

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION
ONE CAPITOL HILL
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

March 2007

www.hrc.ri.gov

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Noreen Shawcross, Executive Director

State of Rhode Island



Housing Resources Commission

March 2007

To: The Honorable Donald Carcieri, Governor of Rhode Island
The Honorable Joseph A. Montalbano, President of the Senate
The Honorable William J. Murphy, Speaker of the House
Members of the General Assembly

The Housing Resources Commission is pleased to submit its 2007 Annual Report as required by RIGL 42-128-16. This report summarizes the Commission's efforts to provide housing opportunities for all Rhode Islanders. The Commission is grateful for your continuing strong support for affordable housing as demonstrated by the housing bond referendum that was approved by voters in all 39 cities and towns. Your leadership and confidence are critical to our work as we formulate housing priorities and develop policies and programs to meet our critical housing needs.

Since its inception in 1999, the Housing Resources Commission has been required to meet challenges posed by escalating homelessness, changes in legislation related to lead hazard mitigation and production, and reorganization due to the creation of the Office of Housing and Community Development. This has been another year of significant progress for the Housing Resources Commission including:

- Replacement of the state's largest homeless shelter for men and women;
- Assuming responsibility for financial management that includes disbursement of over \$8 million dollars of Community Development Block Grant Program and federal and state homeless funds;
- Consolidation of homeless shelter and service funds that had been awarded through three different state agencies to improve system coordination and efficiency;
- Completion of the relocation of the Hurricane Katrina evacuees into permanent homes.

Along with these demands, the Commission continues to address Rhode Island's housing needs as mandated by the Comprehensive Housing Production and Rehabilitation Act of 2004. The "Rhode Island Five Year Strategic Housing Plan: 2006-2010, Five Thousand in Five Years" received final approval in June 2006. Implementation of this plan, along with tracking and reporting on local housing plans indicates progress toward our goal of housing opportunity for all Rhode Islanders.

One of the Commission's most important accomplishments has been continued management of the state's Neighborhood Opportunities Program. This has created well over 1,000 permanent homes for very low income and disabled Rhode Islanders as well as home ownership and mixed use development that has revitalized Rhode Island cities and towns. The mark of this program can be seen in attractive and well-maintained homes throughout the state.

Another highlight of our work is the improvement in children's lives through the implementation of the Lead Hazard Mitigation Act. As more and more homes become healthy, we will have a larger, safer housing stock for families. The Commission's primary prevention effort through education of landlords and tenants is even more crucially important this coming year due to an anticipated elimination of funding for lead hazard abatement work.

Our ongoing challenges remain coordinating a system of shelter and services for those who are homeless, and increasing the supply of housing for vulnerable populations including families involved with the Department of Children, Youth and Families, youth aging out of foster care, the reentry population and those with behavioral health issues. Federal cuts in homeless programs, the state's continuing shortage of available affordable units, and the gap between income and housing costs are severely straining already scarce resources for a growing population of people in need. One of our most important strategies to deal with this will be to work with state agencies on coordinated services.

Our Supportive Housing Pilot Program provides direction for this work. In partnership with the United Way of Rhode Island, we are providing intensive services in housing to people who have been homeless for years. An evaluation will demonstrate that for what we are spending on homelessness, we can have people in housing.

In order to accomplish its work, the Commission established five offices charged with the responsibility of addressing housing issues identified in each office work plan: the Office of Policy and Planning; the Office of Program Performance and Evaluation; the Office of Community Development and Technical Assistance; the Office of Homeownership; and, the Office of Homelessness and Emergency Assistance. The Commission is proud to report to you on the accomplishments of these offices in this Annual Report for the calendar year 2006.

The success of the Commission is due to the active involvement of our Commissioners who bring their diverse skills and knowledge both to the quarterly Commission meetings and to the monthly meetings of its Offices. Through their commitment and expertise, we will continue to identify issues and promote solutions related to housing, homelessness, and lead paint poisoning.

Thank you so very much for your support of our efforts and please be assured of our commitment to fulfill the challenging tasks ahead. If you have any questions about this report, please do not hesitate to contact this office at 222-5766. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Baxter, Chair

