activities, the following recommendation is proposed for CoC consideration:
  - Currently, the RICoC governance charter identifies the RICoC as advisory to the HRC and identifies the HRC as the body to consider and ratify RICoC funding decisions. In the near-term, if proposed changes to governance are adopted and the HRC transitions in function, it is recommended that the RICoC consider updating the charter to incorporate the Interagency Council on Homelessness in these capacities. This would allow for the state agencies with aligned resources

to have insight into the CoC funding decisions and be able to consider opportunities to maximize use of other funding streams that can support homelessness prevention and response, such as TANF. In addition, as recommendations arise from the RICoC on opportunities for the state to address, the Interagency Council would be the appropriate body to review and implement those recommendations.

- In the medium- to long-term, it is recommended that, during the next federal cycle, the RICoC consider naming the Department as the collaborative applicant to further consolidate and enhance coordination on homelessness prevention and response. This would bring the planning responsibilities of CoC and the State into one entity to ensure that there is one, coordinated plan that is being executed to end homelessness.

This recommendation is meant to be a proposed “end-state” for housing governance at the state level. Successful implementation of this recommendation would require the development of a comprehensive, phased change management approach informed by ongoing stakeholder collaboration. In addition, any transition would need to ensure continuity of operations for clients and partners, as well as prioritize a communicative, fair, and transparent approach for all professionals across organizations.

## **Conclusion**

The current structure of state government is not conducive to meeting the urgency of today’s housing crisis. Evolving the state’s housing governance structure to create role clarity, drive proactive policymaking, maximize resources, align efforts, and ensure transparency and accountability will position Rhode Island to better deliver meaningful results for Rhode Islanders. As a next step, the Department of Housing will be working to draft legislation to implement the statutory changes necessary to implement the recommended governance structure.

# APPENDIX A: LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS BY POLICY AREA

Appendix A includes the qualitative data that the Department of Housing used to inform the development of the landscape analysis (Phase I).

- **Survey of state departments, quasi-public agencies, commissions, and boards:** This survey was distributed to all state agencies and to relevant commissions, boards, and quasi-public entities, with some respondents indicating they do not have a direct role in housing and homelessness initiatives. There were 36 survey responses received as of November 2024. The information provided in these responses is included below, as submitted by each survey respondent.
- **Stakeholder survey:** There were four stakeholder survey responses received.
- **Stakeholder interviews:** 12 individual stakeholder interviews were conducted.
- **Review of existing reports:** Five reports were reviewed for analysis and inputs of current landscape and gaps/opportunities.
- **Review of existing statutes:** Five statutes were reviewed. This review is in Appendix C.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

**Policy Area Overview:** Activities involving creation, redevelopment, and production of housing, including land use; construction; financing; permitting; infrastructure; predevelopment; and land assembly and disposition processes.

### Review of Organizational Survey Responses

*53% of respondents (19/36) noted they had a role in Housing Development*

#### Strategy/Planning

- **Department of Housing:** The Department of Housing is the state's lead agency for housing, homelessness, and community development in the state of Rhode Island.
  - The Department has statutory authority for developing a statewide housing plan. The Department has contracted with a team that includes Abt Global, the RI League of Cities and Towns, Root Policy, and Housing Works RI to develop a housing plan for the State of Rhode Island.
  - The Department collaborates with and assists municipalities. It has conducted significant municipal engagement around housing development, including

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

meeting individually with all 39 cities and towns as part of the development of the state housing plan. The Department has hired a Chief of Municipal Planning & Programming who serves as a liaison with municipalities regarding their housing issues and devises and operates municipal assistance programs to address them.

- The Department's team has collaborated with RI Housing on the development of the qualified allocation plan (QAP) and is partnering on the upcoming 5-year consolidated plan for HUD. The Department works alongside RI Housing to support their MTAP program and Proactive Development function.
- The Department is responsible for producing and making recommendations in the annual integrated housing report.
- The Department also develops budget and legislative proposals and works with DOA, OMB, and Governor's Office staff to advance such proposals. Annually, similar to all executive branch public agencies, the Department proposes constrained and unconstrained budget initiatives and is incorporated into the Governor's budget.
- Department staff monitors and collaborates with the General Assembly, including through its many commissions (e.g. Land Use Commission, Landlord Tenant Commission, Housing Affordability Commission, Short-term Rental Commission, Planners Education Commission, etc.).
- The Department is also developing tools to further the implementation of the state housing plan. These include conducting a study of the impact of housing development on municipal school costs, developing a toolkit and trainings for municipal officials, developing a visualization tool to help build support for housing development.
- The Department funds and provides staff support for the HRC. This includes monitoring and reporting on the HRC's budget, staffing any strategy, planning and policy efforts, as well as organizing and conducting the Commission's monthly meetings, as well as additional budget and planning meetings.
- The Department is also represented on the statewide planning council and is a member of the interagency Olmstead coordination team.
- The Secretary of Housing is a Cabinet position and is engaged in the Governor's Cabinet to support interagency coordination and collaboration on strategy and policy.
- The Department receives the Vacant Schools list from RIDE and investigates these and other properties for adaptive reuse and development opportunities.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

- The Department constantly seeks to improve data and permitting systems and supports the development of statewide e-permitting, GIS, and other information systems.
  - The Department was charged by the legislature with developing a housing organizational plan that includes a review, analysis, and assessment of functions related to housing of all state departments, quasi-publics, boards, and commissions.
- **HRC:** By statute (RIGL 42-128), the HRC is “an agency within the executive department with responsibility for developing plans, policies, standards, ... for housing,” and the purposes of the HRC include to “develop and promulgate state policies, and plans, for housing and housing production...” and to “coordinate activities among state agencies and political subdivisions pertaining to housing.” The HRC has statutory authority (RIGL 42-128-8.1) for developing a strategic plan for housing.
- **Housing Resources Coordinating Committee:**
  - The Coordinating Committee is charged in statute (RIGL 42-128-2) with developing and implementing a memorandum of agreement describing the fiscal and operational relationship between the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation and the Rhode Island housing resources commission.
  - Per RIGL 42-128-2.1, the Housing Production Fund is administered by RI Housing subject to guidelines established by the Housing Resources Coordinating Committee. The Housing Resources Coordinating Committee has approved guidelines for these funds to support municipal initiatives which have resulted in the municipal technical assistance program, gap financing for capital projects, and operating subsidy for extremely low-income housing. The Coordinating Committee does not deploy programs and financing, but rather offers policy and reporting guidelines for the deployment of these funds.
  - The Coordinating Committee is also statutorily assigned a significant role in the Housing Incentives for Municipalities program (see RIGL 42-128.3). The Housing Production Fund authorizing language (for which the coordinating committee promulgates guidelines) also references funds being allocated for this program’s purposes.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing manages the development of the 5-year Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) in coordination with the Department of Housing. Many of the federal programs RIHousing administers require conformance with the State Guide Plan and/or the Consolidated Plan. RIHousing reviews and provide feedback to Statewide Planning on the housing element of local comprehensive plans.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

RIHousing serves on State Planning Council, the House Housing Affordability Commission and Land Use Commission and EC4 Advisory Committee.

- **Department of Administration:** The Division of Planning supports the planning function.
- **RI Commerce Corporation:** Finance projects.
- **RI Department of Labor and Training:** Investments via Real Jobs RI into sector-based industry trainings in construction.
- **Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA):** Advocates for smart growth and transit-oriented development (TOD) to increase housing supply near transit service.
- **I-195 Redevelopment District:** The District has a goal to develop 1,000 additional residential units to support its growing innovation district.
- **Department of Business Regulation:** Adoption of national model building codes relative to residential construction and administration of the statewide e-permitting program.
- **EOHHS:** EOHHS is not directly responsible for housing development activities such as construction or land use, but maintains a critical role in shaping the development of housing through the integration of health and human services into housing planning and policy. EOHHS collaborates with the Department of Housing, housing authorities, and developers to ensure new housing developments address the needs of vulnerable populations. EOHHS influences housing development strategies by advocating and supporting the integration of health and supportive services in housing initiatives, pilots, and projects. EOHHS works to support policies that ensure new housing projects are accessible and affordable for populations that require health-related services, particularly through community-based models of care.
- **Quonset Development Corporation:** Work with a developer to construct workforce housing at the Quonset Business Park.
- **Coastal Resources Management Group:** Coastal resources and environmental regulatory programs that balance development with such management.

### Programs/Financing

- **Department of Housing:** By statute, the Secretary of Housing shall be responsible for overseeing all housing initiatives in the state of Rhode Island.
  - The Department is responsible for implementing the proposed housing and community development bond (pending voter approval) and for entering into funding agreements with other agencies and partners involved in implementing bond funded initiatives.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

- Additionally, the Department has oversight of the state LIHTC, CDBG, the Transit Oriented Development Pilot Program, and multiple SFRF-funded planning and financing initiatives. This includes programs generating new projects in the pipeline, such as the Municipal Infrastructure Grant program and Transit Oriented Development Technical Assistance program, as well as programs producing and preserving housing, such as Home Repair, Permanent Supportive Housing Crossroads, Priority Projects Fund, and Transit Oriented Development. The Department also enters into subaward agreements for additional housing programs such as Affordable Housing Predevelopment, Housing Related Infrastructure, Proactive Housing Development, Public Housing Authority Program, Site Acquisition, Development of Affordable Housing (I&II) Community Revitalization Program, and the Middle-Income Program. These sub awarded programs are administered by RI Housing and the RI Infrastructure Bank.
- The Department has also contracted to conduct A&E evaluations for facilities to determine the feasibility of adaptive reuse projects.
- The Department runs the Community Development Block Grant, which supports non-entitlement communities to have access to funding for community development activities, including but not limited to housing development in limited circumstances.
- The Department runs programs assisting municipalities in their planning and capacity-building efforts, including the Municipal Fellows program. This program has been funded with SFRF to date. The Department also collaborates with RI Housing regarding the Municipal Technical Assistance Program which has been funded with Housing Production Funds.
- **HRC:** By statute (RIGL 42-128), the HRC is “an agency within the executive department with responsibility for ... programs and providing technical assistance for housing,” and the relevant purposes of the HRC include RIGL 42-128-5(3)-(9). Through the Housing Resources Commission restricted receipt account, the HRC has funded the development of new housing including predevelopment assistance and funding the Extremely Low-Income Capital and Operating programs. Through bond funds, the HRC has funded affordable housing developments through the Building Homes Rhode Island program.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing’s FY2025 budget includes an anticipated \$35.7M in U.S. Treasury funded programs, \$262.3M in HUD funded programs, \$704M in RIHousing funded programs and \$4.7M in state funded programs. Treasury funded programs include federal LIHTC, Capital Magnet Fund, and ARPA-SFRF funded programs. HUD funded programs include HOME, HOME-ARP, Housing Trust Funds, Lead Hazard Reduction, the Continuum of Care (CoC), and the Section 811 program. RIHousing funded programs include single family and multi-family mortgage lending, construction financing,

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

land banking, Homeownership Investment Fund, Workforce Housing Innovation Fund, Zero Energy for the Ocean State (ZEOS), Turnkey Program and NOAH program. State funded programs administered by RIHousing include the Housing Production Fund (in coordination with the HRC Coordinating Committee) (the capital program, ELI program and Municipal Technical Assistance Program) and Access to Independence. Historically, RIHousing has administered housing bond funds on behalf of the HRC. The bulk of the state's Private Activity Bond cap is allocated to RIHousing to fund our single and multi-family lending programs.

- **Department of Environmental Management:** Some brownfields grant funds for site predevelopment work.
- **I-195 Redevelopment District:** The Commission has used its incentive fund, I-195 Project Fund, to close financing gaps and incentivize affordable housing.
- **Department of Business Regulation:** Administration of the statewide e-permitting program within the State Building Office, which facilitates the utilization of a uniform, online permitting building permit system at the municipal level across Rhode Island.
- **EOHHS:**
  - Pathways to Removing Obstacles (PRO) Housing Grant: Through the RI Department of Housing, EOHHS via the Health Equity Zones (HEZ) received a PRO grant as a sub recipient to work on the elimination of barriers to the development of affordable housing at the community level.
  - Olmstead Planning: EOHHS is working across state agencies and with the community to design a plan that complies with the U.S. Supreme Court Olmstead ruling - to have the supports in place for individuals with disabilities to live, work, and receive services in the community in the least restrictive setting permitted by their disabilities.
  - HEZ Community of Practice on Housing Pilot: EOHHS and RIDOH provided training, best practices, and developer resources to reduce local barriers and create a pipeline of supportive and affordable housing projects in a cohort of six HEZ communities.
- **Coastal Resources Management Council:** Coastal resources and environmental regulatory programs that balance development with such management. CRMC has no financing programs nor financial assistance.
- **Public Finance Management Board (Dept. of Treasury):**
  - Allocates federal volume cap to RIHousing so it can sell bonds at a lower rate of interest

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

- Allocate state volume cap in conformity with IRS Code section 141(b)
- Annually the PFMB allocates volume cap to Rhode Island Housing (and local housing authorities, if requested) as well as Rhode Island Student Loan Authority and other entities that are engaged in "Private Business Activities" in order to allow RI Housing to issue bonds on a tax-exempt basis
- **Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission:** The RIHPHC is the administrator of state and federal historic preservation tax credit programs. These incentives are often used to develop housing.
- **Department of Administration:** Divisions within DOA, especially Grants Management and the Pandemic Relief Office, contribute to program financing.
- **Executive Office of Commerce and RI Commerce Corporation:** Via the rebuild Rhode Island tax credit program and First wave fund.

Regulation/Enforcement

- **Department of Housing:** The Department of Housing is responsible for promulgating regulations for the TOD Pilot Program and Vacant Schools.
- **HRC:** HRC has statutory responsibility for implementing Chapter 128.2 Expedited Permitting for Affordable Housing which seeks to expedite state agency approvals for housing developments that are deemed a critical concern.
- **RIHousing:** The federal programs RIHousing administers are highly regulated and complex. A significant number of agency program staff and staff in the legal and finance divisions are responsible for regulations and enforcement relative to these programs. Specifically, RIHousing oversees the design and construction of the affordable housing it finances including compliance with state and federal requirements. The agency also monitors the long-term compliance of funded projects required by state and federal programs including those involving the condition of the property, tenant eligibility, affordability restrictions and reporting requirements.
- **Department of Environmental Management:** Permitting programs for wetlands, septic systems, stormwater, and brownfields
- **I-195 Redevelopment District:** The District is designated as a Special Economic Development District by the General Assembly therefore required to develop a Development Plan, which outlines zoning regulations and enforcement.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

- **Department of Business Regulation:** Promulgation of the Rhode Island building codes relative to residential construction, which lay out the framework for building standards statewide.
- **EOHHS:** EOHHS monitors contracts to ensure that funds are being utilized within the terms and allowable uses of the funding sources.
- **Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission:** The RIHPHC reviews any projects that utilize federal or state funding or permits to ensure that historic properties are not adversely affected by the undertaking.

Data

- **Department of Housing:**
  - The Department is beginning the process of collecting housing data in one place, given that housing data is collected in a dispersed way across state, municipal, and federal government agencies, non-profits, quasi-publics, and private industry. The Department views the collection and presentation of housing data as an essential role and is currently requesting hiring authority to fill an additional data analytics role. Some of the data that the Department frequently analyzes comes from HUD. While other data comes from municipal governments, such as housing units permitted. Other important datasets include the Department of Business Regulation's short-term rental database, the low-mod database, the Zoning Atlas (created by HousingWorks RI), the American Community Survey, and the Census. The Department monitors metrics from these data sources to inform policymaking and identify areas of need. Additionally, the Department is currently requesting resources to build out its data infrastructure, improve data collection and data quality. The Department also launched a dashboard showing progress on the usage of the \$332M in State Fiscal Recovery Funds awarded for housing production, preservation, planning, and homelessness. The dashboard is publicly available and updated monthly on the Department's website.
  - The Department of Housing is engaged in planning efforts that have significant data needs. The Department is currently developing the state housing plan, with the aim of becoming the new housing guide plan element of the state guide plan. That plan will include new housing goals for the state along with associated metrics that will require routine data collection to measure progress on state goals. The Department also collaborates with RIHousing on the development of the Consolidated Plan for HUD. This is a five-year plan that "help states and local jurisdictions assess their affordable housing and community development needs

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

and market conditions, and make data-driven, placed based investment decisions.”

- As a state agency, the Department also has a role in establishing performance metrics for the State’s budget/performance management process under the Department of Administration. To date performance metrics have focused on progress implementing SFRF funded initiatives. Additional performance metrics are being developed through the development of the state housing plan.
- Additionally, the Department of Housing is required to produce several reports for the Governor, legislature, and public. The reports all require the collection and presentation of housing related data. These reports are included below:
  - § 42-64.19-3(a)(4)(iv): Annual integrated housing report - Annual report on a broad range of housing metrics, includes a requirement to project the units needed for the state, and receive data from municipalities.
  - § 45-53-12(b): Fee in Lieu and Public Housing Report - Annual report on the fees in lieu of the development of affordable housing collected by municipalities and the utilization of vouchers by Public Housing Authorities.
  - § 45-24-76: Accessory Dwelling Unit Annual Report - Annual report on the number of ADUs permitted and provided Certificates of Occupancy in the past two years by municipality along with any ADU related ordinances enacted by each municipality.
  - § 45-53-11: Low and Moderate Income Housing Annual Comprehensive Permit Report - Annual report on the status of comprehensive permit applications, including the number of units built and provided Certificates of Occupancy, by municipality.
  - § 44-71-10: State Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Report - Annual report on the amount of state funded low-income housing tax credit agreements entered into in the previous year.
  - § 45-53-10: Vacant Schools Annual Report - Annual report on the number of vacant schools in Rhode Island and the status of redevelopment efforts to convert vacant schools into affordable housing.
  - Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) - Annual report required by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development providing accomplishments and progress on Consolidated Plan goals.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

- **HRC:** Per statute (RIGL 42-128), the HRC’s purposes include “to develop and promulgate... performance measures for housing programs established pursuant to state law.” HRC completes an annual report, available via the RI Housing website and is also statutorily charged with collaborating with the Department of Housing on its annual integrated housing report.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing collects detailed information on the developments it finances, the mortgages it makes, and the clients it serves through the many federal, state and RIHousing funded programs it administers. RIHousing tracks many performance metrics for the wide range of housing programs that we administer. These metrics range from resources invested for housing production or units preserved, and households assisted. Some of these metrics are required under the federal programs we administer and are reported through federally required and/or maintained platforms. We also utilize many purchased or internally developed data management systems. RIHousing produces numerous reports highlighting a range of these metrics and produces on-line publicly accessible dashboards to provide greater transparency on the administration of particularly high profile programs. These reports and the current State Fiscal Recovery Funds dashboard can be accessed here: <https://www.rihousing.com/research-reporting/>. RIHousing is also responsible for developing the annual chart documenting the percentage of low and moderate income housing by community in Rhode Island as defined in the State’s Low and Moderate Income Housing Act (RIGL 45-53). Also posted on RIHousing’s website are numerous reports required in our enabling act or under state law including NOP Report, reporting on the 8% law and utilization of the fee-in-lieu, as well as reporting on fair housing related issues. In addition, RIHousing periodically produces reports or makes publicly available housing related data that helps to inform public policy or fill important voids. Examples include tracking and analysis of eviction activity in RI, the RIHousing Rent Survey, our Policy Map tool, and information on comprehensive permits reviewed by the SHAB.
- **I-195 Redevelopment District:** The Commission maintains data on residential units in the 195 District.
- **Department of Business Regulation:** Collects data through the e-permitting system.
- **EOHHS:** EOHHS tracks data for populations served through Medicaid, and other state programs within the Ecosystem. Additional data may include HMIS and vendor reporting. EOHHS monitors contract deliverables, outcomes, and tracking the utilization of state resources allocated for housing initiatives.
- **Coastal Resources Management Council:** Number of permits that can be attributed to residential development projects within the agency's jurisdiction.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

**Review of Prior Report Findings***Current system opportunities/gaps**Boston Consulting Group and The Rhode Island Foundation 2023 Report*

- Housing development has stalled in Rhode Island due to lack of support throughout the development process
- Lack of pro-active pipeline building, technical assistance, and inflexible housing financing has limited housing development
- Within the current ecosystem, no person or party is proactively building a pipeline of potential developments that align with state priorities
- There is limited technical assistance for development activities such as property acquisition, site planning and navigating the permitting/regulatory process
- Developers note that the RI permitting process is complicated and leads to low success, which deters many from pursuing development projects
- RI's current approach to housing financing lacks flexibility, which results in delays in financing and makes the system less attractive for developers
- Current procurement processes are rigid, with no ability to adapt financing applications, which slows down the development process, prevents necessary iteration, and creates uncertainty for developers
- Strictly defined funding buckets make the financing process more complex for developers and limit RI Housing's flexibility to finance projects that align with housing needs

*The 2023 RI Integrated Housing Survey*

- There are gaps in publicly available data, as well as at the municipal level. But, there are also gaps in our ability to process and report data reliably and in time to give timely feedback on our progress. Although most of Rhode Island's municipalities responded to the survey conducted for this report, the majority reported that they did not have data that were readily available to share on basic attributes of housing production such as the number of building permits issued during 2023 or the number of projects completed. For example, only 16 were able to provide data on the number of housing units permitted.
  - Implementing technology solutions. We believe there is an opportunity to build upon and leverage the Department of Business Regulation's e-permitting software to address some of these data gaps, although additional analysis is needed.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

- Housing data is not uniformly collected by a single department.
- It will also be important to engage public housing authorities (PHA's) and explore publicly driven development. Such work will enable the leveraging of sometimes underutilized agencies such as PHA's.
- Municipal governments in Rhode Island are vital partners in the work of housing development. Close collaboration will be required to understand specific community needs, develop a shared vision and goals, and develop housing units.
- Opportunities to explore and develop alternative sources of data:
  - Assessing the feasibility of using tax assessor data to quantify existing Rhode Island housing stock

### Summary of Stakeholder Input

#### Current system strengths

- Collaboration across entities has been effective at getting funding out, especially through consolidated funding rounds/one-stop process
- Improved reporting on state of housing in recent years.
- Multiple bodies with funding for development allows for some checks and balances within the system.
- RIHousing has been successful in distributing funds and coordinating multiple funding sources for housing development.
- Historically, RIHousing had done a fantastic job in managing/administering programs, like HOME, that would have been within a Department of Housing if the state had had one.
- The Department of Housing works with RIPTA to coordinate opportunities for TOD and has a seat on the Technical Working Group for the Metro Connector study/project.

