

# STATE OF RHODE ISLAND



HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION  
ONE CAPITOL HILL  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

March 2010

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Administration  
OFFICE OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
HOUSING RESOURCES COMMISSION  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908

March 29, 2010

To: The Honorable Donald Carcieri, Governor of Rhode Island  
The Honorable M. Teresa Paiva-Weed, President of the Senate  
The Honorable Gordon Fox, Speaker of the House  
Members of the General Assembly

From: Susan Baxter, Chair  
Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission

Noreen Shawcross, Chief  
Office of Housing and Community Development  
Executive Director, Housing Resources Commission

RE: **Annual Report**

Please find enclosed Annual Report of the Housing Resources Commission (HRC) for calendar year 2009. We wish to express our gratitude for the resources afforded to the Commission by Governor Donald Carcieri, Senate President Teresa Paiva-Weed, Speaker of the House Gordon Fox and the leadership and members of the House and Senate.

We also want to acknowledge the Commissioners who dedicate their time and expertise to improving housing opportunity and quality in the State of Rhode Island. Through their efforts, we will continue to identify issues and promote solutions related to housing, homelessness, and lead paint poisoning.

If you have any questions about this report, please do not hesitate to contact this office at 222-5766. Thank you.

## **Introduction**

Susan Baxter, Chair, and the members of the Housing Resources Commission respectfully submit this Annual Report in compliance with Section 42-128-16 of the Rhode Island General Laws. The Act requires the Commission “to 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 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.”

## **The Office of Housing and Community Development and Housing Resources Commission: Structure**

In July 2005, a significant change occurred in the structure and administration of the Housing Resources Commission. Through an organizational restructuring, Governor Donald Carcieri established the Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) which consolidated the Commission’s work with that of the state Community Development Block Grant and Emergency Shelter Grant Programs. The programs are located in the Division of Planning within the Department of Administration.

The Chief of the Office of Housing and Community Development also serves as the Executive Director of the Housing Resources Commission. Within the Commission and the Community Development program, eight other staff members carry out a number of programs. All work in a coordinated team approach sharing skills, resources and ideas.

Due to the federal Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008 (HERA) as well as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), the work of the Office of Housing and Community Development and the Housing Resources Commission has greatly expanded. Funding provided to the community by the OHCD has more than doubled. Therefore, this report reflects the overall work of the OHCD as well as the activities of the Commission.

This report, as well as the attached chart of Lead Reduction Loans by Census Tract, is for the calendar year ending December 30, 2009. The following report describes Housing Resources Commission accomplishments in 2009 and the work of the Community Development Program related to housing issues.

## **The Housing Resources Commission**

The Commission completed its first 11 years of work in February 2010. During that time, it has greatly expanded its activities from those envisioned in 1999. Among the many notable achievement have been:

- A significant increase in housing production through the Neighborhood Opportunities Program and the Building Homes Rhode Island bond;

- A reduction in homelessness through ongoing systems change in terms of consolidation of funding for homeless programs, an emphasis on permanent housing rather than shelter, and a new focus on prevention and rapid re-housing;
- Implementation of a state strategic housing plan and tracking of local housing plans; and;
- A significant decrease in incidence of childhood lead poisoning through lead hazard mitigation.

The Commission has been provided with funding for programs and operations through the State of Rhode Island since FY 1999. With support from the Governor and the General Assembly, the Commission has contributed to the economic, social, and physical well-being of the people of Rhode Island. It continues its mission to provide housing opportunities for all Rhode Islanders, to maintain the quality of housing in Rhode Island, and to coordinate housing functions within the agencies and subdivisions of the state.

In the past year, the Commission has worked closely with state agencies including but not limited to the following:

- The Department of Corrections on the problem of homeless registered sexual offenders and identification of housing resources for this population;
- The Departments of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals on: the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) initiative; the federal Access to Recovery (ATR) and Programs in Assistance to Transition from Homelessness (PATH) grants; providing resources to homeless people staying in tent cities and in shelters; and in the ongoing work of creating permanent housing;
- The Department of Transportation in the closure of tent cities;
- The Department of Human Services serving on the Housing Workgroup of the Global Waiver Task Force, continuing a Memorandum of Agreement to manage the department's shelter funding, and providing the department with maintenance of effort funding;
- Bureau of Child Support on its fatherhood initiative;
- The Office of Energy Resources to address residential energy efficiency;
- The Department of Labor and Training on the Office of Homelessness subcommittee on Employment and Income.

