

MEETING OF THE HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION  
PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES  
January 16, 2024

Members of the Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission (“HRC”) met on January 16, 2024 at the Department of Administration, Conference Room 2A, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908, in Public Session, which meeting was scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m., pursuant to the public notice of meeting, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A, as required by applicable Rhode Island law.

The following members were present and participated throughout the meeting as indicated: Kyle Bennett, Michelle Brophy, Lisa Bryer, Brenda Clement, Leonard Giarrano (Designee of the Attorney General), Melina Lodge, Paula McFarland, Matthew Santacroce, Mike Simoli, Erik Wallin, and Carol Ventura.

Also present were: Hannah Moore, Executive Director; Stefan Pryor, Secretary of Housing; Attorney Michael P. Robinson, counsel to the HRC; and various other members of the public.

Recognizing a quorum, Chairman Bennett called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.

Melissa Sanzaro arrived at 9:23 a.m.; Gene Michael Deary arrived at 9:25 a.m.; and Donna Rook (Designee of the Director of the Department of Human Services) arrived at 9:35 a.m.

1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES.

A. Upon motion made by Mr. Wallin and seconded by Mr. Deary, it was unanimously:

VOTED: To approve the draft meeting minutes for the HRC meeting held on December 19, 2023, as presented to the HRC.

2. PRESENTATION IN HONOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS MONTH.

Lauren Hill, Chief Legal Counsel at the Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights (RICHR), provided the HRC with a presentation regarding the RICHR’s housing work in Rhode Island. See attached Exhibit B. Ms. Hill provided the HRC with an overview of the RICHR, and its charge with enforcing state and federal anti-discrimination laws. She also addressed the procedures followed by the RICHR in addressing discrimination charges. Ms. Hill addressed the investigative work of the RICHR, prohibited categories of discrimination, prohibited acts, distinctions between reasonable accommodations and reasonable modifications, and ways for HRC members to assist in the RICHR’s mission. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Simoli asked about the breadth and scope of prohibited retaliations, and Ms. Clement asked about coordination between the RICHR and the Governor’s Commission on Disabilities.

### **3. UPDATES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING**

Secretary Pryor provided an overview regarding key developments involving the Department of Housing, and introduced Executive Director Moore, who presented the slide presentation attached hereto as **Exhibit C**. Executive Director Moore addressed key takeaways from the Integrated Housing Report, the establishment of goals, and the recent release of draft updates to the Landlord/Tenant Handbook.

### **4. UPDATE REGARDING THE BUILDING HOMES RHODE ISLAND (BHRI) PROGRAM**

James Comer provided the HRC with a quarterly report from RIHousing, see attached **Exhibit D**. Mr. Comer addressed the contractual relationship between the HRC and RIHousing for the administration of BHRI funds. He also addressed the funds designated for the Acquisition and Revitalization Program (ARP). He noted that the BHRI and ARP programs have been very successful, allowing communities throughout the state to make progress toward their affordable housing goals and benefiting residents living in affordable housing.

### **5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Executive Director Moore provided the HRC with an update on statutorily required HRC reporting, including with respect to the forthcoming HRC Annual Report, the State Housing Appeals Board (SHAB) Report, and the Lead Hazard Mitigation Report. See attached **Exhibit C**. Members of the HRC discussed making the General Assembly aware of the need for ongoing funding and work after dissolution of the SHAB. Members also discussed eviction sealing in Rhode Island, and various legislative and policy needs. Executive Director Moore also provided the HRC with an update on scheduling of monthly HRC meetings.

### **6. FY 2024 HRC BUDGET**

Executive Director Moore provided the HRC with an update on the HRC FY2024 Budget. See attached **Exhibit C**. HRC members discussed Budget priorities, the multi-step decision making process, and proposed next steps.

### **7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Ventura requested a written report on the status of existing homeless shelters.

### **8. ADJOURNMENT**

S. Pryor left the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

M. Santacroce left the meeting at 10:48 a.m.  
M. Simoli left the meeting at 10:58 a.m.

No further business coming before the HRC, on a motion duly made by Ms. Brophy and seconded by Mr. Wallin, it was approved unanimously:

**VOTED:** To adjourn the January 16, 2024 HRC meeting.

Whereupon the meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kyle Bennett, HRC Chair

JANUARY 16, 2024 HRC MEETING MINUTES

EXHIBIT A

**MEETING NOTICE  
HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION**

A meeting of the Housing Resources Commission (“HRC”) will be held at the **Department of Administration, Conference Room 2A, One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908** on **January 16, 2024** beginning at **9:00 a.m.** for the following purposes:

1. To receive a presentation in honor of Human Rights Month.
2. To consider the approval of draft meeting minutes for the December 19, 2023 Housing Resources Commission meeting.
3. To receive updates from the Department of Housing.
4. To receive an update regarding the Building Homes Rhode Island (“BHRI”) program.
5. To receive updates from the Executive Director, and HRC discussion regarding upcoming statutorily required reports, including the HRC annual report, the State Housing Appeals Board (“SHAB”) annual report, and the Lead Hazard mitigation report.
6. Discussion regarding the FY2024 HRC Budget.
7. To receive public comment.