#### Current system opportunities/gaps

##### *Governance and Strategic Planning*

- It is unclear who is setting state policy and how that policy is then driving funding decisions. Authority and responsibility appear to be separated in some instances.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

- There is a lack of cohesive, readily available information about how funds are invested across the system and what the return on investment is. This is exacerbated by the many different entities with funding and the varying approaches to governing and awarding those funds.
- It is confusing to navigate the various programs and figure out who is in charge of what.
- There are gaps in coordination with municipalities on how to support development
- As legislation changes, it is unclear who is responsible for communicating those changes to developers and to municipalities.
- There is a deficit in central planning and intergovernmental coordination that aligns with and is driven by a long-term strategy. For example: If there were a master list of state-owned land and/or buildings that may be repurposed into shelter/housing space in the coming 1-3 years, building and fire code reviews could begin well in advance of acute needs for use arising. Instead, we find ourselves subject to crisis-driven project demands that inevitably conflict with complicated life-safety considerations and ultimately hold the State back from making progress towards shared objectives. Beyond that, there are obvious and legitimate gaps at present related to data quality, availability, and vintage.
- An updated State Guide Plan element focused on housing will advance the focus on especially affordable housing development at the municipal level by providing realistic goals and strategies with annual reporting and accountability requirements.
  - A more functional and accurate GIS portal will promote access to accurate and continuously updated data to enable optimal site selection efforts for public and private interests (and would align our system with those of our New England neighbors).
- Support for TOD and coordinated/strategic planning has been increasing; this focus and investment should continue (both policy efforts and funding).
- There are significant gaps in the data that make strategic planning and wise investment difficult. Program evaluation is lacking, especially with no guiding strategic plan.

### *Barriers to Development*

- The structure of the current development environment/system creates unintentional barriers to entry for new developers, who have plans and projects but encounter challenges in accessing established networks.
- There is an opportunity to expand support for emerging developers who have potential but need guidance navigating Rhode Island's housing development system.

## Policy Area 1: Housing Development

- Timely application reviews and responses are beneficial to both the regulators and the regulated community. This is the largest gap, as developers, municipalities, parcel owners, etc. simply need to be given answers in a timely fashion.
- An increase in funding that is disbursed more quickly would deliver more housing more quickly.
- “NIMBY-ism” and a lack of cultural and economic diversity among planning and zoning boards may present barriers to comprehensive and equitable development.

### *Workforce and Resources*

- There is an opportunity to consolidate state housing development programs under a unified state department, streamlining operations while also excluding some financing mechanisms such as tax credits, HOME, etc.
- Rhode Island will require significantly more construction workers than we currently have to build and preserve the housing we need. This requires investment in workforce training programs to grow this workforce and build on their skills.
- There is simply not enough housing being produced, rental assistance being provided, or services to meet current or future needs.
- Currently, there is no development project e-permitting system like there is for building permits.
- Rhode Island is facing a shortage of local planners and lacks local accredited planning programs.

## Policy Area 2: Homeownership

**Policy Area 2: Homeownership**

**Policy Area Overview:** Activities supporting individuals or families in becoming homeowners, encompassing mortgage financing, real estate services; payment assistance; financial literacy; homeowner education; and homeownership data analysis.

**Review of Organizational Survey Responses**

*14% of respondents (5/36) noted they had a role in homeownership*

Strategy/Planning

- **Department of Housing:** The Department and its predecessor entity - the Office of Housing and Community Development -- have worked in concert with other state agencies and federal government actors to support policies that assist existing homeowners (e.g., through the Madeline Walker Act, foreclosure prevention and other programs). The Department is developing program policy and strategy pertaining to the homeownership element in the proposed \$120m housing bond. As homeownership is a top priority of the governor, the department continues to explore additional potential programs to support homeownership.
- **HRC:** Serves as the executive department agency responsible for developing housing policies, plans, and standards per RIGL 42-128. Has statutory authority (RIGL 42-128-8.1) to develop and implement the state's strategic housing plan and coordinate housing activities across state agencies and political subdivisions.
- **Housing Resources Coordinating Committee:** While the Coordinating Committee has not played a significant role in homeownership, the Coordinating Committee's roles in establishing an interagency MOU, establishing guidelines for the housing production fund, and establishing the housing incentives for municipalities program could influence homeownership.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing manages the development of the 5-year Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) in coordination with the Department of Housing. Many of the federal programs RIHousing administers require conformance with the State Guide Plan and/or the Consolidated Plan. RIHousing reviews and provide feedback to Statewide Planning on the housing element of local comprehensive plans. RIHousing serves on State Planning Council, the House Housing Affordability Commission and Land Use Commission and EC4 Advisory Committee.

Programs/Financing

## Policy Area 2: Homeownership

- **Department of Housing:**
  - The Department and its predecessor OHCD have played a role in assisting existing homeowners and helping them stay in their homes. The Department/HRC have a staff member that has worked in concert with other agencies and federal partners to assist existing homeowners. Historically OHCD was involved in foreclosure prevention work in partnership with RIHousing through the Homeowners Assistance Fund (HAF) and programs helping assist homeowners, such as Home Repair, Madeline Walker Act, and efforts in partnership with the Office of Healthy Aging to help Rhode Islanders age in place.
  - The Department is currently deploying a \$4.5 million home repair program through a contracted vendor with SFRF funds.
  - Additionally, the Department has made a grant for a \$500,000 SFRF-supported program for preservation of affordable housing units.
  - The Department will be collaborating to administer the proposed \$20 million allocation for homeownership production through the bond.
- **HRC:**
  - Building Homes Rhode Island program: Funds the development of homeownership opportunities.
  - Consolidated Homelessness Fund: Has funded homeownership counseling programs.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing is the primary provider of mortgages for first-time homebuyers in Rhode Island, offering loans and downpayment and closing cost assistance through its lending center and participating lenders. The agency provides downpayment and closing cost assistance to its borrowers through RIHousing funded programs and federal or state funded programs including \$30M in SFRF funding for the Statewide DPA program. RIHousing offers homebuyer counseling in person, virtually and on-line in English and Spanish. The agency services the mortgages in its single and multifamily portfolio. RIHousing offers a HomeSecure program with its mortgages which provides a financial buffer against unexpected expenses for borrowers who participate in extra homebuyer and financial management training. The agency also offers HCVP participants an opportunity to purchase their first home through its Section 8 to homeownership program. RIHousing operates a HelpCenter which provides homeowner counseling to any Rhode Island homeowner, regardless of their lender. RIHousing provides foreclosure mediation services under RIGL 34-27-9, providing homeowners with the opportunity to work with their lender and a homeowner counselor in a mediated setting to seek alternatives to foreclosure. Through its administration of the Madeline Walker program, RIHousing provides assistance to homeowners at risk of losing their homes at

## Policy Area 2: Homeownership

tax sale. RIHousing has administered a number of foreclosure prevention programs including over \$100 million through the HHFRI program during the Great Recession and \$50 million through the Homeowner Assistance Fund during the pandemic.

- **Public Finance Management Board (Dept. of Treasury):**
  - Allocates federal volume cap to RIHousing so it can sell bonds at a lower rate of interest
  - Allocate state volume cap in conformity with IRS Code section 141(b)
  - Annually the PFMB allocates volume cap to Rhode Island Housing (and local housing authorities, if requested) as well as Rhode Island Student Loan Authority and other entities that are engaged in "Private Business Activities" in order to allow RI Housing to issue bonds on a tax-exempt basis

Regulation/Enforcement

- **Department of Housing:** The Department of Housing periodically receives complaints pertaining to fair housing and other housing issues related to homeownership. The Department does not have a direct regulatory role. The Department does try to direct constituents to the appropriate agency and/or create web content to direct constituent
- **RIHousing:** The federal programs RIHousing administers are highly regulated and complex. A significant number of agency program staff and staff in the legal and finance divisions are responsible for regulations and enforcement relative to these programs. RIHousing is the primary lender for first-time homebuyers in the state and services its mortgages. In that role, RIHousing is responsible for ensuring that all mortgages are appropriately underwritten and secured in compliance with federal requirements and that all federal and state requirements are met in the servicing of these mortgages.

Data

- **Department of Housing:**
  - The Department is beginning the process of collecting housing data in one place, given that housing data is collected in a dispersed way across state, municipal, and federal government agencies, non-profits, quasi-publics, and private industry. The Department views the collection and presentation of housing data as an essential role and is currently requesting hiring authority to fill an additional data analytics role. Some of the data that the Department frequently analyzes comes from HUD (housing choice vouchers, HIC, and PIT). While other data comes from municipal governments, such as housing units permitted. Other

## Policy Area 2: Homeownership

important datasets include the Department of Business Regulation's short-term rental database, the low-mod database, the Zoning Atlas (created by HousingWorks RI), the American Community Survey, and the Census. The Department monitors metrics from these data sources to inform policymaking and identify areas of need. Additionally, the Department is currently requesting resources to build out its data infrastructure, improve data collection and data quality. The Department also launched a dashboard showing progress on the usage of the \$332M in State Fiscal Recovery Funds awarded for housing production, preservation, planning, and homelessness. The dashboard is publicly available and updated monthly on the Department's website.

- The Department of Housing is engaged in planning efforts that have significant data needs. The Department is currently developing the state housing plan, with the aim of becoming the new housing guide plan element of the state guide plan. That plan will include new housing goals for the state along with associated metrics that will require routine data collection to measure progress on state goals. The Department also collaborates with RIHousing on the development of the Consolidated Plan for HUD. This is a five-year plan that "help states and local jurisdictions assess their affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and make data-driven, placed based investment decisions."
- As a state agency, the Department also has a role in establishing performance metrics for the State's budget/performance management process under the Department of Administration. To date performance metrics have focused on progress implementing SFRF funded initiatives. Additional performance metrics are being developed through the development of the state housing plan.
- Additionally, the Department of Housing is required to produce several reports for the Governor, legislature, and public. The reports all require the collection and presentation of housing related data. These reports are included below:
- § 42-64.19-3(a)(4)(iv): Annual integrated housing report - Annual report on a broad range of housing metrics, includes a requirement to project the units needed for the state, and receive data from municipalities.
- § 45-53-12(b): Fee in Lieu and Public Housing Report - Annual report on the fees in lieu of the development of affordable housing collected by municipalities and the utilization of vouchers by Public Housing Authorities.
- § 45-24-76: Accessory Dwelling Unit Annual Report - Annual report on the number of ADUs permitted and provided Certificates of Occupancy in the past two years by municipality along with any ADU related ordinances enacted by each municipality.

## Policy Area 2: Homeownership

- § 45-53-11: Low and Moderate Income Housing Annual Comprehensive Permit Report - Annual report on the status of comprehensive permit applications, including the number of units built and provided Certificates of Occupancy, by municipality.
- § 44-71-10: State Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Report - Annual report on the amount of state funded low-income housing tax credit agreements entered into in the previous year.
- § 45-53-10: Vacant Schools Annual Report - Annual report on the number of vacant schools in Rhode Island and the status of redevelopment efforts to convert vacant schools into affordable housing.
- Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) - Annual report required by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development providing accomplishments and progress on Consolidated Plan goals.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing tracks a wide range of data and performance metrics associated with our mortgage portfolio and the clients served. This includes data related to mortgage volume, pricing, delinquency and refinancing as well as information on the geographic distribution of mortgages, and the demographic characteristics of borrowers. RIHousing also tracks similar data associated with its housing counseling and foreclosure prevention programs. RIHousing submits numerous required state and federal reports associated with its mortgage activity including the Mortgage Disclosure Report (§ 42-55-22.1) and the CAPER required by HUD.

## Review of Prior Report Findings

### Current system opportunities/gaps

#### *The 2023 RI Integrated Housing Survey*

- **Explore strategies to help potential borrowers improve their credit score.** Credit score standards to qualify for mortgages at the lowest rates can be a barrier for many aspiring homeowners. Homebuyers with lower credit scores who do obtain mortgages often end up with high rates of interest and correspondingly high monthly mortgage payments. We will explore ways to partner with non-profit organizations to provide homebuyer education and credit counseling services to help potential homebuyers improve their credit scores

## Policy Area 2: Homeownership

- **Explore creative approaches to encourage homeownership.** Alternative models of homeownership, such as co- ownership, may be more accessible to some households than traditional homeownership.
- **Explore shared-equity homeownership programs.** Median home prices in Rhode Island are among the highest in the country. Shared-equity homeownership programs use a one-time public investment to reduce the purchase price of a home to a level affordable to lower-income families. The home's sale price is restricted to ensure that it remains affordable to future income-eligible buyers while at the same time building some wealth for families who would otherwise be unable to buy a home.
- **Monitoring and analyzing third-party sources of data for rent and home sale costs** (for example CoStar and Zillow). These resources provide additional information on available units and cost.

### Summary of Stakeholder Input

#### Current system opportunities/gaps

- **Accessing homeownership:** With housing prices at an historic high there continues to be a need for more downpayment assistance for first time homebuyers, particularly for disadvantaged households like first generation buyers.
- Rhode Island has an opportunity to adopt a more forward-looking, predictive approach to housing policy and strategy development. For example, if condos are the thing that is coming, RI should figure out what the things are that are going to be bigger problems, what policy/strategy/supports are needed. There is an absence of clear guidance that protects condo owners and there is limited oversight of condo associations. For affordable units, there has not been a way to protect the affordable unit from rising condo fees. There is a disparate impact for affordable condo owners.

## Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

### Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

**Policy Area Overview:** Activities that ensure housing affordability and stability, including housing vouchers; housing navigation support; state or federal programs to maintain housing (e.g., LIHEAP); landlord-tenant relationships; eviction prevention; monitoring deed restrictions; financing related to affordability requirements; housing affordability monitoring, and related financial mechanisms.

#### Review of Organizational Survey Responses

*39% of respondents (14/36) noted they had a role in housing affordability and access*

#### Strategy/Planning

- **Department of Housing:** The Department of Housing is the state's lead agency for housing, homelessness, and community development in the state of Rhode Island.
  - The Department has statutory authority for developing a statewide housing plan. The Department has contracted with a team that includes Abt Global, the RI League of Cities and Towns, Root Policy, and Housing Works RI to develop a housing plan for the State of Rhode Island.
  - The Department collaborates with and assists municipalities. It has conducted significant municipal engagement around housing development, including meeting individually with all 39 cities and towns as part of the development of the state housing plan. The Department has hired a Chief of Municipal Planning & Programming who serves as a liaison with municipalities regarding their housing issues and devises and operates municipal assistance programs to address them.
  - The Department's team has collaborated with RI Housing on the development of the qualified allocation plan (QAP) and is partnering on the upcoming 5-year consolidated plan for HUD. The Department works alongside RI Housing to support their MTAP program and Proactive Development function.
  - The Department is responsible for producing and making recommendations in the annual integrated housing report.
  - The Department also develops budget and legislative proposals and works with DOA, OMB, and Governor's Office staff to advance such proposals. Annually, similar to all executive branch public agencies, the Department proposes constrained and unconstrained budget initiatives and is incorporated into the Governor's budget.
  - Department staff monitors and collaborates with the General Assembly, including through its many commissions (e.g. Land Use Commission, Landlord Tenant

## Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

Commission, Housing Affordability Commission, Short-term Rental Commission, Planners Education Commission, etc.).

- The Department is also developing tools to further the implementation of the state housing plan. These include conducting a study of the impact of housing development on municipal school costs, developing a toolkit and trainings for municipal officials, developing a visualization tool to help build support for housing development.
  - The Department funds and provides staff support for the HRC. This includes monitoring and reporting on the HRC's budget, staffing any strategy, planning and policy efforts, as well as organizing and conducting the Commission's monthly meetings, as well as additional budget and planning meetings.
  - The Department is also represented on the statewide planning council and is a member of the interagency Olmstead coordination team.
  - The Secretary of Housing is a Cabinet position and is engaged in the Governor's Cabinet to support interagency coordination and collaboration on strategy and policy.
  - The Department receives the Vacant Schools list from RIDE and investigates these and other properties for adaptive reuse and development opportunities.
  - The Department constantly seeks to improve data and permitting systems and supports the development of statewide e-permitting, GIS, and other information systems.
  - The Department was charged by the legislature with developing a housing organizational plan that includes a review, analysis, and assessment of functions related to housing of all state departments, quasi-publics, boards, and commissions.
- **HRC:**
    - Serves as the executive department agency responsible for developing housing policies, plans, and standards per RIGL 42-128. Has statutory authority (RIGL 42-128-8.1) to develop and implement the state's strategic housing plan and coordinate housing activities across state agencies and political subdivisions.
    - Additionally, the HRC has highlighted housing affordability and access through its monthly presentation series.
  - **Housing Resources Coordinating Committee:** The Coordinating Committee's roles in establishing an interagency MOU, establishing guidelines for the housing production fund, and establishing the housing incentives for municipalities program could influence

**Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access**

housing affordability and access. The housing production fund statute requires RI Housing to prioritize households exiting homelessness or earning not more than 30% of AMI.

- **RIHousing:** RIHousing manages the development of the 5-year Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) in coordination with the Department of Housing. Many of the federal programs RIHousing administers require conformance with the State Guide Plan and/or the Consolidated Plan. RIHousing reviews and provide feedback to Statewide Planning on the housing element of local comprehensive plans. RIHousing serves on State Planning Council, the House Housing Affordability Commission and Land Use Commission and EC4 Advisory Committee.
- **PUC:** Reviews and implements policy decisions on utility cost allocation, rates, and program design that affect housing affordability.
- **Office of Healthy Aging:** Supports statewide strategy related to housing affordability and access by raising concerns of older adults at the Housing Resources Commission.
- **RI Developmental Disabilities Council:**
  - Developing a website for centralized information for people with developmental disabilities, in order to allow greater understanding and access.
  - Educate legislators and policy makers
- **Office of Child Advocate:** Advocacy and policy work related to access to vouchers and affordable housing for youth transitioning from DCYF care.
- **RICoC:** Policymaking lead on local issues related to ending homelessness in Rhode Island. The CoC Board and CoC Committees set strategy, policy, and planning priorities for the Rhode Island homeless response system. This work necessarily includes incorporating strategy, policy, and planning priorities on both housing affordability and access and on specialized housing for specific subpopulations.
- **EOHHS:** Planning policies and programs that aim to improve access to affordable housing for vulnerable populations. EOHHS collaborates with state agencies, housing agencies, and community organizations to integrate health and housing services, ensuring that individuals have the support they need to maintain stable housing. EOHHS coordinates with federal programs, such as Medicaid, to support long-term housing solutions for populations requiring both healthcare and housing support, reducing the need for institutional care. Home Stabilization is also being pursued in the 1115 waiver.

*Programs/Financing*

## Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

- **Department of Housing:**
  - The Department of Housing supports and funds eviction defense programs run by Rhode Island Legal Services and Center for Justice through federal Emergency Rental Assistance funds.
  - The Department is responsible for producing and updating the state's Landlord Tenant Handbook every two years. This is a consumer guide explaining the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants under Rhode Island law. While there is no requirement for printed copies, historically, OHCD has produced them and kept a number of extras available in the office for members of the public.
  - Department staff regularly receive and respond to constituent questions and concerns related to accessing affordable housing. These activities range from providing information to referring them to other state agencies (e.g. RIDOH for lead issues) or to RILS/Center for Justice depending on the nature of the issue.
  - Additionally, the Consolidated Homelessness Fund - discussed in more depth in the homelessness section - has funded landlord incentives, coordinated entry, housing navigation, and rapid rehousing rental subsidies.
- **HRC:** Financially supports RI Housing's Centralized Wait list system which enables applicants to apply for multiple affordable housing opportunities through a single portal, improving efficiency. Additionally, the HRC's contributions to the Consolidated Homelessness Fund have supported initiatives such as landlord incentives, coordinated entry, housing navigation, and rapid rehousing rental subsidies.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing administers over \$240 million in federal rental assistance annually which supports rental assistance in almost 15,500 apartments and almost 1,500 tenant based rental assistance vouchers. RIHousing administers HCVP for 18 of 39 cities and towns and therefore reduces jurisdictional challenges by allowing our voucher holders to lease in any of those 18 communities without having to port to another jurisdiction. Through its Family Self-Sufficiency Program, RIHousing offers Housing Choice Voucher holders the opportunity to escrow funding tied to increases in their earned income which they can use to achieve economic independence. RIHousing also administers a significant number of special needs rental assistance vouchers including \$4 million for 216 rental assistance vouchers to provide permanent supportive housing, \$335,000 for 25 VASH vouchers, \$354,000 for 28 Family Unification Vouchers and 117 Emergency Housing Vouchers. During the pandemic, RIHousing administered over \$277 million in emergency rental assistance through the RentRelief program, helping over 37,540 renters avoid eviction. RIHousing also has the authority to provide rental assistance to 150 units through the Section 811 program, serving tenants with disabilities. RIHousing administers the Housing Production Fund which is currently providing \$10 million in operating support to allow developments to serve households earning up to 30% of AMI.

**Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access**

Since FY2012, RIHousing has administered the NOP program for the state, investing almost \$7 million to ensure that 357 apartments are affordable to very low-income households. The agency offers a number of resources to landlords to encourage their participation in rental assistance programs including a \$2,000 financial incentive for the first apartment rented through HCVP and \$500 for each unit thereafter, free lead-paint remediation and pre-inspections. RIHousing administers the Access to Independence Program in partnership with BHDDH which provides loans of up to \$50,000 for families and caregivers of people with developmental disabilities to modify their homes in order to support their needs and continue living with their families. RIHousing has also developed and made available on its website resources to assist tenants seeking affordable housing. These include a Rental Resource Guide in English and Spanish which lists most of the affordable developments in the state and provides information on the populations they serve and how to submit an application. RIHousing's website also hosts HousingSearchRI which allows tenants to search online for affordable and market rate housing that meets their needs and access information on how to apply. RIHousing also manages the Centralized Waiting List which is the portal through which tenants can apply for Housing Choice Vouchers administered by 18 PHAs.