### **Housing Resources Commission: Annual Report 2009**

The 2009 year continued to focus on problems and opportunities related to housing that have developed due to the economic downturn and the foreclosure crisis. Households struggling with job loss, instability, and/or salary and benefit cuts found their problems compounded by lack of affordable homes. An increase in the number of home foreclosures has threatened significant progress that has been made in the quality of the state's housing stock. The HRC staff members have responded to over 3,000 calls and in-person contacts during 2009, most from people who are experiencing a severe housing crisis.

While we have some resources to address the growing problems, we can only assist a limited percentage of those who need housing assistance. The following programs have been successful in providing housing or preventing homelessness:

- The Building Homes Rhode Island bond;
- The Neighborhood Opportunities Program;
- The federal Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, Neighborhood Stabilization Program (in partnership with Rhode Island Housing);
- Housing First Rhode Island;
- The Consolidated Homeless Fund (with funding through State of RI, Dept. of Human Services and the federal Emergency Shelter Grant Program);
- The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program;
- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) CDBG-R;
- The ARRA Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (in partnership with the cities of Pawtucket, Providence and Woonsocket).

In order to address the state's housing challenges and plan for the use of resources, our staff of four Housing Commission Coordinators and our Executive Director, along with four members of the Community Development team, staffed the Offices of:

- Community Development and Technical Assistance;
- Healthy Housing;
- Homelessness;
- Homeownership, and;
- Planning and Operations.

The Commission, currently with 26 appointed and ex-officio members, held meetings in January, March, May, September and December of 2009. Each of the meetings of the full Commission exceeded the quorum required. Accomplishments of the Offices of the Commission in 2009 are detailed below.

### **Office of Community Development and Technical Assistance**

**Jeanne Cola: Chair**

**Raymond Neirinckx: Housing Commission Coordinator**

- The Building Homes Rhode Island Bond and Neighborhood Opportunities Program Distribution Committee implemented Year 3 of the bond program funding a total of 549 homes with \$30,000,000 in funds, leveraging over \$9 dollars of federal and private funding for each state dollar invested.
- In year 3, BHRI awards have been made to developers of 186 rental homes, including 14 for homeless veterans, and 41 homeownership opportunities. BHRI funds were combined with funds from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds so that vacant, blighted properties could be quickly rehabilitated and put back into use.
- Staff worked with the United Way and their Financial Stability Program is awarding funding to 9 agencies engaged in financial literacy and asset building.
- Staff was involved in key housing initiatives including: the Advisory Council for the Partnership for Community Development (Roger Williams University & the

Housing Network of RI ) for continuing education of community economic development professionals; the Resident Ownership Communities (ROC USA) to offer technical assistance for residents to purchase their mobile home parks; the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections-Family Economic Success initiative for community engagement in Providence; and the Citizens Bank and NBC10 Champions in Action program.