Noreen Shawcross, Executive Director

Highlights of Accomplishments 2006

- The State Planning Council approved the “The “Rhode Island Five Year Strategic Housing Plan: 2006-2010, Five Thousand in Five Years” that was developed by the HRC. Its strategies, action plan, and guidelines will transform housing development in Rhode Island.
- The HRC completed the first annual “Report on Implementation” of local affordable housing plans for the period July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006.
- Relocation of over 200 people who were evacuees of Hurricane Katrina was completed and included supervision of unit turnover, financial payments and ongoing crisis intervention.
- The HRC assumed responsibility for over \$3 million dollars in payments to non-profit providers.
- Following passage of the Building Homes Rhode Island Bond in every city and town, the HRC immediately facilitated the process of developing and approving regulations and assumed administrative responsibility for the \$50 million dollar, four year program.
- In Fiscal Year 2006, the Lead Hazard Reduction Program provided \$1.7 million dollars to make 170 units lead safe throughout the state.
- Since the establishment of the Lead Hazard Mitigation Act, the HRC created training, education and public awareness materials to educate landlords and their tenants on the lead hazard mitigation requirements. Over 22,500 property owners have been trained and over 8,448 rental units received Certificates of Conformance.
- Over 6,000 individuals have been assisted through the HRC’s 222-LEAD hotline.
- The State of Rhode Island committed \$7.5 million in funding through the HRC’s Neighborhood Opportunities Program (NOP). In 2006 this created over 300 units of affordable housing throughout the state. Since its inception in 2001, the program has leveraged \$350 million dollars and created 1,044 homes.
- Bank of America continued its partnership with the HRC by awarding \$100,000 to Community Development Corporations who were funded through the Neighborhood Opportunity Program.
- Through the Supportive Service Pilot Program, we moved 50 people who have been homeless for years into housing and provided intensive case management to assist residents to retain that housing. An

- The HRC replaced the state's largest shelter for adult men and women with smaller community based facilities with a high level of case management to move people out of homelessness more quickly.
- Through a Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Rhode Island, Department of Human Services, the HRC has consolidated the state's shelter funding into a single application and distribution process. This will lead to a more efficient, effective and accountable system.
- The HRC is implementing a detailed action plan to end homelessness that will focus on leadership, housing, services, prevention and data collection. This was released in December 2006 at the first annual "Project Homeless Connect" that provided one-stop information, referral and direct services to over 300 homeless persons.
- Through a Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Rhode Island, Department of Health, the HRC is partnering on a Health Housing Collaborative for research and policy change.
- Staff of the Office of Homeownership provided direct foreclosure prevention advocacy to 86 families facing foreclosure or being evicted due to foreclosure. Since 2000, the Office has assisted 628 families across Rhode Island. Many households have averted foreclosure due to this intervention.
- The HRC continues to provide support for the Homeownership Connection at the Housing Network of Rhode Island. The program served 2,200 potential homeowners in 2006.

NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM

JANUARY 2007: SEVEN YEARS OF GROWTH IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Total funding committed:	\$35,820,622 million-July 2001 – Jan. 2007
Total units:	1,044 housing units
Leveraged:	\$349,016,043 million

Since its inception in 2001, the Neighborhood Opportunities Program has funded the construction or rehabilitation of 1,044 housing units from its three program funds. This includes the production of family housing, permanent supportive housing, and homeownership opportunities. These housing units are located throughout the state at sites that have produced 2,204 affordable housing units.

The Family Housing Fund produces housing that is affordable to families. Rent is set at 30% of income at minimum wage and the NOP funds pay for construction and for an operating reserve to fill the gap between the affordable rent and the total operating cost of the unit. The Family Housing fund has committed \$12.7 million to the production of 302 units.

The Permanent Supportive Housing Fund produces supportive housing units for disabled families and individuals who are homeless or in danger of homelessness. The rent is set at 30% of SSI income. This fund has committed \$22.8 million to the development of 567 units. These supportive housing units are key to Rhode Island's goal of a creating 150 new units through a Permanent Supportive Housing Pilot Program with services provided through the Supportive Service Program funded by the Housing Resources Commission and the United Way of Rhode Island.

The Building Better Communities Funds supports the development of homeownership opportunities and mixed housing and commercial development to help revitalize communities. This fund has committed \$13 million to the development of 477 housing units. Funding is allocated to construction only and leveraged \$154.6 million in total construction. Homeownership and commercial development were not funded in Fiscal 2007 as the General Assembly wanted to maximize resources for rental housing.

RHODE ISLAND HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT: JANUARY 1, 2006 TO DECEMBER 31, 2006

MISSION

The mission of the Housing Resources Commission is to provide housing opportunities for all Rhode Islanders, to maintain the quality of housing in Rhode Island, and to coordinate and make effective the housing opportunities of the agencies and subdivisions of the state.

LEGAL AUTHORITY & GOVERNANCE

The Rhode Island Housing Resources Act of 1998 established the Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission as the planning and policy, standards, and programs division of the Rhode Island Housing Resources Agency. A board of 27 Commissioners governs the Housing Resources Commission. These Commissioners represent a cross section of people working on housing issues. The Commission has established five offices with membership that includes Commissioners and members of the community. Through the efforts of the Offices, the Commission continues to examine housing issues and policies and make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor.

PURPOSE OF THE COMMISSION

- To develop and promulgate state policies and plans for housing and performance measures for housing programs established pursuant to state law.
- To coordinate activities among state agencies and political subdivisions pertaining to housing.
- To provide opportunities for safe, healthy, and affordable housing in Rhode Island, and to promote strong neighborhoods and communities.
- To encourage public-private partnerships that fosters the development, maintenance, and improvement of housing and housing conditions, especially for low- and moderate-income people.
- To foster and support nonprofit organizations, including community development corporations and their associations and intermediaries that are engaged in providing housing and housing-related services.
- To encourage and support partnerships between institutions of higher education and neighborhoods in order to develop and retain quality, healthy housing, and sustainable communities

POWERS AND DUTIES

Policy, planning, and coordination of state housing functions

- To prepare and implement the state's strategic plan for housing.*
- To prepare, adopt, and issue the state's housing policy.
- To conduct research on housing issues in the State and to provide reports.
- To advise the Governor and General Assembly on housing issues, and to coordinate housing activities among: government agencies; agencies created by state law; agencies that provide housing services under government programs.