- **RIDOH:**
  - Rape Prevention and Education: Educate and advocate for shelters to be inclusive or affirming for individuals who are LGBTQ+; support the RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence actions to identify affordable properties for transitional housing and shelters.
  - Reducing Maternal Violence and Mortality: Implement the MOSAIC program, a mother mentorship program, to build resiliency. One aspect of the work is to address housing instability and insecurity.
  - Perinatal and Early Childhood Health (PECH) program: Links families to services related to housing affordability and access.
  - Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program: Addressing housing affordability and access as a major structural determinant of health for RI families and people with disabilities.
- **PUC:** Oversees utility rates and programs related to payment assistance, income-based rate discounts, termination of services notices and moratoria, among other utility rate and program responsibilities that relate to utility affordability and access.
- **Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner:** Rhode Island Reconnect
- **RI DHS:**
  - Housing services are designed to help eligible individuals and families obtain or retain adequate housing in the community. The service is provided through the

**Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access**

Economic Support Services unit and individuals retain housing, offering support for housing searches, landlord-tenant counseling, and tenant rights education. They provide moving assistance for eligible recipients of RI Works (RIW) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) who are forced to relocate due to unsafe or uninhabitable housing conditions.

- Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP): Helps low-income households reduce energy costs, making housing more affordable by improving energy efficiency and providing critical upgrades such as insulation and weather stripping.
- **RICoC:** The CoC oversees a portfolio of over \$15 million dollars annually in funding for Rhode Island's homeless response system. Additionally, federal regulations require coordination and collaboration between Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) recipients and the Continuum of Care on operating within the jurisdiction in determining how to allocate ESG funds, and to set policy related to the homeless response system. The CoC's Funding Committee functions as the review committee for CoC-funded projects, and for the Consolidated Homeless Fund. Additionally, entitlement recipients of other HUD funds (such as CDBG) must consult with their CoC on local need and priorities when developing their 5-Year Plans for investing HUD funds to ensure alignment and consistency.
- **EOHHS:**
  - **Crossroads OUD/SUD Statewide Housing Navigation and Housing Problem Solving:** EOHHS and Department of Housing partnered to utilize opioid settlement funds which creates opportunity to prevent homelessness and/or rapidly exit households from homelessness through Housing Problem Solving services, landlord incentives, and mitigation strategies, and specific housing operating supports provided by Crossroads of Rhode Island to this specific priority population.
  - **Community Integration Support:** Supports Health Equity Zones (HEZ) to enhance staff capacity to support community integration of Medicaid Beneficiaries within a placed based geographic zone who may face barriers to finding and maintaining secure housing above and beyond what traditional HCBS can support.
  - **Home Stabilization Services and Supports:** Provides an array of time-limited services, including home tenancy support, life skill training, and other modeling and teaching services for individuals who require support in maintaining a home, and home find services to individuals who require support in securing, and transitioning to housing.

## Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

Regulation/Enforcement

- **Department of Housing:** Through its shared staffing of the HRC, the Department is involved with the regulation and enforcement of the Monitoring Agents program, which ensures that low- and moderate-income rental and homeownership units in our state follow all requirements and deed restrictions are followed
- **RIHousing:** The federal programs RIHousing administers are highly regulated and complex. A significant number of agency program staff and staff in the legal and finance divisions are responsible for regulations and enforcement relative to these programs. In its role as PBCA, RIHousing monitors compliance of Section 8 developments in Rhode Island with HUD program requirements. In its administration of federal rental assistance vouchers, RIHousing is responsible for ensuring compliance of participating landlords and tenants with the federal program requirements and relevant state requirements. The agency also ensures that the developments we finance comply with federal accessibility requirements and market units in accordance with state and federal fair housing laws.
- **PUC:** Acts as the formal regulator of most programs and all rates. Some activities of the utilities, such as termination, are not jurisdictional to the PUC.
- **RICoC:** The CoC is responsible for monitoring CoC recipient agencies annually and works with the Funding Committee to hold these agencies accountable to system performance standards. These are two separate processes as monitoring focuses on implementation of the program in compliance with HUD and RICoC rules and regulations, while the performance scoring process rates projects annually on how well they are performing. The CoC Planners work with the CoC Board and Funding Committee to conduct monitoring, provide system training, and support recipients in the implementation of their programs.
- **EOHHS:** Monitors contracts to ensure that funds are being utilized within the terms and allowable uses of the funding sources.

Data

- **Department of Housing:**
  - The Department is beginning the process of collecting housing data in one place, given that housing data is collected in a dispersed way across state, municipal, and federal government agencies, non-profits, quasi-publics, and private industry. The Department views the collection and presentation of housing data as an essential role and is currently requesting hiring authority to fill an additional data analytics role. Some of the data that the Department frequently analyzes comes from HUD. Other data comes from municipal governments, such as

**Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access**

housing units permitted. Other important datasets include the Department of Business Regulation's short-term rental database, the low-mod database, the Zoning Atlas (created by HousingWorks RI), the American Community Survey, and the Census. The Department monitors metrics from these data sources to inform policymaking and identify areas of need. Additionally, the Department is currently requesting resources to build out its data infrastructure, improve data collection and data quality. The Department also launched a dashboard showing progress on the usage of the \$332M in State Fiscal Recovery Funds awarded for housing production, preservation, planning, and homelessness. The dashboard is publicly available and updated monthly on the Department's website.

- The Department of Housing is engaged in planning efforts that have significant data needs. The Department is currently developing the state housing plan, with the aim of becoming the new housing guide plan element of the state guide plan. That plan will include new housing goals for the state along with associated metrics that will require routine data collection to measure progress on state goals. The Department also collaborates with RIHousing on the development of the Consolidated Plan for HUD. This is a five-year plan that "help states and local jurisdictions assess their affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and make data-driven, placed based investment decisions."
- As a state agency, the Department also has a role in establishing performance metrics for the State's budget/performance management process under the Department of Administration. To date performance metrics have focused on progress implementing SFRF funded initiatives. Additional performance metrics are being developed through the development of the state housing plan.
- Additionally, the Department of Housing is required to produce several reports for the Governor, legislature, and public. The reports all require the collection and presentation of housing related data. These reports are included below:
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- Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) - Annual report required by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development providing accomplishments and progress on Consolidated Plan goals.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing tracks significant data and performance metrics associated with its and project-based rental assistance programs. This includes demographic information related to tenants and information involving the properties where the rental assistance is being utilized. RIHousing also produced numerous federal and state required reports including the Consolidated Plan, the Fair Housing and the Annual CAPER. The agency also conducts research and posts data relevant to housing affordability and access on its website including analysis of [eviction activity in RI](#), the [RIHousing Rent Survey](#) and information on [low and moderate income housing](#) in Rhode Island.
- **PUC:** Requires utilities to provide data on customer costs, program enrollment, arrearages, arrearage management and success, and many other utility performance and cost data. The most robust data sets are related to customers served by Rhode Island Energy Gas and Electric.
- **DHS:** Integrated eligibility system captures data on living situations and documents activities with families in case notes.
- **RI Developmental Disabilities Council:** Reviews the state's access to housing on a five-year basis
- **RICoC:**
  - Designates the HMIS Lead in the state, which works with all ESG and CoC-funded projects. This includes submitting all mandated reports to HUD on time and accurately, including the Point in Time (PIT) Count, the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), the Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA), and the System Performance Measures (SPM) report, among other responsibilities.

## Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

- **EOHHS:**
  - Tracks data for populations served through Medicaid, and other state programs within the Ecosystem. Additional data may include HMIS and vendor reporting.
  - Monitors contract deliverables, outcomes, and tracking the utilization of state resources allocated for housing initiatives.

### Review of Prior Report Findings

#### Current system opportunities/gaps

#### *Boston Consulting Group and The Rhode Island Foundation 2023 Report:*

- Based on state benchmarking the following are potential functions of a state housing department related to housing affordability and access:
  - Set affordable housing production targets in tandem with housing development planning
  - Set strategy for public housing
  - Mandate tenant protections if affordability restrictions terminate
  - Enforce affordability quota
  - Enforce acceptance of vouchers at rental properties
  - Apply for and manage federal programs, including:
    - Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
    - Supportive Housing for Elderly
    - Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities
  - Public housing
  - Rental assistance programs
  - Mortgage/homeowner assistance
  - Utilities assistance
  - Section 8 voucher
  - Veteran financial assistance
  - Real-estate taxes programs

**Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access**

- Track housing affordability

*The 2023 RI Integrated Housing Survey*

- Explore ways to build on pre-existing and SFRF-funded residential rehabilitation programs designed to assist low- and moderate- income Rhode Islanders in meeting their housing rehabilitation needs, allowing them access to decent, safe and healthy housing.
- There are also opportunities in Rhode Island to analyze the costs of a state rental voucher program with a range of options for housing assistance, perhaps including shallow subsidies for severely cost-burdened households.

**Summary of Stakeholder Input***Current system strengths*

- RIHousing is able to quickly/efficiently allocate and administer funding.
- RIHousing has expertise in managing and completing the reports associated with federal monies and resources.

*Current system opportunities/gaps***Structure and Governance**

- The current structure of RIHousing's role as a Public Housing Authority (PHA) creates challenges in voucher administration. While RIHousing manages vouchers for 17/39 cities and towns, there are jurisdictional limitations and complex porting requirements between housing authorities that create barriers to voucher utilization.
- The HRC's current structure, specifically its 1) 28-member committee, 2) role in both allocation and receipt of funds, and 3) reliance on less transparent subcommittees for bonds has the potential to create operational inefficiencies and governance challenges that impact effective decision-making.
- The current system, where RIHousing manages the majority of funding streams, limits strategic flexibility in deploying state resources for diverse housing needs. This structure constrains policy innovation, such as separating state from federal LIHTC requirements or developing programs for middle-income and market-rate units, while also raising transparency concerns around funding decisions and scoring criteria.

### Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

- Collectively, state and community leaders need clarity related to the roles played by, or to be played by, the Department of Housing, RI Housing, the Housing Resources Commission, and the tables convened by and among them, so we maximize knowledge and resources.

#### System Coordination

- Improve coordination between state agencies, municipalities and community/industry partners on housing policy and programs: There currently is no entity tasked with ensuring coordination and collaboration between different agencies administering housing and homeless related programs and services. Improving coordination will help to ensure that different programs complement one another and will help to identify gaps in meeting housing needs. There is also no entity coordinating the process of bringing together stakeholders (including state agencies) to address critical policy and legislative issues involving housing and homelessness. Various entities conduct research on housing related issues, but there is no one organization coordinating that work or comparing and learning from the best practices or data analysis being conducted by these different entities to inform the policy and program development conversation.
- Streamline processes and requirements: Developing and providing tenants access to affordable housing are challenging processes made more so by the many different programs and requirements at the federal, state and local level that govern them. It would be helpful to identify opportunities to reduce regulatory burdens and better align funding cycles and program requirements to streamline both the process for developing housing and the process for connecting tenants to housing opportunities they can afford.
- Consolidating research and reporting functions: There are many planning and reporting responsibilities related to housing and homelessness that are spread across a number of different agencies and Departments. Where possible, it would be more efficient to consolidate these functions to avoid duplicative information requests and reports. Similarly, it would be helpful to centralize housing and homelessness policy planning and prioritization, informed by a wide range of providers and partners, to ensure consistent and coordinated goals and strategies. Centralized oversight of implementation of these plans will also help to ensure that progress is made in achieving goals across state departments, agencies and industry and community partners.
- Cross-train staff across housing, homelessness, and other related programs would improve service delivery by enhancing staff knowledge and reducing wait times for clients seeking information on multiple services.
- Implement Performance Metrics and Continuous Improvement Programs

### Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

- Establishing clear performance metrics and adopting a continuous improvement approach to measure the effectiveness of housing and homelessness services, identify bottlenecks, and make data-informed decisions to optimize processes.
- Develop and track key performance indicators (KPIs) for housing and homelessness services, such as client satisfaction, service utilization rates, and time to placement. Regularly review data to identify areas for improvement, and implement feedback loops to ensure services evolve to meet client needs.
- By law, mobile home parks are regulated by the Department of Business Regulation; however, currently, the law does not provide for any notification to a State agency. There should be consideration that, at a minimum, DBR is notified of any sale and/or additional notice is provided to the Department of Housing or RIHousing.

#### Resources and Service Challenges

- Leveraging Technology for Process Automation and Self-Service
  - Implementing digital tools for clients to apply for services, schedule appointments, and access case information would improve service delivery speed and reduce administrative burdens. Automation can streamline processes such as eligibility determination, application processing, and benefit renewals
- Enhanced Data Sharing and Integration:
  - By improving data sharing we can reduce duplicative work and gain a comprehensive view of client needs. An integrated data system across agencies would allow us to track clients more effectively, minimize repeated data entry, and facilitate coordinated care.
  - Develop a centralized data platform or data-sharing agreements with key partners, such as Rhode Island Housing, community action programs, and homelessness service providers. This system should enable shared access to eligibility information, service history, and case notes.
- Coordinated Entry and Case Management
  - Clients often encounter multiple entry points into the system and are required to provide the same information to various agencies, leading to fragmented services and inefficiencies.
  - A coordinated entry system that centralizes intake and assessment across all housing and homelessness services would streamline service delivery. In addition, an integrated case management system that enables real-time communication and coordination is essential to ensuring clients receive seamless support.

### Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

- Workforce Development and Support for Service Providers
  - Many service providers face high caseloads and limited resources, which can lead to burnout and staff turnover. Additionally, there is a shortage of trained staff to deliver specialized services, such as case management and behavioral health support, which are essential for stabilizing individuals in housing.
  - Expanded workforce development programs to train and retain staff are critical. Offering incentives, professional development, and specialized training for staff working in housing and homelessness services would increase capacity and improve service quality.
- Housing Stability and Financial Coaching
  - There is a lack of ongoing financial coaching and stability services that help individuals and families remain stably housed over the long term.
  - Programs offering financial literacy, budgeting assistance, and tenant education would enhance housing stability. These services could include ongoing coaching to help families build savings, improve credit, and reduce dependency on emergency assistance.
- Emergency and Catastrophic Assistance for Non-Eligible Populations
  - Some individuals who experience sudden crises, such as job loss, domestic violence, or natural disasters, may not qualify for traditional housing assistance programs but still need immediate support to prevent homelessness.
  - A flexible emergency assistance fund that can be used to support individuals ineligible for existing programs but facing urgent housing needs would address this gap. This fund should have streamlined eligibility requirements and be accessible to those in immediate need.

#### Population-Specific Needs

- Ensuring that there is access to safe and affordable housing presents the opportunity for long-term success. Without the constant fear of losing housing, young adults can work towards career development or higher education. Ensuring that there is a streamlined process and that providers in this work are well-supported to continue and expand this work is imperative. We have data on the population of youth we need to serve each year, having enough housing to meet that need is critical. We also encourage the exploration of creative housing opportunities to develop these resources for our youth.
- Addressing accessibility challenges: As Rhode Island's population continues to age, more households will require accessibility related modifications to their homes to allow

### Policy Area 3: Housing Affordability and Access

them to age in place, and overall, housing will need to be more accessible for people with disabilities.

#### Funding

- Lack of operating support: There is not enough operating support to allow the lowest income tenants to be served in affordable developments. The federal programs that once coupled capital funding with operating support to be able to serve the lowest income households have largely disappeared. Resources are needed at the state level to fill that gap.
- More discussion and strategy across state agencies to address affordability, access, safety/protections; landlord education on public health issues and resources to support them and their tenants. Shelter capacity is inadequate, housing wait lists are too long, lack of affordability across RI, cliff effect of support programs
- Streamlining Funding and Resource Allocation
  - Efficient allocation of available resources can be achieved by centralizing budget planning and ensuring that funds are directed where they have the highest impact. This approach can also reduce redundancy in program funding and allow for better alignment of resources with needs.
  - Conduct a thorough analysis of current housing and homelessness funding streams and assess gaps or overlaps. Develop a centralized budgeting approach that ensures funds are allocated to high-priority areas and creates a more unified framework.

#### Affordable Housing Availability

- There is a significant shortage of affordable housing units across Rhode Island, which limits options for low-income families and individuals. This shortage is particularly acute in high-cost areas, making it difficult to place clients in stable, affordable housing even with financial assistance.
- Increased investment in affordable housing development is needed, as well as stronger partnerships with housing authorities and developers to expand access. Functions like a state-led affordable housing task force or a dedicated affordable housing development fund could help address this gap.

## Policy Area 4: Specialized Housing

### Policy Area 4: Specialized Housing

**Policy Area Overview:** Housing designed for specific populations or purposes, such as Assisted Living facilities, Transitional Housing, and Recovery Housing.

#### Review of Organizational Survey Responses

*39% of respondents (14/36) noted they had a role in specialized housing*

#### Strategy/Planning

- **Department of Housing:** Closely related to our homelessness work, the Department supports specialized housing particularly for those who have been victims of domestic violence. Governor McKee convened an Executive Working Group on Domestic Violence to identify gaps in the current domestic violence response and prevention systems. As part of that work, the Department presented and had approved a recommendation to convene a planning cohort to develop a report on housing needs for domestic violence survivors. The recommendation was adopted by the Executive Working Group and the planning cohort is expected to produce a report by December 2025.
- **HRC:** Housing for specific populations was identified by HRC commissioners as one of their top 3 priorities for 2024. The HRC has convened twice to discuss potential policy solutions and research needed to advance this work. Additionally, the HRC has highlighted housing needs for specific populations through its monthly presentation series.
- **RI Developmental Disabilities Council:** Educates legislators and policy makers on the needs of people with developmental disabilities
- **Office of the Child Advocate:** Advocacy and policy work related to access to vouchers and affordable housing for youth transitioning from DCYF care. We continue to advocate for access to specialized housing with appropriate supports to ensure youth's success following their transition from DCYF care.
- **RICoC:** Policymaking lead on local issues related to ending homelessness in Rhode Island. The CoC Board and CoC Committees set strategy, policy, and planning priorities for the Rhode Island homeless response system, which can include incorporating strategy, policy, and planning priorities on both housing affordability and access and on specialized housing for specific subpopulations.
- **EOHHS:** Supports specialized housing for vulnerable populations. EOHHS works to ensure that these populations have access to housing environments connected to supportive services that are tailored to their unique health and social needs.

**Policy Area 4: Specialized Housing**

- **Governor's Commission on Aging:** Advocates for safe and affordable housing for older Rlers.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing develops the Consolidated Plan and the Fair Housing Plan in coordination with the Department. The agency also staffs the state's Continuum of Care.
- **BHDDH:** BHDDH serves approximately 55,000 individuals with mental health and substance use disorders and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Most of the population we serve are very low income, receiving SSI/SSDI and need or will need affordable and supportive housing. BHDDH has a primary staff person working on increasing access to housing through partnerships with RI Housing and public housing authorities to increase Mainstream and 811 vouchers.
- **Department of Public Safety, Public Safety Grant Administration Office:** Coordinates planning, policy, and programs across the criminal justice system.
- **Governor's Overdose Task Force:** Develops strategic plans and sets target indicators
- **Opioid Settlement Committee:** Alignment and monitoring of spending, planning and evaluation of Abatement funds allocated for Homelessness Prevention (EOHHS) and Recovery Housing (BHDDH)

*Programs/Financing*

- **Department of Housing:**
  - **Domestic Violence:** As part of the Consolidated Homelessness Fund (CHF), the Department supports organizations assisting those who have been victims of domestic violence, such as the Elizabeth Buffum Chace Center, the Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County, and the Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center. Moreover, Rapid Rehousing and Housing Navigation efforts assist domestic violence victims through a number of different providers.
  - **Recovery Housing:** The Department also runs the Recovery Housing program in collaboration with BHDDH. The Department has limited federal funding (approximately \$3M) to grant to partners or communities for doing development (i.e. predevelopment, acquisition, renovation, etc.) of buildings to be used for recovery housing, and BHDDH will fund the operations of the building.
  - The Department also administers funding through the federal Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA) program.
- **HRC:** HRC has included a preference for specialized housing funded through the Building Homes Rhode Island program.

**Policy Area 4: Specialized Housing**

- **DHS:** Provides targeted support for certain populations, including individuals who need to move due to specific situations such as domestic violence, fire, natural disaster, or homelessness. These services include funding for temporary shelter and emergency assistance for individuals in crisis.
- **RIDOH:**
  - Tobacco Control Program: Manages approximately 70 calls inquiries annually to provide technical assistance requests related to secondhand smoke or product related inquiries related to RI Gen Laws “Public Health and Workplace Safety Act.” The work allows for educating tenants, landlords/property managers, and building associations with rights to smoke free policies in multi-unit residential settings.
  - Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury: Rhode Island does not currently have step-down options available when clients living with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are discharged from inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and unable to go home. Some examples of concerns elevated include inability to maintain rent payments due to the logistical and financial strain of recovery. Survivors are losing homes due to brain injuries, are not able to work to continue to pay bills, and resource delivery is a challenge.
  - Rape Prevention and Education: Educate and advocate for shelters to be inclusive or affirming for individuals who are LGBTQ+; support the RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence actions to identify affordable properties for transitional housing and shelters.
  - Reducing Maternal Violence and Mortality: Implement the MOSAIC program, a mother mentorship program, to build resiliency. One aspect of the work is to address housing instability and insecurity.
  - Perinatal and Early Childhood Health (PECH) program: Links families to services related to housing affordability and access.
  - Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program: Addressing housing affordability and access as a major structural determinant of health for RI families and people with disabilities.
- **DHS:** Supports moving payment assistance for individuals who receive SSI Income, reimbursement allowances for moves for those who receive Rhode Island Works (RIW) cash assistance. catastrophic assistance.
- **RI Developmental Disabilities Council:** Directs grants to people who can demonstrate unique housing ideas for people with developmental disabilities.