**Office of Health Housing (OHH)**

**Brenda Clement: Chair**

**Doris De Los Santos: Housing Commission Coordinator**

- Continued promoting a healthy housing agenda by working with different stakeholders and initiatives.
- Participated in regional efforts sponsored by the Asthma regional Council of New England to address healthy homes using a holistic, coordinated approach to promote healthier housing across New England. The project includes goals such as conducting a regional needs assessment, the development and delivery of healthy homes training, and the creation of specialized working sub-groups.
- Continued collaborating with the Healthy Housing Collaborative initiative.
- Began implementation of the new filing requirements for lead inspectors.
- Continues to provide technical assistance to Lead Inspectors.
- Continues to respond to issues related to quality control for all programmatic areas of the office (inspection protocol, certified trainers).
- Assessed the online inspector application and developed a set of recommendations for improving the navigation and the collection of information. The recommendations are being analyzed by [www.RI.gov](http://www.RI.gov).
- Continues to receive and process Presumptive Compliance and Affidavit of Visual Inspection applications.
- In 2009, the Lead Hazard Mitigation Program issued 5,226 Certificates of Conformance and 900 Presumptive Compliance certifications. A total of 23, 911 Certificates of Compliance certificates and 4,900 Presumptive Compliance certificates have been issued since 2005.
- 855 property owners and realtors have taken the three-hour Lead Hazard Awareness Seminar in 2009. Through this course, 25,855 property owners and realtors have been trained in lead mitigation protocols and lead safe work practices through since 2005.
- Continues to distribute the booklets/fact sheets on the Lead Hazard Mitigation Act and lead information to landlords and tenants.
- Conducted our annual campaign to outreach hardware stores in the state to provide "Warning Signs" to be posted to alert consumers on the importance of lead safe work practices when doing home repairs.
- In conjunction with the Department of Health (DOH), continued the operation of the Lead Hotline 222 – LEAD (5323).
- Collaborated with the DOH in the planning and development of RI Healthy Housing Conference entitled "Stimulating Healthy Housing".

- Continued collaboration with the Attorney general’s Office in the implementation of the programs created with the DUPONT/Healthy Kids Collaborative funds.
- Assisted the Healthy Kids Collaborative sub-grantees in targeted media events to increase the participants in their programs.
- Collaborated with the Providence Human Relations Commission in the creation of a “Landlord/Tenant Resources Guide. The Guide is still in the process of being developed.
- Assisted the Providence Schools Wellness Committee in developing a policy, goals and expectations relative to wellness, including nutrition guidelines and education for their student population.
- State Lead Hazard Reduction Program: since 1999, the state has provided \$17,019,097 to the State Lead Hazard Reduction program administered through Rhode Island Housing to make 1,470 units lead safe. (Please see page 12 for 2009 Report.)

**List of Publications:**

- Current Property Owner Fact Sheet
- New Property Owner Fact Sheet
- Tenant Rights and Responsibilities Fact Sheet
- Landlord Handbook
- Guide to Lead Safety in Historic Buildings in RI
- Section on the Lead Hazard Mitigation Law in “The Landlord/ Tenant Handbook”

**Office of Homelessness**

**Susan Bodington and David McCreadie: Co-Chairs**

**Darlene M. Price: Housing Commission Coordinator**

- Staff updated the Action Plan to End Homelessness, noting a list of considerable achievements and establishing new goals and action steps.
- In order to closely monitor ongoing progress, the staff consulted with the Office of Homelessness to create a Coordinating Committee Structure.
- Staff organized additional winter shelter beds and identified management and funding for their operation.
- Staff represents the HRC as a partner agency in Project “Restore” with the State of RI, Dept. of Human Services, Office of Child Support. The program addresses the needs of families and fathers who pay child support through case management.
- Staff administered the Consolidated Homeless Fund (CHF) which provides shelter and services, including transportation assistance with the overarching goal of placement in permanent housing through grants to 27 agencies.
- Staff partnered with Rhode Island Housing on the HUD required Five Year Consolidated Plan and the annual Continuum of Care Application.
- Staff assisted in the coordinated efforts to address the needs of couples and individuals staying in tent cities. This led to the creation of a specialized shelter for couples by the Office.

- Staff works with local groups such as Direct Action for Rights & Equality, Pawtucket Homeless Work Group, Basic Needs Network and others to inform municipalities and groups on current practice and changes in the state homeless systems.
- Staff serves as a member of fund distribution committees including: Thresholds, RI Emergency Food and Shelter Board, HPRP, and CHF.
- Staff participated in: Medicaid Global Waiver Task Force; Rhode Works Advisory Committee; Faith Based Service Providers Networking Meetings; Pawtucket and Westerly Project Homeless Connect organizational meetings.
- Staff also attended the following Access To Recovery (ATR) Trainings:
  - ATR Administration and Reporting;
  - Discharge, Probation and Parole;
  - Strength Based Methods and Motivational Interviewing;
  - National Recovery Month: Real People, Real Recovery (networking).
- Staff organized the third annual Rhode Island Project Homeless Connect a one day, one-stop event that connects homeless persons with a wide range of assistance. Nearly two hundred people attended.
- The CHF changed management at Harrington Hall, the state's largest shelter. The programming and physical plant have been improved through this process.