Establish, implement, and monitor state performance measures and guidelines for housing programs:

- To promulgate performance measures and guidelines for housing programs conducted under state law.
- 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.

Administer programs pertaining to housing resources assigned by state law including, but not limited to:

- Distribution of the Neighborhood Opportunities Program funding.
- Awarding of contracts for the Supportive Services Program.
- Coordination and funding of shelter and services for the homeless.
- Community development.
- Outreach, education and technical assistance service.
- Assistance, including financial support, to nonprofit organizations and community development corporations.
- Administer lead hazard mitigation through the powers, duties and responsibilities as established by RIGL 42-128, the state's Lead Hazard Mitigation Act of 2004.**
- Management of a lead hazard abatement program in cooperation with the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation.

**In 2002, the General Assembly assigned the Housing Resources Commission the power, duties and responsibilities to serve as the lead state agency for lead hazard mitigation, planning, education, technical assistance, and coordination of state projects and state financial assistance to property owners for lead hazard mitigation.*

***In 2004, the General Assembly assigned the Housing Resources Commission responsibility, in conjunction with the Statewide Planning Program, to develop a State Housing Strategy by July 1, 2006.*

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Chairperson – appointed by the Governor

Ex officio – Directors of the Departments of: Administration; Business Regulation; Elderly Affairs; Health, Human Services; Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals; the chairperson of the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation; the Attorney General.

Organizational members – RI Bankers Association, RI Mortgage Bankers Association, RI Realtors Association, RI Association of Executive Directors for Public Housing, RI Coalition for the Homeless, and The Housing Network of Rhode Island.

Governor's appointments (with advice and consent of the Senate) representing – the homeless, community development corporations, lead poisoning issues, local planners, local building officials, fair housing interests, racial minorities, the RI Builders Association, insurers, a community development intermediary that provides financing and technical assistance to housing nonprofits, nonprofit developers, and senior housing.

HRC ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

Coordinating Committee - whose purpose is to plan and coordinate staffing, policy and program implementation that govern the Housing Resources Commission and defines its relationship with Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation. The Committee is comprised of the chairperson and the executive director of the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, and the chair of the Housing Resources Commission and the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Administration. The Coordinating Committee meets at least annually to review the relationship between Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation and the Housing Resources Commission and, if needed, make modification to the Memorandum of Agreement. This agreement defines the terms of program responsibility and implementation, staff services and the operational relationship between Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation and the Housing Resources Commission.

Executive Committee – serves as the body that deals with daily operations of the Commission, coordinates, recommends budget priorities, addresses programs, policy and legislative issues that may arise from the work of the five committees and emergency housing needs.

OFFICES WITHIN THE COMMISSION

- Office of Policy and Planning (Planning and Operations)
- Office of Program Performance and Evaluation (Healthy Housing)
- Office of Homelessness Services and Emergency Assistance (Homelessness)
- Office of Community Development and Technical Assistance
- Office of Homeownership

The Commission may establish by rule such other offices, operating entities, workgroups, advisory bodies, and committees as it may deem appropriate.

OFFICE OF PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION

Chair: Roberta Aaronson
Staff: Doris M. De Los Santos
Housing Resources Coordinator
(401) 222-4890

The Office of Program Performance and Evaluation (PPE) is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation, assessment, adjudication, research and reporting on State housing issues and programs.

LEAD HAZARD MITIGATION ACT

The Act established the Housing Resources Commission as the lead state agency for Lead Hazard Mitigation. The Act tasked the Housing Resources Commission with promulgating and establishing policies, programs and regulations to carry out the requirements of the Act. These responsibilities include developing a four (4) year Comprehensive Strategic Plan, creating Lead Hazard Mitigation Regulations, and establishing the Rhode Island Technical Assistance Center to help property owners comply with Rhode Island's lead laws and provide education to tenants about their rights and responsibilities under the Act. To continue accomplishing these tasks, the HRC has taken the following steps in this reporting year.

- Continued with the implementation of the Four Year Comprehensive Strategic Plan. The goal of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan is to reduce the incidence of childhood lead poisoning through better coordination of services and resources within state and local agencies.
- Filed amendments to the Lead Hazard Mitigation Rules and Regulations with input from other state and local agencies and stakeholders affected by the Law to address quality control issues.
- The HRC, in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH) has developed a protocol to respond to tenant complaints regarding units that are not in compliance with Lead Hazard Mitigation Regulations. Standardized forms have been developed to assist tenants in providing landlords with the required notification of lead hazards on their property. If the property owner does not respond to the complaint in a manner that satisfactory to the tenant, the tenant can issue a formal complaint to HRC. After reviewing the complaint, HRC will determine the appropriate response based on the conditions in the unit and tenancy of at risk residents.
- Continued to develop appropriate training and education materials to educate landlords and their tenants on the lead hazard mitigation requirements. Fact sheets to assist property owners to bring their unit into compliance with the Law as well as to educate tenants on their rights and responsibilities were updated to reflect the changes to the Act. The fact sheets are now available in the following languages: English, Spanish, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Laotian and Hmong.
- The HRC has developed and improved a web-based data system to track all compliance certificates issued and allow the public to research compliance units.