This notice shall be posted at the Office of the Housing Resources Commission, at the State Library, and by electronic filing with the Secretary of State’s Office.

Savage Law Partners, LLP,  
Counsel to the HRC

Any individual requiring a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this meeting must notify the HRC at 401-278-9100, forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

Dated: January 10, 2024

JANUARY 16, 2024 HRC MEETING MINUTES

EXHIBIT B



**Rhode Island Commission  
for Human Rights**

***RI Housing Resources Commission  
Overview of RICHR Housing Work  
January 16, 2024***

Lauren E. Hill, *Chief Legal Counsel*  
[Lauren.hill@richr.ri.gov](mailto:Lauren.hill@richr.ri.gov); 401-22-4477

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Overview  
Laws Enforced/Investigated

**WHAT DOES THE COMMISSION  
DO?**

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## **About the Commission**

- Enforces State and Federal anti-discrimination laws
  - Employment
  - Housing
  - Public Accommodations
  - Credit
  - Delivery of Goods and Services
- Neutral, objective investigative agency
- Services free of charge

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## **About the Commission**

- 7 members to be appointed by the governor, with the advice and consent of the senate,
- Commissioner characteristics:
  - demonstrated sensitivity to the concerns of the classes protected under this chapter.
  - judicious temperament, analytical ability, and sufficient time to dedicate to commission work.
  - reflect the diversity of the state's population.
  - governor should attempt to appoint at least one with a background in law, business, and/or real estate.

R.I. Gen. Laws sec. 28-5-8

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## About the Commission

15 Commission staff:

- Executive Director
- 2 attorneys
- EEOC Project Director
- HUD Project Director
- Chief Compliance Officer
- 3 administrative staff
- 6 investigators (4 senior compliance officers and 2 investigators)

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### State Laws Enforced

- Fair Employment Practices Act ("FEPA") - R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-6-1 et seq.
- Fair Housing Practices Act ("FHRA") - R.I. Gen. Laws § 36-3-1 et seq.
- Civil Rights of People with Disabilities Act ("CRPDA") - R.I. Gen. Laws § 28-6-1 et seq.
- Equal Rights to Public Facilities Act ("ERPA") - R.I. Gen. Laws § 40-3-1 et seq.
- Hotels and Public Places Act - R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-29-1 et seq. (Discrimination in Public Accommodations)
- HIV/AIDS - R.I. Gen. Laws § 23-6-3-11, 12 (discrimination based on HIV/AIDS prohibited)



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## Federal Laws Investigated

- Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 - employment
- Fair Housing Act, Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- Age Discrimination in Employment Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act ["ADA"]



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## Complaint Distribution

72% of overall of charges taken in at RICHR are for Employment Discrimination - FY 2021

ALL CASES	EMPLOYMENT
48% - Disability	44% - Disability
34% - Retaliation	39% - Retaliation
26% - Sex	31% - Sex
24% - Race	28% - Age
22% - Age	18% - Color

These percentages add up to more than 100% because some charges allege multiple bases. If a charge alleges discrimination on the bases of age, race and disability, it is included in all three categories.



[www.richr.ri.gov](http://www.richr.ri.gov)

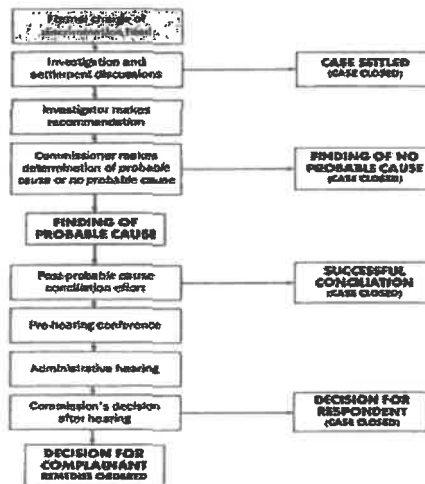
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Investigation Process  
Protected Categories

## HOW DOES THE COMMISSION ADDRESS DISCRIMINATION CHARGES?

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### Charge Process Summary



NOTE: Rhode Island law expressly provides that, under certain circumstances, complainants and/or respondents may elect to terminate proceedings before the Commission and have the case heard in Superior Court.