**Policy Area 4: Specialized Housing**

- **RICoC:** The CoC oversees a portfolio of over \$15 million dollars annually in funding for Rhode Island's homeless response system. This includes funding for the following project types - Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, Coordinated Entry, the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), Supportive Services Only (SSO), and CoC Planning. Additionally, federal regulations require coordination and collaboration between Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) recipients and the Continuum of Care on operating within the jurisdiction in determining how to allocate ESG funds, and to set policy related to the homeless response system.
- **EOHHS: Administrators:**
  - Nursing Home Transition and Money Follows the Person: Offers support to Rhode Islanders who are interested in returning to the community from a nursing home.
  - Support and Services at Home (SASH): Supports the health and wellbeing of Medicare recipients. The program is designed so people can have improved quality of life, keep healthy and remain living in their homes.
  - Accessory Dwelling Unit Pilot: The Rhode Island State Legislature passed H. 7942/S. 2323 in 2022, which allows easier development of Accessory Dwellings (ADUs) in most Rhode Island municipalities. This statute will be leveraged by a proposed pilot program, supported with Money Follows the Person (MFP) rebalancing funds, to create meaningful new affordable and accessible housing opportunities for Medicaid waiver recipients.
  - Medical Respite and Mobile Wound Care Pilot: Serves people experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness with acute medical and behavioral health support needs.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing administers numerous rental assistance programs for specialized populations including \$4 million to provide 216 rental assistance vouchers for permanent supportive housing, \$335,000 for 25 VASH vouchers for veterans experiencing homelessness and \$354,000 for 28 Family Unification Program Vouchers for families experiencing homelessness who have been involved with the child welfare system. RIHousing also has an 811project rental assistance program to subsidize up to 150 units for people with disabilities in partnership with BHDDH. RIHousing also provides rental assistance to 42 units through the Section 811 program, serving tenants with disabilities. RIHousing also administers the Access Independence Program in partnership with BHDDH which provides loans of up to \$50,000 for families and caregivers of people with developmental disabilities to modify their homes in order to support their needs and continue living with their families. RIHousing finances the development of permanent supportive housing as well as developments that target other special needs populations such as veterans, seniors, tenants with disabilities, youth aging out of foster care, reentry

## Policy Area 4: Specialized Housing

populations and victims of domestic violence. RIHousing has financed the development of several affordable assisted living facilities. RIHousing serves as the collaborative applicant for the state's Continuum of Care and staffs the CoC.

- **BHDDH:**
  - BHDDH has levels of care that include long-term residential programs for individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and Serious and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI).
  - Administers a Thresholds Program that provides funding for the acquisition and/or rehabilitation of new or existing housing opportunities for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
  - Administers Recovery Housing, and per the general law, all Recovery Housing must comply with the National Association of Recovery Residence (NARR) standards and all programs receiving these funds are certified by Rhode Island Communities for Addiction Recovery Efforts (RICARES) through a contract with BHDDH.
- **Department of Public Safety, Public Safety Grant Administration Office:** Grant funded programming for organizations that serve survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual assault.
- **Governor's Overdose Task Force:** Advisory
- **Opioid Settlement Committee:** Homelessness Prevention and Recovery Housing

Regulation/Enforcement

- **RIDOH:** Nursing home regulation and licensing.
- **RICoC:** Annual monitoring of CoC recipient agencies, working with the Funding Committee to hold agencies accountable to system performance standards.
- **EOHHS:** Monitors contracts to ensure that funds are being utilized within the terms and allowable uses of the funding sources. Additionally, EOHHS continues to contribute to the state's whole-of-government approach to Olmstead Planning.
- **RIHousing:** The federal programs RIHousing administers are highly regulated and complex. A significant number of agency program staff and staff in the legal and finance divisions are responsible for regulations and enforcement relative to these programs. Specifically, RIHousing ensures compliance with state and federal requirements associated with the development and rental assistance programs it administers including those associated with accessibility. RIHousing ensures that landlords participating in its

## Policy Area 4: Specialized Housing

rental assistance programs and the developments in its portfolio provide reasonable accommodations upon request to meet the housing needs of specialized populations.

- **BHDDH:**
  - Oversight and enforcement of Thresholds Program:
  - Certification (through RICARES) of recovery housing, adhering to the standards of the National Association of Recovery Residences. BHDDH conducts audits every two years to ensure compliance with its contractual mandates and deliverables.
  - Licenses agencies that use Medicaid billable support services that can be coupled with affordable housing units in the community.
- **Opioid Settlement Committee:** Opioid Settlement Agreement

Data

- **Department of Housing:** As part of the Department's integrated housing report, the Department will conduct an assessment of the suitability of existing housing stock in meeting accessibility needs of residents. The first assessment will be conducted for the 2026 report and every three years thereafter, all contingent upon funding for data collection. As part of the Department's agency budget submission, funding was requested to support this data collection. Currently there is not available data on the number of accessible units and the current need for accessible units in the state.
- **DHS:** Integrated eligibility system captures data on living situations and documents activities with families in case notes.
- **RI Developmental Disabilities Council:** Reports on housing to federal government and provides comprehensive review every five years.
- **RI CoC:**
  - Designates the HMIS Lead in the state, which works with all ESG and CoC-funded projects. This includes submitting all mandated reports to HUD on time and accurately, including the Point in Time (PIT) Count, the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), the Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA), and the System Performance Measures (SPM) report, among other responsibilities.
- **EOHHS:**
  - Tracks data for populations served through Medicaid, and other state programs within the Ecosystem. Additional data may include HMIS and vendor reporting.

## Policy Area 4: Specialized Housing

- Monitors contract deliverables, outcomes, and tracking the utilization of state resources allocated for housing initiatives.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing tracks a wide range of data and performance metrics for tenants assisted through specialized rental assistance programs and in developments serving special needs populations. This includes demographic information on tenants as well as details associated with the developments.
- **BHDDH:** Collects the following data from the Recovery Housing program: number of admissions, discharge reason, housing after discharge, demographics, social drivers of health.
- **Governor's Overdose Task Force:** Strategic plan alignment and target setting

### Review of Prior Report Findings

#### Current system opportunities/gaps

#### *Boston Consulting Group and The Rhode Island Foundation 2023 Report:*

- There is not enough housing in RI for seniors
- There is need for a "much expanded" diversion program that can be delivered by all providers, and with less strings attached
- Based on state benchmarking the following are potential functions of a state housing department related to specialized housing
  - Apply for and manage federal programs:
    - Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)
    - Supportive Housing for Elderly
    - Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities
- There are not enough shelter options and supportive services for individuals with substance use disorder (SUD).

### Summary of Stakeholder Input

#### Current system opportunities/gaps

#### Service Gaps

- Transitional and Supportive Housing Options

## Policy Area 4: Specialized Housing

- Transitional housing options, especially for individuals with specialized needs such as behavioral health issues, disabilities, and substance use disorders, are limited. Without access to supportive environments, these individuals are at a higher risk of repeated homelessness or housing instability.
- More transitional housing facilities with integrated support services are needed. Developing partnerships with behavioral health providers and expanding programs that offer both housing and case management support would fill this gap.

### Outreach and Access

- Comprehensive Outreach and Engagement for Hard-to-Reach Populations
  - Certain populations, including individuals with mental health issues, undocumented individuals, and people experiencing chronic homelessness, may not engage with traditional service models and are therefore underserved.
  - Outreach teams focused on connecting with hard-to-reach populations are needed. These teams could work directly in the community, offering on-the-ground support, building trust, and linking individuals to necessary services. Additionally, mobile service units that provide on-site assistance and resources would improve accessibility.

### Interagency Coordination

- The Department of Housing and EOHHS agencies partnering and coordinating will improve the outcomes for people experiencing homelessness, entering recovery, or housing insecure. Utilization of Medicaid reimbursable services to ensure supportive housing services will allow the Dept. of Housing to focus on housing and operating planning.

## Policy Area 5: Preservation, Health, and Safety of Existing Housing Stock

**Policy Area 5: Preservation, Health, and Safety of Existing Housing Stock**

**Policy Area Overview:** Activities related to maintaining housing habitability through home repair programs; programs that address health hazards (e.g., lead, radon, asbestos); building inspections; and enforcement of code requirements.

**Review of Organizational Survey Responses**

*28% of respondents (10/36) noted they had a role in preservation, health, and safety of existing housing stock*

Strategy/Planning

- **Department of Housing:** The Department contributes to the planning and design of housing preservation efforts through the State's budgeting process. Through the Department's staffing of the HRC, the Department is involved with reporting on the State's lead hazard mitigation program, which is implemented by the Department of Health per a Memorandum of Understanding, and the Monitoring Agents program.
- **PUC:** Implements policy through programs that directly and indirectly impact health and safety of housing stock.
- **Department of Business Regulation:** Promulgation and enforcement of fire and building codes.
- **EOHHS:** Contributes to efforts aimed at maintaining healthy housing conditions for vulnerable populations, ensuring that housing remains a safe environment, free from hazards and able to be accessed.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing manages the development of the 5-year Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) in coordination with the Department of Housing. Many of the federal programs RIHousing administers require conformance with the State Guide Plan and/or the Consolidated Plan. RIHousing reviews and provide feedback to Statewide Planning on the housing element of local comprehensive plans. RIHousing serves on State Planning Council, the House Housing Affordability Commission and Land Use Commission and EC4 Advisory Committee.

Programs/Financing

- **Department of Housing:** The Department supports programs such as CDBG Home Repair, SFRF Home Repair, and the Preservation of Affordable Homes program (through SFRF funds). The Department also partners with RI Housing to develop guidelines for SFRF and bond-funded programs, some of which support preservation. In

**Policy Area 5: Preservation, Health, and Safety of Existing Housing Stock**

addition, the Landlord Tenant Handbook provides information about required health and safety standards of rental units.

- **HRC:**
  - The HRC is statutorily charged with reporting on the State's lead hazard mitigation program. Lead hazard mitigation program responsibilities are implemented by the Department of Health per an MOU.
  - HRC's contributions to the Consolidated Homelessness Fund have supported initiatives such as landlord incentives, which have financed unit repairs.
  - The Building Homes Rhode Island program has supported the preservation of existing affordable homes.
- **RIDOH:**
  - Tobacco Control Program: Manages approximately 70 calls inquiries annually to provide technical assistance requests related to secondhand smoke or product related inquiries related to RI Gen Laws "Public Health and Workplace Safety Act." The work allows for educating tenants, landlords/property managers, and building associations with rights to smoke free policies in multi-unit residential settings.
- **PUC:** Oversees energy efficiency programs that can include or work in tandem with remediation actions necessary to implement efficiency improvements. Other examples of programs are the PUC's oversight of regulated water utilities' leak pipe replacement programs.
- **RI Department of Labor:** Investments via Real Jobs RI into sector-based industry trainings in construction.
- **EOHHS:**
  - Homelessness Prevention Grant: Administers \$2.25 million in rolling grant opportunities for homelessness prevention initiatives for priority populations.
  - 1115 Waiver: Transitional supports pursued in the 1115 waiver includes appropriate modifications to improve the safety, health, and accessibility of housing units.
  - Olmstead Planning
- **Coastal Resources Management Council:** Regulatory programs that address maintenance of existing structures such that balanced management of coastal resources are achieved. CRMC has no financing programs nor financial assistance

**Policy Area 5: Preservation, Health, and Safety of Existing Housing Stock**

- **RIHousing:** RIHousing regularly finances the preservation of existing affordable housing through a range of federal, state and RIHousing financed programs including LIHTC, HOME, Housing Trust Fund, the Capital Magnet Fund, FHA Risk Share including Risk Share with FFB, taxable and tax-exempt mortgages and the Preservation Loan Fund. The agency also administers federal and state lead hazard remediation funds and federal healthy home funds which are used to address lead hazards and other health and safety issues in homes occupied by low-income families. Through its 203(k) program, RIHousing can wrap into a mortgage, additional resources to help homebuyers finance needed home improvements. RIHousing also partners with the RI Infrastructure Bank and communities to offer financing to replace septic systems or help homeowners tie into existing sewer lines.

*Regulation/Enforcement*

- **Department of Housing:** Through its shared staffing of the HRC, the Department is involved with the regulation and enforcement of the lead safety program.
- **HRC:**
  - Oversees the Monitoring Agents program, which ensures that low- and moderate-income rental and homeownership units follow all requirements and deed restrictions are followed.
  - Lead hazard mitigation regulatory responsibilities are implemented by the Department of Health per a Memorandum of Understanding.
- **PUC:** Regulates implementation of programs and rates. For example, the PUC does regulate investments in lead pipe replacement, but the PUC is not the body that determines if lead pipes are hazardous to the public.
- **RIDOH:** The Center for Healthy Homes and Environment (CHHE) regulates lead, asbestos and radon hazard control by statute. CHHE also promotes climate resiliency and adaptation.
- **Department of Environmental Management:** Permitting programs for wetlands, septic systems, stormwater, and brownfields
- **Department of Business Regulation:** Promulgation and enforcement of fire and building codes.
- **EOHHS:** Works with other state agencies to enforce regulations on housing safety, particularly for populations in specialized housing or those receiving healthcare services at home. EOHHS monitors contracts to ensure that funds are being utilized within the terms and allowable uses of the funding sources.

## Policy Area 5: Preservation, Health, and Safety of Existing Housing Stock

- **RIHousing:** The federal programs RIHousing administers are highly regulated and complex. A significant number of agency program staff and staff in the legal and finance divisions are responsible for regulations and enforcement relative to these programs. Specifically, RIHousing ensures that developments it finances meet all federal and state requirements including those involving affordability restrictions and property conditions. RIHousing ensures that lead hazard remediation is carried out by appropriately trained contractors in conformance with state and federal lead hazard remediation requirements.

### Data

- **Department of Housing:** Data on the lead hazard mitigation program is reported annually in the integrated housing report.
- **HRC:** Annual lead hazard mitigation program reporting
- **PUC:** Requires utilities to provide data related to program spending and other performance metrics.
- **Department of Environmental Management:** Some brownfields cleanup work
- **EOHHS:**
  - Tracks data for populations served through Medicaid, and other state programs within the Ecosystem. Additional data may include HMIS and vendor reporting.
  - Monitors contract deliverables, outcomes, and tracking the utilization of state resources allocated for housing initiatives.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing tracks a wide range of data on developments preserved with financing through RIHousing and homeowners and tenants assisted through lead hazard remediation programs.

### Review of Prior Report Findings

#### Current system opportunities/gaps

#### *Boston Consulting Group and The Rhode Island Foundation 2023 Report:*

- Based on state benchmarking the following are potential functions of a state housing department related to housing preservation:
  - Plan for long-term housing updates
  - Mandate regular upkeep of housing
  - Mandate tenant protections from landlords
  - Enforce maintenance of affordable housing

**Policy Area 5: Preservation, Health, and Safety of Existing Housing Stock**

- Enforce necessary structural renovation
- Apply for and manage federal Housing Trust Fund
- Structural renovations
- HVAC/utilities updates
- Electrification
- Historic building preservation
- Collect and analyze data (e.g., which buildings need support, etc.)

*The 2023 RI Integrated Housing Survey:*

- Deploying new surveys. Where there are gaps in high-impact data that can only be filled through surveys, the State may wish to identify funding for periodic surveys. For example, funding for a survey conducted every three years on housing accessibility features and the presence of health hazards in housing units would help guide priorities and funding for better meeting accessibility and health needs of Rhode Island residents.

**Summary of Stakeholder Input***Current system opportunities/gaps*

## Health and Safety Regulation:

- Efforts to increase the number of lead professionals such as lead inspectors, lead renovators and lead abatement contractors.
- Asbestos statute does not give RIDOH authority over one- and two-family homes leaving some potential for asbestos exposure in those settings. Radon statute does not give RIDOH authority in residential dwellings of any kind.

## Strategic Planning

- We have been asked to deal with highly complex, extremely time sensitive, and project-specific code reviews and/or inspections relative to, in particular, short-term homelessness solutions. Accordingly, we would recommend a longer-view, strategic approach whereby properties/development opportunities are identified in advance of seasonal or event-driven crises.

## Housing Stock Preservation:

- There are not enough resources available to help lower income property owners make repairs, improve energy efficiency, or build ADUs.

## Policy Area 6: Climate and Energy

**Policy Area 6: Climate and Energy**

**Policy Area Overview:** Housing-related activities addressing climate resilience, climate adaptation, renewable energy, energy infrastructure, and energy efficiency,

**Review of Organizational Survey Responses**

*36% of respondents (13/36) noted they had a role in climate and energy*

Strategy/Planning

- **Department of Housing:**
  - The Department is collaborating with Statewide Planning to consider options for integrating climate into the state housing plan from a land use perspective. Additionally, energy/climate is anticipated to be a cross-cutting theme within the state housing plan.
  - The Department seeks to support state and regional efforts to achieve carbon reduction targets in the Act On Climate and other initiatives, interacting regularly with governor's policy office and OER to ensure that building/ housing sector adds to attainment of goals in Act on Climate. While we are not directly involved with driving climate or energy policy, the Department seeks to raise awareness of federal and state incentives to reduce energy consumption and foster growth of renewables and storage in all areas of housing sector. The Department has been invited to join the EC4.
- **HRC:** Serves as the executive department agency responsible for developing housing policies, plans, and standards per RIGL 42-128. Has statutory authority (RIGL 42-128-8.1) to develop and implement the state's strategic housing plan and coordinate housing activities across state agencies and political subdivisions.
- **PUC:** Aligns utilities' business practices with the public interest, including the mandates of the Act on Climate, as well as other statutory requirements related to energy supply and infrastructure. Opens dockets to investigate if policy changes are necessary to better align utility business practice with public interest.
- **Department of Environmental Management:** Chair of Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council, working on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and resiliency.
- **Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA):** Advocates for smart growth, TOD, and mode shift to support Rhode Island's climate goals and reduce GHG emissions; inviting housing developments to provide transit passes to residents at no/reduced cost.

## Policy Area 6: Climate and Energy

- **RIHousing:** RIHousing manages the development of the 5-year Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) in coordination with the Department of Housing. Many of the federal programs RIHousing administers require conformance with the State Guide Plan and/or the Consolidated Plan. RIHousing reviews and provide feedback to Statewide Planning on the housing element of local comprehensive plans. RIHousing serves on State Planning Council, the House Housing Affordability Commission and Land Use Commission and EC4 Advisory Committee.
- **RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (RIEC4):** Responsibility and oversight relating to assessing, integrating, and coordinating climate change efforts across state government.
- **Division of Public Utilities and Carriers:** Advocates for ratepayers in all regulated utility proceedings, including Rhode Island Energy's Energy Efficiency Plans, Renewable Energy project tariffs and ratepayer costs, plans related to Electric Vehicles and infrastructure.
- **Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency:** Serves as a member of EC4 Council

*Programs/Financing*

- **Department of Housing:** There are no state programs on energy or renewables administered by the Department presently. The Department will continue to publicize and broadcast federal initiatives that are available to RI housing and homelessness sector, both non-profit and for profit, and public housing authorities. Additionally, projects that take into account climate and energy goals or utilize green building strategies may be given preference in procurement
- **HRC:** HRC is able to prioritize projects that include certain factors, including climate change, environment, and energy issues
- **PUC:** Utilities file plans to procure energy, invest in energy infrastructure, or ask for rate recovery for investments made. PUC determines the prudence of these proposals and whether the utility may collect costs for ratepayers.
- **DHS:**
  - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): Helps eligible low-income households pay their heating bills through federal grants.
  - Weatherization Assistance Program: Provides services to reduce energy consumption in homes.

## Policy Area 6: Climate and Energy

- **RI Department of Labor and Training:** Invests in green economy workforce development initiatives.
- **Department of Environmental Management:** Administers some grant-related programs.
- **Coastal Resources Management Council:**
  - Regulatory programs that review and assent individual parcel development within the CRMC's primary jurisdiction.
  - For ocean renewable energy projects in state waters, direct regulatory programs.
  - For ocean renewable energy projects in federal waters, direct review authorities only, and then under allowable and applicable federal laws, with the ability to affect the siting of renewable activities in relation to the affectation to RI's coastal resources.
- **RIHousing:**
  - Funds ZEOS program in partnership with OER and RI Energy to finance development of Net Zero affordable housing. Prioritizes financing for development of housing that meets higher energy efficiency standards and utilizes solar/renewable energy.
- **RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (RIEC4):** Develops and offers various programs that promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and resilient building/infrastructure design. Each agency/office is responsible for implementing its own programs, with larger policy issues being vetted through the RIEC4.
- **Division of Public Utilities and Carriers:** Approves long-term debt entered into by regulated utilities.

Regulation/Enforcement

- **PUC:** Oversees rate recovery and determines prudence - the PUC regulates utilities' business practices and decisions related to climate and energy.
- **RIHousing:** Comply with all state and federal requirements for the programs we administer.
- **RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (RIEC4):** The RIEC4 is not a regulatory entity. Only a handful of members (e.g. DEM) are considered enforcement agencies.
- **Division of Public Utilities and Carriers:**

## Policy Area 6: Climate and Energy

- Regulates compliance by regulated utilities to ensure analysis of cost/benefit for any investments or rates charged by the utilities
- DPUC has a federally funded gas pipeline team that inspects for safety
- DPUC has a consumer team that assists consumers with billing or meter disputes, payment plans for low income, and termination processes.

Data

- **Department of Housing:** The Department does not presently collect data related to climate and energy policy
- **PUC:** Requires energy suppliers to provide data about the volume, sources, and emissions associated with the energy they serve retail customers. The PUC also collect actual energy and emissions data from energy utilities, as well as near-term and long-term forecasts of energy use.
- **DHS:** Integrated eligibility system captures data on living situations and documents activities with families in case notes.
- **Department of Environmental Management:** Lead agency for conducting the annual state greenhouse gas emissions inventory
- **RIHousing:** Tracks information on the developments we finance.
- **RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (RIEC4):** Many of the members of the RIEC4 perform their own data collection (e.g. home efficiency rebates, renewables).
- **Division of Public Utilities and Carriers:** Engages analysts/consultants to verify claimed impacts, costs and benefits for reliable/safe energy and climate.