- The Technical Assistance Center staff continued to assist property owners to assess their units and to suggest corrective measures in order to bring their units into compliance with lead hazard mitigation requirements and to function as a clearinghouse of information for all housing/lead related issues in the state.
- As of the December 2006, 30 individuals and/or agencies throughout the state have been certified to offer the required 3-hour Lead Hazard Awareness Seminar. The Seminar ran on Cable and Public Access in March and June 2006. DVD's are available for sale and online classes continue to be offered. In-person classes are available in the following languages: English, Spanish, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Laotian and Hmong.
- By the close of 2006, over 22,500 property owners had taken the three-hour Lead Hazard Awareness Seminar. This number is well over the goal of training 9,900 property owners between 2004-2007 as outlined in the Comprehensive Strategic Plan. The training teaches property owners about the health affects of lead, how to comply with the Law, and, most importantly, use of lead safe work practices in the ongoing maintenance of their rental properties.
- Continued to raise awareness among constituents affected by the Law. Since the Law passed in 2002, HRC, DOH, and the Governor's Office sponsored public service announcements to educate the public on the dangers of lead and the importance of lead hazard control and mitigation practices. The message is "Good lead safe maintenance practices protect landlords and their investment and tenants." In 2006, the public awareness campaigns ran in July and August and in English and Spanish TV spots.
- Licensed more than 380 inspectors through DOH to conduct mitigation inspection. Since November (2005), 3,115 rental units have achieved compliance.
- During 2006, 8,448 rental units received Certificates of Conformance, including 2003 that received presumptive compliance. Since November 1, 2005, 13,404 rental units have received Certificates of Conformance.
- Maintained a lead hotline to answer questions the public may have about the Law. As of December 2006, the HRC has assisted over 6,000 individuals.
- Provided funding to the State Lead Hazard Reduction Program.
- Helped owners to navigate through the Lead Hazard Reduction Programs and promoted and marketed the State Residential Lead Tax Credit

The Housing Resources Commission has worked tirelessly throughout 2006 to ensure that property owners and tenants are aware of their requirements under the law. The additional staff that the HRC has been able to hire through its HUD Lead Outreach Grant, have greatly aided the Commission, not only in assisting property owners and tenants, but also in ensuring quality technical assistance and customer service to Rhode Islanders. Efforts will continue in 2007 to ensure that both property owners and tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the law. However, the HUD Lead Outreach Grant, the only source of funding for the Lead Technical Assistance Center and its outreach and education activities, has not been funded by HUD. We continue to try to identify resources to continue implementing all mandates of the Lead Hazard Mitigation Act.

OFFICE OF HOMELESSNESS SERVICES & EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Co-Chairs: Susan Bodington and David McCreadie, Jr.
Staff: Darlene M. Price
Housing Resources Coordinator
(401) 222-4892

The Office of Homelessness has the responsibility to ensure that homeless persons and at-risk persons can obtain and retain housing (including necessary supportive services) through a continuum of emergency and transitional assistance ultimately leading to permanent housing. The Office will continue to coordinate its present activities that include:

- Promoting and participating in planning for the prevention of homelessness and the development of services to homeless persons.
- Identifying and developing strategies for resolving barriers in state agency service delivery systems that inhibit the provision and coordination of appropriate services to homeless persons and persons in danger of being homeless.
- Assisting in obtaining and increasing funding from all appropriate sources to prevent homelessness or assist in alleviating homelessness.
- Serving as a clearinghouse for information regarding funding and services available to assist homeless persons and persons in danger of being homeless.

The Office is committed to the initiative to end homelessness through the following accomplishments in 2006.

- Governor Carcieri and Commission Chair Susan Baxter, launched the “**Rhode Island Action Plan to End Homelessness**” in December 2006, and significant work is underway. This initiative is focused on policies that will eliminate discharging clients back into homeless situations; improving state agency coordination; improving access to SSI with a consideration given to presumptive eligibility; evaluation of fiscal effectiveness of housing rather than temporary shelter; and housing production and service strategies toward the goal of ending homelessness in Rhode Island. This is the second year of the **Action Plan to End Homelessness** in Rhode Island, with the Office of Homelessness organizing government and non-profit service providers to concentrate on reducing the number of homeless.
- The **Governor’s Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)** will oversee the implementation of the Plan through identification of policy, practice, and funding actions that can be taken at the state level to prevent and end homelessness through support, involvement, and coordination among multiple state agencies and the private sector.
- The Office will carry out the planning, review, and ranking for the state Continuum of Care for federal McKinney Homeless Assistance Funds. The Office of Homelessness has worked during the year with its subcommittee to prepare policies and procedures for the upcoming sponsor site visits to evaluate and rank the projects that are up for funding renewal.