[www.richr.rh.gov](http://www.richr.rh.gov)

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## Protected Categories

- Race
- Color
- National/Ancestral Origin
- Physical Disability
- Mental Disability
- Age
- Sex
  - Pregnancy
  - Sexual Harassment
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Familial Status\*
- Marital Status\*
- Military Status\*
- Victim of Domestic Abuse
- Housing Status (Homelessness)
- Lawful Source of Income

- Orange categories are only protected under fair housing law, not employment  
 - Starred categories\* are also protected under fair credit law

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PROTECTED CATEGORIES UNDER STATE AND FEDERAL LAW						
	EMPLOYMENT		HOUSING		PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS	CREDIT
	State	Federal	State	Federal	State	Federal
Race	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Color	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Religion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ancestral Origin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sex	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Age	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sexual Orientation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender Identity or Expression	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Familial Status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marital Status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Victim of Domestic Abuse	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Homeless Status*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conviction Status** ("Ban-the-Box")	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Military Status*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Residency	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

\* Federal law prohibits discrimination on this basis in public housing.  
 1. Includes school placement and discrimination on the basis of pregnancy status.  
 2. Includes physical and mental disability.  
 3. Pregnancy and Child: 40+ years of age in Employment; persons include 16+ years of age in Housing, Public Accommodations and Credit.  
 4. Persons include who are heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual.  
 5. Includes an individual's sexual orientation, as well as an individual's gender identity, gender-related role, gender-related expression, or gender-related appearance, whether or not they identify as transgender.  
 6. Includes, regardless of age, in addition to those traditionally associated with the individual's sex or birth.  
 7. "Housing Status" means the status of being or not having a home or other residence, including the status of being on the street or in a homeless shelter or other emergency housing.  
 8. "Housing Status" means the status of being or not having a home or other residence, including the status of being on the street or in a homeless shelter or other emergency housing.  
 9. "Conviction Status" means a conviction for a crime, whether or not the individual has been convicted of a crime. Certain convictions may be expunged or sealed.  
 10. "Military Status" means status as a service member in the Armed Forces, or status as a veteran with an honorable discharge or as a member of a reserve component.



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## **Prohibited Acts**

R.I. Gen. Laws sec. 34-37-4, 34-37-5.1

- Inquiring about protected category;
- Refusing to sell, rent based on protected category;
- Issuing discriminatory advertisements;
- Discriminate against any individual because of protected category;
- Applying different terms, conditions, or privileges of the sale/rental, or different facilities or services;
- Misrepresenting the availability of a housing accommodation;
- Delaying applications processing;

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## **Prohibited Acts**

- Refusing to make reasonable modifications for disability;
- Refusing to make reasonable accommodations for disability;
- Aiding or abetting an unlawful housing practice;
- Discriminating against someone for reporting unlawful housing practice or opposing unlawful housing practice;
- Interfering, coercing, intimidating, threatening someone for exercising protected right or assisted someone else in exercising a protected right.

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## **Mrs. Murphy Exemption\***

### **Federal Law**

- 4 units or fewer
- Owner occupied

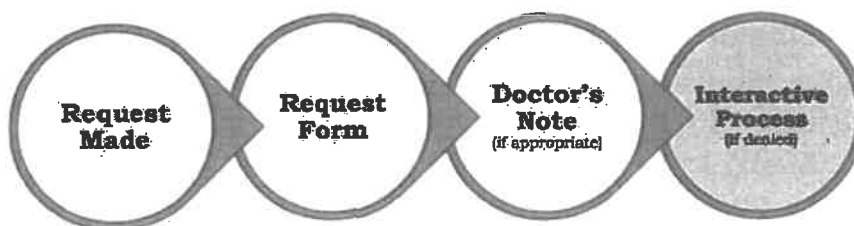
### **State Law- familial status**

- Two units or fewer and owner occupied, OR
  - Four units or fewer, one owner occupied, and one occupied senior for whom presence of children would constitute a hardship, OR
  - Senior Housing (55+ and 62+)
- \* = Does not apply to advertising

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## **Reasonable Accommodations/Modification**

- Changes in policies or structure that allow individual with disability to gain equal access to housing



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## **Reasonable Accommodation vs. Reasonable Modification**

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

- Change in Policy
- Exemptions to Policies
  - Assistive Animals
- Other Misc. Accommodations
  - Parking spaces
  - Live-in Aide
  - Unit transfers

### **Reasonable Modification**

- Grab bars
- Ramps
- Lowering of counters\*
- Other structural changes\*
- \* If landlord/owner cannot afford to modify the unit, tenant may offer to pay, but must restore to original condition after moving out.