### **Office of Homeownership**

**Chair: Peter Walsh**

**Raymond Neirinckx: Housing Commission Coordinator**

- Staff increased direct case work with at-risk homeowners. This increased from 131 cases in 2007 to 157 cases in 2008. The 2008 total reflects an increase of 170% over previous years. Along with advocacy on behalf of homeowners, staff assisted an increasing number of tenants in foreclosed homes. Staff accepted both self-referrals and requests from elected officials seeking help for constituents.
- Staff conducted a workshop on the "Mechanics of a Workout" for the National Consumer Law Center's annual conference in Philadelphia. Staff also worked with FDIC, the Attorney General's office, the Housing Network and Rhode Island Housing on a foreclosure and rescue scam workshop.
- Staff worked with the United States office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HOPE NOW program and with local agencies on the implementation of Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) to assist at risk homeowners.
- Staff conducted a training session for United Way's Safety Net Committee on the foreclosure crisis and its impact on tenants and discussed risk to tenants in foreclosed homes with United Way's Homelessness Prevention Subcommittee.
- Staff continued to link foreclosed homes, community development, and HRC programs with Neighborhood Stabilization Program activities.
- Staff researched and monitored acquisition of HUD homes eligible under the \$1 house program to support community development stabilization initiatives. This task included outreach to municipalities and agencies.
- Staff continued to work with the Homeownership Connection on foreclosure prevention counseling work and training of local counselors.

- Staff discussed a possible legal clinic to address foreclosure rescue scams with Roger Williams Law School and the Housing Network.
- Staff provided technical assistance to several agencies seeking to develop foreclosed homes.

**Office of Planning and Operations**

**Thomas Kravitz and Dennis Langley: Co-Chairs**

**Simon Kue: Program Services Officer**

- Staff continues to analyze the data submitted for local affordable housing plan (AHP) annual progress reports and filed a statewide “Report on Implementation.” The staff worked closely with the Statewide Planning Program and Rhode Island Housing to measure progress made by the local communities.
- Since the General Assembly passed the Expedited Permitting for Affordable Housing in 2008, De La Salle at Black Point submitted the first application for an Expedited Permit. The HRC gave its approval in December 2009. The project will produce 80 LMI units for elderly persons, 9 affordable workforce homes, and 43 market rate homes with a projected investment of \$26 million.
- The Office managed and disbursed payments of over \$17.6 million dollars, mostly in federal funds, to Rhode Island Housing, 33 CDBG communities, and non-profit service providers for housing production, shelter, services, and homebuyer education.
- Funds managed by this Office include: Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing, Emergency Shelter Grant, Title XX Homeless Shelter and Services Grant, Housing Resources Commission budget, and Building Homes Rhode Island bond funds.

**Future Goals**

The Office of Housing and Community Development and the Housing Resources Commission will work diligently to alleviate housing problems and to proactively plan for the future. Please be assured that the Chair, Commissioners, staff are committed to the goals of increasing housing opportunity, improving housing quality, reducing homelessness, and contributing to economic development.