- The Office has supported the collection of data through the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and is providing monthly reports on shelter usage to the Office membership. The system will allow services to be coordinated more efficiently, facilitate tracking of client outcomes, and help to inform decisions of policy makers and advocates and to identify gaps in services. The system will also provide data for the “RI Food and Shelter Board Annual Report.”
- The Supportive Service Pilot Program, in partnership with the United Way of Rhode Island, has worked with over 60 persons who have been homeless an average of 7 years, moving them into housing and connecting them with services. An evaluation, funded by the United Way, will study the cost of homelessness and the benefits of supportive housing.
- The HRC contracts with non-profit, community-based providers to pay for shelters and services and, as funds permit, rental assistance. On July 1, 2006, the HRC and the Department of Human Services (DHS) agreed to transfer a portion of the Title XX Social Services Block Grant funds to create the Consolidated Homeless Fund. A new, single application process was established and funded more than 30 agencies, distributing nearly three million dollars. The new Fund merged the resources of the HRC homeless program budget, the federal Emergency Shelter Grant and the Title XX funds. Applications are accepted at the beginning of each fiscal year. Programs are eligible for continued funding and must demonstrate that funds will be used to place clients in permanent housing and offer case management services.
- The Office provided state matching funds (30% of the 20% HUD match) for programs that provide services to the homeless related to substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, and AIDS/HIV.
- The Office organized Rhode Island Project Homeless Connect, an event designed to facilitate communication between providers and effectively coordinate services offered to homeless singles and families. More than 30 homeless services providers, representing federal, state, and not for profit assistance programs attended this daylong event to meet others and exchange ideas, and provide services to over 300 homeless people who attended that day. The event featured national and local speakers including Governor Carcieri as well as the Philip Mangano, Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Event participants included 48 volunteers who directed people to resources for housing, legal assistance, income and food benefits, veteran’s affairs and health care and transportation. The United Way of Rhode Island provided food and drinks, advertising, transportation, entertainment and free tee shirts. The event was held at no charge in the hall of the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in Downtown Providence.
- The Office continued the Family Emergency Apartment Program to offer short-term housing with supportive services to homeless families with children in a typical community environment and structure. A Request for Proposals went out in April to the participating apartment providers to request services for case management and to procure leases to rent suitable housing for homeless families in emergencies. The Office of Homelessness funded 14 units strategically located throughout the state to serve families in crisis. Providers will offer safe and habitable rental, case management services, furnishings and property management.

- The HRC provided operating funds to Crossroads for a 48 bed family shelter at a new site in Providence. The facility has five permanent supportive housing units. The HRC approved additional funding for this family shelter for construction costs.
- The HRC funds Harrington Hall, the state's largest shelter for single men, which accommodates about 80 individuals and remains open throughout the year. The Urban League operates the shelter.
- The faith community offered space for overflow shelter in the winter of 2005/2006 with partial funding from the HRC.
- The Office has intervened related to shelter conditions in response to community concerns and at the request of the House Finance Committee. Staff has overseen on improvements at Welcome Arnold and Harrington Hall shelters.
- The Office developed and implemented the plan to close Welcome Arnold Shelter in March of 2007. The shelter was replaced with smaller community based shelters.

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Co-Chairs: Jeanne Cola and Barbara Fields
Staff: Raymond Neirinckx
Housing Resources Coordinator
(401) 222-4893

The Office of Community Development and Technical Assistance encourages collaborations to address statewide community development activities including: access to capital, mobile home parks, the impact of off-campus housing and green building/energy efficiency in housing. This Office will focus on result driven strategic solutions in community economic development by encouraging creative flexible tools and resources. In the current year, this Office has managed the Neighborhood Opportunities Program, assuming responsibility not only for the Building Better Communities Program, but also the Supportive Housing and Family Housing Programs. A NOP subcommittee has met regularly to disburse funds, revise regulations, and create policies and procedures.

- **Neighborhood Opportunities Program:** Provided \$7.5 million in funding for family rental, permanent supportive housing and homeownership opportunities across the state. (There is no funding for homeownership in FY 2007 as the General Assembly wanted to maximize resources for rental housing.)
- **Mobile Home Parks:** The Office convened a Mobile Home Working Group to foster a partnership of key stakeholders to identify resources and to develop policies to address the growing risk to the State's 46 mobile home parks of potential sales as well as preservation strategies for such parks in Rhode Island as an affordable housing option. Continued our policy work with the Meredith Institute-Advancing Sectoral Strategies in Manufactured Housing for a national and state approach to assisting in resident conversion of mobile home parks. Designated in 2006, as the designated agency to assist resident-ownership conversion through the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund's Management Guide agreement.
- **Healthy Housing:** The Office addressed healthy housing issues through participation on the Department of Health's Asthma Control Coalition of Rhode Island and the newly formed Asthma-Friendly Housing Group, which is working on a pilot healthy housing initiative with RI Hospital, Newport Housing Authority and public housing residents. Continued our participation in the two-year, Agency for Health Care Research & Quality (AHRQ) two-year Learning Institute on Decreasing Disparities in Pediatric Asthma. Also, through participation on the Policy Advisory Council for the State Energy Office, the Office continued to address the growing nexus of energy costs and its relationship to housing.
- **Community Reinvestment Activities:** Staff continued tracking the community development activities and lending performance of financial institutions, banks and credit unions under the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA), seeking to develop partnerships, collaborations and research regarding opportunities for community investments in the State. Application reviews were conducted for CRA of ten (10) financial institutions. Staff reviewed applications for fourteen (14) businesses seeking to expand check-cashing

services in the State, and continued our participation in the annual Financial Innovations Roundtable hosted by the School of Community of Economic Development at Southern New Hampshire University.