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## **Assistive Animals**

- Animals as reasonable accommodation
  - Not considered pets
  - Some pet policies do not apply
  - Insurance must accommodate
- Service animals
  - Certified
  - Perform specific service (ex: Seeing Eye Dog)
- Emotional Support Animals
  - Does not need to be certified
  - Note can be from psychologist, psychiatrist, LICSW, Doctor

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## Common Defenses

Undue  
Burden

- Unable to accommodate or modify due to financial or administrative cost

Direct  
Threat

- Accommodating tenant will put themselves or others at significant risk of substantial harm

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## Lawful Source of Income

Types of income covered:

- Section 8
- Social Security
- Disability
- Alimony
- Child Support
- Veterans Administration Loans
- Rent relief?
- Others?

One exemption:

3 units or fewer and owner occupied

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## Familial Status

- Families with Minor Children
- Occupancy defense
  - Number of people per bedroom
- Different rules for children and adults

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## Prohibited Acts

### Terms and Conditions

- Must live on 1st floor
- Must pay additional security deposit
- Children can access certain parts of property

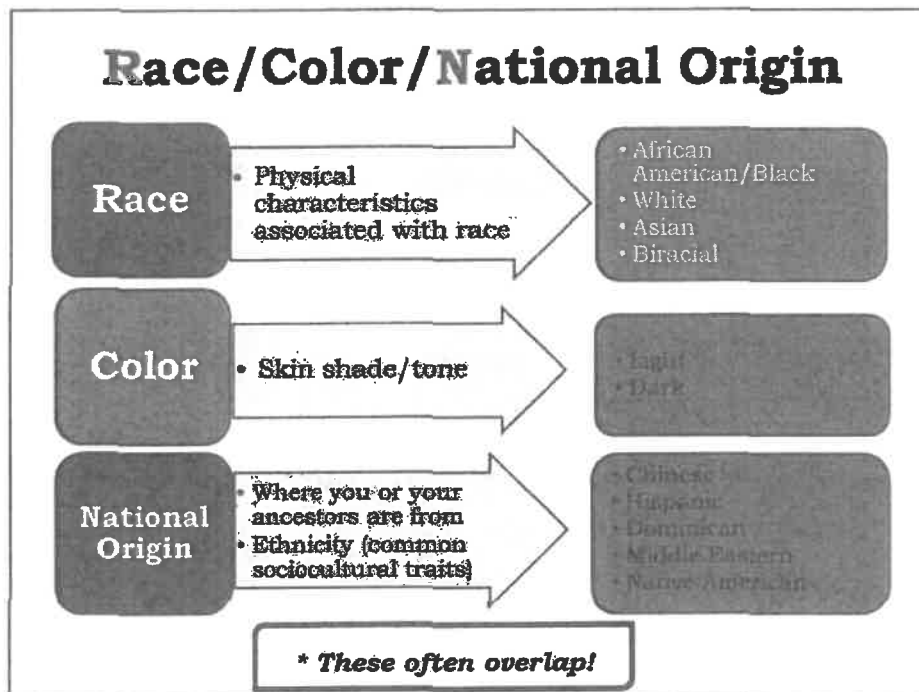
### Refusal to rent

- State do not want children on property
- Not enough bedrooms in unit – too small

### Harassment

- Neighbors harass children or parents
- Landlords/owners fail to take action to end harassment

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## Steering

- Restricting an individual's housing choice
- Either directing towards or away certain neighborhood based on race/color/national origin
- Can be done via words or conduct
  - Showing houses/apartments only in certain neighborhoods
  - Saying "You may be more comfortable living in X neighborhood"

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## **Sex Discrimination**

- Discrimination based on male, female or other genders/sexes
- Also covers pregnancy and sexual harassment
- Pregnancy may be also involve familial status as well in limited circumstances

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## **Sexual Orientation vs. Gender Identity or Expression**

- Sexual Orientation
  - Who you are attracted to
    - Straight, gay, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, etc.
- Gender Identity or Expression
  - Actual or perceived gender
  - Gender-related self identity or self expression
- Gender Stereotyping
  - Assigning societal “norms” to conform with sex assigned at birth

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## **Military Status**

- Active or Retired Military
- All discharge types covered except dishonorable discharge
- Prohibited Acts:
  - Refusing to take VA loan from buyer
  - Charging different rates of rent for military
  - Creating policies targeting military (Requiring orders to be submitted for rental)

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## **Harassment**


- Quid Pro Quo
- Hostile Environment
- Landlord/Owner can be liable for conduct of
  - Neighbors
  - Property Managers
  - Third Parties (maintenance, landscapers, etc.)


