

The Homeless Bill of Rights:

On June 20, 2012 the Governor signed the Homeless Bill of Rights into law, making Rhode Island the first state in the nation to formally protect the rights of those experiencing homelessness. The law states:

“No person’s rights, privileges, or access to public services may be denied or abridged solely because he or she is homeless. Such a person shall be granted the same rights and privileges as any other resident of this state.”

Discrimination against those experiencing homelessness is not acceptable in the state of Rhode Island.

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If you have been discriminated against on the basis of your housing status, you are entitled to damages and the cost of attorney fees. Please take down details of the incident (what happened, where, and the date and time). Remember to get the name and/or badge number and/or vehicle number of the discriminating person.

Call to be advised about your next steps:

RI Coalition for the Homeless
(401) 721 - 5685

You can visit www.rihomeless.org to learn more about the Homeless Bill of Rights

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How It Affects You

2012

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EQUAL TREATMENT

You have the right to equal treatment by all state and municipal agencies and their employees, including, but not limited to:

- Libraries
- Elected officials
- Police
- RIPTA
- Fire & Rescue services
- City/town halls
- Voting/election officials
- Social service agencies
- And any others not listed

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PUBLIC SPACES

You have the right to use all public sidewalks like all other residents.

You have the right to use all public buildings (such as state or town offices, or libraries) like all other residents.

You have the right to use all public parks like all other residents.

You have the right to use all public transportation (such as buses) like all other residents.

LACK OF ADDRESS

A shelter address, an address for under a bridge or on a street corner, or other forms of non-traditional address are all valid addresses.

- Employers are barred from not hiring you or from firing you for having an address like that or for being on the street.
- You cannot be prevented from voting at your local voting place because of your lack of a traditional address. Nor can you be kept from registering to vote because of your lack of a traditional address.
- You cannot be denied housing, like when you're applying for an apartment, just because of your address and housing status.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY

Your personal belongings (such as a backpack or bags) are protected from search or seizure as if you were in a house, under the 4th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Some of your personal records are generally confidential and protected from disclosure. Such records include but are not limited to:

- Shelter sign-in lists
- Shelter records
- Wait lists
- Your medical records

MEDICAL CARE

You cannot be denied medical care or emergency services because of your housing status.

You have the right to be treated like any other patient when you seek medical attention.

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