**Review of Prior Report Findings**Current system opportunities/gaps*Boston Consulting Group and The Rhode Island Foundation 2023 Report:*

- Based on state benchmarking the following are potential functions of a state housing department related to climate and energy
  - Plan for long-term health and safety updates
  - Prepare state housing for climate disasters (e.g., emergency action plan and prevention)
  - Mandate climate conscious building choices

**Policy Area 6: Climate and Energy**

- Mandate safe building practices
- Mandate lead abatement
- Enforce climate conscious building choices
- Review/approve new developments for environmental considerations (e.g., California Coastal Commission)
- Enforce safe building practices
- Enforce home safety inspections
- Apply for and manage federal programs:
  - Community Development Block Grant
  - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)
  - Climate related renovations
  - Energy efficiency programs
  - Lead abatement
  - Structural integrity
  - Weatherization program (WAP)

**Summary of Stakeholder Input****Current system opportunities/gaps**

- Include the Department of Housing and RI Housing on the EC4
- Being proactive and considering how homes are being built/rehabbed (from an energy perspective) and where they are being built (from a resilience perspective to avoid flooding) is a conversation the RIEC4 would like to advance with the housing community.

## Policy Area 7: Homelessness

**Policy Area 7: Homelessness**

**Policy Area Overview:** Comprehensive activities related to addressing homelessness, including prevention, intervention, and planning activities.

**Review of Organizational Survey Responses**

*39% of respondents (14/36) noted they had a role in homelessness*

Strategy/Planning

- **Department of Housing:** The Department of Housing is charged in statute as the lead agency on homelessness for the State. Preventing homelessness and assisting those who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing homelessness is a central focus and responsibility of the Department.
  - Homelessness - and more specifically developing the housing needed to prevent and respond to homelessness - is anticipated to be a priority within the state housing plan that the Department is working on (described in more detail within Housing Development).
  - The Department has developed budget proposals requesting state funding to support its homelessness efforts.
  - The Department collaborated with RIHousing to incorporate further prioritization of homes for extremely low-income and people who have experienced homelessness into the qualified allocation plan (QAP).
  - In the winter of 2023-24, the Department partnered to conduct the planning necessary to help providers identify properties to accommodate an increase in housing/shelter capacity. This included engaging closely with municipalities on identifying facility options. As a result, the number of shelter beds available in Rhode Island was increased by more than 30%.
  - Collaboration on consolidated plan which articulates federal funding priorities.
  - Of note, the predecessor entity to the Department - OHCD - was charged with convening the Interagency Council on Homelessness, which has not met for several years. The Department has recently discussed reconvening this group as part of its charge to address homelessness.
- **HRC:**
  - Serves as the executive department agency responsible for developing housing policies, plans, and standards per RIGL 42-128. Has statutory authority (RIGL 42-128-8.1) to develop and implement the state's strategic housing plan and coordinate housing activities across state agencies and political subdivisions.

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- The HRC's contributions to the Consolidated Homelessness Fund have supported initiatives such as the HMIS system.
- **Housing Resources Coordinating Committee:** The Coordinating Committee's roles in establishing an interagency MOU and establishing guidelines for the housing production fund could influence homelessness. The housing production fund statute requires RI Housing to prioritize households exiting homelessness or earning not more than 30% of AMI.
- **DCYF:**
  - Engages with the Homeless and Housing Support System to identify strategies to address family and youth homelessness.
  - Collaborates with Family Community Care Partnerships (FCCPs) to expand mission to support unhoused families, aiming to prevent their involvement in the child welfare system.
  - Develops procedures within Support and Response Unit to assist families in navigating housing insecurity.
- **Office of the Child Advocate:** Homelessness impacts many of the youth we work with who transition from DCYF care due to lack of affordable housing or lack of necessary supports. We advocate for access to housing and work with other providers to develop solutions to this growing issue impacting our youth.
- **Department of Business Regulation:** Collaborates with property owners, State entities, and local jurisdictions relating to repurposing of existing structures as temporary or long-term housing.
- **RICoC:** Policymaking lead on local issues related to ending homelessness in Rhode Island. The CoC Board and CoC Committees set strategy, policy, and planning priorities for the Rhode Island homeless response system. This work necessarily includes incorporating strategy, policy, and planning priorities on both housing affordability and access and on specialized housing for specific subpopulations, for example those experiencing chronic homelessness, youth experiencing homelessness, and households fleeing domestic violence. The CoC is also governed by federal regulations that define its structure, responsibilities, and operational requirements for coordinating homeless services and resources. These federal statutes mandate specific requirements that shape the CoC's overall governance and strategic approach. Of note, local jurisdictions are required by federal regulation to have a CoC Board and Governance Structure to receive CoC funds, and decisions about who serves as the Coordinated Entry Lead, HMIS Lead, and Collaborative Applicant are, by statute, made by the CoC Board.

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- **EOHHS:** Develops homelessness prevention strategies and initiatives, integrating health services with housing solutions to address the root causes of homelessness. EOHHS coordinates statewide efforts to reduce homelessness through comprehensive health and housing initiatives and interventions.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing manages the development of the 5-year Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI) in coordination with the Department of Housing. Many of the federal programs RIHousing administers require conformance with the State Guide Plan and/or the Consolidated Plan. RIHousing reviews and provide feedback to Statewide Planning on the housing element of local comprehensive plans. RIHousing serves on State Planning Council, the House Housing Affordability Commission and Land Use Commission and EC4 Advisory Committee. RIHousing staffs the Continuum of Care including administration of planning resources.
- **BHDDH:** Has a position that works across the Departments, Commissions, quasi-public agencies to increase access to housing opportunities, develop programs, policies and practices that address housing support and retention services, and liaison with housing programs to address service gaps. The position represents the Director on the Housing Resource Commission, is on Membership of the Continuum of Care, represents the Department at various planning and policy committees, including Olmstead, the Health Planning Cabinet, the Continuum of Care Pipeline committee, the Behavioral Health Plan, and local health equity zones.
- **Governor's Overdose Task Force:** The Task Force is the center of all drug overdose prevention and intervention activities in the state. The Task Force and its workgroups are responsible for addressing the overdose crisis and serves as an advisory for strategic planning, emerging issues, and addressing social determinants of health.

Programs/Financing

- **Department of Housing:**
  - The Department administers programs providing temporary emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, supportive services, housing navigation, street outreach, homelessness prevention, housing problem solving, and systems coordination. These efforts are funded annually through the Consolidated Homelessness Fund (CHF), which is comprised of funding from HUD's Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), federal Title XX funds through the Department of Human Services, and the Housing Resources and Homelessness restricted receipt account. In recent years, these efforts have been significantly funded by time-limited State Fiscal Recovery Funds. In partnership with the RICoC, funding from CHF supports systems investments in the CES and HMIS systems.

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- The Department administers an SFRF-funded municipal homelessness support initiative, which provides grant funding to municipalities that host new or expanded overnight shelters and winter emergency hubs. Awards assist municipalities with public safety expenses and other municipal services that support individuals and families experiencing homelessness.
- The Department developed the priority projects fund to allocate resources to development projects that include units for people who have experienced homelessness and/or extremely low income Rhode Islanders
- **HRC:**
  - HRC invests into the Consolidated Homelessness Fund (CHF), which allocates funding to shelter operations, outreach, rapid re-housing rental assistance, and systems supports (including the coordinated entry system). Through the Consolidated Homelessness Fund process, Housing Resources Commission; the State of Rhode Island Department of Housing; and the Department of Human Services collaborate to make funding decisions.
  - Collaborates with other funders on the Continuum of Care/ESG funding committee.
  - Funds the development of new housing through the Extremely Low-Income Capital and Operating programs through the Housing Resources Commission restricted receipt account (renamed to Housing Resources and Homelessness restricted receipt account).
- **RIDOH:**
  - Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury: Rhode Island does not currently have step-down options available when clients living with traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are discharged from inpatient rehabilitation hospitals and unable to go home. Some examples of concerns elevated include inability to maintain rent payments due to the logistical and financial strain of recovery. Survivors are losing homes due to brain injuries, are not able to work to continue to pay bills, and resource delivery is a challenge.
  - Rape Prevention and Education: Educate and advocate for shelters to be inclusive or affirming for individuals who are LGBTQ+; support the RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence actions to identify affordable properties for transitional housing and shelters.
  - Reducing Maternal Violence and Mortality: Implement the MOSAIC program, a mother mentorship program, to build resiliency. One aspect of the work is to address housing instability and insecurity.

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- Perinatal and Early Childhood Health (PECH) program: Links families to services related to housing affordability and access.
  - Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Program: Addressing housing affordability and access as a major structural determinant of health for RI families and people with disabilities.
- **DHS:** Provides comprehensive services related to homelessness prevention and intervention. These services include helping individuals and families relocate if they are in unsafe or uninhabitable housing and offering emergency assistance for those experiencing homelessness or at risk due to eviction, foreclosure, or domestic violence. Emergency shelter services are also available for those affected by catastrophes like fire or severe weather.
- **DCYF:**
  - Over the past two years, DCYF has spent millions supporting families in hotels, both as a preventive measure to keep them from entering our system and as mandated by court orders for families already involved with the Department. In response, we have actively pursued strategies to better support the homeless population, including partnerships with Family Community Care Partnerships (FCCPs), the Continuum of Care (CoC), and housing agencies.
- **Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA):** Piloting a fare benefit program in partnership with organizations serving people experiencing housing insecurity, to provide free public transportation to this population.
- **RICoC:** The CoC oversees a portfolio of over \$15 million dollars annually in funding for Rhode Island's homeless response system. Additionally, federal regulations require coordination and collaboration between Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) recipients and the Continuum of Care on operating within the jurisdiction in determining how to allocate ESG funds, and to set policy related to the homeless response system. The CoC's Funding Committee functions as the review committee for CoC-funded projects, and for the Consolidated Homeless Fund. Additionally, entitlement recipients of other HUD funds (such as CDBG) must consult with their CoC on local need and priorities when developing their 5-Year Plans for investing HUD funds to ensure alignment and consistency. Much of Rhode Island's resources to address housing and homelessness flow from HUD and are therefore beholden to a complex code of federal statutes, regulations, policy statements, and initiatives. The best example of this is the CoC Competition for funding, which is a highly technical and complex application that is completely dictated by federal rules. Another example is the Coordinated Entry System, the requirements of which are outlined in federal policy memos and rules. The federal regulations also speak definitively about the Continuum of Care's role in selecting its lead agencies (CES, HMIS, and Collaborative Applicant), which is necessary to

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understand while considering options in local state governance. Continuum of Care funding is unique among federal funding streams in that it is not entitlement funding or block-granted. Instead, the CoC must competitively earn its funding annually via a complicated and nuanced local competition, a national competition, and through responding to special notices of funding as they are offered. Each provides prescriptive requirements to a CoC, and many of those requirements inform the CoC's policies, governance, and structure. Additionally, CoC recipients are rigorously monitored and have significant expectations on monitoring and technical assistance provisions. Continuum of Care: 24 CFR Part 578

- **EOHHS:**
  - Justice-Involved Homelessness Prevention Initiatives: Funds from the Opioid Settlement are being made available to the DOC for the purpose of improving housing stability upon community transition for individuals with or at risk of OUD/SUD. This is being accomplished through the facilitation of basic needs care packages, emergency food provisions, and essential document needs for these individuals.
  - Reentry Support Packages: Provide transitional support and essential items for successful reentry.
  - Emergency Food Provisions: Address immediate nutritional needs until individuals can access community resources.
  - Essential Document Support: Assist individuals in obtaining vital documents for reintegration.
  - Unsheltered Supportive Services - Additional supportive services are needed to protect vulnerable populations from harsh winter conditions, reduce health risks, and assist in offering pathways to permanent housing. EOHHS holds funding in reserve for an MOU with the Department of Housing for Winter, should warming stations or navigation centers be utilized.
  - Additional Programs that apply to this Policy Area include: Pay for Success, Homelessness Prevention Initiative Grant, Medical Respite and Mobile Wound Care.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing administers a number of rental assistance programs targeting or prioritizing homeless populations including permanent supportive housing rental assistance vouchers and Emergency Housing Vouchers. RIHousing finances the development of permanent supportive housing as well as developments that target other special needs populations such as veterans, seniors, tenants with disabilities, youth aging out of foster care, reentry populations and victims of domestic violence. RIHousing is administering over \$13 million in HOME-ARP funds which is supporting capital and

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operating costs as well as supportive services in affordable housing targeted to homeless populations. RIHousing is the applicant for the Continuum of Care and staffs the CoC.

- **BHDDH:**
  - Receives a grant from Projects for the Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This grant provides \$300,000 annually to provide outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness who have severe and persistent mental illness.
  - The goal of the Rhode Island Systems, Engagement and Navigation grant (RISEN) is to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in Rhode Island due to untreated mental health (MH), substance use (SUD), or co-occurring disorders (COD) through connections to treatment and services. The RISEN program will co-locate in shelters and public housing authorities to outreach individuals identified as homeless or at risk for eviction due to untreated behavioral health concerns.
- **Governor's Overdose Task Force:** Advisory role

Regulation/Enforcement

- **Department of Housing:** The Department plays a role in establishing and determining standards for the State's shelter system.
- **Office of the Child Advocate:** When youth who are eligible for supports through DCYF are brought to our attention and are homeless, we advocate within the individual case to ensure the youth is provided with necessary supports to get them off the street and into safe and secure housing.
- **Department of Business Regulation:** Ensures that repurposing/reuse of existing properties is occurring in compliance with applicable fire and building codes and that relief from code requirements is being requested through the proper statutory and regulatory pathways.
- **RICoC:** The CoC is responsible for monitoring CoC recipient agencies annually and works with the Funding Committee to hold these agencies accountable to system performance standards. These are two separate processes as monitoring focuses on implementation of the program in compliance with HUD and RICoC rules and regulations, while the performance scoring process rates projects annually on how well they are performing. The CoC Planners work with the CoC Board and Funding Committee to conduct monitoring, provide system training, and support recipients in the implementation of their programs.

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- **EOHHS:** Ensures that housing providers receiving state funds comply with regulations aimed at protecting the homeless population, ensuring they have access to safe and supportive housing environments. EOHHS monitors contracts to ensure that funds are being utilized within the terms and allowable uses of the funding sources and that providers are meeting deliverables as defined within the contracts.
- **RIHousing:** The federal programs RIHousing administers are highly regulated and complex. A significant number of agency program staff and staff in the legal and finance divisions are responsible for regulations and enforcement relative to these programs. Specifically, through its staffing role for the CoC, the CoC Planner works with the CoC Board and Funding Committee to conduct monitoring, provide system training, and support recipients in the implementation of their programs. This ensures technical assistance is provided and system standards and rules and regulations are enforced.
- **BHDDH:** Licenses community mental health centers, some of whom have contracts with the Department of Housing for homeless services; however, are not involved in oversight of these programs.
- **Governor's Overdose Task Force:** Advisory role

Data

- **Department of Housing:** The Department, through the Consolidated Homelessness Fund and with HRC funding, contracts for Housing Management Information System (HMIS) services. (HMIS is governed by the RI Continuum of Care). Additional homelessness-related data is collected as part of contract management.
- **HRC:** Completes an annual report, available via the RI Housing website. Recent homelessness data has focused on funding allocations of the HRC.
- **DHS:** Integrated eligibility system captures data on living situations and documents activities with families in case notes.
- **DCYF:**
  - Certain data specifically related to families served
  - Internally track families as they enter and exit hotels.
- **RICoC:** The CoC designates the HMIS Lead in the state, which works with all ESG and CoC-funded projects. The current HMIS Lead is the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness (RICEH) and is the designated agency responsible for the day-to-day operations of HMIS. This includes submitting all mandated reports to HUD on time and accurately, including the Point in Time (PIT) Count, the Housing Inventory Count (HIC), the Longitudinal System Analysis (LSA), and the System Performance Measures (SPM) report, among other responsibilities.

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- **EOHHS:** Tracks data for populations served through Medicaid, and other state programs within the Ecosystem. Additional data may include HMIS and vendor reporting. EOHHS monitors contract deliverables, outcomes, and tracking the utilization of state resources allocated for housing initiatives.
- **RIHousing:** RIHousing tracks a wide range of data and performance metrics for tenants assisted through homeless rental assistance programs and in developments serving these populations. This includes demographic information on tenants as well as details associated with the developments.
- **BHDDH:** BHDDH has been attempting to match its RI Behavioral Health On-line Database (RIBHOLD) with the Homeless Management Information System and has not been successful obtaining a data sharing agreement, however, the Ecosystem does match Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data.
- **Governor's Overdose Task Force:** Advisory role

**Review of Prior Report Findings***Current system opportunities/gaps**Boston Consulting Group and The Rhode Island Foundation 2023 Report:*

- There is a deficit of project-based permanent supportive housing (PSH) units in Rhode Island, driven in large part by a deficit of units
- Several State Licensed Facilities have expressed willingness to provide space to accommodate homeless individuals
- There are not enough shelter options and supportive services for individuals with substance use disorder (SUD)
- It is difficult to track every individual who has been identified as unsheltered over time and across providers
- There is little incentive for developers to prioritize individuals who are experiencing homelessness; much of the burden of developing a tenant selection plan falls on developers
- Based on state benchmarking the following are potential functions of a state housing department related to homelessness
  - Set strategy to end homelessness
  - Solicit input from community stakeholders
  - Enforce availability of permanent housing options for homeless individuals

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- Apply for and manage:
  - Continuum of Care Program
  - Emergency Solutions Grants
- Fund emergency shelters
- Fund permanent housing for adults experiencing homelessness
- Coordinate use of emergency shelters
- Coordinate wraparound services
- Collect and analyze data (e.g., number of homeless, effectiveness of programs, etc.,)
- Coordinate collection across homeless and housing service providers (HMIS)

**Summary of Stakeholder Input**Current system opportunities/gaps

## Governance and Coordination

- The current system is lacking a clear, unified plan, with multiple strategies across entities and agencies. These departmental silos impact the ability to develop a cohesive, system-wide strategy for addressing homelessness.
- The current structure, where RIHousing receives a substantial portion of RI Continuum of Care (RiCoC) program funds while also playing an administrative role, creates potential governance dynamic complexities.
- The current organizational structure between RIHousing, RiCoC, and HRC is unclear and has some administrative and authority challenges, presenting an opportunity to realign authority and administrative processes for improved governance.
- There are potential redundancies among EOHHS agencies (DOC, BHDDH, DHS) in addressing homeless populations, which poses an opportunity to further streamline and optimize processes and structures.
- Improve coordination between state agencies, municipalities, and community partners on homelessness policy and programs through establishing a functional Interagency Council on Homelessness. This will help the Department of Housing and the RiCoC leverage resources/funding to serve households experiencing homelessness outside of the Consolidated Homeless Fund and CoC resources.
- Continue to utilize the Funding Committee to work on strategy and inform funding decisions of the both the CoC and Consolidated Homeless Fund/HRC will ensure that

## Policy Area 7: Homelessness

the two main funding streams of the homeless response system are aligned and not duplicating services.

- Coordinate planning processes, so that RICOc's strategic plan and the current strategies for ending homelessness in Rhode Island both inform and are informed by the state's housing plan.
- The Continuum of Care has developed into a highly bureaucratic system which is not nimble or flexible enough to meet the current demand. CES is similar. Restructuring these will help to streamline the system and move to a more nimble system.
- It feels as though the CoC operates in relative isolation. While the organization has its own funds and resources, there is an opportunity to develop more formal structures that can bring together resources across entities and agencies.
- The main gap in the current homeless response system is the higher-level coordination efforts necessary to leverage systems outside of CoC and CHF funding to end homelessness in Rhode Island. The current homeless response system is set up to house those who are most vulnerable, and with a scarcity of resources, this means that often as households are entering our system, there is no other options outside of the limited shelter resources. One key component of a successful strategy to end homelessness is to focus significant time and effort on inflow into the homeless response system. This requires coordination with other systems that are engaged with households entering homelessness (DOC, DCYF, BHDDH, etc.). A quarterly meeting of state department directors and implementation staff focused on issues of homelessness, would help the RICOc and homeless response system effectively coordinate to decrease inflow via more effective discharge planning or diversion programs (for example, this could be the Interagency Council on Homelessness), while also working to increase housing supply and supportive services.

### Service Delivery and Partnerships

- Centralized Intake and Assessment Processes:
  - Centralizing intake for housing and homelessness services would streamline eligibility assessments and reduce the need for clients to complete multiple applications across agencies. A centralized system would also allow for faster referrals to the most appropriate resources.
  - Implement a coordinated entry system that allows clients to access a single entry point for housing and homelessness services. This could be accomplished by partnering with local non-profits and other agencies to create a standardized assessment tool and a shared case management platform.
- Expanding Outreach and Early Intervention Programs

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- Investing in proactive outreach and early intervention programs can prevent individuals and families from falling into homelessness and reduce the demand for emergency housing services.
- Develop an outreach team or partner with community organizations to identify and support individuals at risk of eviction or homelessness. This could include expanding case management services, offering tenant counseling, and providing short-term financial assistance to stabilize at-risk households.
- **Strengthening Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations**
  - Many local organizations provide essential housing and homelessness services. By formalizing partnerships and improving coordination with these organizations, we can maximize resource allocation, minimize duplication, and streamline service delivery.
  - Establish formal memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with community action agencies, shelters, and other housing organizations to outline roles and responsibilities. Regular coordination meetings and joint training sessions would enhance communication, foster collaboration, and ensure that clients receive the most appropriate services.
- **Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Services**
  - While emergency shelter services are available, there is a lack of comprehensive homelessness prevention programs that intervene before individuals or families lose their homes. Additionally, rapid rehousing services that assist people in quickly transitioning back into permanent housing after a crisis are unable to keep up with demand.
  - A dedicated homelessness prevention program focused on providing rental assistance, mediation services, and case management support would help prevent evictions and keep individuals stably housed. Expanded rapid rehousing services with wraparound support, such as rental subsidies and job placement assistance, are also essential.

### Data Collection and Evaluation

- Data collection capabilities are limited by the current technology infrastructure, which restricts the ability to fully understand trends, assess service needs, and evaluate program impact across the housing and homelessness system.
- An enhanced data management system that integrates data from multiple sources (such as homelessness shelters, healthcare providers, and local housing authorities) is needed to provide a comprehensive view of the housing crisis. This system would support real-time data sharing, track outcomes, and facilitate data-driven decision-making.