***Not limited to just sexual harassment***


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## Retaliation











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Other State Agencies  
How You Can Help

**WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT  
THE COMMISSION'S ENFORCEMENT  
AUTHORITY?**

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### Other State Agencies

- Governor's Commission on Disabilities – R.I. Gen Laws § 42-51-6 – “removal of environmental and communication barriers in state-owned facilities.” R.I. Gen Laws § 42-51-9(4)(iv).
- Attorney General – Civil Rights Advocate, R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-9.3-2; Consumer Protection division
- Mental Health Advocate, R.I. Gen. Laws § 40.1-5-13

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### Other Agencies

- Rhode Island Legal Services, eviction representation
- RI Bar Lawyer Referral for Elderly, (401) 521-5040 or [eking@ribar.com](mailto:eking@ribar.com)
- RI Bar Lawyer Referral for Pro Bono Services, (401) 421-7758 or 1-800-339-7758 or [jellis@ribar.com](mailto:jellis@ribar.com).

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## How You Can Help

- Refer complainants to the Commission
- Support the Commission's outreach efforts
- Submit testimony in support of Commission's amendments to the FHPA (last year's bills H6197; S616)
- Call your senators and representatives to ask them to support the Commission's amendments to the FHPA

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## Questions?

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## **Contact Us!**

### **Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights**

180 Westminster Street, 3rd Floor  
Providence, RI 02903

**Hours:** Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

**Tel:** 401-222-2661

**Voice Relay:** 7-1-1


**Fax:** 401-222-2616

**Website:** [www.richr.ri.gov](http://www.richr.ri.gov)



JANUARY 16, 2024 HRC MEETING MINUTES

EXHIBIT C

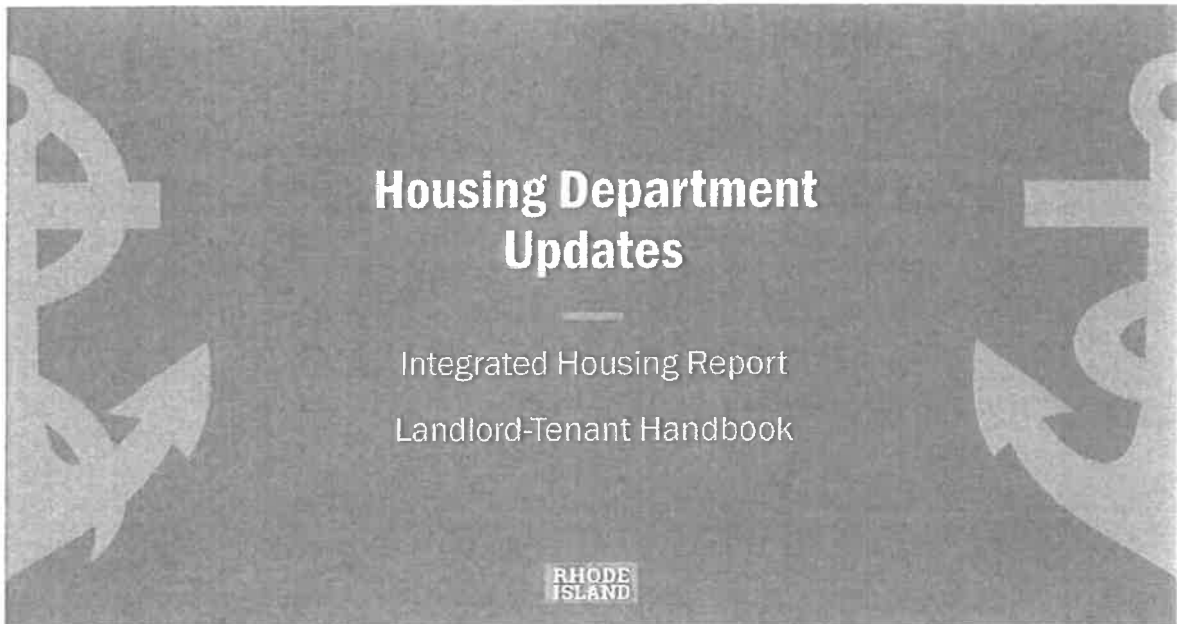


HRC Meeting

January 16, 2024

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**Housing Department  
Updates**