- **University Partnerships:** The Office continues to monitor the work of area colleges and universities regarding their on-campus and off-campus housing impact. Again participated in the University of Rhode Island's Commuter Orientation Program concerning landlord-tenant relations. Participated in three regional workshops concerning "Leveraging Resources for University/Community Partnerships" through the New England Resource Center for Higher Education.
- **Community Economic Development:** The Office continued to work with the Annie E. Casey's Providence Making Connections work around the role of financial services and asset building strategies in designated low-income communities. Staff worked with the United Way, The Urban Revitalization Fund (TURF), and ACCION/USA-New England Regional Office regarding the expansion of community economic development opportunities in the state.
- **Abandoned Properties:** Staff continued its work with the Providence Plan on the Urban Land Reform project and website (<http://maps.provplan.org/ulr/>) to address policy reform and strategic planning for tracking and action around vacant and abandoned properties in Providence.
- **Housing & Conservation Trust Fund Task Force:** Staff participated in this task force that in April 2006 released the report: "The Rhode Island Housing & Conservation Trust Fund: A Sound Investment for Rhode Island's Future" to the Governor and the General Assembly (on line: <http://www.growsmartri.com/pdfs/PDF%20of%20full%20report.pdf>). The report discusses the potential of the land trust mechanism for preserving long-term affordability of housing, and the viability and financing for a state housing conservation trust fund.

OFFICE OF HOMEOWNERSHIP

Co-Chairs: Angela Lovegrove and Monica Staaf
Staff: Raymond Neirinckx
Housing Resources Coordinator
(401) 222-4893

The purpose of the Office of Homeownership is to promote homeownership for low- and moderate-income households, especially those Rhode Islanders traditionally underserved. The Office is charged with: addressing a range of issues in the home selection and buying process; eliminating housing discriminatory practices such as predatory lending, home improvement loan abuses, insurance abuses, and access to credit; encouraging practices and policies to foster homeownership retention through foreclosure prevention and counseling. The Office works with various housing partners to encourage and create homeownership opportunities in Rhode Island.

- **Homeownership Connection:** The Office continued our partnership and support of the the Homeownership Connection. The Connection served over 2,200 Rhode Islanders in 2006.
- **Passage of the Home Loan Protection Act:** Staff participated in the release of the joint commission chaired by Senator Juan Pichardo and Representative John McCauley to study the issue of predatory mortgage lending practices in the state (<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/Documents/PredLending.pdf>), which resulted in passage of the RI Home Loan Protection Act. Currently, RI has joined over two dozen other states with specific laws to combat predatory lending.
- **Predatory Lending:** With RI Housing and the Homeownership Connection, the staff continued our participation in the “Don’t Borrow Trouble-Rhode Island” Campaign to educate and inform the public about responsible lending and abusive practices and to provide access to direct advocacy/counseling/legal assistance to at-risk homeowners. An Alternative Lending Product Working Group was formed to create a rescue mortgage product to assist at-risk homeowners with an alternative refinance mortgage.
- **Foreclosure Prevention:** The Office partnered with the Homeownership Connection to form a Foreclosure Prevention Committee. Staff provided direct foreclosure prevention advocacy to 86 families facing foreclosure or being evicted due to foreclosure. Since 2000, the Office has assisted 628 families across Rhode Island. The Office is working with RI Housing on the implementation of the “Madeline Walker Act of 2006” which reformed the practice of risk related to equity loss for households’ facing foreclosure because of real estate, water or sewer lien sales. Staff was a trainer for a “Training for Trainers” foreclosure prevention program in April. Attended the national Foreclosure Prevention Symposium in Washington, DC as well as the initial meeting of the New England Housing Sustainability Group looking at a regional partnership to reduce foreclosures.
- **Homeowners Insurance:** The Office has continued its’ policy work with regard to use of credit scoring and access to affordable homeowners insurance in low and moderate-income communities.

OFFICE OF POLICY AND PLANNING

Co Chairs: Dennis Langley and Peter Walsh
Staff: Simon Kue
Housing Commission Coordinator
222-4897

This Office has undergone major structural changes in order to respond to demands on the HRC due to legislative mandates of the Comprehensive Housing Productions and Rehabilitation Act of 2004 and the State of Rhode Island's new financial system (RIFANS). The Office has a dual focus, both tracking implementation of the Act and also making payments to providers and vendors through RIFANS. In 2006, the Office accomplished the following work in these two areas.

