

Report Card on OPENING DOORS RHODE ISLAND

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

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For more information:

www.rihomeless.org

401-721-5685

info@rihomeless.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT OPENING DOORS

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

The Plan proposes to:

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

CONCLUSIONS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Governor’s Office:

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

For the State Departments:

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

For the General Assembly:

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

For the Homeless Service Provider Community:

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

OVERALL GRADE: C+