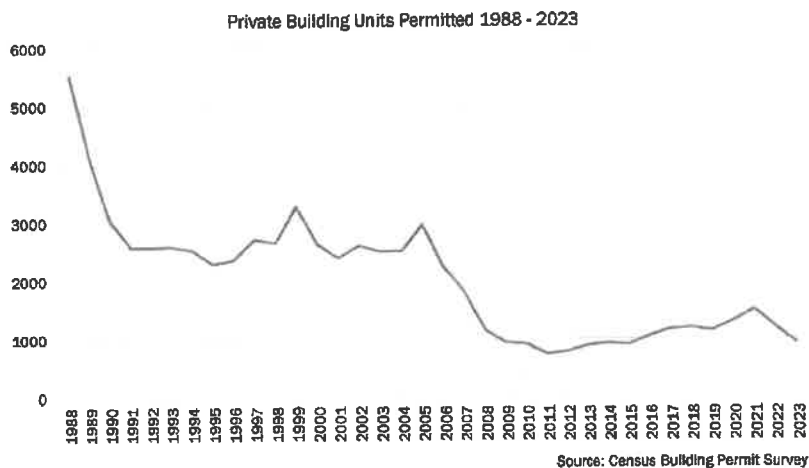
Integrated Housing Report  
Landlord-Tenant Handbook

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## Integrated Housing Report Key Takeaways

- Projected average number of new units needed each year: between 2,224 and 3,087 on average
- Minimum needed to keep up with households and unit loss (does not model production needed to improve affordability within the state)
- Achievable benchmark: Before the Great Recession, Rhode Island routinely achieved numbers in or above that range



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## Integrated Housing Report

### Key takeaways (continued)

- Rhode Island lags behind Massachusetts and Connecticut in terms of state investment in housing and affordable housing development on a per capita basis. Due to significant investments of federal funds, Rhode Island provides a greater total and proportion of funding towards capital investments compared to a relatively small amount for operating expenses.
- Current housing data has limitations, particularly housing production data. The Department of Housing developed a municipal permit survey to gather data on housing production for this report and to learn about current municipal data collection practices. The Housing Department is committed to improving the collection, quality, and reporting of housing-related data to better inform the state's housing priorities and policies.

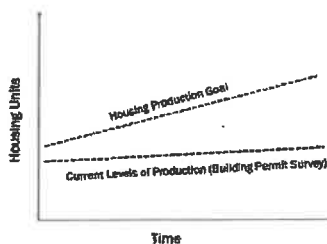
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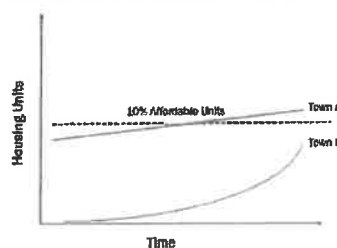
# Integrated Housing Report: Goal Setting

Based upon preliminary research into goal setting and production targets from other jurisdictions

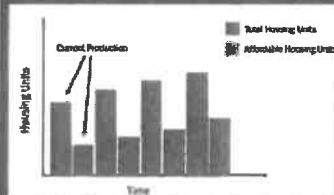
**Overall production target:** Jurisdictions like NY set overall production targets for housing units to be developed.



**Affordable production target:** RI & MA have set affordable unit thresholds for municipalities (10%) based upon total number of units, but they have not established affordable production growth goals.



**Hybrid:** A commonly utilized approach is an overall production target combined with an affordable unit production target (DC, CA, OR).



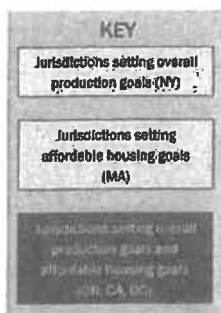
Alternative approaches. Minneapolis does not set citywide goals but directs those be set in each neighborhood of the city and focused on creating policy.

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## Develop a framework for a shared vision and goals.

What have other jurisdictions done to develop goals?



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## Draft landlord tenant handbook released

- Thanks to the Center for Justice and the major contributions from HousingWorks RI and Rhode Island Legal Services
- Open comment period through the end of February
- Comments can be submitted via email to Nick Freeman at: [Nicholas.Freeman@housing.ri.gov](mailto:Nicholas.Freeman@housing.ri.gov)
- More info to follow regarding public meeting

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## HRC Updates

Upcoming Reporting Updates (HRC Annual Report,  
SHAB, and Lead Hazard Mitigation Report)

Meeting Scheduling

Budget Survey Results

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## HRC Annual Report Details and Proposed Timeline

### RIGL 42-128-16

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.