- The HRC completed "The Rhode Island Five Year Strategic Housing Plan: 2006-2010" with the approval of the document in January 2006. This followed a year of intensive work with ABT Associates, the consultants who had been selected to write the plan, and a large representative group from within the community. In June 2006, the plan was approved by the State Planning Council and became the state's official Guide Plan for housing. The plan includes the following guiding principals:

PRESERVE ASSETS

Preserve the character of Rhode Island's communities, open space and natural resources by promoting compact development in growth centers, towns and villages.

MINIMIZE COSTS

Address the escalating cost of housing by reducing regulatory barriers and increasing density, where appropriate, and maximum use of existing infrastructure.

PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Support the workforce by providing housing at all price points for workers. This includes developing new housing as well as preserving existing housing resources.

ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY

Encourage the development of economically and racially diverse and accessible communities to provide geographic opportunity to households at all income levels.

TARGET POPULATIONS

Focus the strategic plan and the state's resources **for the next five years** on safe, healthy, and affordable housing for families, small households, the homeless, and the disabled based on population projections.

- Completion of the first annual "Report on Implementation" related to the local affordable housing plans that had been mandated by the Housing Act. This report was provided, as required by law, to the Governor, the leadership of the General Assembly and the Chair of the Statewide Housing Appeals Board. While many of the strategies were in the early stage of development, and units were just beginning to come on line, proposals for future development indicate strong progress should these come to fruition. Comprehensive permits, a streamlined process with greater density in developments that include affordable housing, were tracked and reported on as part of this report.

- A Technical Assistance Committee has been meeting in order to provide communities with the tools to carry out their plans.
- Over 500 requisitions and invoices have paid out nearly \$2 million dollars to non-profit providers in the homeless system, the Lead Hazard Reduction Program and the Homeownership Connection. This has required learning an Oracle based financial system, constant tracking of accounts, and extensive trouble shooting during the initial stage of this transition.

HRC BUDGET

	FY 2006 Revised	FY 2007 Enacted	FY 2008 Target
Salary, Fringe, Operations	\$246,418	\$524,592	\$463,440
	3 HRC Staff	All OHCD Staff	All OHCD Staff

Housing Resources Commission Program Budget

Lead Program

Administrative Fee	\$292,560		
Lead Hazard Control	\$1,372,962		
Inspections	\$39,301		
Credit Reports	\$337		
Relocation Costs	\$11,841		
Lead Public Awareness Program	\$3,673		
Required Match	\$50,000		
FY 07 Reduction		(\$500,000)	
Total Lead	\$1,770,674	\$1,220,000	\$0

Technical Assistance Center	\$34,000	\$0	
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Homelessness

Emergency Apartments	\$305,208	\$299,880	\$250,000
Harrington Hall	\$302,000	\$206,000	\$200,000
Supportive Service Program (Pilot)	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Crossroads Family Shelter	\$425,000	\$425,000	\$400,000
HMIS Database	\$40,000	\$38,000	\$30,000
Match for HUD SHP Grants	\$208,615	\$190,000	\$160,000
Urban League Women's Shelter (Due to Welcome Arnold Closure)		\$120,000	\$140,000
Emergency Shelter Transition (Welcome Arnold Closure)		\$24,995	
Consolidated Homeless Fund (Used with Title XX Funds)		\$54,645	

Total Homelessness	\$1,580,823	\$1,658,520	\$1,480,000
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Homeownership Connection	\$50,000	\$47,500	\$40,000
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Strategic Plan Consultant	\$50,000		
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Total Lead	\$1,770,674	\$1,220,000	\$0
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Technical Assistance Center		\$34,000	\$0
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Total Homelessness	\$1,580,823	\$1,658,520	\$1,480,000
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Homeownership Connection	\$50,000	\$47,500	\$40,000
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Total HRC Program Budget	\$3,401,497	\$2,960,020	\$1,520,000
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Legal Fees-Lead Act Suit	\$3,000		
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Crossroads Family Shelter Construction	\$100,000		
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Faith Based Shelter	\$75,000		
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Appendix: Lead Program Statistics

LEAD HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM

The State Lead Hazard Reduction Program is the state funded deferred loan program targeting homeowners and rental property owners to make units lead-safe for children under the ages of six. In March of 1999, the HRC adopted Rules and Regulations for the State Lead Hazard Reduction Program. The Commission continues to evaluate regulations and procedures to improve the delivery of services and effective use of our resources.

The Commission contracted with Rhode Island Housing to implement and administer the program. This program makes funds available to property owners whose homes have lead paint and are identified as health risks for occupancy. Funds are made available to homeowners and rental property owners to reduce the risk of lead poisoning for children under the age of six, children with elevated blood level (EBL) and those units cited by the Department of Health. Also targeted are home-based daycare units and low-income children living in Section 8 subsidized units. Projects sponsored by non-profit organizations also receive priority.

In addition to direct support, this program provides a one-time \$2,000 loan reduction to owners who opted to take the education incentive. This helps owners lower their loan balance and ensures that the property will be maintained using lead safe work practices.