The members of the Housing Resources Commission have approved this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Baxter

Chair  
Housing Resources Commission

Noreen Shawcross

Chief, Office of Housing & Community  
Development/Executive Director,  
Housing Resources Commission

## **Housing Resources Commission Members: December 2009**

Susan Baxter, Public Member (Chair)

Jeanne Cola, Designee, Rhode Island Mortgage Bankers Association (Vice Chair)

David Hammarström, MetLife Auto & Home (Secretary)

Roberta Hazen Aaronson, Childhood Lead Action Project

Gary Alexander, RI Health and Human Service Secretariat

Susan Arnold, RI Association of Realtors

Kathleen Bazinet, East Bay Community Development Corporation

Susan Bodington-Designee, RI Housing & Mortgage Finance Corporation

William De Luca-Designee, RI Department of Business Regulation

Michael Evora, RI Commission on Human Rights

Kevin Flynn-Designee, RI Department of Administration

David Gifford, M.D., RI Department of Health

Richard Godfrey-Designee, R I Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation

Kaveh Hajian, People to End Homelessness

Chris Hannifan, Housing Network of Rhode Island

Marilyn Kiesel-Designee, RI Association of Realtors

Thomas Kravitz, Town Planner, Burrillville, RI

Hon. Patrick Lynch, Attorney General for the State of Rhode Island

Mark Noble, Board Chair, Rhode Island Housing

A. Michael Marques, RI Department of Business Regulation

Joanne Mc Gunagle-Comprehensive Community Action Program

Ana Novais-Designee, RI Department of Health

Stephen O'Rourke, RI Association of Executive Directors for Housing

Melody Rodrigues-Designee, RI Department of Elderly Affairs

Corinne Calise Russo, RI Department of Elderly Affairs

James Ryczek, RI Coalition for the Homeless

Gary Sasse, RI Department of Administration

Bonnie Sekeres, Shalom Housing Inc., Senior Housing

Craig Stenning, RI Department of Mental Health, Retardation and Hospitals

Terence Tierney-Designee, RI Office of the Attorney General

Mark Van Noppen, RI Builders Association

Carrie Zaslow, Local Initiative Support Corporation

City/Town	Census Tract	Unit '09	Total Units	Committed '09	Total Dollars Committed:
Bristol	308		47		\$580,205
Barrington	301		2		\$23,690
Burrillville	129, 130.20		12		\$230,214
Central Falls	108, 110, 111		46		\$659,114
Coventry	206.01, 206.02, 206.03		9		\$134,185
Cranston	134, 135, 136, 137.01, 138, 140, 141, 142, 145		31		\$430,667
Cumberland	112, 113, 113.01		98		\$637,690
East Greenwich	209.01		6		\$51,405
East Providence	102, 106	1	4	\$24,689.50	\$83,478
Gloucester	131.01		4		\$45,325
Johnston	123, 124.01, 125	3	10	\$30,000.00	\$106,069
Lincoln	115, 116, 117.01, 117.02		8		\$82,826
Little Compton	414	1	1	\$39,999.67	\$40,000
Manville	115		21		\$260,000
Middletown	404		1		\$14,000
Newport	405, 406, 408, 409		7		\$91,227
North Kingstown	501.03, 512.00		1		\$23,985
North Providence	118, 119, 120, 121.02	1	9	\$17,143.50	\$106,965
North Scituate	132		1		\$14,578
North Smithfield	128.98		2		\$21,559
Pascoag	129	1	1	\$24,585.00	\$24,585
Pawtucket	150, 151, 152, <b>154</b> , 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 164, 165, 166, 167.98, 168, <b>170</b> , 171	13	113	\$130,000.00	\$1,020,945
Portsmouth	401.01, 401.02		2		\$38,810
Providence	001, 002, 003, <b>004</b> , 004, 005, 006, 007 009, 011, 013, 014, 015, <b>016</b> , 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 025, 026, 027, 028, 029, 031, 032, 034	55	593	\$313,796.50	\$6,474,328
Tiverton	<b>416.01</b>		66		\$150,000
Warren	305		6		\$89,753
Wakefield	512	1	2	\$24,601.50	\$32,439
Warwick	210, 211, 214.01, 214.02, 215.02, <b>217</b> , 219.02, 223,		42		\$367,432
West Warwick	201.02, <b>202</b> , 203	2	14	\$20,000.00	\$186,427
Westerly	508, 508.01, 509		7		\$104,260
Woonsocket	174, 176, 177, 184		173		\$237,708
		<b>78</b>	<b>1,339</b>	<b>\$624,815.67</b>	<b>\$12,363,867</b>