### Proposed Timeline

- January 16<sup>th</sup> - Review report approach/framework at HRC meeting
- February 5<sup>th</sup> - Share draft of report
- February 9<sup>th</sup> - HRC members share feedback on report
- February 15<sup>th</sup> - Share updated draft of report based upon HRC staff feedback
- February HRC meeting - Finalize report for submission

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## HRC Annual Report Approach

### Last Year's Annual Report

- Cover letter + 6 attachments
- Attachment 1: HRC Activities and Programs
- Attachment 2: List of HRC Homeless Assistance Programs
- Attachment 3: Preliminary findings on housing issues
- Attachment 4: Chart of progress on 10% (Housing Works RI Fact Book)
- Attachment 5: Community specific housing conditions (Housing Works RI Fact Book)
- Attachment 6: Health related housing assessments (Housing Works RI Fact Book)

### Proposed Structure

- Utilize the cover letter + attachments format
- Include an updated list of HRC activities and programs plus an updated list of HRC Homeless Assistance Programs table (which shows award amounts and bed counts where relevant)
- Provide chart of progress on 10%, local housing conditions, health related housing assessment, and the preliminary recommendations from the 2023 Integrated Housing Report

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## State Housing Appeals Board (SHAB) Report

### R.I. Gen. Laws § 45-53-13

- Report to the secretary of housing, speaker of the house, and senate president on all active cases and appeals pending before the state housing appeals board
- Due date: March 15
- Report includes:
  - (1) The total number of appeals pending before the board;
  - (2) The number of appeals for which a decision has been made
  - (3) The number of board decisions which were appealed in the previous calendar year and the status of those cases; and
  - (4) The length of time for the board to decide appeals in the previous calendar year
- Department of Housing has received updates for 2023 provided by the SHAB and is aggregating the data into a single report
- Last year for this report as it is subject to a sunset

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## Lead Hazard Mitigation Report

### R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-128.1-5

- Report to the Governor and General Assembly on progress related to the four year comprehensive strategic plan for lead mitigation
- Due date: March 31
- Report developed by the Rhode Island Department of Health as lead mitigation has been MOU'ed to the Department of Health. In 2023, the report included data on the following:
  - Lead poisonings
  - Lead remediation professionals
  - Lead hazard mitigation cases
  - Certificates of Conformance

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## HRC Scheduling

Thanks for completing the survey

- Least conflicts: Tuesdays (2) and Wednesdays (2)
- Following up directly with these four commissioners to see if we can identify a specific Tuesday or Wednesday that will work for all
- Next meeting: Tuesday, February 20th at 9:00 AM

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## Budget Survey Results

Data below is current through 1/15/2024

- 17 responses
- **Reserve funding:** most commissioners recommended reserving 20% or \$372k
- **Top three budget categories:**
  - **1) Housing Development.** This category includes efforts to increase housing production. For example, supplement pre-development funding, municipal technical assistance, vacant land study, etc.
  - **2) Homelessness with an emphasis on prevention/systems.** For example, supplementing monitoring of Consolidated Homeless Fund awards, funding improvements to the coordinated entry system, technical assistance and training for providers (e.g., boosting Medicaid billing capacity), supplemental gap analysis/system modeling, supportive housing pipeline development, etc.
  - **3) Housing needs for specific populations.** For example, funding assessment and planning for housing needs for specific populations (e.g., DV, seniors, those with disabilities).

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## Illustrative FY24 Budget

Sources	Amounts
New revenue (revenue estimating projection)	\$4.80 mm
New revenue (above estimate through Oct.)	\$0.42 mm
Carryforward	\$2.44 mm
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7.66 mm</b>



Uses	Amounts
Lead hazard mitigation (RI Dept. of Health)	\$0.50 mm
Consolidated homelessness fund	\$4.50 mm
Centralized waiting list (RI Housing)	\$0.10 mm
FY 2022 Predevelopment Funding	\$0.70 mm
Reserve	\$0.37 mm
New projects	\$1.49 mm
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7.66 mm</b>

**\$1.86 million unobligated**

After allocating \$372k for reserves, this leaves \$1.49 mm for new projects

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## Budget Priorities Decision Making

During our 12/7 discussion, we discussed following a multi-step process for aligning on specific projects