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## Specialized Populations

- Lack of affordable housing options: Families are struggling to access stable, affordable housing, which directly impacts their ability to maintain family unity and stability.
- Insufficient concrete supports for housing-insecure families: There is a significant need for increased resources and services specifically designed to help families secure and sustain housing.
- Limited shelter availability: the lack of movement of people out of emergency shelter into housing leaves families with few options during times of crisis.
- Inadequate transitional housing: There is a need for more investments in transitional housing programs to provide stability for families as they work toward long-term housing solutions.
- Underinvestment in support services: Families experiencing housing insecurity are not receiving the level of support they need, including case management, financial assistance, and mental health services, all of which are crucial for long-term stability.
- Creating emergency housing opportunities in a manner that is flexible based on real time needs, especially for families. Regionally based housing navigation/support teams that can work closely with individuals and families with acute housing needs to move them quickly to other housing options, or emergency when necessary.

## Resources and Capacity

- Lack of capacity: There is not enough capacity among homeless providers to manage the increasing number of homeless families and individuals and guide them through the coordinated entry system. In addition, there is not enough emergency or transitional housing available to accommodate immediate shelter needs.

## APPENDIX B: LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS SOURCES

### Rhode Island: Existing Housing Statutes

Statute #	Title and Link
R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-11-10	<a href="#">Department of Administration: Statewide Planning Program</a>
R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-55	<a href="#">Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation</a>
R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-64.19-3	<a href="#">Executive Office of Commerce</a>
R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-64.34	<a href="#">The Department of Housing</a>
R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-128	<a href="#">Rhode Island Housing Resources Act of 1998</a>

### Prior Housing Reports

Date Published	Report Title and Link
November 2022	<a href="#">Department of Housing: Housing Organizational Plan</a>
December 2022	<a href="#">HousingWorks RI: Visualizing Rhode Island's Housing Ecosystem</a>
April 2023	<a href="#">Rhode Island Foundation: Housing Supply and Homelessness in Rhode Island</a>
December 2023	<a href="#">Rhode Island 2023 Integrated Housing Report</a>
September 2024	<a href="#">Rhode Island: Housing 2030 Advisory Group Meeting</a>

### Survey of State Departments, Quasi-Public Agencies, Commissions, and Boards - List of Respondents

**(36 Organizational Responses): Note** - This survey was distributed to all state departments, as well as relevant quasi-public agencies, commissions, and boards, with some respondents indicating they do not have a direct role in housing and homelessness initiatives.

Entity Name
Cannabis Control Commission
Coastal Resources Management Council
Department of Administration
Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Development Disabilities, and Hospitals
Department of Business Regulation
Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Department of Environmental Management
Department of Housing
Department of Human Services

## Landscape Analysis Sources

Department of Public Safety, Public Safety Grant Admission Office
Division of Public Utilities and Carriers
Economic Development Planning Council
Executive Office of Commerce and RI Commerce Corporation
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Governor's Commission on Aging
Governor's Overdose Task Force
Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission
Housing Resources Coordinating Commission
Housing Resources Commission
I-195 Redevelopment District
Office of Healthy Aging
Office of Post-Secondary Commissioner
Office of the Child Advocate
Opioid Settlement Committee
Public Finance Management Board
Quonset Development Corporation
RI Commerce Corporation
RI Continuum of Care
RI Department of Health
RI Department of Training and Labor
RI Development Disabilities Council
RI Emergency Management Agency
Ri Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council
RI Infrastructure Bank
RI Public Transit Authority
RI Public Utilities Commission
RIHousing

## APPENDIX C: CURRENT STATE STATUTES BY FUNCTION

Appendix C includes relevant state statutes organized by housing functional area and entity.

### *Strategy/Planning*

#### Department of Housing

(§ 42-64.34-1.)

- The Secretary of Housing shall (ii) Be responsible for overseeing all housing initiatives in the state of Rhode Island and developing a housing plan, including, but not limited to, the development of affordable housing opportunities to assist in building strong community efforts and revitalizing neighborhoods.
- Coordinate with all agencies directly related to any housing initiatives and participate in the promulgation of any regulation having an impact on housing including, but not limited to, the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, the coastal resources management council (CRMC), and state departments including, but not limited to: the department of environmental management (DEM), the department of business regulation (DBR), the department of transportation (DOT) and statewide planning, and the Rhode Island housing resources commission.

(§ 42-64.34-2.)

- The department of housing shall be the state's lead agency for housing, homelessness, and community development in the state of Rhode Island.
- To serve as the governor's chief advisor and liaison to federal policymakers on housing, homelessness, and community development as well as the principal point of contact on any such related matters;
- To coordinate the housing, homelessness, and community development programs of the state of Rhode Island and its departments, agencies, commissions, corporations, and subdivisions;

#### Housing Resources Commission

(§ 42-128-4. Rhode Island housing resources commission.)

- The Rhode Island housing resources commission shall be an agency within the executive department with responsibility for developing plans, policies, standards and programs and providing technical assistance for housing.

(§ 42-128-5. Purposes.)

## Current State Statutes by Function

- To develop and promulgate state policies, and plans, for housing and housing production and performance measures for housing programs established pursuant to state law.
- To coordinate activities among state agencies and political subdivisions pertaining to housing.
- To promote the stability of and quality of life in communities and neighborhoods.
- To provide opportunities for safe, sanitary, decent, adequate and affordable housing in Rhode Island.
- To encourage public-private partnerships that foster the production, rehabilitation, development, maintenance, and improvement of housing and housing conditions, especially for low and moderate income people.
- To foster and support no-profit organizations, including community development corporations, and their associations and intermediaries, that are engaged in providing and housing related services.
- To encourage and support partnerships between institutions of higher education and neighborhoods to develop and retain quality, healthy housing and sustainable communities.
- To facilitate private for-profit production and rehabilitation of housing for diverse populations and income groups.
- To provide, facilitate, and/or support the provisions of technical assistance.

### (§ 42-128-8. Powers and duties)

- To prepare and adopt the state's plans for housing; provided, however, that this provision shall not be interpreted to contravene the prerogative of the state planning council to adopt a state guide plan for housing.
- To prepare, adopt, and issue the state's housing policy.
- To conduct research on and make reports regarding housing issues in the state.
- To advise the governor and general assembly on housing issues and to coordinate housing activities among government agencies and agencies created by state law or providing housing services under government programs.

### (§ 42-128-8.1. Housing production and rehabilitation.)

- Strategic plan. The commission, in conjunction with the statewide planning program, shall develop by July 1, 2006, a five-year (5) strategic plan for housing, which plan shall be adopted as an element of the state guide plan, and which shall include quantified

## Current State Statutes by Function

goals, measurable intermediate steps toward the accomplishment of the goals, implementation activities, and standards for the production and/or rehabilitation of year-round housing to meet the housing needs including, but not limited to, the following: Older Rhode Islanders, including senior citizens, appropriate, affordable housing options; Workers, housing affordable at their income level; Students, dormitory, student housing and other residential options; Low-income and very-low income households, rental housing; Persons with disabilities, appropriate housing; and Vulnerable individuals and families, permanent housing, single-room occupancy units, transitional housing and shelters.

- Guidelines. The commission shall advise the state planning council and the state planning council shall promulgate and adopt not later than July 1, 2006, guidelines for higher density development, including, but not limited to: (1) Inclusionary zoning provisions for low- and moderate-income housing with appropriate density bonuses and other subsidies that make the development financially feasible; and (2) Mixed-use development that includes residential development, which guidelines shall take into account infrastructure availability; soil type and land capacity; environmental protection; water supply protection; and agricultural, open space, historical preservation, and community development pattern constraints.'

(§ 42-128-12. Coordination with other state agencies.)

- State agencies, departments, authorities, corporations, boards, commissions, and political subdivisions shall cooperate with the commission in the conduct of its activities

### Statewide Planning

(§ 42-11-10. Statewide planning program.)

- State guide plan. Components of strategic plans prepared and adopted in accordance with this section may be designated as elements of the state guide plan. The state guide plan shall be comprised of functional elements or plans dealing with land use; physical development and environmental concerns; economic development; housing production; energy supply, including the development of renewable energy resources in Rhode Island, and energy access, use, and conservation; human services; climate change and resiliency; and other factors necessary to accomplish the objective of this section. The state guide plan shall be a means for centralizing, integrating, and monitoring long-range goals, policies, plans, and implementation activities related thereto. State agencies concerned with specific subject areas, local governments, and the public shall participate in the state guide planning process, which shall be closely coordinated with the budgeting process.

### RIHousing

## Current State Statutes by Function

(§ 42-55-5. General Powers.)

- (12) Stimulate environmental planning for housing for persons of low and moderate income in order to enhance opportunities of those persons for self-development and employment;

(§ 42-55-5.2. Consistency with plans.)

- The corporation shall exercise its powers under this chapter in a manner that is consistent on a programmatic basis with the state guide plan, adopted pursuant to § 42-11-10 and with local comprehensive plans, prepared and adopted pursuant to chapter 22.2 of title 45, that have been approved as consistent with the state guide plan.

(§ 42-55-5.4. Renewable energy in housing developments.)

- On or before July 1, 2009, the corporation shall establish, in appropriate housing development programs it administers, criteria for priority consideration of housing development proposals which include renewable energy features which are demonstrated to be cost-effective and can be implemented in a reasonable period of time.

### Interagency Council on Homelessness

§ 40-17-3. Duties and responsibilities of council.

- The duties and responsibilities of the council shall be: (1) To participate in the process of developing a strategic plan to end homelessness aligned with the federal strategic plan to end homelessness that will serve to reduce the number of homeless individuals and families in Rhode Island; (2) To coordinate services for the homeless among state agencies and instrumentalities, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, volunteer organizations, advocacy groups, and businesses; (3) To coordinate services not specifically for the homeless, but from which the homeless may benefit, among state agencies and instrumentalities, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, volunteer organizations, advocacy groups, and businesses; and (4) To identify and seek to remedy gaps in services, specifically in the area of making provisions for the availability, use, and permanent funding stream for permanent supportive housing.

### *Programs/Financing*

#### Department of Housing

(§ 42-64.34-2. Powers and duties.)

- The department of housing shall be the state's lead agency for housing, homelessness, and community development in the state of Rhode Island.

**Current State Statutes by Function**

- The secretary of housing shall have the following powers and duties: All powers and duties pursuant to § 42-64.19-3(a)(4); To supervise the work of the department of housing and to act as its chief administrative officer; To coordinate the administration and financing of various departments or offices within the department of housing; To serve as the governor's chief advisor and liaison to federal policymakers on housing, homelessness, and community development as well as the principal point of contact on any such related matters; To coordinate the housing, homelessness, and community development programs of the state of Rhode Island and its departments, agencies, commissions, corporations, and subdivisions; To employ such personnel and contracts for such consulting services as may be required to perform the powers and duties conferred upon the secretary of housing; To oversee and direct the administration of funds that may be appropriated from time to time to the department of housing.
- In addition to such other powers as may otherwise be delegated elsewhere to the department of housing, the department is hereby expressly authorized, by and through the secretary of housing: To purchase, receive, lease, or otherwise acquire, own, hold, improve, use, and otherwise deal in and with, real or personal property, or any interest in real or personal property, wherever situated; To accept any gifts or grants or loans of funds or property or financial or other aid in any form from the federal government or any agency or instrumentality of the federal government, or from the state or any agency or instrumentality of the state, or from any other source and to comply, subject to the provisions of this chapter, with the terms and conditions of the gifts, grants, or loans; Subject to the provisions of § 37-2-1 et seq., to negotiate and to enter into contracts, agreements, and cooperative agreements with agencies and political subdivisions of the state, not-for-profit corporations, for-profit corporations, and other partnerships, associations, and persons for any lawful purpose necessary and desirable to effectuate the purposes of the department of housing; and To carry out this chapter and perform the duties of the general laws and public laws insofar as those provisions relate to any regulatory areas within the jurisdiction of the department of housing.

(§ 42-128-2. Rhode Island housing resources agency created.)

- There is hereby established a restricted receipt account within the general fund of the state. Funds from this account shall be used to provide for housing and homelessness initiatives including housing production, lead hazard abatement, housing rental subsidy, housing retention assistance, and homelessness services and prevention assistance with priority to veterans. Effective December 31, 2024 or after fulfillment of the reporting requirements established under §42-64.34-1(vi), whichever is later, the restricted account established under §42-128-2(3) shall be administered by the Department of Housing in consultation with the Housing Resources Commission. Funds in this account will be used in accordance with the uses established in § 42-128-2(3).

**Housing Resources Commission**

## Current State Statutes by Function

(§ 42-128-5)

- To encourage and support partnerships between institutions of higher education and neighborhoods to develop and retain quality, healthy housing and sustainable communities.

(§ 42-128-8. Powers and duties.)

- Administer the programs pertaining to housing resources that may be assigned by state law. The commission shall have the power and duty to administer programs for housing, housing services, and community development, including, but not limited to, programs pertaining to:
  - Abandoned properties and the remediation of blighting conditions;
  - Lead abatement and to manage a lead hazard abatement program in cooperation with the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation;
  - Services for the homeless;
  - Rental assistance;
  - Community development;
  - Outreach, education and technical assistance services;
  - Assistance, including financial support, to nonprofit organizations and community development corporations;
  - Tax credits that assist in the provision of housing or foster community development or that result in support to nonprofit organizations performing functions to accomplish the purposes of this chapter;
  - The Supportive Services Program, the purpose of which is to help prevent and end homelessness among those who have experienced long-term homelessness and for whom certain services in addition to housing are essential. State funding for this program may leverage other resources for the purpose of providing supportive services. Services provided pursuant to this subsection may include, but not be limited to: assistance with budgeting and paying rent; access to employment; encouraging tenant involvement in facility management and policies; medication monitoring and management; daily living skills related to food, housekeeping, and socialization; counseling to support self-identified goals; referrals to mainstream health, mental health, and treatment programs; and conflict resolution.

(§ 42-128.1-13. Rhode Island lead hazard technical assistance service.)

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (c) Cooperation with Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation. The housing resources commission is hereby authorized to cooperate with the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation in putting the provisions of this section into effect, and the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation is hereby authorized to exercise its powers under § 42-55-5.1 to provide for the implementation of this section.

### Housing Resources Coordinating Committee

(§ 42-128-2.1. Housing production fund.)

- (a) There is hereby established a restricted receipt account within the general fund of the state, to be known as the housing production fund. Funds from this account shall be administered by the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, subject to program and reporting guidelines adopted by the coordinating committee of the Rhode Island housing resources commission for housing production initiatives, including:
  - (1) Financial assistance by loan, grant, or otherwise, for the planning, production, or preservation of affordable housing in Rhode Island for households earning not more than eighty percent (80%) of area median income; and
  - (2) Technical and financial assistance for cities and towns to support increased local housing production, including by reducing regulatory barriers and through the housing incentives for municipalities program.
- (b) In administering the housing production fund, the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation shall give priority to households either exiting homelessness or earning not more than thirty percent (30%) of area median income.

(§ 42.128.3-6. Assistance to municipalities)

- The coordinating committee is authorized and empowered, at its discretion, to provide all manner of support and assistance to municipalities in connection with fostering local housing production, including, but not limited to:
  - (1) Providing technical assistance for the preparation, adoption, or implementation of laws, regulations, or processes related to residential development; and
  - (2) Authorizing the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation to issue school impact offset payments to participating municipalities.

### RIHousing

(§ 42-55-5. General powers.)

- (7) Acquire real or personal property, or any interest therein, on either a temporary or long term basis in its own name by gift, purchase, transfer, foreclosure, lease, or

## Current State Statutes by Function

otherwise, including rights or easements in property; to hold, sell, assign, lease, encumber, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of any real or personal property or any interest therein; to hold, sell, assign, or otherwise dispose of any mortgage interest owned by it or under its control, custody or in its possession; and to release or relinquish any right, title, claim, lien, interest, easement, or demand, however acquired, including any equity or right of redemption in property foreclosed by it, and to do any of the foregoing by public or private sale, with or without public bidding, notwithstanding the provisions of any other law;

- (8) Enter into agreements or other transactions with and accept grants and the cooperation of the United States or any governmental agency or instrumentality thereof or of the state or any governmental agency or instrumentality thereof in furtherance of the purposes of this chapter, including, but not limited to, the development, maintenance, operation, and financing of any housing development, housing project, or healthcare facility, and to do any and all things necessary in order to avail itself of such aid and cooperation;
- (9) Make contracts with the state or any governmental agency thereof, municipalities, and counties of the state, the federal government, public corporations or bodies, and private corporations or individuals;
- (10) Receive and accept aid or contributions from any source of money, property, labor, or other things of value, to be held, used, and applied to carry out the purposes of this chapter subject to the conditions upon which the grants and contributions may be made, including, but not limited to, gifts or grants from any governmental agency or instrumentality of the United States or this state for payment of rent supplements to eligible persons or families or for the payment in whole or in part of the interest expense for a housing development, housing project, or healthcare facility or for any other purpose consistent with this chapter;
- (11) Provide, contract, or arrange for consolidated processing of any aspect of a housing development, housing project, or healthcare facility in order to avoid duplication thereof by either undertaking that processing in whole or in part on behalf of any governmental agency, or instrumentality of the United States or of this state, or, in the alternative, to delegate the processing in whole or in part to any governmental agency or instrumentality;
- (13) Employ architects, engineers, attorneys, accountants, housing construction and financial experts, and any other advisors, consultants, and agents that may be necessary in its judgment and to fix their compensation;
- (17) Subject to any agreements with bondholders or note holders, to purchase bonds or notes of the corporation out of any funds or money of the corporation available for this purpose, and to hold, cancel, or resell those bonds or notes;

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (19) Make and execute contracts with mortgage bankers or other financial institutions in this state for the servicing of mortgages acquired by the corporation pursuant to this chapter, and pay the reasonable value of services rendered to the corporation pursuant to these contracts;
- (20) Subject to any agreement with bondholders or note holders, renegotiate, refinance, or foreclose, or contract for the foreclosure of, any mortgage in default; waive any default or consent to the modification of the terms of any mortgage; commence any action to protect or enforce any right conferred upon it by any law, mortgage, contract, or other agreement, and bid for and purchase property at any foreclosure or at any other sale, or acquire or take possession of property; operate, manage, lease, dispose of, and otherwise deal with this property, in any manner necessary to protect the interest of the corporation and the holders of its bonds, notes, and other obligations;
- (21) Borrow money and issue bonds and notes or other evidences of indebtedness;
- (22) Subject to any agreement with bondholders or note holders, consent to any modification with respect to rate of interest, time, and payment of any installment of principal or interest security or any other term of any contract, mortgage, mortgage loan, mortgage loan commitment, contract, or agreement of any kind to which the corporation is a party;
- (23) Procure or agree to the procurement of insurance or guarantees from the federal government or any governmental agency or instrumentality thereof, or from any private insurance company, of the payment of any bonds or notes or any other evidences of indebtedness issued by the corporation including the power to pay premiums on that insurance;
- (24) Insure long-term mortgage loans made by mortgage lenders approved by the corporation to eligible housing sponsors as determined by the corporation. The corporation may establish any terms and conditions it deems necessary for the supervision of the holders of corporation insured loans and for its insurance program, including the maximum amount which may be insured, maximum interest rates, down payment requirements, refinancing terms, insurance premium requirements, and remedies on default or foreclosure;
- (25) Make temporary loans, with or without interest, to eligible housing sponsors of single-family residential housing units to be owned and occupied by the sponsor to defray down payment costs and charges on mortgage loans purchased or made by the corporation;
- (26) Make and undertake to make any and all contracts and agreements, including the payment of fees, with mortgage lenders in this state for assistance rendered to the corporation;

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (27) Subject to any agreement with bondholders or note holders, to purchase and make commitments for the purchase of, to invest in, and dispose of securities or other obligations issued by mortgage lenders to finance residential housing for persons and families of low and moderate income, including, but not limited to, securities or other obligations payable from, backed by or otherwise evidencing an interest in mortgages securing mortgage loans to finance residential housing for persons and families of low and moderate income;
- (28) To the extent permitted under its contract with the holders of bonds, bond anticipation notes and other obligations, enter into contracts with any mortgagor containing provisions enabling the mortgagor to reduce the rental or carrying charges to families of persons unable to pay the regular schedule of charges for housing where, by reason of other income or payment from any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States or this state, the reductions can be made without jeopardizing the economic stability of housing being financed;
- (35) To administer and manage Section 8 tenant based certificate programs and Section 8 rental voucher programs in those municipalities that do not have a local housing authority and in those municipalities whose local housing authority elects to contract with Rhode Island housing mortgage and finance corporation.

## (§ 42-55-5.3. Letters of eligibility)

- The corporation shall issue all letters of eligibility for low- and moderate-income housing for applications made pursuant to chapter 53 of title 45.

## (§ 42-55-5.4. Renewable energy in housing developments)

- On or before July 1, 2009, the corporation shall establish, in appropriate housing development programs it administers, criteria for priority consideration of housing development proposals which include renewable energy features which are demonstrated to be cost-effective and can be implemented in a reasonable period of time.