In 2006, \$2 million were committed to make 277 units lead safe. Since 1999, the State Lead Hazard Reduction Program has committed over \$12.4 million representing 379 loans toward making 1,319 units lead-safe. Seventy percent (55%) of the program's loans were made to core urban cities such as Providence, Pawtucket, Newport, Woonsocket and Central Falls where the incidence of lead poisoning is highest. The average median income of the borrowers is \$34,000.

Overall, the State Lead Hazard Reduction Program is making a significant impact on improving the condition of residential property throughout the state of Rhode Island. In addition, the program is helping to increase public awareness of the hazards of lead-based paint and how to eliminate it.

STATUS OF LEAD HAZARD PREVENTION

RESOURCES COMMITTED

Rhode Island has some of the oldest housing in the country. Of the 439,837 houses and apartments, 80% were built before 1978, when lead paint was banned. Because of the age of Rhode Island housing stock, there are many high-risk units, which not only contain significant levels of lead, but are also in deteriorated condition in need of repair. Of the 29 state census tracts with the greatest concentration of old housing (75% of the units date from before 1950), 25 tracts are located in low-income neighborhoods.

Rhode Island spent approximately \$45 million dollars (state and federal) dollars since 1993 toward making 3,100 units lead-safe. In addition, other measures have been taken to raise awareness and reduce the incidence of lead poisoning, including public awareness and education campaigns, legislative changes, and strengthened enforcement and public policies. The Lead Hazard Mitigation Act holds particular promise because of the shift in focus not only to lead hazard reduction but also to lead safe maintenance of pre-1978 units and primary prevention. A key component of the Lead Hazard Mitigation Act is lead education. The Act requires landlords to attend a 3 hour lead awareness seminar that will teach landlords about the health effects of lead and how to properly maintain their pre-1978 rental units using lead safe work practices.

INCIDENCE OF LEAD POISONING

Studies have shown that there is a correlation between older housing stock and the high rate of lead paint poisoning among children. Because Rhode Island has one of the oldest housing stocks in the nation, it is no surprise that the incidence rate is higher than the national average. Although the incidence rate of childhood lead poisoning continues to decrease, the rates among minority children are 3 times higher compared to white children. A major factor beside social and economic is that most minority children predominantly reside in Core Urban Cities where the housing stock is much older.

The latest annual report released by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT Fact Book 2006, states that 7% of children entering kindergarten in the fall of 2006 are lead poisoned. The highest prevalence of lead poisoning is found in the core urban cities of Newport (13.6%), Providence (13.2%), Central Falls (13%), Pawtucket (8.5%), and Woonsocket (8.2%). However, lead poisoning is not limited to the urban core. Cities and towns such as Warren (10.1%), Hopkinton, Jamestown and New Shoreham (9.1% each), Westerly and Charlestown (8.6% each), Burrillville (8.1%), and Bristol (7.8%) have tested significantly high for lead poisoning. The lowest prevalence rates for kindergarten-aged children were in Smithfield (1.3%), Coventry (2.2%), Cumberland and Warwick (2.4% each). When comparing core cities to the rest of the state, they have 60% of all elevated lead levels above 10 ug/dl for children entering kindergarten in the fall of 2006. It is important to understand childhood lead poisoning touches every community regardless of race, place of residence or socio-economic status.

STATUS OF LEAD HAZARD REDUCTION LOANS BY CENSUS TRACK

City/Town	Census Tract	Total Units	Total Dollars Committed:
Bristol	308	47	580,205.00
Burrillville	129, 130.20	12	230,214.00
Central Falls	108, 109,110, 111,	51	689,114.00
Coventry	206.01, 206.02, 206.03	10	142,704.00
Cranston	134, 135, 136, 137.01, 138, 140, 141, 142, 145	34	478,923.00
Cumberland	112, 113, 113.01	98	637,690.00
East Greenwich	209.01	6	51,405.00
East Providence	102, 106	3	58,788.00
Glocester	131.01	3	33,325.00
Johnston	123, 124.01, 125	4	67,379.00
Lincoln	115, 116, 117.01, 117.02	8	82,826.00
Middletown	404	1	14,000.00
Narragansett	515	1	10,867.00
Newport	405, 406, 408, 409	19	139,227.00
North Kingstown	501.03,503, 512.00	130	399,985.00
North Providence	118, 119, 120, 121.02	8	89,821.00
North Scituate	132	1	14,578.00
North Smithfield	128.98	2	21,559.00
Pawtucket	150, 151, 152, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163,164, 165, 166, 167.98, 168, 171	72	883,669.00
Portsmouth	401.01, 401.02	2	38,810.00
Providence	001, 002, 003, 004, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 011, 013, 014, 015, 016, 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 025, 026, 027, 028, 029, 031, 032, 034	568	6,477,682.00
Warren	305	4	49,753.00
Warwick	206,210, 211, 214.01, 214.02, 215.02, 217, 220, 223,	38	361,486.00
West Warwick	201.02, 202, 203	13	165,789.00
Westerly	508.01, 509	11	160,270.00
Woonsocket	176, 177, 184, 185, 186	173	529,663.00
		1319	12,409,732