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## Proposed next steps

- Staff to work with RI Housing to refine predevelopment guidelines and any amendments to existing MOU
- Commissioners, please share specific spending recommendations (with emphasis on the following categories) by January 30th:
  - **Housing Development.** This category includes efforts to increase housing production. For example, supplement pre-development funding, municipal technical assistance, vacant land study, etc.
  - **Homelessness with an emphasis on prevention/systems.** For example, supplementing monitoring of Consolidated Homeless Fund awards, funding improvements to the coordinated entry system, technical assistance and training for providers (e.g., boosting Medicaid billing capacity), supplemental gap analysis/system modeling, supportive housing pipeline development, etc.
  - **Housing needs for specific populations.** For example, funding assessment and planning for housing needs for specific populations (e.g., DV, seniors, those with disabilities).
- Would commissioners like to discuss at a breakout meeting (e.g., on Tuesday, February 13th)?

JANUARY 16, 2024 HRC MEETING MINUTES

EXHIBIT D



## MEMO

**To:** Housing Resources Commission  
**From:** James Comer  
**Date:** January 16<sup>th</sup> 2024  
**Subject:** Building Homes Rhode Island

Rhode Island voters have approved four housing bonds totaling \$190 million since 2006, with the most recent \$65 million housing bond approved in 2021. This represents \$165 million in Building Homes Rhode Island (BHRI) funds which support the development and preservation of affordable housing units throughout the state. \$25 million in funding (from the 2016 and 2021 bonds) has been designated to fund the Acquisition and Revitalization Program (ARP) which is a blight remediation initiative that in addition to housing, can be used to fund community and commercial space.

BHRI funds are overseen by the Housing Resources Commission which has entered into a contractual relationship with RIH to administer the funds. RIHousing prepares and publishes solicitations for applications for BHRI, evaluates and underwrites the projects, and administers the funds, dispersing through the construction process and reviewing the work performed. The key relationship as outlined by the MOU governing RIH services is the evaluation and recommendations made to the Funding Committee of HRC and ultimately through them to the Commission as a whole. These recommendations are made consistent with scoring guidelines published with the RFP for applications, and emphasize the projects' impact, financial feasibility and readiness to proceed. Attached is the current solicitation for applications, along with the scoring criteria by which projects are evaluated.

These bond funds have been a critical tool to address the shortage of affordable housing in our state, and until the recent Housing Production Fund and commitment of State Fiscal Recovery Funds by the General Assembly and Governor, have been the only state dollars available to meet this great need. The funds in both BHRI and ARP have allowed communities throughout the state to make progress toward their affordable housing goals and provided many community and commercial spaces which benefit the residents of those communities, particularly those living in affordable housing. Over the course of the four bond issues, over 4800 housing units have been created:



- **2006 Bond—"BHRI I"—\$50,000,000**

- Fund is completely expended
- 1505 units created in total throughout 29 communities
- 1208 BHRI-funded units
- 1059 affordable rental units created in 22 communities.
- 149 affordable homeownership units created in 19 communities

- **2012 Bond—"BHRI II" \$25,000,000**

- Fund is completely expended
- 1164 units created in total throughout 14 communities
- 768 BHRI-funded units
- 746 affordable rental units in 13 communities
- 22 affordable homeownership units in 6 communities

- **2016 Bond—"BHRI III" \$50,000,000 (\$40,000,000 BHRI/\$10,000,000 ARP)**

- \$39,865,424 BHRI funds obligated
- \$10,000,000 ARP funds obligated
- 1149 units, 9 community spaces and 1 commercial facility funded in 20 communities
- 984 BHRI-funded units
- 943 affordable BHRI-funded rental units in 14 communities
- 41 affordable homeownership units in 6 communities
- 128 affordable ARP-funded rental units in 3 communities
- 10 affordable ARP-funded homeownership units in 2 communities

- **2021 Bond—"BHRI IV"—\$65,000,000 (\$50,000,000 BHRI/\$15,000,000 ARP)**

- \$50,000,000 BHRI funds awarded
- \$4,432,807 in BHRI funds have been deobligated due to project not moving forward and are available in the current RIH Consolidated RFP
- \$11,787,047 ARP funds awarded
- \$3,215,953 ARP funds available in the current RIH Consolidated RFP
- 1068 units, 21 commercial spaces and 2 community facilities funded in 13 communities
- 648 affordable BHRI-funded rental units in 10 communities
- 22 affordable BHRI-funded homeownership units in 5 communities
- 160 affordable ARP funded rental units in 2 communities
- 6 affordable ARP-funded homeownership units in Providence