## (§ 42-55-6. Powers relative to making loans)

- (1) Make, undertake commitments to make, and participate in the making of mortgage loans, including without limitation federally insured mortgage loans, and to make temporary loans and advances in anticipation of permanent mortgage loans to housing sponsors or healthcare sponsors to finance the construction or rehabilitation of, or installation of energy saving improvements to, residential housing designed and planned for occupancy primarily by persons and families of low and moderate income or healthcare facilities upon the terms and conditions set forth in § 42-55-9;

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (2) Make, undertake commitments to make, and participate in the making of mortgage loans to persons of low or moderate income who may purchase residential housing or who own and occupy residential housing used as security for loans where the proceeds may be dispersed at such time or times that the corporation may determine, including without limitation persons and families of low and moderate income who are eligible or potentially eligible for federally insured mortgage loans or federal mortgage loans. These loans shall be made only after a determination by the corporation that mortgage loans are not otherwise available, wholly or in part, from private lenders upon reasonably equivalent terms and conditions;
- (3) Make, undertake commitments to make, and participate in the making of loans to persons of low or moderate income for the purpose of making energy saving improvements to residential housing. Any loan made pursuant to this subsection may be secured by a mortgage or otherwise, shall be repaid, shall bear interest and shall be upon any terms and conditions that may be determined by the corporation;
- (5) Enter into agreements and contracts with housing sponsors or healthcare sponsors under the provisions of this chapter;
- (7) Make, undertake commitments to make, and participate in the making of mortgage loans to persons of low or moderate income for the purpose of improving septic systems and wells on their residential property to substantially comply with standards as set by the department of environmental management and/or the department of health. Any loan made pursuant to this subsection may be secured by a mortgage or otherwise shall be repaid, shall bear interest, and shall be upon those terms and conditions that may be determined by the corporation;
- (8) Make and participate in the making of grants to assist in the construction, rehabilitation, or operation of residential housing;
- (10) Provide grants to any existing private nonprofit housing program sponsor for the following use and purpose:
  - Establish or expand an existing revolving loan fund, if the housing program sponsor matches the funds, those grants not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000).
  - Provided, however, that grants shall not be made more frequently than once per year and that the grants be made from funds held in the corporation's reserve fund.
  - In the event that the private nonprofit housing program sponsor should cease its operations, all unexpended funds shall revert back to the corporation;
- (11) Guaranty "homeowners notes".

## Current State Statutes by Function

- A “homeowners note” is the promissory note secured by a second mortgage of any eligible home buyer made payable to any person, firm, corporation or other entity loaning money to the eligible home buyer to purchase his or her principal residence. The homeowners note shall be in a form, at an interest rate, in denominations and upon other terms and conditions established in rules and regulations promulgated by the corporation. Homeowners notes may be used solely to assist in the financing of the purchase of a principal residence by eligible home buyers....
- (12) Establish the Environmentally Compromised Home Opportunity (ECHO) loan program.
  - The corporation may make, undertake commitments to make, and participate in the making of loans to persons owning residential property, the value of which has been significantly reduced by contamination.....

(§ 42-55-7. Powers relative to purchase of and sale to mortgage lenders of loans – Loans to mortgage lender.)

- (1) To invest in, purchase or to make commitments to purchase, and take assignments from mortgage lenders, of notes and mortgages evidencing loans for the construction, rehabilitation, installation of energy saving improvements to, purchase, leasing, or refinancing of housing for persons and families of low and moderate income or healthcare facilities in this state upon the terms set forth in § 42-55-10;
- (2) To make loans to mortgage lenders under terms and conditions requiring the proceeds to be used by those mortgage lenders for the making of new residential mortgages or healthcare facilities upon the terms set forth in § 42-55-10;
- (3) To make commitments to purchase, and to purchase, service and sell federally insured mortgages, and to make loans directly upon the security of a mortgage, provided the underlying mortgage loans shall have been made and shall be continued to be used solely to finance or refinance the construction, rehabilitation, purchase, or leasing of residential housing for persons and families of low and moderate income or healthcare facilities in this state;
- (4) To sell, at public or private sale, with or without public bidding, any mortgage or other obligation held by the corporation;
- (5) Subject to any agreement with bondholders or note holders, to collect, enforce the collection of, and foreclose on any collateral securing its loans to mortgage lenders and acquire or take possession of the collateral and sell it at public or private sale, with or without public bidding, and otherwise deal with such collateral as may be necessary to protect the interest of the corporation therein;

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (6) To make or participate in the making of mortgage loans to persons of low or moderate income and owners of property subject to tax sale for the purpose of extinguishing tax liens, redeeming tax titles or preventing loss of property due to nonpayment of taxes. Any loan made pursuant to this subsection may be secured by a mortgage or otherwise, shall be repaid, shall bear interest and shall be upon any terms and conditions that may be determined by the corporation;
- (7) To acquire at tax sales liens on one to four (4) family residential properties, to hold the lien while endeavoring to assist the property owner with retaining ownership, to hold and sell the property where consistent with the purpose of the corporation to encourage home ownership, particularly by low-income persons, productive and beneficial use of property, and other purposes of the corporation, and to adopt rules and regulations necessary to carry this program into effect.

## (§ 42-55-7.1. Powers relative to acquisition and operation of housing projects.)

- (1) To acquire on either a temporary or long-term basis, in its own name, from any person, joint venture, partnership, trust, association, firm, corporation, municipality, municipal agency or entity, governmental agency, housing sponsor, or other legal entity or combination thereof by grant, purchase, transfer, foreclosure, or otherwise, housing projects or any interest or any option in housing projects, and to sell, assign, exchange, transfer, mortgage, or encumber housing projects or any interest in housing projects and to accomplish any of the foregoing by public or private sale, with or without public bidding, notwithstanding the provisions of other laws;
- (2) To own, hold, clear, and improve, in its own name, housing projects or any interest in housing projects;
- (3) To construct, reconstruct, rehabilitate, improve, alter, repair, or provide for the construction, reconstruction, improvement, alteration, or repair of any housing project;
- (4) To operate, manage, and control housing projects, in its own name, and to do all things necessary and incidental to the ownership of housing projects, including making rules and regulations;
- (5) To lease, with or without an option to purchase, all or any part of a housing project to any person, firm, partnership, trust, joint venture, association, municipal or state entity, or corporation. The lease may provide for the assumption by the lessee of the management and control of the housing project, as well as the right of the lessee to collect all revenues;
- (6) To finance the acquisition and operation of housing projects in accordance with the provisions of this chapter; provided, however, that prior to the corporation issuing any

## Current State Statutes by Function

obligations, it makes the findings as provided in subsections (1), (2), and (4) of § 42-55-12;

- (7) To enter into all agreements and contracts with third parties, including owners, residents, housing sponsors, and tenants of housing projects, necessary to accomplish the purposes of this section, including the power to enter into leases, joint ventures, reverse annuity agreements, sales agreements, equity participation agreements, and mortgage agreements; and
- (8) To enter into partnership agreements as a general or limited partner with any housing sponsor as a general or limited partner; these partnerships may exercise any and all of the powers granted to partnerships under the laws of this state, as well as exercise all of the rights, duties, and privileges of a housing sponsor under the provisions of this chapter.

(§ 42-55-8. Supervision of housing sponsors and health care sponsors.)

- The corporation shall have the power to supervise housing sponsors of multi-family residential housing units and single family residential housing units designed by the sponsor for occupancy primarily by persons and families of low and moderate income or sponsors of health care facilities and their real and personal property in the following respects...
- (1) The corporation may prescribe uniform systems of accounts and records for housing sponsors and healthcare sponsors and may require them to make reports and give answers to specific questions on those forms and at times necessary for the purposes of this chapter;
- (2) Through its agents or employees, the corporation may enter upon and inspect the lands, buildings, and equipment of a housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor, including all parts thereof, and may examine all books and records with reference to capital structure, income, expenditures, and other payments of a housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor;
- (3) The corporation may supervise the operation and maintenance of any housing development, housing project, or healthcare facilities, and may order any repairs that may be necessary to protect the public interest or the health, welfare, or safety of the housing development or housing project occupants or healthcare facility user;
- (4) The corporation may fix, and alter from time to time, a schedule of charges for any housing development, housing project, or healthcare facility;
- (5) The corporation may determine standards for, and may control resident selection by a housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor;

## Current State Statutes by Function

## (§ 42-55-9. Terms and conditions of loans)

- (4) The corporation shall have authority to set from time to time the interest rates at which it shall make loans and commitments. The interest rates shall be established by the corporation at the lowest level consistent with the corporation's cost of operation and its responsibilities to the holders of its bonds, bond anticipation notes and other obligations. In addition to these interest charges, the corporation may make and collect those fees and charges, including, but not limited to, reimbursement of the corporation's financing costs, service charges, insurance premiums, and mortgage insurance premiums, that the corporation determines to be reasonable;

## (§ 42-55-13. Bonds and notes)

- (a)(1) The corporation shall have the power and is hereby authorized to issue from time to time its negotiable notes and bonds, whether tax exempt or taxable in the principal amount that the corporation shall determine to be necessary to provide sufficient funds for achieving any of its corporate purposes including the payment of interest on the notes and bonds of the corporation, establishment of reserves to secure those notes and bonds including the reserve funds created pursuant to § 42-55-14, and all other expenditures of the corporation incident to and necessary or convenient to carry out its corporate purposes and powers.
- (2) The corporation shall have the power, from time to time, to issue (i) notes to renew notes and (ii) bonds to pay notes, including the interest on these notes and, whenever it deems refunding expedient, to refund any bonds by the issuance of new bonds, whether the bonds to be refunded have or have not matured, and to issue bonds partly to refund bonds then outstanding and partly for any of its corporate purposes.
- (3) Except as may otherwise be expressly provided by resolution of the corporation, every issue of its notes and bonds shall be general obligations of the corporation payable out of any revenues or moneys of the corporation, subject only to any agreements with the holders of particular notes or bonds pledging any particular revenues.
- (4) Notwithstanding any other provision contained in this section, proceeds of bonds issued by the corporation may be used to finance any housing development that constitutes a qualified residential rental project under section 142 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, 26 U.S.C. § 142, and all regulations promulgated thereunder....

## (§ 42-55-14. Reserve funds and appropriations.)

- The corporation may create and establish one or more special funds ("capital reserve funds"), and shall pay into each capital reserve fund (1) any moneys appropriated and made available by the state for the purpose of the fund, (2) any proceeds of sale of notes or bonds to the extent provided in the resolution or resolutions of the corporation

## Current State Statutes by Function

authorizing the issuance thereof, and (3) any other moneys which may be made available to the corporation for the purpose of the fund from any other source or sources....

- (f) The corporation shall create and establish any other fund or funds that may be necessary or desirable for its corporate purposes.

(§ 42-55-15. Issuance of refunding obligations.)

- The corporation may provide for the issuance of refunding obligations for the purpose of refunding any obligations then outstanding which have been issued under the provisions of this chapter, including the payment of any redemption premium and any interest accrued or to accrue to the date of redemption of those obligations and for any corporate purpose of the corporation. The issuance of those obligations, the maturities and other details, the rights of the holders, and the rights, duties, and obligations of the corporation in respect of the refunding obligations shall be governed by the provisions of this chapter which relate to the issuance of obligations, insofar as those provisions may be appropriate.

(§ 42-55-22.3. Emergency housing assistance.)

- The department of human services shall administer the emergency housing assistance program in accordance with the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation rules and regulations and contracts with community action program agencies, as those rules and regulations may be currently in force and effect. In so far as the board of directors may authorize funds for the support of this program, the receipt of those funds shall be deposited as general revenues and appropriated to the department of human services for the support of the program.

(§ 42-55-23. Authorization to accept appropriated moneys.)

- The corporation is authorized to accept any moneys appropriated from time to time by the general assembly for effectuating its corporate purposes including, without limitation, the payment of the initial expenses of administration and operation and the establishment of reserves or contingency funds to be available for the payment of the principal of and the interest on any bonds, notes, or other obligations of the corporation.

(§ 42-55-24.1. Allocation of tax credits.)

- The corporation shall be the sole and exclusive agent for the allocation of all federal tax credits for low-income housing under 26 U.S.C. § 42. The corporation shall have all of the powers necessary to effectuate those allocations, including without limitation, the power to adopt rules, regulations, and policies regarding those allocations.

(§ 42-55-27. Lead paint removal revolving fund.)

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (a) There is created, as a separate fund within the treasury, the lead paint removal revolving fund. The fund shall consist of any sums that the state may from time to time appropriate, as well as money received from donations, gifts, bequests, or otherwise from any public or private source, which money is intended to implement and encourage lead paint removal.
- (b) The treasurer shall contract with the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation for the administration and disbursement of funding. The Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation shall adopt rules and regulations in conjunction with the department of health and appropriate community groups consistent with the purposes of this section and the Administrative Procedures Act, chapter 35 of this title, which provide for the orderly and equitable disbursement and repayment of funds.
- (c) All funds placed in the lead paint removal fund shall be made available:
  - (1) To make loans to individuals and nonprofit organizations for the purpose of reducing lead hazards in housing units for Rhode Islanders; and
  - (2) To fund improvements to residential property in conjunction with lead paint reduction as necessary to conduct lead hazard reduction.
- (d) Loans made available under the provisions of this section may be made directly, or in cooperation with other public and private lenders, or any agency, department, or bureau of the federal government or the state.
- (e) The proceeds from the repayment of any loans made for that purpose shall be deposited in and returned to the lead paint revolving fund to constitute a continuing revolving fund for the purposes provided in this section.
- (f) The department of health and the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, in coordination with cities and towns, shall take any action necessary to obtain federal assistance for lead hazard reduction to be used in conjunction with the lead paint removal revolving fund.

## (§ 44-9-8.3. Sale of owner-occupied residential property to housing agency.)

- Where the property subject to tax sale is owner-occupied residential and contains three (3) or less units, the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation shall have a right of first refusal to acquire the tax lien at tax sale, and may assist the owner to discharge the lien or take title and acquire the property in its own name pursuant to regulations to be developed by the corporation, consistent with its purposes. The corporation shall notify the collector of its intention to exercise this right by the later of: (i) thirty (30) days from its receipt of the certified mail notice set forth in § 44-9-10; or (ii) ten (10) days before the date of sale or any adjournment of the sale. Failure of the

## Current State Statutes by Function

corporation to notify the collector as provided herein shall extinguish the right of first refusal provided in this section....

(§ 45-24-46.1. Inclusionary zoning)

- (3) Amount of fee-in-lieu. For affordable single-family homes and condominium units, the per-unit fee shall be the difference between the maximum affordable sales price for a family of four (4) earning eighty percent (80%) of the area median income as determined annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the average cost of developing a single unit of affordable housing. The average cost of developing a single unit of affordable housing shall be determined annually based on the average, per-unit development cost of affordable homes financed by Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation (RIHMFC) over the previous three (3) years, excluding existing units that received preservation financing.

(§ 45-25.15.2. Section 8 performance-based contract administration program)

- (a) The Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation is a public housing authority and public housing agency authorized to administer housing assistance programs throughout this state for the benefit of persons of low- or moderate-income, subject to the limited exception in § 45-25-15.1.
- (b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no other person, public housing authority, or public housing agency, domestic or foreign, shall be authorized to administer allocations of money under 42 U.S.C. § 1437f, or other federal statute authorizing project-based rental subsidies under an annual contributions contract for the benefit of persons of low- or moderate-income, on a statewide basis within this state, or on a regional basis that includes this state, except:
  - (1) The Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation;
  - (2) A person authorized to administer such allocations pursuant to an agreement with the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation; or
  - (3) An organization, of which the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation is a promoter, member, associate, owner, partner, manager, or other joint venturer, that is authorized by a federal agency to administer such allocations in this state.
- (c) In addition to the powers granted by this chapter and chapter 55 of title 42, the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation shall have all the powers necessary or convenient for the administration of federal monies pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, including the power:

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (1) To enter into one or more agreements for the administration of federal monies on a statewide basis;
- (2) To be a promoter, partner, member, associate, owner, partner, manager, or other joint venturer of any partnership, limited liability company, joint venture, association, trust, or other organization;
- (3) To conduct its activities, locate offices, and exercise the powers granted by this title within or outside this state, in compliance with all applicable laws;
- (4) To carry on a business in the furtherance of its purposes; and
- (5) To do all things necessary or convenient, consistent with law, to further the activities and affairs of the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation.

(§ 45-53-10. Repurposing of vacant schools for affordable housing program)

- (2) The secretary of housing shall conduct an assessment, in conjunction with a task force comprised of the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, the department of environmental management, the department of health, a fire marshal, the local building inspector, and the local planning office, into its feasibility to be repurposed as affordable housing, and the anticipated costs of renovating the building for that intended purpose. This assessment shall be completed within one hundred and fifty (150) days after being notified by the task force of the availability of a vacant building available pursuant to this section....

### Regulation/Enforcement

#### Department of Housing

(§ 42-64.34-2. Powers and duties.)

- Creation of a written guide for consumers relating to the rights and duties of landlords and tenants pursuant to chapter 18 of title 34, which the secretary shall update at minimum on a biennial basis. The guide shall be posted on the website of the department of housing and shall be published in both English and Spanish.

#### Housing Resources Commission

(§ 42-128-2. Expedited Permitting for Affordable Housing.)

- A person may apply to the Rhode Island housing resources commission and request that a project be classified as a project of critical housing concern. Said request shall contain a description of how the project is consistent with applicable provisions of state plans pertaining to affordable housing developments. Not more than five (5) days after the receipt of such request, the chairperson, or the executive director acting on behalf of the chairperson, shall refer the request to statewide planning for review of the probable

## Current State Statutes by Function

consistency of the project with the applicable provisions of the state guide plan. The associate director shall issue a determination of probable consistency to the chairperson within twenty (20) days. If the associate director has made a determination of probable consistency, the Rhode Island housing resources commission shall render a written decision on the request within sixty (60) days of the filing and receipt of the request. If the project is found to be a housing project of critical concern, the Rhode Island housing resources commission may issue a certificate of critical housing concern. A certificate of critical housing concern shall expire two (2) years from the date of issuance.

(§ 42-128-4. Rhode Island housing resources commission.)

- The Rhode Island housing resources commission shall be an agency within the executive department with responsibility for developing plans, policies, standards and programs and providing technical assistance for housing.

(§ 42-128-8. Powers and duties.)

- Establish, implement, and monitor state performance measures and guidelines for housing programs. The commission shall have the power and the duty: (i) To promulgate performance measures and guidelines for housing programs conducted under state law. (ii) To monitor and evaluate housing responsibilities established by state law, and to establish a process for annual reporting on the outcomes of the programs and investments of the state in housing for low- and moderate-income people. (iii) To hear and resolve disputes pertaining to housing issues.

## RIHousing

(§ 42-55-5. General powers.)

- (5) Adopt and from time to time amend and repeal bylaws, rules, and regulations, not inconsistent with this chapter, to carry into effect the powers and purposes of the corporation and the conduct of its business, and such bylaws, rules, and regulations may contain provisions indemnifying any person who is or was a commissioner, officer, employee, or agent of the corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the corporation as a commissioner, director, officer, employee, or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, in the manner and to the extent provided in § 7-1.2-814;
- (18) Make and publish rules and regulations respecting its lending programs and any other rules and regulations that are necessary to effectuate its corporate purposes;

(§ 42-55-6. Powers relative to making loans.)

- (6) Institute any action or proceeding against any housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor or persons and families of low and moderate income receiving a loan under the provisions hereof, or owning any housing development hereunder in any court of

## Current State Statutes by Function

competent jurisdiction in order to enforce the provisions of this chapter or the terms and provisions of any agreement or contract between the corporation and the recipients of loans under the provisions hereof, or to foreclose its mortgage, or to protect the public interest, the occupants of the housing development, or the stockholders or creditors, if any, of the sponsor. In connection with an action or proceeding it may apply for the appointment of a receiver to take over, manage, operate, and maintain the affairs of the housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor and the corporation, through the agent it shall designate, is hereby authorized to accept the appointment of the receiver of a sponsor when so appointed by a court of competent jurisdiction. In the event of the reorganization of any housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor to the extent possible under the provisions of law, the reorganization shall be subject to the supervision and control of the corporation, and no reorganization shall be had without the prior written consent of the corporation. In the event of a judgment against any housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor in any action not pertaining to the foreclosure of a mortgage, there shall be no sale of any of the real property included in any housing development, housing project, or healthcare facilities hereunder of a sponsor except upon sixty (60) days' written notice to the corporation. Upon receipt of that notice, the corporation shall take those steps that in its judgment may be necessary to protect the rights of all parties;

- (4) Make and publish rules and regulations respecting the grant of mortgage loans pursuant to this chapter, the regulation of borrowers, the admission of tenants and other occupants to housing developments pursuant to this chapter, and the construction of ancillary commercial facilities;
- (9) Make and publish rules and regulations respecting the making of grants to assist in the construction, rehabilitation, or operation of residential housing;

(§ 42-55-7.1. Powers relative to acquisition and operation of housing projects.)

- To operate, manage, and control housing projects, in its own name, and to do all things necessary and incidental to the ownership of housing projects, including making rules and regulations;

(§ 42-55-8. Supervision of housing sponsors and health care sponsors.)

- (6) The corporation may require any housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor to pay to the corporation any fees that it may prescribe in connection with the examination, inspection, supervision, auditing, or other regulation of the housing sponsor;
- (7) The corporation may order any housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor to do, or to refrain from doing, those things necessary to comply with the provisions of law, the rules and regulations of the corporation, and the terms of any contract or agreement to which the housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor may be a party;

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (8) The corporation may regulate the retirement of any capital investment or the redemption of stock where the retirement or redemption when added to any dividend or other distribution shall exceed in any one fiscal year ten percent (10%) (or such lesser amount as may be determined by the rules and regulations of the corporation) of the original face amount of any investment or equity in any housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor;
- (9) The corporation may prescribe regulations specifying the categories of cost which shall be allowable in the construction or rehabilitation of a housing development or housing project or healthcare facility. The corporation may require any housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor to certify the actual housing development or healthcare facility costs upon completion of the housing development or healthcare facility, subject to audit and determination by the corporation. Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, the corporation may accept, in lieu of any certification of housing development or healthcare facility costs, any other assurances of the housing development or healthcare facility costs, in any form or manner whatsoever, as will enable the corporation to determine with reasonable accuracy the amount of the housing development or healthcare facility costs.

(§ 42-55-9. Terms and conditions of loans.)

- (9) As a condition of the loan, the corporation shall have the power at all times during the construction or rehabilitation of a housing development or housing project by a housing sponsor or of healthcare facilities by a healthcare sponsor and the operation thereof:
- (i) To enter upon and inspect any housing development or housing project or healthcare facility, including all parts thereof, for the purpose of investigating the physical and financial condition thereof, and its construction, rehabilitation, operation, management, and maintenance, and to examine all books and records of the housing sponsor or healthcare sponsor with respect to capitalization, income and other related matters and to make any charges that may be required to cover the cost of those inspections and examinations;
- (ii) To order any alterations, changes or repairs that may be necessary to protect the security of its investment in a housing development, housing project, or healthcare facility or the health, safety, and welfare of the occupants or users thereof and to insure that the housing development or healthcare facility is, or has been, constructed or rehabilitated in conformity with all applicable federal, state, and local building codes;
- (iii) To order any managing agent, housing development or healthcare facility manager, or owner of a housing development or healthcare facility, or sponsors of these, to do those acts that may be necessary to comply with the provisions of all applicable laws, ordinances, or building codes or any rule or regulation of the corporation or the terms of any agreement concerning the development or facilities or to refrain from doing any acts

## Current State Statutes by Function

in violation thereof, and in this regard the corporation shall be a proper party to file a complaint and to prosecute any violations of law, ordinances, or building codes as set forth herein;

- (iv) A housing sponsor may not make distributions of income or earnings from a housing development or housing project financed by the corporation in any one year in excess of six percent (6%) (or a higher or lower percent as shall be prescribed by the rules and regulations of the corporation) of the housing sponsor's equity in the development, nor shall any of the principals or stockholders of the housing sponsor at any time earn, accept, or receive a return greater than six percent (6%) per annum (or a higher or lower percent as shall be prescribed by the rules and regulations of the corporation) of his or her investment in any housing development financed by the corporation. The sponsor's equity in a housing development shall consist of the difference between the corporation assisted mortgage loan and the total housing development cost. With respect to every housing development assisted by the provisions of this chapter the corporation shall, pursuant to regulations adopted by it, establish the sponsor's equity at the time of the making of the final mortgage advance and, for the purposes of this subsection (9)(iv), that figure shall remain constant during the life of the corporation's mortgage on the development;....
- (vi) The corporation may provide by rules and regulations for the terms and conditions of mortgage loans to housing sponsors of single family residential housing units or healthcare facilities and the supervision of housing sponsors or healthcare sponsors.

(§ 42-55-10. Terms and conditions of the purchase and sale to mortgage lender of loans - Loans to mortgage lenders)

- (d)(1) The corporation shall from time to time adopt, modify, or repeal rules and regulations governing the making of loans to mortgage lenders and the purchase and sale of mortgage loans and the application of the proceeds thereof, including rules and regulations as to any or all of the following:
  - (i) Procedures for the submission of requests or the invitation of proposals for the purchase and sale of mortgage loans or for loans to mortgage lenders;
  - (ii) Limitations or restrictions as to the number of family units, location, or other qualifications or characteristics of residences to be financed by those mortgage loans;
  - (iii) Restrictions as to the interest rates on those mortgage loans or the return realized by mortgage lenders;
  - (iv) Requirements as to commitments by mortgage lenders with respect to the application of the proceeds of that purchase or loan;

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (v) Schedules of any fees and charges necessary to provide for the expenses and reserves of the corporation; and
- (vi) Any other matters related to the duties and the exercise of the powers of the corporation under this section.
- (2) These rules and regulations shall be designed to effectuate the general purposes of this chapter and the following specific objectives:
  - (i) The expansion of the supply of funds in the state available for mortgage loans for residential housing for occupancy by persons and families of low and moderate income;
  - (ii) Provision of the additional housing needed to remedy the shortage of adequate housing in the state and eliminate the existence of a large number of substandard dwellings; and
  - (iii) The restriction of the financial return and benefit on those mortgage loans to that level necessary to protect against the realization by mortgage lenders of a financial return or benefit in excess of prevailing market conditions....

## (§ 42-55-11. Admission and income limitations relative to housing developments)

- (b) The corporation shall approve a residential selection plan submitted by a housing sponsor for a housing development to be financed pursuant to the provisions of this chapter. The corporation shall make and publish regulations from time to time governing the terms of the resident selection plans. These plans shall include criteria for resident selection which establish income limits for eligible residents which may vary with the size and circumstances of the person or family. Subject to the approval of the corporation, resident selection plans may provide, with respect to dwelling accommodations, that any local housing authority created pursuant to the Rhode Island law in the municipality in which the housing development is located, shall have the right to designate residents, who are otherwise eligible for these accommodations as they become available, either in the initial occupancy of the housing development, or as vacancies occur.
- (c) The corporation shall by rules and regulations provide for the periodic examination of the income of any person or family residing in any housing development financed with a loan from the corporation.

## (§ 42-55-22.3. Emergency housing assistance)

- The department of human services shall administer the emergency housing assistance program in accordance with the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation rules and regulations and contracts with community action program agencies, as those rules and regulations may be currently in force and effect. In so far as the board of directors may authorize funds for the support of this program, the receipt of those funds

## Current State Statutes by Function

shall be deposited as general revenues and appropriated to the department of human services for the support of the program.

(§ 42-55-27. Lead paint removal revolving fund)

- (b) The treasurer shall contract with the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation for the administration and disbursement of funding. The Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation shall adopt rules and regulations in conjunction with the department of health and appropriate community groups consistent with the purposes of this section and the Administrative Procedures Act, chapter 35 of this title, which provide for the orderly and equitable disbursement and repayment of funds....

(§ 34-45-5. Notice of termination of section 8 contract)

- (a) Not less than two (2) years prior to terminating any contract under which rental assistance payments are received under § 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, 42 U.S.C. § 1437f, an owner shall provide written notice to the corporation, specifying the reasons for the termination with sufficient detail to enable the corporation to evaluate whether the termination is lawful and whether there are additional actions that can be taken by the corporation to avoid the termination. The corporation shall review the owner's notice, and shall consider whether there are additional actions that can be taken by the corporation to avoid the termination....

**RIDOH**

(§ 23-17-5)

- An application for a license shall be made to the licensing agency upon forms provided by it and shall contain any information that the licensing agency reasonably requires, which may include affirmative evidence of ability to comply with reasonable standards, rules, and regulations that are lawfully prescribed under this chapter. Each application shall be accompanied by payment of the fees prescribed in accordance with § 23-17-38.

**Data****Department of Housing**

- Annual integrated housing report: Annual report on a broad range of housing metrics, includes a requirement to project the units needed for the state, and receive data from municipalities.

(§ 42-64.19-3(a)(4)(iv))

## Current State Statutes by Function

- Fee in Lieu and Public Housing Report: Annual report on the fees in lieu of the development of affordable housing collected by municipalities and the utilization of vouchers by Public Housing Authorities.

(§ 45-53-12(b))

- Accessory Dwelling Unit Annual Report: Annual report on the number of ADUs permitted and provided Certificates of Occupancy in the past two years by municipality along with any ADU related ordinances enacted by each municipality.

(§ 45-24-76)

- Low and Moderate Income Housing Annual Comprehensive Permit Report: Annual report on the status of comprehensive permit applications, including the number of units built and provided Certificates of Occupancy, by municipality.

(§ 45-53-11)

- State Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Report: Annual report on the amount of state funded low-income housing tax credit agreements entered into in the previous year.

(§ 44-71-10)

- Vacant Schools Annual Report: Annual report on the number of vacant schools in Rhode Island and the status of redevelopment efforts to convert vacant schools into affordable housing.

(§ 45-53-10)

- Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER): Annual report required by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development providing accomplishments and progress on Consolidated Plan goals.

### Statewide Planning:

(§ 42-11-10. Statewide planning program.)

- The division of statewide planning shall manage and administer the Rhode Island geographic information system of land-related resources, and shall coordinate these efforts with other state departments and agencies, including the university of Rhode Island, which shall provide technical support and assistance in the development and maintenance of the system and its associated database.

### Housing Resources Commission

(§ 42-128-5. Purposes.)

**Current State Statutes by Function**

- To develop and promulgate state policies, and plans, for housing and housing production and performance measures for housing programs established pursuant to state law.

(§ 42-128-8. Powers and duties.)

- To conduct research on and make reports regarding housing issues in the state.
- To monitor and evaluate housing responsibilities established by state law, and to establish a process for annual reporting on the outcomes of the programs and investments of the state in housing for low- and moderate-income people.

(§ 42-128-8.1. Housing production and rehabilitation.)

- The statewide planning program shall maintain a geographic information system map that identifies, to the extent feasible, areas throughout the state suitable for higher density residential development consistent with the guidelines adopted pursuant to subsection (g).

(§ 42-128-16. Annual report.)

- The commission shall submit for each calendar year by March 1 of the next year a report to the governor and the general assembly on its activities and its findings and recommendations regarding housing issues, which report by census tract, shall include the number and dollar amount of its programs and an assessment of health related housing issues, including the incidence of lead poisoning.

**RIHousing**

(§ 42-55-22. Annual reports.)

- The corporation shall, promptly following the close of each fiscal year, submit an annual report of its activities for the preceding year to the governor, general treasurer and the general assembly. Each report shall set forth a complete operating and financial statement of the corporation during that year. The corporation shall cause an audit of its books and accounts to be made at least once in each fiscal year.

(§ 42-55-22.2. Fair housing policy reports.)

- The corporation shall administer all of its programs and activities relating to housing or community development in a manner affirmatively to further the policies of chapter 37 of title 34 (Rhode Island Fair Housing Practices Act). The corporation shall annually report to the general assembly on the measures it has taken affirmatively to further the policies of chapter 37 of title 34. The corporation shall compile a biennial affirmative action report which will indicate the extent of minority participation in the following corporation programs: homeownership programs, home equity conversion mortgage, home repair program, rental housing development, emergency housing assistance.

## Current State Statutes by Function

(§ 45-24-46.1. Inclusionary zoning.)

- (f) Both the municipalities and RIHMFC shall report annually with the first report due December 31, 2024, to the general assembly, the secretary of housing, and the housing resources commission the amount of fees in lieu collected by community, the projects that were provided funding with the fees, the dollar amounts allocated to the projects, and the number of units created.

(§ 45-53-14. Database of low-income rental units.)

- (a) The Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation established pursuant to § 42-55-4 (the “corporation”) shall maintain an online database (“database”) of low-income housing tax credit developments that are designated only for households at or below sixty percent (60%) of area median income, adjusted for household size and subsidized housing developments, as referenced in the corporation’s Rhode Island resource guide, which are designated only for households at or below eighty percent (80%) of area median income, adjusted for household size (collectively “low-income rental units”) in the state on the corporation’s website. The corporation shall place an emphasis on the database containing the following:
  - (1) Current, updated information on the existing inventory of low-income rental units in the state;
  - (2) The contact person or entity and contact information pertaining to individual developments;
  - (3) To the extent the information is available, a copy of the application to apply for housing in individual developments; and
  - (4) Information pertaining to any special populations, including, but not limited to, elderly, disabled, homeless individuals, and victims of domestic violence, served by individual developments.
    - (b) This database shall be accessible to the public by July 1, 2023.

(§ 45-53-15. Annual reports.)

- (a) The Rhode Island housing corporation established pursuant to § 42-55-4 (the “corporation”) shall provide the annual reports pursuant to subsections (b) and (c) of this section to the speaker of the house, the president of the senate, the housing resources commission, the division of statewide planning, and the secretary of housing. Reports shall be made available on the corporation’s website for a period of at least three (3) years, and shall be deemed to be a public record. Reports shall be due on or before March 15, of each year, commencing in the calendar year 2023.

## Current State Statutes by Function

- (b) Report on Rhode Island housing corporation housing development and preservation activity. This report shall include the following information:
  - (1) The identity of projects that have been provided funding by the corporation for housing development or preservation and that closed on that financing by December 31 of the previous calendar year;
  - (2) The total aggregate of funds, in dollar amounts, that have been provided to projects by the corporation for housing development or preservation and that closed on that financing by December 31, of the previous calendar year, as well as those amounts disaggregated by each project; and
  - (3) The number of housing units that received funding from the corporation for housing development or preservation that received a certificate of occupancy in the previous calendar year, both in total and disaggregated by project.
- (c) Report on tax payments made by affordable housing developments to municipalities pursuant to § 44-5-13.11. This report shall include data aggregated by all the municipalities and disaggregated by each individual municipality on the total amount of fees collected in the previous calendar year by municipalities on any assessment and taxation made pursuant to § 44-5-13.11.
- (d) With regard to the report in subsection (c) of this section, all municipalities in the state shall annually submit to the corporation by January 15, of each year, the total amount of fees collected in the previous calendar year by the municipality on any assessment and taxation made pursuant to § 44-5-13.11 disaggregated by individual development.

## State Housing Entities

## APPENDIX D: STATE HOUSING ENTITIES

Appendix D summarizes the general powers, roles, responsibilities, and membership requirements established by current state statutes and/or organizational governance documents.

Department of Housing	
<b>Structure</b>	Public agency within the executive branch of state government
<b>Leadership</b>	Cabinet secretary, appointed by the Governor with Advice & Consent of the Senate
<b>Staffing</b>	Authorized to have 38 FTEs
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://housing.ri.gov/">https://housing.ri.gov/</a>

Housing Resources Commission	
<b>Structure</b>	28-member commission and executive department agency, established by state statute
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Governor shall appoint the chairperson of the commission, who shall not be an ex officio member, with the Advice and Consent of the Senate.</li> <li>The commission shall elect annually a vice-chairperson, who shall be empowered to preside at meetings in the absence of the chairperson, and a secretary.</li> </ul>
<b>Membership</b>	<p>The commission shall have twenty-eight (28) members as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>8 ex officio members:</i> the directors of the departments of administration, business regulation, healthy aging, health, human services, behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals, the chairperson of the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, and the attorney general,</li> <li><i>7 members by role:</i> the president of the Rhode Island Bankers Association, or the designee of the president; the president of the Rhode Island Mortgage Banker's Association, or the designee of the president; the president of the Rhode Island Realtors Association, or the designee of the president; the executive director of the Rhode Island Housing Network; the executive director of the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless; the president of the Rhode Island Association of Executive Directors for Housing, or the designee of the president; the executive director of operation stand down;</li> <li><i>13 members appointed by the Governor, with Advice &amp; Consent of the Senate:</i> one of whom shall be the chairperson, one of whom shall be the representative of the homeless; one of whom shall be a representative of a community development corporation; one of whom shall be the representative of an agency addressing lead poisoning issues; one of whom shall be a local planner; one of whom shall be a local building official; one of whom shall be a representative of fair housing interests; one of whom shall be representative of an agency advocating the interest of racial minorities; one of whom shall be a representative of the Rhode Island</li> </ul>

## State Housing Entities

	Builders Association; one of whom shall be a representative of a Rhode Island city or town with a population below twenty-five thousand (25,000) people according to data from the United States Census Bureau; one of whom shall be a representative of a community development intermediary that provides financing and technical assistance to housing nonprofits; one of whom shall be a nonprofit developer; and one of whom shall be a senior housing advocate.
<b>Member Terms</b>	The terms of appointed members shall be three (3) years, except for the original appointments, the term of four (4) of whom shall be one year and the term of four (4) of whom shall be two (2) years; no member may serve more than two (2) successive terms.
<b>Staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The governor shall appoint from qualified candidates, with the advice of the coordinating committee, an executive director</li> <li>• The commission shall also cause to be employed staff and technical and professional consultants as may be required to carry out the powers and duties set forth in this chapter.</li> <li>• All staff, including the executive director, may be secured through a memorandum of agreement with the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, or any other agency or political subdivision of the state with the approval of the relevant agency or political subdivision, as provided for in § 42-128-2(2)(ii).</li> </ul>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://housing.ri.gov/housing-resources-commission">https://housing.ri.gov/housing-resources-commission</a>

## Housing Resources Coordinating Committee

<b>Structure</b>	4-member committee, established by state statute
<b>Leadership</b>	The chairperson of the Rhode Island housing resources commission shall be chairperson of the coordinating committee.
<b>Membership</b>	<p>The coordinating committee of the housing resources agency shall be comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the chairperson of the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation;</li> <li>• the chairperson of the Rhode Island housing resources commission;</li> <li>• the director of the department of administration, or the designee of the director; and</li> <li>• the executive director of the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation.</li> </ul>

## Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (RIHousing)

<b>Structure</b>	Quasi-public agency, established by state statute (“public corporation of the state, having a distinct legal existence from the state and not constituting a department of the state government... constituted a public instrumentality exercising public and essential governmental functions”)
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The governor shall designate a member of the corporation to serve as chairperson.</li> </ul>

## State Housing Entities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The commissioners shall elect from among their number a vice-chairperson annually and those other officers as they may determine.</li> <li>The commissioners shall employ an executive director who shall also be the secretary and who shall administer, manage, and direct the affairs and business of the corporation, subject to the policies, control, and direction of the commissioners.</li> </ul>
<b>Board Membership</b>	<p>The powers of the corporation shall be vested in seven (7) commissioners consisting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the director of administration, or the director's designee;</li> <li>the general treasurer, or the general treasurer's designee;</li> <li>the director of business regulation, or the director's designee;</li> <li>four (4) members to be appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate who shall among them be experienced in all aspects of housing design, development, finance, management, and state and municipal finance...</li> </ul>
<b>Member Terms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The governor shall appoint a member to succeed the member whose term will then next expire to serve for a term of four (4) years commencing on the first day of July then next following and until his or her successor is appointed and qualified.</li> <li>A vacancy in the office of a commissioner, other than by expiration, shall be filled in like manner as an original appointment, but only for the unexpired portion of the term. If a vacancy occurs when the senate is not in session, the governor shall appoint a person to fill the vacancy, but only until the senate shall next convene and give its advice and consent to a new appointment. A member shall be eligible to succeed him or herself.</li> <li>Any member of the corporation may be removed by the governor for misfeasance, malfeasance, or willful neglect of duty.</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing</b>	<p>The commissioners may employ technical experts and other officers, agents, and employees, permanent and temporary, and fix their qualifications, duties, and compensation. These employed persons shall not be subject to the provisions of the classified service. The commissioners may delegate to one or more of their agents or employees those administrative duties they may deem proper.</p>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.rihousing.com/">https://www.rihousing.com/</a>

## Interagency Council on Homelessness

<b>Structure</b>	20-member committee, established by state statute
<b>Leadership</b>	The chief of the office of housing and community development, or his or her designee, shall chair the interagency council on homelessness
<b>Membership</b>	<p>Membership: Shall consist of 18 members and 2 ex-officio members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief of the office of housing and community development, or his or her designee, who shall chair the interagency council on homelessness;</li> <li>Director of the department of administration, or his or her designee;</li> <li>Chair of the housing resources commission, or his or her designee;</li> </ul>

## State Housing Entities

- Director of the department of human services, or his or her designee;
- Director of the department of health, or his or her designee;
- Director of the department of children, youth and families, or his or her designee;
- Director of the office of healthy aging, or his or her designee;
- Director of behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals, or his or her designee;
- Director of the department of labor and training, or his or her designee;
- Director of the department of corrections, or his or her designee;
- Commissioner of the department of elementary and secondary education, or his or her designee;
- Director of the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, or his or her designee;
- Director of the emergency management agency, or his or her designee;
- A representative from the Rhode Island office of veterans services, or his or her designee;
- The public defender, or his or her designee;
- Medicaid director within the department of human services, or his or her designee;
- Secretary of the executive office of health and human services, or his or her designee;
- Lieutenant governor, or his or her designee;
- An ex-officio member who shall be from the Providence Veterans Administration Medical Center who specializes in health care for homeless veterans; and
- An ex-officio member who shall be the chair, or his or her designee, of the interagency council on homelessness advisory council as described in this chapter herein.

**Advisory Council**

There is hereby created a permanent advisory council to the interagency council on homelessness containing representation of advocates; service providers; members of the veteran community, including housing providers and a current or former homeless veteran; current and/or former members of the homeless community; as well as representatives specifically affiliated with youth homelessness. All new members shall be chosen and approved by majority vote of the members present at an official meeting. At no time shall there be less than three (3) representatives of the homeless community, current or former. The chair shall be elected by a majority of the members.

**RI Continuum of Care**

<b>Structure</b>	17-member board, established by Federal statute (HEARTH Act)
<b>Leadership</b>	Directors will elect officers from among the Board. Officer elections may take place annually or at the next scheduled meeting following a mid-term vacancy in any Officer position. Officers will serve two-year terms unless filling a mid-

## State Housing Entities

	term vacancy, in which case an officer will serve for the remainder of their current Board term.
<b>Board of Directors</b>	<p>Board of Directors: The RICoC board will consist of 17 RICoC Members, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least three individuals with lived experience of homelessness</li> <li>• At least two individuals who are members of the Youth Action Board</li> <li>• At least two individual representatives of organizations providing housing or services for the homeless;</li> <li>• At least one individual from the RI Department of Housing</li> <li>• At least one individual from a philanthropic organization</li> <li>• At least one individual from a municipal public housing authority</li> </ul>
<b>Director Terms</b>	<p>Directors can serve up to three terms consecutively. A term on the Board is 2 years; if a board member is continuously re-elected, they may serve three, 2-year terms (6 years) consecutively. Once a board member has served three 2-year terms, they must take a 2- year break before being able to run for the RICoC Board again. After a Director reaches their term limit, they may continue to be a RICoC Member. At the end of a Director's term, the Continuum of Care Planner will initiate the nomination process.</p>
<b>Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership in the RICoC is available to representatives of organizations and agencies within Rhode Island and individuals who are interested in the well-being of people at risk of homelessness, those who are homeless and those who formerly were homeless.</li> <li>• Members will vote to elect candidates from among the Membership to fill Board seats as vacancies arise.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative Applicant (Staffing)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A collaborative applicant (CA) is the eligible applicant that has been designated by the Continuum of Care to apply for a grant for Continuum of Care planning funds under this part on behalf of the Continuum.</li> <li>• RIHousing is currently designated to serve as the RICoC's collaborative applicant.</li> <li>• The CoC board may on an annual basis review the performance of the CA.</li> <li>• In the event that the Board finds that the current CA is not fulfilling responsibilities, the Board may decide to replace the CA. To do so, it will document that the current CA is deficient in operations, and it will establish an open and competitive process to solicit a replacement CA. The board will implement a competitive process and will designate as CA the organization found to be most effective in fulfilling the CA responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.rihousing.com/continuum-of-care/">https://www.rihousing.com/continuum-of-care/</a>